

# **Gender differences in labour market perspectives of young migrants in the Netherlands**

*Debby Gerritsen*

*Department of Interdisciplinary Social Science*

*Utrecht University*

*D.Gerritsen1@uu.nl*

## **Abstract**

Literature shows that, despite the improved level of education and labour market participation in the last decades, the position of migrant women in European societies is still disadvantaged. Especially labour market participation is still relatively low and educational advancement is not always translated to the labour market. There are several explanations for the gendered picture of differences in education and labour market outcomes of migrant youngsters in the Netherlands, like differences in motivation, social support, labour market perspectives, traditional beliefs and perceived discrimination. In this study we examine the possible explanations and analyse the future perspectives of migrant girls. For our analyses we use survey data on school satisfaction and professional orientation supplemented with qualitative data consisting of observations and interviews with migrant vocational students. In addition we will discuss the policy reforms which have affected the situation of young migrants, such as emancipation and integration policies to stimulate their participation in education and on the labour market and how these reforms stimulate their labour market participation.

## **Introduction**

In Europe and in the Netherlands young migrants are in a disadvantaged position when it comes to schooling and employment: they are concentrated in lower segments of education, drop out more often and have higher unemployment rates. In spite of this somewhat negative picture it is important to note that the school performances and experiences of migrant youngsters are diverse and there are clear differences, for example between the genders. In general girls outperform boys at school and results of our study on school adjustment indicate that in particular migrant girls are very satisfied with their school life (Gerritsen, D. & Van Zenderen, 2010).

Interestingly, more school engagement of migrant girls does not translate itself in better labour market outcomes and participation is still relatively low. Statistical data shows that, despite the improved level of education and labour market participation in the last decades, the position of migrant women in European societies is still disadvantaged (OECD 2009). Especially labour market participation is still relatively low and educational advancement is not always translated to the labour market. This is surprising, one would expect that when the educational level improves, labour market participation improves as well. Previous studies show indeed that labour market participation of migrant women was mostly explained by educational level (OECD 2009). However, after controlling for educational attainment a gap between native and migrant women in employment rates remains.

Despite their disadvantaged position, migrant women seem to be less affected by the global crisis than migrant men. For example, unemployment rates are increasing among young migrants, although less for women than for men. Moreover, the labour market participation of migrant women is still increasing, while for migrant men it is on the decrease.

Segments in which traditionally more women work seem less affected by the crisis, but the fact that participation is even on the increase also points in the direction of an emancipation process of migrant women which is not only restricted to their life at school.

This paper first discusses the position of young migrant women with Turkish and Moroccan backgrounds in Netherlands and Europe in education and at the labour market. Next we compare this position with the perspectives of migrant girls themselves. We analyse the future perspectives of these girls and place them in the current situation of the global crisis. These issues are important to discuss in the academic debate, since educational attainment and labour market outcomes are major determinants for integration of children of migrants in general (OECD 2009). Furthermore, we will discuss in which way Dutch policies and public debate stimulates labour market participation of migrant women.

### **Labour market position**

Migrant women are having the least favourable position in the European labour market, both in absolute terms and relative to children of natives of the same gender (OECD 2007:81-82). For both genders unemployment is about 16 times higher, but also employment rates are lower 8% points for migrant men and 13% points for migrant women. Although second generation (the children of migrants, born and raised in country of residence) has a higher employment probability than young migrants, the gap with natives is still large (OECD 2009). For example in Denmark, Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands the differential rates are between 7% and 13%.

OECD numbers show that educational attainment is an important determinant of employment prospects (OECD, 2007). Despite, several studies show that migrant women receive less occupational status in return for their education. They have less often a long-term

contract, have lower wages and have lower status jobs than native women with the same educational level (Fleischman & Dronkers, 2006; Nielsen et al., 2003).

Labour market participation outcomes differ for migrant groups depending on country of origin and host country (OECD, 2007; van Tubergen, 2006). For example, labour market outcomes of migrants from less developed countries are worse than for migrants from developed countries.

Furthermore, native born children of migrants do better than foreign born children. The same is true for migrant women; being born, raised and educated in host country is beneficial for their labour market participation. Second generation immigrants are also having higher labour market participation rates than first generation immigrants, but many European countries show significant gaps between the participation of second generation migrants and the native population (OECD, 2007). However, the employment rates of second generation migrants are very low in Belgium and in the Netherlands, compared to other OECD countries (about 20% lower). There is also a large group of non-participants among second generation migrant men in the Netherlands, even more non-participants than in the group of first generation migrants. Non-participation numbers for girls show the opposite, second generation girls are less often non-participating (OECD, 2009).

Research shows that the second generation in Europe usually has lower educational levels and lower labour market participation, compared to their native counterparts. The PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) a study of the educational outcomes of 15 year-olds in all OECD countries, includes information of the background of the students' parents. These data show that educational outcomes and attainment levels of children of migrants tend to lag behind those of native children (OECD, 2007). The PISA shows that the educational outcomes of the second generation depends on the skills of their parents; children from low skilled migrant workers have usually lower educational levels than native

children, children from high skilled migrants have the same or sometimes even higher educational levels than natives. Second generation youngsters are doing better in education than migrant youngsters.

A Danish study found that second generation migrant girls seem to do better in the educational system than male second generation migrants, but they face larger problems in the labour market (Nielsen et al., 2003). This contradiction is interesting; the participation of second generation girls in education and at the labour market is not increasing in the same pace, while educational levels improve strongly, labour market participation improves slower, which causes discrepancies between the educational level and labour market outcomes of migrant women. We would like to know which explanations theories and previous literature offer for the disadvantaged position of migrant girls and women in school and the labour market, and for the discrepancy.

In particular we are interested in the transition from school to work. So we would like to extend our question by the following one: What are the explanations for the dissimilar participation in education and the labour market? Or more precise: What are the obstacles that many migrant girls encounter when finishing their education and entering the labour market?

## **Theory**

### *Education*

The literature suggests many different explanations for the disadvantaged position of first and second generation migrants at the labour market. However, literature specifically focussing on girls and women is rare. The literature offers explanations in line with theories of human capital, discrimination, social capital and cultural differences.

In 2006 Keuzenkamp and Merens published a report on the position of migrant women in the Netherlands. They acknowledged that the women from ethnic minorities have weak positions in the Dutch society. According to them education, demand of the language, migration generation and traditional views at gender roles are the most important determinants of the position and participation of migrant women (Keuzenkamp & Merens, 2006).

The explanation human capital theory offers is that human capital (skills, knowledge and qualifications, which are most of the time reduced to education) improves the participation of migrants in the host society positively. A study from Van Tubergen (2006) discusses how human capital can influence labour market participation of migrant women in Europe. According to him educational level, language proficiency and work experience are important determinants for participation. He also discusses how human capital can explain country of origin and host country effects on participation, he argues that the value of human capital differs for different countries of origin and different host societies (van Tubergen, 2006). According to the OECD educational attainment is a strong predictor for employment outcomes for children of migrants. Other scholars found as well that educational attainment is the most important determinant for labour market outcomes (Fleischman & Dronkers, 2007; van Tubergen, 2006). However, this image should be nuanced; Fleischman & Dronkers (2007) found that while individual education is an important predictor of migrants' labour market outcomes, the results of their education, in terms of occupational status, are much lower for migrant women than for native women. Nielsen et al. (2003) found that education has a strong influence on wages and employment duration of second generation migrants in Denmark. However, the economic return of their education is much lower than for native women. According to Biffl (2008), the participation of migrant women in Denmark tends to

have a bipolar skills structure. High skilled migrants tend to do as well as natives while low skilled migrant workers are often marginalised or altogether excluded from the labour market.

Some studies point at the importance of language proficiency (Crul & Doornik, 2003, Keuzenkamp & Merens, 2006), migrant women with a better understanding of the language are more often participating at the labour market than migrant women who have low language proficiency. We hypothesize that educational attainment improves the labour market position of migrant women positively (H1). Nevertheless there are studies that show that also highly educated migrant women have disadvantaged positions compared to their native counterparts. Still a gap in participation between migrant women and native women exists. So other factors, next to education, may restrict the participation of migrant women in European societies.

### *Discrimination*

First gender discrimination takes place, because employers have prejudices against women that they are not the primary breadwinners they prefer part-time work and that are temporary workers and leave when becoming pregnant (Castles & Miller, 2010). Second, racial discrimination is also mentioned as a restricting factor for migrant women to enter and to participate at the labour market. Although migrant women are according to the literature less often discriminated against than migrant men (Arai et al., 2008; Güngör & Bornstein, 2009 Timmerman et al., 2003). According to Kofman et al. (2000) there is evidence of racial discrimination at mainstream labour markets in Europe and even highly educated second generation migrant women face difficulties at the labour market. Some tests in which comparable candidates except nationality/national origin, applied for jobs show evidence of discriminatory practices. All revealed the prevalence of racial discrimination in all countries

included in the study (OECD, 2006). Also van Tubergen (2006) discusses the role of discrimination on labour market participation of migrant women.

According to a study of the Dutch SCP (Social and Cultural Plan Office) it is useful to analyse discrimination of women separate from analysing discrimination at the labour market in general, because they have the worst positions at the labour market, in particular, Turkish and Moroccan women in the Netherlands have a disadvantaged position. Most complaints about discriminatory practices in the Netherlands concern the hijab or headscarf. Muslim women feel disadvantaged at the labour market because of their headscarf. Employers admit that for representative jobs or jobs that require neutrality, women with headscarves are not hired (Andriessen et al., 2007). We hypothesize that discrimination is a serious obstacle for migrant women who want to participate at the labour market (H2). Migrant women might be double disadvantaged because of discrimination because of their gender and of their ethnic background.

### *Social capital*

Another explanation for the disadvantaged position of migrant women is the lack of access to networks. Networks, or in social capital literature called 'weak ties' are important when looking for a job (Field, 2008). In many European countries access to jobs is very often at the informal market, through contacts like relatives and friends. Children of migrants and their parents often lack these networks (OECD, 2007). Networks of migrants do often not correspond to the networks of, most of the time native, employers. Furthermore, networks are in many cases gendered, which limits the entrance of women to high level jobs. Migrant women have in many cases same gender networks, which limit their possibilities to enter the labour market, which is still white male dominated. Attending segregated schools and living in segregated neighbourhoods also give fewer chances for a useful social network. We

hypothesize that that migrant women have networks that are incompatible with the networks of employers and therefore they have less access to the labour market (H3a).

Next to lack of access there is also a lack of general knowledge about the functioning of the labour market. Support from family and friends, the so called 'strong ties', can offer the necessary support for youngsters when being in an education or looking for a job (Field, 2008). This support is crucial for youngsters to finish their education successfully and to make a smooth transition to the labour market. The parents of second generation children are often not in the position to assist their children in how to apply for a job or how to succeed in a recruitment interview (OECD, 2006). Different studies pointed out that the parental background is of great importance for the educational and labour market outcomes of children of migrants (Nielsen et al., 2003). Children from high-skilled migrants have more chances to fully participate in the host society than children from low-skilled migrants, because they are more able to provide their children with the support needed for education and labour market entrance (Nielsen et al., 2003). Crul & Doornik (2003) found that parental socio economic status is a crucial explanatory factor for the low educational attainment of second generation migrant Turkish and Moroccan youngsters in the Netherlands. We hypothesize that children of migrants receive less support from their parents, which can hinder them in obtaining an education and to make a smooth transition to the labour market (H3b).

### *Cultural factors*

Cultural factors can possibly offer an explanation for differences in participation between migrant men and women. Views on the education of girls, fertility choice and marriage status may all influence participation. From our previous studies we know that migrant girls feel not only constraint by the host society, but also by their own community (Gerritsen, van Zenderen & Maier, 2009). Traditional norms and values sometimes restrict girls to study and/or work.

In the Netherlands, for example, migrant girls from Moroccan and Turkish families often have care responsibilities for younger brother and sisters, especially the oldest daughters. These care responsibilities hinder girls to invest in school. Sometimes there is large influence of the community that expects girls to get married early (Crul & Doornik, 2003). Cohabiting or living on your own is in most Muslim cultures not accepted for girls and also higher educated girls marry early. During the 70' and 80' there were many migrant parents in the Netherlands that did not value their daughters' education and kept them at home. These practices are rare nowadays and most migrant parents value education, it is obvious for parents that their children are going to school (Crul & Doornik, 2003).

Antecol (2000) suggests that differences between labour market participation of migrant men and women can be attributed to cultural factors such as tastes regarding family structure and women's role in market versus home work (Antecol, 2000). Nielsen et al. (2003) conclude from their study that migrant parents' attitude towards the role of women is a major explanation behind the gap in labour market success of second generation migrant women and native Danish women. Also other scholars found that traditional role divisions have a strong influence at the labour market participation of migrant women (Keuzenkamp & Merens, 2006; van Tubergen, 2006).

Socio-demographic factors like marital status and numbers of children also influence the labour market participation substantially. In the age group 20-29 migrant women are overrepresented among those who are married and have children (Liebig & Schröder, 2010). Therefore we formulate our fourth hypothesis as follows: we expected that traditional views on gender roles makes that migrant women are more involved in care responsibilities because they marry early, have a family at a young age and have more children in total, which makes that they participate less on the labour market (H4).

The theories discussed above should not be seen as separate factors that influence labour market participation of migrant women. For example, a low educational level, a lack of networks and support and traditional views on gender roles are more common in migrant families with a lower social economic background. However it is important to mention those theories separately to show that the position of migrant women in the labour market is affected in multiple ways.

### **Method/Analysis**

To examine the perspectives of young migrant girls on their labour market prospects we conducted extensive qualitative and quantitative research. Our target group consists of migrant girls with Turkish and Moroccan backgrounds in the age of 16-21. Turks and Moroccans are the two largest migrant groups in the Netherlands and the labour market participation of women in these groups is the lowest. For example, much lower than for women from Surinamese or Antillean descent.

The data we used were collected for the comparative European research projects TRESEGY and PROFACITY. In both projects the situation and experiences with education and labour market inclusion of young second generation migrants in the host country were examined. Parts of both studies focussed especially on gender differences in experiences. These data are used for the current study.

The qualitative data was collected during ethnographic fieldwork (2008-2010) at a trainee project for migrant youngsters and at a secondary vocational school (different locations; care and welfare work, economics, ict). At the trainee project about 13 migrant youngsters were interviewed. At the secondary vocation schools we conducted participant observations in classrooms and 11 youngsters (native and migrant) and 4 teachers have been

interviewed. Furthermore, three focus groups have been organised, one with teachers, two with migrant girls with Moroccan and Turkish backgrounds. In total 29 people have been interviewed, 18 persons participated in focus groups and around 50 persons were involved in the participant observations.

The data was analysed with the help of the software package maxqda 2007. Segments were coded and codes were rearranged to have a systematic overview of the perspectives of youngsters on education and labour market participation.

Next to the qualitative study we conducted a quantitative study in which 608 youngsters of five vocational schools filled in a questionnaire. The survey included, among others, questions on educational ambitions, labour market identity, social networks and discrimination. The results of the qualitative and quantitative study complement each other very well and are presented in the next paragraphs.

## **Results**

The results of the survey show that migrant girls with Moroccan or Turkish backgrounds are the most satisfied with their school life. They are willing to study further and obtain a higher education and have strong wish for upward mobility. Moroccan girls are even more satisfied with school than Turkish girls (see also Gerritsen and Van Zenderen, 2010).

This optimism is in line with the general tendency that migrant girls are catching up in the educational system, and are nowadays doing better than their male counterparts (OECD, 2009). There is, however, still a gap between them and native girls in educational attainment. So the fact that less migrant girls participate on the labour market is partly explained by their lower educational level. Also migrant girls themselves confirm that they feel they have fewer opportunities at the labour market because of their too low educational level. Our first

hypothesis that a low educational level contributes to a lower level of labour market participation is affirmed. This is however not the complete story, there are other factors which hinder their school engagement and transition to the labour market.

In spite of their optimism, many migrant youngsters, boys and girls, experience a lack of support, which makes it harder for them to continue at school when things are going wrong. From our qualitative data it became clear that many migrant girls have care responsibilities for siblings or start their own family, which makes it hard for them to fully concentrate at school. When they start their own family it is difficult for them to combine care tasks with an education.

Both the qualitative and quantitative study show that many migrant youngsters feel discriminated against. We found many concrete examples in the ethnographic studies in which youngsters report to be discriminated, due to wearing a headscarf or coming from the wrong zip code area (a neighbourhood where many migrants live). Some of our respondents mention employers or trainee places where they clearly do not want to have youngsters from certain backgrounds. In general boys and girls report similar experiences with discrimination in the survey, about 50% of the migrant youngsters have felt themselves discriminated against the last year. However, when we separate the different ethnic groups we find a significant difference between Moroccan boys and girls. Moroccan boys feel much more often discriminated against in the last year than Moroccan girls (59% vs. 41%). The results of the survey also show that migrant girls experience discrimination at work and in public transportation, while boys feel discriminated when going out or in the street. Muslim girls tell about experiences of discrimination due to wearing a headscarf. For example, entering higher position jobs seem to a real problem for them.

Our data shows that discrimination is a real problem for these youngsters, so our hypothesis that discrimination influences labour market participation seems to be confirmed.

However, interviews with the youngsters also revealed that many youngsters do not see discrimination as real hindrance. They are convinced that with the right papers, the right experience and the right attitude, they will find a job. Even the girls wearing a headscarf have the feeling that finding a job will not be a problem. So interestingly the perspectives of young migrant girls are not in line with our hypothesis.

From the literature it appeared that young migrant girls are disadvantaged when it comes to support from their social network and do not have the right networks to access the labour market. This was confirmed by our study: networks of migrant women are often single-ethnic (82%) and single-gender (more than 60% mostly girls vs. 20% for native girls) which gives them fewer opportunities to find a job through their network.

According to the survey outcomes many migrant youngsters try to find a job at employment agencies for temporary work, which results in an uncertain job position at the labour market. Native youngsters on the other hand find in most cases a job through their networks. Trainee posts are very important in this sense, because it happens often that youngsters are offered a job after a successful period of internship.

From the interviews it became clear that many migrant parents lack the knowledge to support their children with school work and their transition to the labour market. They are in many cases low educated and are unfamiliar with the Dutch school system and labour market. Also our quantitative data revealed that most migrant youngsters (56%) do not receive any support with their school work.

So young migrant women have limited networks and experience a lack of support which makes it more difficult for them to access the labour market a high status jobs. Our third hypothesis was also confirmed. In combination with experiences with discrimination when searching for a trainee post this can hinder their labour market entry severely.

We asked the young migrant girls in our study about their future perspectives and outlooks. All of them would like to finish a higher education, to have a career, to marry and to have a family. The migrant girls in our study have modern views on work; they know what their future job will look like and are very convinced about their future job. The majority of migrant girls reported, for instance, in the survey that their heart lies with profession for which the study.

. In the first place the girls do not see marriage and a family as an obstacle for obtaining an education and having a career. Despite their modern view on work, they have traditional views on marriage and the family. They all want to marry a man from the same ethnic background, mostly for religious reasons. None of them would like to cohabit and all want to marry and start a family. Finishing their education is not even a prerequisite; they feel they will continue their education after getting married or starting a family. However, asking further they admit that combining work and a family might be difficult and therefore many of them have a preference for part-time work. Especially the Turkish girls in our study feel that it is a women's job to take care of the household and the children. During focus groups the girls said that in general their parents and future husbands have more traditional views on gender roles than they have, which makes it difficult for them to combine work and family in the future. Also the teachers in our study state that many Muslim girls quit school after getting married, and also the girls themselves have examples of older sisters who did not continue school after marriage. There is a clear friction between modern views on work, but traditional views on marriage and the family.

We also found that girls sometimes use their education to postpone or avoid care responsibilities or marriage. As long as they are going to school there is put less pressure on them to get married. On average girls from Turkish or Moroccan descents in the Netherlands marry at a younger age they start a family at a younger age, and get more children than native

girls. The figures for the second generation are getting closer to those of native girls (SCP, 2009). We thus can confirm the hypothesis that traditional views on gender roles in Turkish and Moroccan communities in the Netherlands, limits the labour market participation of the women in these groups.

### **Emancipation and integration policies**

We are also interested if national policies correspond to the demands and perspectives of migrant women. Do emancipation and integration policies focus on factors important for the education and labour market participation of migrant women in European societies? Central in the emancipation policies of the Netherlands are labour market participation and economic independency. As said immigrant women occupy the worst positions in figures of labour market participation and economic independency. However, are the demands for integration and emancipation also the wishes of migrant women themselves and does it fit their perspectives?

First integration policies, in the last decades the migration and integration policies in the Netherlands shifted from a multiculturalist approach to an assimilationist approach which entails that full cultural and social adaptation of immigrant to host society is demanded. This was heavily influenced by the public debate which became more in favour of what is called 'new realism' (Prins & Saharso, 2008; Prins 2010). Prins (2010) distinguishes five distinctive features of this new genre. Firstly, the author of a new realism discourse presents him/herself as someone who dares to face the facts, who speaks frankly about 'truths' concerning the failures of integration which former discourses covered up. Secondly, the new realist poses as the spokesperson of the 'ordinary people', i.e. the autochthonous population. A third characteristic of new realism is the suggestion that realism is a characteristic feature of

national identity: being Dutch equals being frank, straightforward and realistic. Fourthly, new realism opposes the political left. Finally, the discourse of new realism is highly gendered, centered on gender and sexuality, as evidenced by its insistence and criticism on 'headscarves', arranged or forced marriages, female genital mutilation, honor killing, the cultus of virginity, domestic violence and homophobia. This author labels the extreme-right discourses as 'hyper-realism'.

This public debate influenced the integration policies in the Netherlands and immigrants are expected to adapt to the Dutch norms and values. Integration courses, a Dutch canon and civic education in school were introduced in 2006 to ensure immigrants' loyalty to Dutch values. Furthermore, immigrants themselves are held responsible for their own integration. Attention has shifted in the last thirty years from structural barriers to cultural barriers which are located in the migrant culture (Roggeband & Verloo, 2007).

A remarkable development in the Dutch emancipation policies is that implicitly a distinction is made between native Dutch women at the one hand and non-western immigrant women on the other (Prins & Saharso, 2008). The aims of more economic independence and more women in positions of power and decision making are primarily targeting the native Dutch women, while the aims of prevention and combating violence against women and the prevention of social exclusion of vulnerable and deprived women is targeting women from ethnic minority groups and at most Muslim women. Labour market participation is not the priority for this group and volunteering or having care responsibilities are seen as a first step towards participation (Keuzenkamp, 2007; Prins & Saharso, 2008).

Dutch minority and gender equality policies have made two major shifts. Minority and integration policies have become more gendered, where unequal gender relations got more attention. At the same time the emancipation policies became more 'ethnicized', with special focus on the emancipation of migrant women (Roggeband & Verloo, 2007).

The increased attention for immigrant women in minority and emancipation policies and the presentation of migrant women as being (culturally) disadvantaged allows the government to take the role of well-intended helper of these women. According to Roggeband & Verloo (2007) negative representation of immigrant women as traditional, backward and potential victims may limit the identification and participation of these women and might have the opposite effect of from what the government aims to accomplish.

### **Conclusion and discussion**

Young migrants have a very optimistic view about their future. Especially, migrant girls from Turkish and Moroccan backgrounds, who are very satisfied with their school life and also with their life in general. Interviews and observations revealed that school is a place where they can escape from strict social control from their family and community and care responsibilities and offers them a free social space in which they can meet friends. Following an education postpones in some cases early marriages of Muslim girls.

Young migrant women feel that when they obtain the right education, when they have the right work experience, and the right attitude, they will have a successful future career. Migrant girls themselves focus foremost on human capital factors for participation at the labour market. Discrimination or lack of support or not having the right network does, from their perspective, not seem to be seen as a real hindrance. They also think they will be able to combine having a household and children with study and making a career. Youngsters have the feeling they are in full control of their future.

However, existing figures on labour market participation and the results of our study show a different, gloomier picture and young migrant girls might have a too optimistic view. Our empirical data shows that many migrant girls feel discriminated against, many young lack

support from their social network, and the social networks of many young migrants are single-ethnic, which restricts their access to the labour market. Young migrant girls are also optimistic about having a career without being restricted by early marriage. However, many of them marry early and start a family, which limits their opportunities to finish their education. Due to traditional views on gender roles, many migrant girls decide not to work and instead be a fulltime house wife and mother.

The question what could be a possible explanation for differences in educational attainment and labour market participation of migrant girls can be answered as follow. Lower education levels in comparison with native girls still explain a part of the disadvantaged position at the labour market, this is partly explained by their parents' low educational level and socio economic status of many second generation migrant youngsters. Also discrimination plays a role, especially for Muslim immigrant women, who in many cases feel excluded from the labour market because of their headscarf. Many migrant women lack social support during their studies and transition to the labour market, which makes it more difficult for them to successfully finish their studies and enter the labour market. They also have in many cases social networks that do not compromise to the network of employers, which restricts them from finding a job. Traditional views at gender roles, early marriage and care responsibilities could be an explanation for the differences in participation between immigrant men and women.

So according to our analysis there are different explanations for the still disadvantaged position of migrant women in the Netherlands. We feel migrant youngsters underestimate this disadvantaged position and are not fully aware of the above mentioned obstacles. This is explained by their frame of reference: in comparison to their parents, and especially girls in comparison with their moms, make big steps forward. Next to this many migrant youngsters grow up in segregated neighbourhoods and go to segregated schools and have little native

friends. They therefore do not compare themselves with native Dutch youngsters, but mostly with other migrant youngsters. In comparison with their parents, the situation in their country of origin and with other migrant youngsters they are not in disadvantaged position, on the contrary they are in better positions.

Dutch policies on integration and emancipation are having two folded consequences for the immigrant women. Since the arrival of new realism immigrant women are viewed as being victims of their own culture and religion. The Muslim culture in particular is perceived as being oppressive to women and as a threat to the social cohesion in the Dutch society and to Dutch values. However, the shifts in integration and emancipation policies moved immigrant women from the margins of interest to the centre of interest of these policies. This made immigrant women more visible and gave them a chance to speak up. They can defend their interpretation of Islam and their own views and desires for emancipation (Prins & Saharso, 2008). Also Biffl (2008) points that the settlement of immigrant women in the EU allows them to break with traditional roles and patterns of behaviour and thereby gain self-determination.

Dutch minority policies shifted from a focus on structural barriers to a focus on cultural barriers for satisfactory integration, for which the migrant groups themselves are held responsible. This suggests that Dutch policymakers believe cultural norms and values are most restrictive for migrant women since they are being culturally victimized. From migrant girls we heard another story; according to them wearing their headscarf, for instance, is perceived as a form of emancipation instead of a form of oppression, as often viewed by Western cultures. They would like to have a choice, to be Muslim and to be active at the labour market and strive for equal chances for women with a headscarf. So policies aiming at changing traditional cultural norms do not fit their perspectives and might not be effective.

Policies should rather focus on creating possibilities and opportunities for labour market participation of migrant women. Policies should not only target at the responsibilities of migrants themselves to adapt, but should also create opportunities to combine personal cultural norms of migrants and participation at the labour market.

We have come to the point to answer our second question; do Dutch minority and emancipation policies meet the needs of migrant women? Nowadays migrant women are the main focus of minority and emancipation policies. This made them more visible and gave them a voice to show their wishes. On the other hand migrant women are represented in the Dutch policies as victims, backward and not emancipated, without including the voice of migrant women themselves. In this way the policies do not meet the demands of migrant women. In a study of Roggeband (2010) migrant women's organisations challenge the assumption that culture and religion are barriers to participate and instead feel that processes of exclusion and othering are actual barriers for participation. So according to migrant women policy should focus on combating discrimination and exclusion, instead of demanding migrant women to give up their cultural and religious norms and to assimilate.

The current economic crisis makes the need for responsive policy even more urgent. Labour market participation of migrants is highly correlated to the economic conjuncture. In periods of economic downturn, the unemployment rates of migrant increase the most and fast (De Graaf & Van Zenderen, 2009). This is related to discrimination patterns, in periods of economic downturn the supply of labour is high and jobs are rare, when employers have the choice they prefer native workers over migrant workers.

However, the labour market participation of migrant women is on the increase, even since the start of the global economic crisis. There is less unemployment among young

migrant women compared to their male counterparts, however numbers are still higher compared to native Dutch women.

Different sectors are differently affected by the global crisis. Segments in which traditionally more women work seem less affected by the crisis. For example the care sector, in which many migrant women work, is one of the least affected sectors. Labour market participation is, despite the global crisis, on the increase for migrant women in the Netherlands. This points in the direction of an ongoing emancipation process of migrant women which is not only restricted to their life at school and is not hampered by the crisis. One could expect labour market participation figures to be even higher without the situation of a global crisis. This outcome is in line with the fact that second generation migrant girls performs better in the educational system, and education in the host country seems to have an emancipating effect. Also figures on marriage and child birth show that second generation migrant women are showing numbers more in line with the figures in native women, which in the future will slowly translates itself into more labour market participation.

## **Literature**

Andriessen, I., Dagevos, J., Nievers, E. & Boog, I. (2007). Discriminatiemonitor niet-westerse allochtonen op de arbeidsmarkt. SCP/Art.1 Den Haag/Rotterdam.

Antecol, H. (2000) An examination of cross-country differences in the gender gap in labor force participation rates. *Labour Economics* 7 409-426.

Arai, M., Bursell, M. & Nekby, L. (2008). Between meritocracy and ethnic discrimination: The gender difference. IZA discussion paper no. 3467 April, 2008.

Biffi, G. (2008). Migrant women and youth: the challenge of labour market integration. WIFO working papers No. 320.

- Castles, S. & Miller, M. (2009). *The age of migration: international population movements in the modern world*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Crul, M & Doornik (2003). *The Turkish and Moroccan second generation in the Netherlands: divergent trends between and polarization within the two groups*. *International Migration Review* 37(4) 1039-1064.
- Van Egten, C. & De Hoog, S. (2009). "Misschien had ik wel hoger gekund." *Schoolloopbanen van meisjes uit etnische minderheidsgroepen. E-quality: Den Haag*.
- Field, J. (2008). *Social Capital*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London and New York: Routledge.
- Fleischman, F. & Dronkers, J. (2007). *The effects of social and labour market policies of EU-countries on the socio-economic integration of first and second generation immigrants from different countries of origin*. EUI working papers RSCAS 2007/19.
- Gerritsen, D., Van Zenderen, K. & Maier, M. (2009). *Education and labor market participation among young migrants*. Paper presented at 7<sup>th</sup> ESPAnet Annual Conference, Urbino 17-19 September 2009.
- Gerritsen, D & Van Zenderen (2010). *School satisfaction of migrant youth*. Working paper presented at ESPAnet Conference, Amsterdam.
- Güngör, D. & Bornstein, M. (2009). *Gender, development, values, adaptation and discrimination in acculturating adolescents: the case of Turk heritage youth born and living in Belgium*. *Sex Roles* 60:537-548.
- Keuzenkamp, S. & Merens, A. (2006). *De sociale atlas van vrouwen uit etnische Minderheden*. SCP, Den Haag.
- Keuzenkamp, S. (2007). *Wat heeft mevrouw Benayad aan emancipatie-onderzoek?* Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

- Kofman, E., Phizacklea, A., Raghuram, P. & Sales, R. (2000). Gender and international migration in Europe. Routledge, London and New York.
- Kofman, E. (2003). Women migrants and refugees in the European Union. OECD/OCDE.
- Liebig, T. and L. Schröder. 2010. Main findings of the joint EC/OECD seminar on the labour integration of the children of immigrants (1 and 2 October 2009, Brussels). In *Equal Opportunities? The labour market integration of the children of immigrants*, 9-14. Paris: OECD.
- Nielsen, H., Rosholm, M., Smith, N. & Husted, L. (2003). The school-to-work transition of 2<sup>nd</sup> generation immigrants in Denmark. *Journal of population economics*, 16, 755-786.
- OECD (2007). International Migration Outlook. SOPEMI 2007 edition.
- OECD (2010). International Migration Outlook. SOPEMI 2010 edition.
- Prins, B. & Saharso, S. (2008). In the spotlight: a blessing and a curse for immigrant women in the Netherlands. *Ethnicities*, 8(3) 365-384.
- Prins, B. (2010). How to face reality. Genres of discourse within Dutch minorities research. In *National paradigms of migration research*, ed. D. Thränhardt and M. Bommers, 81-108. Osnabrueck: V&R Unipress.
- Roggeband, C. van & Verloo, M. (2007). Dutch women are liberated, migrant women are a problem: the evolution of policy frames on gender and migration in the Netherlands, 1995-2005. *Social Policy and Administration* 41(3) 271-288.
- Roggeband, C. (2010). The victim-agent dilemma; how migrant women's organizations in the Netherlands deal with a contradictory policy frame. *Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 35(4) 943-967.

Salaff, J. & Greve, A. (2003). Gendered structural barriers to job attainment for Skilled Chinese emigrants in Canada. *International journal of population geography*, 9, 443-456.

SCP, (2009). *Annual Report on Integration 2009*. The Hague: SCP.

Timmerman, C., Vanderwaeren, E. & Crul, M. (2003). The second generation in Belgium. *International Migration Review* 37(4): 1065-1090.

Tubergen, F. van (2006). De arbeidsmarkt positie van allochtone vrouwen in international vergelijkend perspectief. *Migrantenstudies* (4).