



# Emancipation of Muslim female Migrants

*An analysis of the personal emancipation views of Arabic speaking, young Muslim female migrants and the consistency with the Dutch emancipation policies*



## Master Thesis Public Administration

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*'If you educate a women, you educate a family'*

## Foreword

Yes, if you educate a women, you educate a family. And if you educate a family, you change the future. This was a quote from queen Rania from Jordan. And yes, she is true. Women have not only suffered oppression, deprivation and persecution throughout history, women are also the ones from whom society is born. Literally. Great leaders had greater women standing behind them, supporting them in their ambitions for greater things. That's a woman's strength I think. She can inspire for greatness, but she herself can also be great.

For you lies my research that I have carried out in order to graduate for my Master study Public Administration. The subject is one that is close to my heart. As a female, as a Muslim, as a migrant child and even as a young feminist I first found inspiration in my mother, a strong women who brought up five children towards success while she herself never had the chance to pursue her dreams. I cannot but dedicate this graduation to her.

Before you continue reading, I have to thank some of the persons who played a great part in this research. First my supervisor, prof. Sawitri Saharso, who was a never ending source of inspiration for me and guided me with so much patience and involvement. I am proud to have had the honour to be one of her students. I also want to thank my second supervisor, dr. Ringo Ossewaarde a one of a kind teacher who leaves his imprints on his student because of his dedication, his positivity and his ability to get the best out of his students. I am truly blessed with such a graduation committee.

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The only thing that remains now is to urge you and read this most interesting research.

Manal Chakor  
Universiteit Twente, 2013

## Samenvatting

Dit onderzoek heeft geprobeerd een antwoord te geven op de vraag hoe het Nederlandse emancipatiebeleid het probleem rondom de emancipatie van Islamitische migrantenvrouwen framed en of dit uitgangspunt overeenkomt met de ideeën, opvattingen en eigen capaciteiten van deze vrouwen. Voor het onderzoek zijn 16 vrouwen geïnterviewd waarbij zij gevraagd zijn hun eigen visie op emancipatie te schetsen. De emancipatie en integratie van Islamitische migrantenvrouwen, en dan voornamelijk van huwelijksmigranten is het afgelopen jaar sterk bekritiseerd en is uitgegroeid tot een groot maatschappelijk probleem. De bestaande maatschappelijk en politieke discours benadrukt hierbij nog eens het negatieve beeld dat bestaat over deze vrouwen, die als slachtoffer, ongeschoold en onderdrukt worden beschouwd. Het emancipatiebeleid gaat uit van dit negatieve beeld en stelt de emancipatie van deze vrouwen (en mannen) als oplossing van het probleem. Hierbij dienen migrantenvrouwen de al geëmancipeerde Nederlandse vrouw als voorbeeld te nemen. Aangezien de vrouwen vanuit het beleid weinig ruimte krijgen om hun visie op het probleem te geven wil ik dit in mijn afstudeeronderzoek wel doen. Hierbij is de volgende hoofdvraag geformuleerd:

*Welke opvatting over de emancipatie van migrantenvrouwen heerst er in het Nederlandse emancipatiebeleid en in hoeverre komt deze overeen met de behoeften, capaciteiten en ideeën van deze vrouwen zelf?*

De theorie die gebruikt is in dit onderzoek is ontleend aan de twee grote emancipatiegolven van Nederland. Hieruit zijn vier concepten geformuleerd die te herleiden zijn naar de belangrijkste karakteristieken van de emancipatiegolven. Deze concepten zijn: Gezin & Huwelijk, Onderwijs, Sociale Participatie en Politieke Participatie. Deze vier concepten zijn tevens als thema's gebruikt tijdens de interviews. De resultaten van de interviews hebben aangetoond dat er grote verschillen zijn tussen de hoogopgeleide en de laagopgeleide respondenten. Hierdoor is gekozen om in de analyse deze twee groepen apart te behandelen. Het meest opvallende is dat alle respondenten zich bewust waren van de negatieve opvattingen die bestaan over hun positie binnen de Nederlandse samenleving. Dit was op te merken aan hun, wat leek, defensieve reactie op de vraag wat emancipatie voor hun betekent. De respondenten beweerden dat de Islamitische religie gelijkheid promoot en dat de rechten van de vrouw gewaarborgd zijn binnen de Islamitische geschriften. Daarnaast kwam ook naar

voren dat hun emancipatie onlosmakelijk verbonden is met hun geloofsovertuiging. Zowel de rechten, maar ook de plichten van de vrouw zijn zeer duidelijk opgesteld binnen de Islam en dit is dan ook een duidelijke afbakening van wat zij onder emancipatie verstaan.

Zoals ik al zei is het onderscheid tussen hoogopgeleide en laagopgeleide vrouwen gemaakt. De laagopgeleide respondenten zijn op jonge leeftijd naar Nederland geëmigreerd, meestal nog voor hun twintigste. Zij hadden niet of nauwelijks hun middelbare school afgemaakt. Eenmaal in Nederland raakten de meeste respondenten al gauw zwanger, waardoor zij bijna alleen verantwoordelijk werden voor het huishouden en de kinderen. Naarmate de kinderen wat ouder worden proberen deze respondenten parttime te werken om wat bij te verdienen, meestal binnen de schoonmaak. Daarnaast volgen zij taal- of integratielessen en behalen hun rijbewijs. De kinderen blijven hun prioriteit, maar het leven schijnt beter te zijn in Nederland dan als ze in land van herkomst waren gebleven.

De hoogopgeleide vrouwen daarentegen zijn door hun emigratie naar Nederland in een soort negatieve spiraal terecht gekomen. Deze respondenten hebben in land van herkomst een Bachelor of Master studie afgerond. Van Nederland hadden ze de hoop verder te kunnen met hun academische achtergrond, maar dit bleek een illusie. De diploma's werden niet erkend en deze vrouwen moesten helemaal opnieuw beginnen. Daarnaast raakten ook zij al gauw zwanger en kwamen hierdoor in een grotere isolatie terecht. Zonder steun van de (schoon)familie en de overheid hebben deze vrouwen alle hoop opgegeven om ooit nog hun dromen te kunnen verwezenlijken. Zij beschouwen hun emigratie naar Nederland dan ook als de grootste fout in hun leven.

Naar aanleiding van de bevindingen waarvan sommigen al kort hierboven zijn genoemd zijn een aantal aanbevelingen geformuleerd:

- De doelgroep betrekken in het beleidsproces en hierbij hun religieuze achtergrond betrekken.
- De zorgrol van de vrouwen accepteren als onderdeel van hun emancipatie.
- Ontwikkelen van integratie- en emancipatiebeleid die rekening houdt met de verschillende achtergronden van de migranten en inspeelt op hun behoeften.
- Tegengaan van de armoedeval om de sociale situatie van vrouwen te verbeteren door hen te stimuleren betaald werk te doen.

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## Introduction

*'Dutch people just don't understand. There is no disadvantage, this is a matter of subordination'* (Halleh Ghorashi, Het Parool, 2006). This was the heading of a news article in 2006, after International Women's Day. On that day emphasis was put on immigrant women in the Netherlands and their emancipation and integration. As will become clear, the emancipation and integration of migrant women has become a subject of great concern and interest in the Netherlands. In this research the focus is put on young female Muslim migrants who speak the Arabic language. The existing discourse in the Netherlands emphasizes on the negative view about non-Western female migrants, and to be more specific Muslim female migrants. The Islamic religion is being very criticised, especially when it comes to gender and women's rights. So when female migrants, who usually move to the Netherlands because of marriage, enter the country their emancipation (and integration) emphasizes on a so called re-education towards more Western norms and values and from their 'backward' oppressive culture. This emancipation also relates to men because they seem to be the perpetuating factor for this oppression. It is however the women who need help and are perceived as victims within the existing policy discourse. That is why in this study the focus will be put on young female migrants with an Islamic identity. Also, because the researcher speaks Arabic it is easier to interview just the women who speak the Arabic language. This way the difficulties around interviewing respondents in Dutch who do not master the language sufficient are avoided.

It has now been over twenty years that a national debate about minorities started in the Netherlands. In 1991, it was the leader of the Conservative Liberals party, Frits Bolkestein, who claimed that the integration of minorities should be dealt with entirely different than has been done until now. According to Bolkestein, the government needed to change its attitude towards ethnic minorities, an attitude whereby the government tried to help minorities in society acquire a better socioeconomic position by letting them emancipate within their own ethnic groups (Prins & Saharso, 2010, p. 73-74). Bolkestein's debate created a new public discourse, called New Realism. An important and, until then new feature of this New Realism was the gender debate. Within this debate, women are considered to be victims of the backward, non-Western cultured they lived in, which made it more important for them to adapt to the customs of Dutch society (Prins & Saharso, 2010, p. 75).

The discussion about minorities reached a peak after the publication of Paul Scheffer's article called *The Multicultural Drama* in the Dutch NRC newspaper. The article stated the failure of the Dutch multicultural society that was based on diversity and cultural equality. Hence the huge deficiencies some ethnical groups were dealing with were due to the government's tolerance towards these groups. The integration policies that were developed until then were not ensuring the adequate integration and adaptation to Dutch society of immigrants coming to the Netherlands and in some sense, even maintained the integration problems society was currently dealing with (*Het Multiculturele Drama*, 2000).

Living in a multicultural country meant respect and acceptance to all different cultures to be able to coexist in the Dutch society, including the cultures with sexist and female unfriendly attitudes. But after it was made clear that the concept of multiculturalism seemed to foster cultural segregation and enhance gender inequality, it became unacceptable that norms and values of these cultural groups (c.q. Islamic conceptions) clashed with the Dutch democratic and liberal values of freedom (Roggeband & Verloo, 2007, p. 271-273). This included the debate on gender equality, an aspect of the discussion about multiculturalism that turned into one of great concern after multiple publications in the media and research showed that a large number of these women did not participate in society in the same manner as the native Dutch women and even lived isolated from the outside world. Critics of the multicultural society claimed that this isolation is caused by their backward, oppressive culture and even accused the Dutch government that by developing policies based on multicultural principles instead of promoting the Dutch values of freedom and (gender) equality, minorities in society keep on violating women's rights (Roggebrand & Verloo, 2007, p. 273).

The discussion about migrant women emancipation continues, also in the public area. Media are reporting about 'the bad integration and language deficiency that is lasting for generations now' and 'the weak position of female marriage migrants'. Their low education levels are not sufficient enough to acquire jobs and it hinders their children in their own education (Waldring, 2006). According to the public policy maker, forced marriages result in women being held home and living in a isolated environment, not being able to freely participate in the Dutch society. Hence, policy should be developed that put a restriction on these marriages. This policy vision stresses the importance of women who do immigrate to the Netherlands, will need to adapt to the Dutch culture so their emancipation will help them participate as full and independent citizens (Bijlo, 2004).



According to the Liberal Democrats (VVD) the urge to help female migrant emancipate and integrate in the Dutch society is very clear on the political level. The immigration of disadvantaged women to the Netherlands prevents them to acquire a full positions in society, an aspect that does not only benefits them, but also their children. Politicians state that these risks for women with specific cultural backgrounds, who immigrate to the Netherlands, need to be tackled by expanding their emancipation possibilities. In a research conducted by the commission Blok in 2004, it was stated that: ‘in order to tackle the problems arising from wedding migration, the Cabinet prefers an approach aimed at preventing these problems. That is why stricter requirements are demanded concerning language proficiency and knowledge of the Dutch society, so there is a double integration obligation for them: in their own country as well as in the Netherlands’ (TK 2003-2004 28689, nr. 17). By doing so, women immigrating to the Netherlands will already have some knowledge about gender relationships and the language and culture in the Dutch society (Notos, 2004, p. 2).

The presumed emancipation deficiency of women from specific ethnic minorities has become an aspect of great discussion and concern in the Dutch political and public arena. And, as has been stretched out above, this subject received much attention, both in the media as well as in the Dutch political area, where more emphasize was put on the discontent of the public about how was dealt with problem.

For tackling this problem, different emancipation policies are developed. The striking part of the developed policies on the emancipation of migrant women is that is does not only frame them as victims in an isolated position, they are also considered as playing an important role in solving not only their emancipation disadvantages, but also the integration problems of their own cultural group. According to Roggebrand & Verloo (2007), by emancipating the migrant women, a big step towards the emancipation of the entire cultural group is made , because it seems as if the “key to integration is an educated an emancipated women’. This means a policy shift towards a more individual approach where assimilation sometimes seems more present than just integration (Roggebrand & Verloo, 2007, p. 2-4).

In 2008 the last emancipation policy is developed, called: ‘More chances for women, Emancipation policy 2008-2011’. This policy document puts a large emphasize on the emancipation of young female marriage migrants, who immigrated to the Netherlands from non-Western countries. The policy document states that ‘an entire new generation of women is threatened to fall behind’. This also influences the development and emancipation of their children (Meer kansen voor vrouwen, 2008, p. 9). Here the idea of these women have a

responsibility towards their own cultural group is also observed.

So nowadays, as the integration of migrants is seen as an overall requirement for successful participation in the Dutch society, the position of female (marriage) migrants receives much attention from the government. The idea is that the integration of these women not only helps them acquire a position in the Dutch society as full and independent citizens; it also fosters their emancipation and participation and that of their own cultural group.

The shift in policy towards an emphasize on the emancipation of migrant women roots from the point of view that these women are victims of their own culture; uneducated and dependent. Once they are in the Netherlands, their emancipation is the solution for their social problems, and the best example of the emancipated and liberal woman is the native Dutch woman. It seems as if this approach tends to impose to migrant women a certain ideal image of what an emancipated woman should look like. While not taking into account these women's own perceptions on emancipation, developed policies tend to put more emphasize on assimilation and not just integration. Eventually, it will only result in liberating these women from one cultural and forcing them into another one, without taking their own views and needs into account.

This research will root from these principles. Migrant women with an Islamic identity are facing a lot of prejudice and expectations when it concerns their emancipation. It is also very peculiar to see that in the last years, emancipation has been linked to integration and cultural adaptation. It seems that the prevailing thought is that these women lag on emancipation, when compared to the emancipated native Dutch women. Within the Dutch emancipation policy that dates from 2008, female migrants are consequently described as isolated or victims, not being able to liberate themselves from the backward traditions of their families. Especially female marriage migrants are considered to form a risk, because of their vulnerable and dependent positions. It is stated that the moment young women do not integrate in the Dutch society, they cannot be fully emancipated. This eventually leads to a lag in every area of development, not only for them, but also for their children (Meer kansen voor vrouwen, 2008).

The way female migrants need to emancipate is very clear in the policy area, but what about the women themselves? To what extent does this developed policy meets their own expectations and does it meet their own needs and desires. How far does their emancipation affects the emancipation of their families and to what extent do they feel the responsibility to

participate in society and help their own cultural group do so to? In other words, to what extent is the developed and existing policy consistent with these women's own perception of emancipation? To answer these question, the following research question is formulated:

*What view on the emancipation of migrant women does the current Dutch emancipation policy hold and to what extent is that view consistent with these women's own needs, capacities and ideas on emancipation?*

The sub-questions that will need to answering this main question are formulated in the following way:

1. How is the problem analysis of the Dutch policy on the emancipation of young, female marriage migrants formulated, from the beginning of the seventies until now?
2. What ideas do migrant women have regarding their emancipation and to what extend can this be implemented in the current emancipation policy?
3. To what extent do the migrant women themselves encounter as problematic in their emancipation and what are their views on how to tackle them?

The first sub-question will reflect on how the problem is defined, what causes are formulated and what implications for solutions exist within the Dutch emancipation policies, including the development of emancipation policies in general and specifically the emancipation of female Muslim migrants. This sub-question will also explain how the female target group in this research is described and what policy outcomes and interventions are developed to tackle the defined problem.

The last two sub-questions reflects on the needs and thoughts about emancipation of the young female migrants themselves. Policy can be well thought out, but if it does not comply with the needs and capacities of its target group, it becomes very hard to achieve the policy goals. This last sub-questions will also provide any improvements and alternatives on the existing policy and how this can be implemented in the existing emancipation policies.

Even though the described emancipation policy is about female migrants in general, in this research only Arabic speaking women will be included. The reason for this is because the existing discourse on the emancipation of female migrant is partly related to their Islamic culture. A large number of these Muslim, migrant women come from Arabic speaking countries. Considering the fact that the researcher speaks Arabic, is seems more convenient to

include Arabic speaking women. In order to provide this research with substantial data, the aim is to interview between 15 and 20 respondents. For practical reasons, the respondents will be picked from around Enschede. Considering the existing views on marriage migrants, only respondents who immigrated to the Netherlands due to their marriage will be interviewed. Also, their immigration to the Netherlands should not be longer than 15 years ago and shorter than 5 years, so that on the one hand there are no large differences between the period of their lives in their home country while on the other hand they have been in the Netherlands long enough to be familiar with the Dutch culture and way of life. The desired modal age of the respondents is around 35, but all women between 25 and 45 will be included. So in short, only young Arabic speaking, female Muslim migrants will be included in this research.

This research's aim is to describe and explain. Before being able to conduct data a theoretical framework will be developed. This framework will delimit the used theory from which concepts will be formulated. These concepts will be used as themes within the questionnaire and will form the basis for the semi-structured interviews that will be held with the respondents. The conceptualization is these concepts are described in the methodological chapter. Also, in order to describe the developed emancipation policies in the Netherlands academic literature about the subject will be analyzed. Important sources are the essays from Saharso, Roggebrand and Verloo. They all conducted useful studies about the emancipation, integration and immigration developments in the Netherlands. The results of these studies will be used in the chapter that describes the problem analysis of the Dutch emancipation policy. The analysis of the interviews will not only answer the question about what ideas the women have concerning their own emancipation, it will also describe what needs they have and the consistency with the existing policies.

The conclusion will not only answer the main research question, it will also describe the found theoretical insights and will provide ideas about policy implementation.

## Chapter 1

### 1. Emancipation

*'Liberalism, above all, means emancipation - emancipation from one's fear, his inadequacies, from prejudice, from discrimination, from poverty'.* Hubert H. Humphrey

Emancipation is a concept that has been existing longstanding, from before the Marxist theories about the class society, to the launch of feminism and gender equality in modern society. However, the processes of emancipation always seems to be occurring under certain circumstances, with the presence and absence of some factors. Also in the Netherlands, emancipation movements varied over the years, each movement depending on the social circumstances of its time. In this chapter, the concept of emancipation will be discussed as a process over time. The main question that needs to be answered is what views exist within the Dutch emancipation policy regarding the status of migrant women and whether this view is consistent with the personal views of migrant women. To provide a description and explanation of these views, a clear theoretical framework must be available, from which the topic will be perceived. This theoretical framework will be based on the two large emancipation waves that occurred in the Netherlands. The main concepts and their characteristics that will be used to develop a questionnaire and that will be used for the analysis are derived from these emancipation waves. Every emancipation wave will be discussed in a separate paragraph, where the important aim, actors and features will be analyzed and consequently their meaning towards the overall process of emancipation. In the conclusion of this chapter the link with the chosen target group will be shortly mentioned and how the theoretical framework is an elaboration of the research questions.

#### 1.1 Definition

If you look for the origin of feminism, one can go back as far as to the Enlightenment. The thinkers of the Enlightenment sought the source of knowledge through freedom in reason and rationality. Reason only would lead to truth and since all human beings, male or female, are rational in their essence, all people should be equal (Evans, 1977, p. 13). Hence the Enlightenment paved the way to demand equal rights to education, labour and citizenship. Of course, it would take some ages before equal rights would really receive a chance.

If you search for a definition of the concept emancipation, it is not likely that a clear answer will be found. The concept of emancipation is not one that is solely used for, for example, the

empowerment or freedom of women; emancipation can mean anything that includes changes towards lifestyle development, educational development, political development and of course, the development in gender relationships.

If you look at the mere definition of emancipation, Oxford Dictionaries states that emancipation is:

‘The fact or process of being set free from legal, social, or political restrictions; liberation: *the social and political emancipation of women*

- the freeing of someone from slavery: *the early struggle for emancipation from slavery*

(Oxford Dictionaries, retrieved from:

<http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/emancipation>).

The Van Dale dictionary states that emancipation is the strive for equal rights and independency (Van Dale dictionaries). This implies that some sort of change occurs from captivity to liberty, and in connection with women, this liberation has a political and social starting point. It thus implies providing women with the same social and political rights as men (equality). It also implies a certain struggle for equality and towards freedom and the right to conduct an independent, social life. Emancipation has a legal, social and political aspect and in the above mentioned definition, it is linked to liberation. Hence emancipation is the liberation of a social group from any legal, social or political restrictions or oppression towards a state of equality and liberty.

Even though emancipation is a concept that can be used for different social groups, in the case of women emancipation it does not only imply the equality of rights, but also the equality of opportunities. In the particular case of migrant women, they already have equal and formal rights, it is not something they still have to fight for. Equality of opportunities however is not obvious. Dutch women are still suffering from the fact that they do not have equal career opportunities as men, as is visible in the low number of women in top management and senior positions. Migrant women in the Netherlands have to deal with the same, plus the fact that they do not always have supportive environments who can help them in their development.

## 1.2 Emancipation processes

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, women fought for their legal and political rights and later on during the second emancipation wave for their social and individual rights. Even though much of women's rights were officially acquired, the equality of opportunities was not so self-evident. The last century, women kept and are still keeping to fight for their equal

rights and opportunities, as has been clear under the emergence of different emancipation waves. Every emancipation wave had its own specific goal and definition of women's emancipation. Hence the fact that women emancipation is a process, rather than a fixed concept, over time. The uprising of different emancipation waves will be discussed further on this chapter. But in order to discuss the process of emancipation, the development of the concept of emancipation will be discussed first.

According to Verweij Jonker, emancipation is a phenomenon that occurs under certain circumstances and in accordance to some patterns in society that tend for change. This explains why different emancipation movements can occur in different times. The process of emancipation in the Netherlands can best be explained by discussing the two emancipation waves that occurred from the beginning of the nineteenth century. These were emancipation movements that were developed under specific circumstances and initiated by a certain social group of women. In this research, these two emancipation waves will be used to question the personal view on emancipation of Muslim, migrant women in the Netherlands, in order to determine whether those same emancipation principles can be used for developing policies aimed at their emancipation. By discussing what determines the process of emancipation, this research can obtain information about the state of the emancipation of migrant women, a group of women that entered a society where women already fought half a century for their rights and opportunities.

The Netherlands have had two major emancipation waves, the first starting at the beginning of 1900 and the second almost more than half a century later. Both emancipation waves occurred under certain circumstances and had different goals and advocates. In order to determine the state of the emancipation of Muslim migrant women in the Netherlands and explain their views on their individual emancipation, it is necessary to distinguish between and discuss the emancipation movements. This can be done by looking for the different circumstances which determined the process of two emancipation waves in Western societies. Verweij Jonker's research about the various conditions that have to be met in order to distinguish between emancipation movements can be used to differentiate between these two emancipation waves and their principles. The first condition implies that not only must there be a clear definition of the concept of emancipation, that is to say a specific goal, and all other relevant concepts relating to emancipation are known. Second, what kind of social group is dealt with? The social positions of these groups are also included, opposite to the social position that is

actually desired, or of course, the social position that is set as an example. What factors are causing their social position and what other groups in society are they ‘struggling’ against (Verweij Jonker, 1983, p. 7-9)? In other words, there must be a clear problem definition, formulated for women’s position in society.

As emancipation is considered a process, a movement over time between different groups in different positions within one society (or a comparable one), definitions about what emancipation really is vary over time. Due to this aspect of emancipation, there is no universal definition. Hence, when a definition is given of emancipation, rather the process of emancipation is defined. Even though, Verweij Jonker describes a definition provided by Hendriks, which describes emancipation as a movement where less powerful groups in society aspire a living free from discrimination, subordination and the absence of power, into an existence of equality. Although this definition of Hendriks is usable, Verweij Jonker still differentiates between emancipation movements and emancipation processes (Verweij Jonker, 1983, p. 8-10). This implies that emancipation has both a process side as well as a movement side. Movements rely on the social activities that proceed change, whereas the process refers to this actual change, usually in power relations (Verweij Jonker, 1983, p. 9). This process of change is a condition for emancipation, where in society different groups with different positions find themselves powerful or less powerful. For emancipation processes to occur, there must be a form of critical awareness of the own social situation which is no longer accepted and which is revolted against. In this study the process of emancipation will be used to portrait the framework from which Muslim, migrant women view their own emancipation and how they perceive they social situation. In a society that has fought for women emancipation for more than a decade, migrant women have become a specific social group and in this study general emancipation (or mainstream feminism) will be used to describe the emancipation of Muslim migrant women in particular and how it is consistent with the Dutch policy outcomes.

### **1.2.1 Emancipation and Feminism**

When looking at the history of feminism, the Netherlands have had two large emancipation waves during the last nineteenth century, both with their own specific character. These emancipation waves will be discussed later in this chapter. The oldest historical mentioning of feminism however, considers feminism as a inheritance from the Enlightenment, where ideas about reason, liberty and equality were created. This implied equal chances on education,



labour and not less important, 'citizenship'. Citizenship implies equal formal right, such as women suffrage and the right to participate in society as a full citizen (Brouns et al, 1995, p. 14). Society was formed by social relationships based on the element of gender, where power acquires meaning because of these relationships between women and men. Gender is thus an organizing principle that arranges society. It results in the fact that society works and is classified around male and female, what is feminine and what is masculine and how these (gender) structures contribute to identity.

Acting and reacting on these principles of how society is organized, feminism would officially rise, because of the activities of Olympe de Gouges and Mary Wollstonecraft. Olympe de Gouges was active during the French Revolution, where she protested against the exclusion of women from new rights for man and citizen. Mary Wollstonecraft, an English lady, wrote in her 'Vindication of the Rights of Women' (1792) about the rights women have on proper education (Brouns et al, 1995, p. 14-15). Only if women could grow into reasonable beings, they will be able to fulfil their task in raising their children to responsible citizens. These ideas on feminism were also taken over in the Netherlands, where Betje Wolff and Aagje Deken wrote about the improvement of the education for women. These were still baby steps in the activity of feminism, as their account on the improvement of education was framed by women's role as mothers and motherhood in general, while the division of gender roles were accepted as a natural given. The real rise of feminism occurred almost a decade later, when not only the right of education was fought for, but also labour chances for women. During this period, a resistance against the institution of marriage grew and women like Mina Krüseman debated against 'the education towards marriage' (Krüseman, 1873).

### **1.3 The first feminist wave**

The first feminist wave covers the period from 1870 until 1920. But most scholars agree that this first wave started early 1860s, when two women, Elise van Calcar and Minette Storm-van der Chijs tried to influence the political debate around the Law on Education, which was devised by Thorbecke. Even though girls could not enter the Hogere Burgerscholen, this law proposed the idea that private citizens could found high schools for girls (Paletschek & Pietrow-Ennker, 2004). This small success created the possibility for better education for girls in those days. The debate on better education for girls was accompanied by the question whether more education should serve a woman's marriage, or whether it should result in women taking part in paid labour. Also, the institution of marriage was debated, where Mina Krüseman argued against marriage conventions and for a free and equal marriage. She argued

that women should not just sit and wait around for marriage, instead they should go out and educate themselves.

In that period, there was a strict difference between women from the bourgeois and women from the working class. During the industrial revolution, a change occurred from a traditional/agricultural society toward a more industrial society, with the rise of factories, the reduction of local production and an increase in income for factory owners (Verweij Jonker, 1983). Before the industrial revolution, women played an important role, not only indoors, but also outside their homes. Within the agricultural society, women were hard workers who not only managed the household; they also took care of crops, cattle, sales and income. Besides, women before the nineteenth century usually remained unmarried (Verweij Jonker, 1983, p.36). Even though this was usually not willingly, women however at least had some freedom of choice and were to some extent independent to men. There were of course class differences, but differences between the classes were applied to both men and women (Verweij Jonker, 1983, p. 36-38).

With the rise of the more capitalist economy and society, a significant change occurred for the position of women in all layers of society. For the proletarian women, their independency was lost because of the increase in the workload, indoors as well as outdoors. The working class found itself get stuck in a certain (subordinated) economical and social position, so marriage was an outcome to increase income, because both the husband as well as the wife could work together (Verweij Jonker, 1983, p. 69). This also meant an increase in early marriages, an increase in birth and a more heavily workload for women. Women now not only had the role of housewife and mother they had to comply with, they also had to work in labour, in order to decrease the risk of poverty. A twelve hour workday was normal for women in that time.

On the other hand, there were the girls and women from the bourgeois. At the beginning of the capitalist society, women worked at and around their homes, as a support to their husbands, who usually organized their businesses around home. With the rise of capitalism, family businesses moved from the domestic area towards bigger factories and offices. From that point on, women were no longer needed, and they stayed behind in their (mostly large) houses (Verweij Jonker, 1983, p. 38-40). In this period, participation of women in society became more and more undesirable. The bourgeois woman was expected to be a housewife, in charge of her household. Of course, running their household became more and more time consuming, as houses became bigger and the lifestyle more extravagant. The education of

children was also considered a very important duty of the mother, so the bourgeois household become more and more a business where the housewife was in charge (Verweij Jonker, 1983, p. 40-41). Women were considered to learn the basics of running a household and maybe some music to entertain, some French and of course, prepare themselves for marriage. If marriage was not an option, a woman usually spend her life at a relative, making herself useful in (again) the household (Verweij-Jonker, 1983).

### **1.3.1 Fighting for change: a bourgeois struggle**

In the course of the nineteenth century with the rise of technical developments, an increased demand for somewhat educated women in education and nursing was occurred (Verweij Jonker, 1983, p. 43). Even though this only meant a small step toward social participation for women, these developments did lead to an urge for more and better education. However, it started to seem as if marriage was not the only goal in life for women and new possibilities for women to be able to work created a more independent position for them. Under these circumstances the emancipation movement started to take form and questions were starting to be asked by women from the bourgeois about why girls were ‘not able to attend universities, work as a nurse but not become a doctor or why she couldn’t vote’ (Verweij Jonker, 1983, p. 43). These questions were not asked by women from the working class, as they already were tired of working long hours a day and education was financially impossible anyhow. The rise of the emancipation movement was hereby limited to the intellectual bourgeois classes and women from these social groups became active in order to receive social equality and formal rights. Hence the feminist of this time claim to speak for all women and the women’s cause, while in reality represented only bourgeois women and their interests.

From that period on, the possibilities for improving education for girls were expanded. In 1871, Aletta Jacobs, was the first woman who enrolled as a medical student at the University of Groningen. Other women applied for high school teacher’s exams and high schools for girls were opened. It became even possible for them to attend the lectures at the Hogere Burgerscholen, although just as listeners in the beginning. Some girls got permission to follow the regular curriculum, but permission had to be given to every single girl and was withheld if in the same town a girls’ high school existed (Paletschek & Pietrow-Ennker, 2004). So while the process towards better education slowly started, the main goal of the first emancipation wave was to obtain formal equality and the same civil rights as men.

Against this idea of creating a meaningful existence for women in society, the first feminist organization was found. This was Wilhelmina Drucker’s ‘Vrije Vrouwenvereeniging’ (VVV).

This association argued against the unequal position of women in society and demanded equal rights for women, on an educational, political, labour and marital level. The VVV eventually became the fighter for formal rights for women and equal citizenship.

### **1.3.2 Equality feminism**

The founding of Wilhelmina Drucker's 'Free Women's Movement (VVV) can be seen as the beginning of the organized women's movement, founded at the beginning of the 1890s (Paletschek & Pietrow-Ennker, 2004, p. 57). These movements questioned the concept of gender that existed in those days, as was made clear by the opening sentences of its program: 'By right she should be equal to man. The Law should but recognize human beings without any comment' (Paletschek & Peitrow-Ennker, 2004, p. 57). The movement called upon women to participate in and enter educational institutions and paid professions the same as men did. Also important was the freedom for (married) women to have the same rights as their husbands, like the rights to have control over their common possessions. In order for women to enter educational institutions and participate in society as employees, their formal rights as full citizens had to be officially and formally guaranteed. The ultimate form of these formal citizen rights was the right for women to vote, as feminists in that time considered political participation to be the way for women to be equal to men in a society where no differences existed between the genders.

Initially, woman's suffrage was not mentioned in the VVV's program, but in 1893 Wilhelmina Drucker among others, founded the 'Association of Women's Suffrage' (Vereeniging voor Vrouwenkiesrecht, VvVK). Later, Aletta Jacobs, Netherlands' first physician also joined the association after bringing the subject of women's suffrage to a broader audience somewhat earlier by trying to register in order to vote in 1883. The first years of this association the question remained whether women should campaign only for suffrage, or whether alliances should be made on campaigning many other issues women were dealing with (Paletschek & Peitrow-Ennker, 2004).

Even though the first emancipation movement in the Netherlands covered a relatively small group of women in society, it still contributed to a significant change in attitudes towards equality and gender. The first emancipation wave was a battle for equality. Women from the richer part of society questioned the existing and traditional gender roles by demanding equal formal rights to men. The movement denounced women's place within marriage, by first and foremost creating better education for girls. This would create an alternative for marriage and possibilities outside the domestic area. By demanding formal rights, women could assure

themselves for a equal position in society and be able to use their rights as full citizens next to men. The main goal of full citizenship rights were achieved through women's suffrage and gaining formal rights created financial independency for both married as unmarried women (Verwey-Jonker, 1983, p. 42-45).

The battle for equality during the first emancipation wave was one waged by the bourgeois women. In contrast to the working class women, they felt a need to change their living circumstances. On the other hand, in order to decrease the risk of poverty, women from the working class had no choice but to work in paid labour, next to their household chores. Working days of more than 12 hours were no exception and education or voting was the last of their priorities. The differences between women from these classes in that time were to big in order to create a feminist unity. Bourgeois women not only had the financial benefit, they also had the time, no risk and more opportunities through the first emancipation wave. This resulted in a feminist movement that reflected the needs of bourgeois women and a emancipation process that was based on the living circumstances of the bourgeois middle class.

By obtaining women's suffrage in 1920, the first emancipation wave slowly came to an end. Women were formally equal to men, they had the right of education and the same citizenship rights as men. With these rights, women obtained the right to manage their own financial resources, which created a more independent position for women. However, there were still many exceptions like for example a prohibition for married women to work and an automatic dismissal after marriage. Women in general were not even legally allowed to close any individual agreements without their husband. In 1955 a motion was filed to dismiss this incapacitation of women and in 1956 it was finally abolished. Women who did have the chance to work got paid much worse than their male colleagues and there were no career making prospects for women. Moreover, there were restriction for the kind of work women were allowed to do (Smit de, 2006). Most women worked in nursing, lower education or were charged with administrative work. This resulted in new female role in society, the role of assistant.

So even though only a small group of women in society experiences the benefits that the first emancipation movement brought, it is striking to see that around the 1920s, the role of women from different classes of society started to change in a similar manner: as it became accepted for bourgeois girls and unmarried women to participate in paid labour, their roles in society

changed and became somewhat similar to those of the working class women. The emergence of labour movement demanded an increase in family wages which, alongside the economic growth, resulted in the fact that the men's wages became enough to support their families. Together with the prohibition on married women to work, bourgeois women and working-class women were all pushed into the same role: the housewife (Verwey-Jonker, 1983, p. 46). Therefore, the role of married women from different classes changed towards the same social position, while eventually the overall numbers of married women active in employment decreased.

## **1.4 The Second Emancipation Wave**

This commonly shared position of being forced into the role of housewife and pushed away from the labour market led to the second emancipation wave, where it found its origin in the United States and in Britain. From the States the rise of feminism found its way to the Western European countries. This makes feminism a typically (international) Western phenomenon, which is not so peculiar, as the Western democratic societies promoted and implemented equality and liberty, so the equality between men and women was more visible (Smit de, 2006, p. 6-7).

### **1.4.1 Problem of identity**

The second emancipation wave occurred in the sixties of the last century, a century characterized by many changes and developments. It was also the time of many protests, where movements were formed internationally and revolutions did not stop at borders. Under these circumstances, feminist activities were inspired. Besides, there were also the social and cultural changes, like economical prosperity and secularization. This last aspect was important, because it meant a decrease in the traditional rules of conduct between the sexes and an expansion of personal independency and self-development, apart from traditional views (Wilcke-van der Linden, 1990).

In this period, married women started to participate more in paid labour, as the economical prosperity resulted in a greater demand for workers and companies appealed more to women by providing facilities for childcare and part-time employment.

However, this increase of women participating in paid labour was associated by an increase of awareness of the importance of motherhood and the role of housewives. This resulted in conflicting requirements women had to comply with. On the other hand, as more women were better educated, they became much more aware of the fact that the views on self-development and equal chances for all did not apply to (married) women. Women now were better

educated, they had more opportunities as paid labour was more accepted, and not the least important, the sexual revolution provided a choice whether or not they wanted children. Marriage and motherhood took on a completely different meaning, as the right of self-determination became more and more the starting point of female self-development. The right for abortion was the best example for this (Wilcke-van der Linden, 1990).

It was under these changes that Betty Friedan wrote *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963. As women during the sixties were better educated, more ambitious and were actively participating in society, they were still pushed into the role of housewives. These traditional views on gender and social roles stood female development in the way and took every chance of self-development away.

Friedan was surprised by the dissatisfaction of unhappy, married women around her. A small study under some of the women she studied with showed that most of these women were depressed about their lives and she called this 'the problem that has no name'. In *The Feminine Mystique* she wrote about the domestic ideal that made housewives miserable, but was promoted by female magazines, advertisements and the popular Freudian psychology. This false and unwanted view on women was called the feminine mystique and it resulted in an identity problem for women. This identity problem was an obstacle and an avoidance for spiritual growth (Meijer, 1996, p.2). By alerting women on these obstacles and the opportunities of self-development they missed, Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* meant the beginning of the second emancipation wave and the start of a highly gendered discussion (Meijer, 2010).

#### **1.4.2 The right for self-determination**

Between 1960 and 1970 between 20-30% of women were part of the Dutch labour force (CBS Statline). Half of this female labour force were women younger than 25 years old. Also in education women showed a large deficit, as in 1960 more than 90% of women from the labour force finished their lower education, while no more than 1% participated in higher education (CBS Statline). In the 1960's a increase in the female labour force occurred due to the large labour shortages, but this was over soon in 1970, when guest workers replaced female labour. Due to these changes, that were similar to the ones in the United States, Joke Kool-Smit discussed the female identity that was derived from a masculine society. While the formal rights to work for married women was obtained, social gender views withheld women from working, as it was considered not done for them to leave family and children for labour

out-doors. The status for women was formed by their marriage, as it provided them with a clear role of housewife. Her social status depended on her husband's profession and if she was unmarried, she was not considered female at all (Meijer, 1996, p.4). Joke Kool-Smit came to the conclusion that women were second-class citizens and it was important for women to be made aware of this position. Kool-Smit, a working mother with young children, published an article called 'The discomfort in Women' (Het Onbehagen bij de Vrouw) in 1967. In this article she advocated for the participation in paid labour by women and for an increase in awareness of the rights and obligations of women in an equally divided society that respects both the feminine and the masculine.

Joke Kool-Smit's call of frustration and call for change received a lot of reactions, this time not only in the upper class of society, but also from different social classes. This was due to the fact that the difference between bourgeois women and working class women became less visible with the changing society towards a capitalist, consumption based economy. Women in all social groups found themselves in the same positions, and their awareness of subordination grew (Kooy, 1985, p. 162-164). This eventually led to the rise of nationwide movements and actions, like the founding of 'MaleFemaleSociety' (ManVrouwMaatschappij, MVM) in 1968 by Joke Kool-Smit and Hedy d'Ancona. This movement fought against the existing role patterns between men en women, and tried to create a new awareness in the acceptance of active women in society.

However, the second emancipation wave was also characterized by the emergence of different schools of thought about feminism. Conscious raising groups were formed, and social equality and redistribution of paid and non-paid labour between men and women was not the only goal any more. Appreciation of the feminine started to become more important and as women were biologically not equal to men, it was time to create a balance between the feminine and masculine in a historical male society. As women already possessed citizenship rights equal to men, the feminine had to be revaluated in society and it had to become more accepted for women to combine work and family by redistributing domestic and family care between women and men (Loo van de, 2008). Joke Kool-Smit called for an equal division of labour and domestic care, which could be achieved by applying a six hour workday for both men and women. This meant that traditional role patterns had to be replaced by a greater appreciation of the feminine, by having men take part in domestic labour and creating possibilities for women to participate in paid labour.

On the one hand you now had the equality feminist, like Joke Kool-Smit, who wanted to



create equality between men and women and create awareness of the fact that women and men had to work together in order to have balance between the feminine and masculine in society. On the other hand there was the feminist movement based on difference, which advocated that in order to create a more feminine society, women had to liberate themselves from any male oppression that is caused by a highly male valued society. An important discussion turned out to be whether the female personality should be changed or the social structures (thus a consideration between change in the power relations or the change in mentality) (Wilcke-van der Linden, 1990). So even though women's movement in the Netherlands during the second emancipation wave seemed to have bridged class differences actually did spoke for and behalf of all women, there is some major criticism in what might to become the third emancipation wave.

These changes and a variety in women movements resulted in a tremendous increase of publications, initiatives, women publishers, women magazines and bookstores and of course a huge women network (Verwey-Jonker, 1983, p. 50). Women realized they needed to work on change themselves, by working together and striving for common solutions. These solution were, among others, found in the alongside raging sexual revolution. With the developments of contraceptives, women received choices about the role of motherhood and a liberation of the legislation on abortion in 1981 made it possible for them to decide on unwanted pregnancies (Verweij-Jonker, 1983, p. 50-51). Alongside the broader educational possibilities and the emergence of female publications, women became more aware of the role they could play in deciding their own goals in life. This made it for women more possible to participate in higher education and paid labour.

Even though the rise of feminism started with a process towards a common goal and a sense of sisterhood between all women, it eventually received criticism during the eighties of the last century. Critics of the term 'we women' argued that there could not be such a thing as a universal woman, and differences between women should also be taking into consideration (Brouns et al, 1995, p. 19).

### **1.5 Emancipation of migrant women. Third emancipation wave?**

In the course of the eighties, during the second emancipation wave differences between feminist thoughts grew and at the same time the resistance against the term 'us women', that formed the starting point for feminism. The first criticism came from women movements who doubted the universality of female identity from their own personal identity as black or

lesbian women. They argued that there could not be such a thing as ‘us women’, given the many differences between them (Brouns et al, 1995, p. 19). Feminism was not considered a simple and clear movement anymore and also the feminine should be shaped in society in different ways and based on different contexts.

The feminist movement often received accusations of being too white, because of its lacking solidarity with other ‘black or migrant’ women. Their daily experiences with the racial society did not receive any importance in the existing feminist movements. The so called sisterhood was limited to the needs of white women and black, migrant women felt excluded from the feminist movements and the ongoing gender studies in that time (Brouns et al, 1995, p. 47-48). The black women had totally different experiences in life in term of inequality. A major example is the racism they had to deal with, while they worked as maids in white women’s houses.

As many black women felt they were not recognized by the women’s liberation movement in their experiences with class, gender and race, the Black Feminist Movement grew out to be the counterpart of the Black Liberation Movement and the Women’s movement (Hull et al, 2002). This movement was formed in an effort to meet the needs of black women who felt racially not recognized by the Women’s movement and sexually oppressed by the Black Liberation Movement. Black, migrant women felt invisible as they fell between two stools and the movement was established in order to address the way race, gender and class all together formed a racist blockade in their daily lives (Hull et al, 2002). Due to the inability of black men and white women to acknowledge the oppression of black women, the National Black Feminist Organization was founded in 1973 in New York (Hull et al, 2002).

Black, or migrant women who participated in the feminist movements found that in general panels and conferences usually were about the struggles and oppression of white women, whereas black or migrant women were not equally represented in the women’s studies department and no classes or studies were about the black women’s history. Most publications discussed the experiences of white, middle class women and they were described as ‘universal women’s experiences, largely ignoring the differences between black and white women due to race and class’ (Gutierrez y Muhs et al, 2012). Also, the unwillingness of white feminists to admit to their racism was a source of huge frustration for black women. This unwillingness stems from the belief that those who are oppressed cannot oppress and it strengthened the belief of black women that the women’s movement’s desire was to just improve the social conditions of white women in society (Gutierrez y Muhs et al, 2012; Hull et al, 2002).

Due to the many differences between women, in 1983 the Journal for Women's studies (Tijdschrift voor Vrouwenstudies) argued whether there was a possibility to create a Theory of the Feminine. Different authors argue for, or against this theory and more attention was eventually created towards the differences between 'black' and 'white' women. Because even in the category black, there are differences between afro-migrant women or Asian women, and it creates a They versus Us struggle based on the simplistic assumption that all members of a specific social group pursue the same interests (Brouns et al, 1995, p. 49).

It is however clear that there is no such thing as 'Us Women' any more, as a common, female identity does no longer exists. Instead, different interests should form the starting point of any feminist theory.

## 1.6 Conclusion

In the above mentioned emancipation movements, the concept of 'women' cannot be used in a universal manner, just as the concept of 'gender' is not an unambiguous one. It has already been clear that during the first and second emancipation wave, different kind of women were addressed and different goals were pursued.

The first emancipation wave was characterized by the female bourgeois interests that were reflected in its aims and goals. While the working class women were too busy with their long workdays, bourgeois women started to ask questions about why they should not have equal, formal rights as men and why they should not receive the same opportunities as their male equals. The first emancipation wave had a clear character, and there were no differences between the women who advocated for change. It was a movement that consisted of bourgeois women, who fought for better education, equal formal citizenship rights and social equality between women and men. It emphasized the equal status between the genders and sought opportunities for women outside the institution of marriage. During this period access to education for women was improved and formal rights were given to them, culminating in women's suffrage in 1920.

While the first emancipation wave was characterized by the solidarity of women participating in the women's movement to obtain formal rights, the second emancipation wave occurred in a need for equal opportunities and equal recognition of the masculine and the feminine in society. The second emancipation wave started as a result of the increasing awareness of women's oppression in a men based society. Even though formal rights were given to women, they were still considered second-class citizens. On the other hand, differences between ideas

and views on how to create more balance between the feminine and masculine resulted in a division between the women's movement. The feminist in these times were only united by their oppression in society and the lack of self-development of women.

Different views on what 'Us Women' actually means did however result in a black women's movement, who rebel against the 'white women's movement'. Views on white feminism versus black feminism made the common female identity something of the past, as societies became more and more diverse. It can no longer be assumed that emancipation actually has an unambiguous meaning and through history different women ascribed other meanings and content to it. Therefore this research will provide migrant women a chance to express their thoughts and views on emancipation, instead of opposing a Western conception of it on them. Just like with the upraising of the third emancipation wave and the black women's movement, these women might have a total different idea on emancipation. the expectations in this study are that these women cannot be placed or viewed in one of from the principles of one emancipation wave. Instead there might be quite some differences, depending the specific aspect or theme, regarding their position within the process of emancipation. The content of this theoretical framework is thus a consequence of the formulated research questions, as it provides a space for multiple interpretations of these women's views and ideas regarding their emancipation and the consistency with developed policies.

## Chapter 2

### 2. Methodology

In this chapter the methodological approach of this research will be explained. First I will discuss the methods of data collection and how the respondents are chosen for this particular study. Then I will elaborate more on how this research will operationalize the theoretical concepts that are conducted from the theoretical framework and how this must result in answering the research questions. This chapter will conclude with what insights are provided for the methodological aspect of this research and what research activities will follow on these insights.

The aim of this study is to describe and explain. By describing what theoretical insights will be used in the study a framework is provided from which not only the existing policies on the subject are explained, they will also be used in order to provide meaning to the input from the respondents. The theoretical concepts will thus indicate what (and if) connections exist between the views from respondents and the ideas behind developed emancipation policies.

#### 2.1 Methods of data collection

This study was conducted through qualitative research whereby semi-structured interviews are held with 16 respondents. These interviews were held face-to-face at the respondents homes. All of the respondents were female, marriage migrants who moved to the Netherlands from a non-Western country. The existing debate on female integration and emancipation is partly related to their Islamic religion. A large number of these Muslim, migrant women come from Arabic speaking countries and since the researcher speaks Arabic the choice is made to include these women in the research. Also, this research's aim is not only to explain, an important aspect of analyzing the social issue of emancipation is by first describing personal sentiments and views before being able to provide a clear explanation. An explanation of the policy will not only be sought by analyzing policy documents, academic literature will provide a much better understanding about the ideas and motivations behind the existing policies. However, to relate the policy component to reality of the respondents, interviews are held, who will in turn not only describe, but also explain the issue of emancipation and the discrepancy towards the developed interventions and policies.

All respondents are women with young children and are considered to be new-comers, which means they have been in the Netherlands less than 15 years, so that on the one hand all the respondents grew up in a similar time and place but on the other hand they have been in the Netherlands long enough to be familiar with the Dutch culture and way of life. The aim was to conduct this research under young female migrants who are old enough to have finished an education, but still young enough to be in a changing period of their life where new opportunities and chances are still possible to be addressed, even though most of them have small children. The average age is 35,9 years with a standard deviation of 5,3. As to their education, this differs between a masters degree and an unfinished high school career, but eight of the 16 respondents are highly educated. Most women are housewives, while some combine their household chores with a part-time cleaning job. Table 3.1 gives an overview of the respondents:

**Table 2.1 Overview of Respondents**

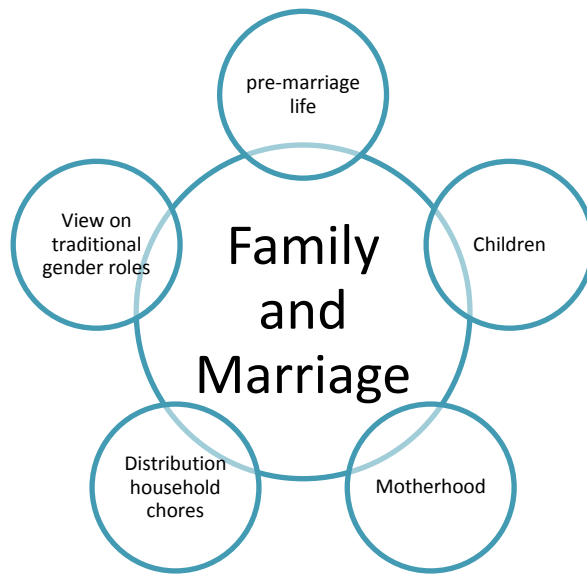
<i><b>Respondent</b></i>	<i><b>Age</b></i>	<i><b>Education</b></i>	<i><b>Profession</b></i>
<b>Respondent 1</b>	38	High School	Housewife
<b>Respondent 2</b>	37	Bachelor	Teacher
<b>Respondent 3</b>	34	Unfinished High School	Housewife
<b>Respondent 4</b>	33	Unfinished High School	Housewife/cleaning
<b>Respondent 5</b>	45	Bachelor	Housewife/cleaning
<b>Respondent 6</b>	36	Master	Housewife/cleaning
<b>Respondent 7</b>	34	Bachelor	Housewife/student
<b>Respondent 8</b>	45	Unfinished High School	Housewife/student
<b>Respondent 9</b>	35	High School	Housewife
<b>Respondent 10</b>	44	Bachelor	Housewife
<b>Respondent 11</b>	29	MBO-3	Housewife/cleaning
<b>Respondent 12</b>	29	Bachelor	Housewife
<b>Respondent 13</b>	36	MBO-3	Home care
<b>Respondent 14</b>	36	MBO-3	Cleaning/paperwork
<b>Respondent 15</b>	26	Bachelor	Student
<b>Respondent 16</b>	38	Bachelor	Housewife/cleaning

## 2.2 Operationalization

In order to answer the research questions, a qualitative study is conducted by semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire is based on the theoretical framework, but during the interviews respondents were free to discuss the topics in a random order. The questionnaire consisted of four topics: family and marriage, education, social participation and political participation. These concepts are conducted from the theoretical framework and are based on the two main emancipation waves. These main concepts are then further subdivided choosing the features and characteristics that distinguish that particular concept. To operationalize the theoretical framework further, questions based on these concepts and their characteristics are formulated to be used for the interviews. This process of operationalization is made clear in the figures below every concept. The questionnaire can be found in the appendix.

### *Family and Marriage*

The first concept is family and marriage. This concept relates to the traditional ideas on gender roles. During the first emancipation wave a woman's role was considered to be at home with her children. At the late 1800's the question of emancipation was even how this could benefit a women in terms of marriage and children, so motherhood plays a very important role in this concept. This emphasize on motherhood was mostly inspired by the prevailing Christian norms and values. The institution of marriage became however more discussed together with the strict traditional gender roles when Mina Krüseman argued against marriage conventions and for an equal marriage. In this research, this concept discusses the pre-marriage lives of the respondents and how marriage has changed their lives in society. The division of household chores between the respondents and their partners relates to the attitude towards traditional gender roles, especially when it concerns having children and the role of the mother within the family. An important aspect here is the choice for children and how this choice was made. Because the respondents in this research are all Muslim, the Islamic identity and religion might play an important role in how marriage and family are perceived. Just like with the first wave Christian feminism, the respondents can retrieve their rights, but also their 'obligations' from the Islamic teachings. This concept will thus provide more insight in if and how traditional views on gender and the female social role are related to the respondents' sense of emancipation. In figure 2.1 the conceptualization is made visible. The interview questions that have been formulated from this concept and its sub-concepts can be found in the appendix.

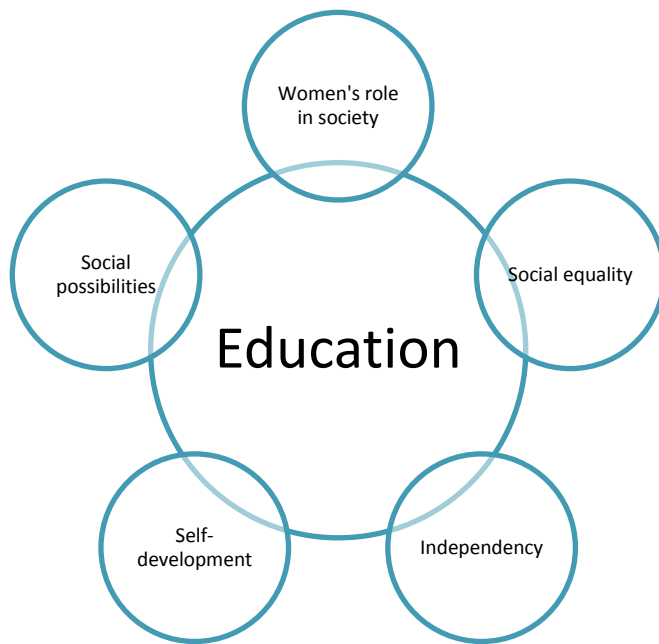


**Figure 2.1: Conceptualization *Family and Marriage***

### *Education*

The second concept education relates strongly to the first mentioned concept because at the rise of feminism education was considered the key towards free and equal marriages and an alternative for the institution of marriage. During the first emancipation wave the right for education was fought hard for. Education can provide an alternative for marriage and changes the attitude towards women's role in society. Also, it meant a step towards social participation for women, away from the home-bound role. Education also means another achievable goal than just marriage and creates new possibilities and independence from the husband. Hereby social equality is also achieved because it causes a more balanced division of labour between women and men. Also, the role of housewife becomes less dedicated to women because it questions traditional gender roles and it breaks with the strict attitude towards female and male goals in live. Figure 2.2 depicts the conceptualization of the concept education.

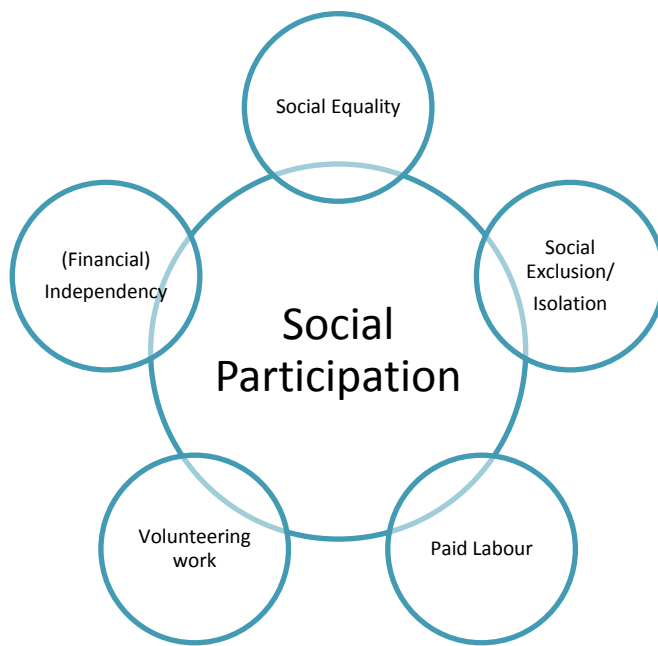




**Figure 2.2: Conceptualization Education**

### *Social Participation*

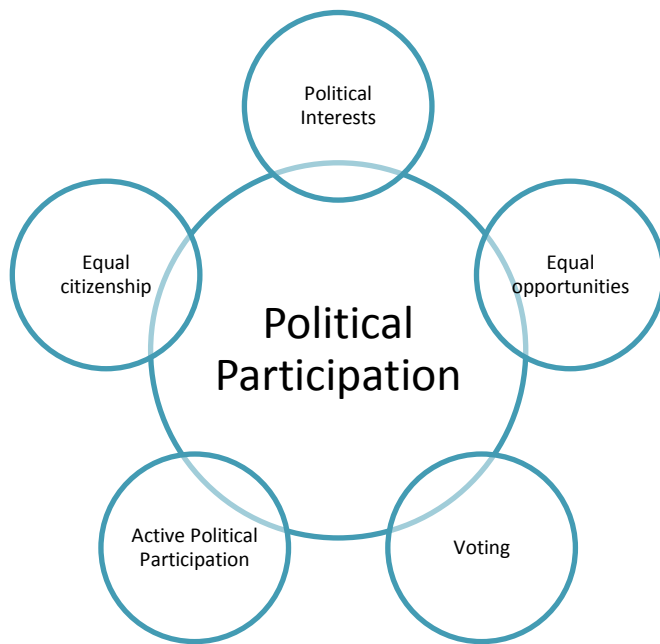
Social participation is again related to education. As is stated before, education provides new possibilities and changes apart from the institution of marriage. Social participation becomes more acceptable because women's role in society is not questioned anymore. Also, social participation can contribute to a change in gender attitudes, because with women being more visible in society more acceptance towards femininity in society increases. Social participation can be achieved through both paid labour and through volunteering work. Paid labour leads to a more financially independent position while participation in general prevents social exclusion and isolation. This prevention of social isolation also questions the role of motherhood as it forces more commitment from the husband, when women become less family oriented and more socially oriented. This eventually increases the social status of women by creating an equally divided society that respects both the feminine and the masculine. The operationalization of the concept social participation is depicted in figure 2.3 below.



**Figure 2.3: Conceptualization *Social Participation***

### *Political Participation*

The fourth concept is political participation and that relates to the way political interests are reflected. Social participation implies an equal social status between the gender, but it does not automatically results in equal opportunities. In a society that historically has been dominated by men, political influence is also mainly through men. In order to create social equality female political interference is necessary. Through female political participation the female decision-making is guaranteed. Is also makes for a more active, involved attitude and status in society. This sense of citizenship is needed if you want integration and cohesion, especially if people think they can make a change. In this research political participation does not merely mean an effort for equal opportunities between the gender, it also means making a better society for one's own cultural group. Especially for the Muslim society, whose religion has become more under attack, political participation can help change views and attitudes towards Islam towards the positive. Thus, political participation in this sense also means cultural equality. The operationalization of the concept *political participation* is schematically shown in figure 2.4 below.



**Figure 2.4: Conceptualization *Political Participation***

The questionnaire is derived from the above described concepts. The interviews are held anonymous and were recorded. Afterwards, the interviews were processed to transcripts. These transcripts were first manually analysed by using codes to determine themes and later entered in the program MaxQDA. For the analyses, open coding is used to point out the most important fragments and to summarize them in codes. Axial coding is used to rank the most important fragments around the four subscales family and marriage, education, social participation and political participation. Finally, selective coding is used to cluster the fragments in order to establish links between the different themes.

In the analyses and in answering the research questions, quotations are used for an increased reliability. It should however be noted that because of the many translation steps (the interviews are held in Arabic, transcribed in Dutch and translated into English for this thesis) it was difficult to report what the respondents said correctly. The key objective was to try and translate the quotes in such a matter that the emotional content of what was said in Arabic would also be visible through the English translation.

### 2.2.1 Data analyses

The four themes family and marriage, education, social participation and political participation all measure to which extent the respondents experience their personal

emancipation. These four themes or subscales are derived from the theoretical framework. The subscale family and marriage describes how the respondents give interpretation to their role as housewife or mother. The distribution of household chores between husband and wife measure to what extent traditional gender roles play a greater part in the respondent's family situation. The subscale education describes the respondent's view on education and intellectual development. Their level of education indicates the importance of studying and the years that are used in order to achieve a certain level of education the level of self-development.

Social participation describes the role of housewives outside the domestic area. Paid labour or volunteering can give an indication about independency of the female respondents and their right of self-determination. Political participation describes the sense of citizenship and is measured by the awareness of the political situation and the use of the right of voting.

These four sub-scales are scored through the following coding scheme shown on the next page:

**Table 2.3 Coding Scheme**

Sub-scale	Score	Description of score
Family & Marriage		
	1	Traditional gender roles in the household
	2	Some help of partner, but household largely own responsibility
	3	Equal distribution of Household chores
Education		
	1	No completed study
	2	Is trying to obtain an education
	3	Completed study before or during marriage
Social Participation		
	1	No paid labor or volunteering work
	2	Some sort of labor or volunteering work, but only part-time
	3	Active in paid labor or volunteering work
Political Participation		
	1	No political awareness and no voting
	2	Some political awareness, but no active participation
	3	Political awareness and voting

The coding scheme will be used in the conclusion and for the recommendations. This research will try to describe and explain the personal view on emancipation of Muslim, female, marriage migrants. By scoring the answers the respondents gave, their actual emancipation

process can be measured through their level of political and social participation, their educational development and the way the gender roles are established in their domestic lives. The total scores per theme will indicate which part of their emancipation is still lagging behind and on what aspects the Dutch policies should intervene. This scoring method will thus be used to underpin which subject still need attention and what aspects of emancipation are most necessary to adjust.

## 2.3 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a clear structure about the methodological approach of the research. The main concepts are formulated and operationalized, whereas the interview questions needed to obtain the relevant information are obtained. For a clear overview of the concepts and their underlying assumption a table is used. Academic analysis of the emancipation policies will be used to link the theoretical assumptions to the existing policies and the personal emancipation views of the respondents. Every concept has been elaborated on by pointing out the important features and characteristics. These concepts will be used as themes for this research's analysis. This will eventually result in a description and explanation of the developed emancipation policies and most important what view is hold about the subject by female marriage migrant.

The following steps will be taken for the analysis. First the Dutch emancipation policies will be analyzed, from the early 1970's until now, by using academic literature that discussed the problem of emancipation, its definition and how it is formulated and why certain interventions were developed. Afterwards in two chapters the answers of the respondents will be analyzed according to the sequence of the themes from this chapter. One chapter will discuss the lower education respondents, and the other chapter the high educated women from this study. This analysis will also provide theoretical feedback, which will be defined by the theoretical framework. In the conclusive chapter a summary of the findings per theme will be outlined as well as policy recommendations and new theoretical insights.

## Chapter 3

In the chapters 1 and 2 a theoretical framework was formulated, following an explanation of the methodological structure and choices. In the theoretical framework four main concepts are formulated, which will be used as four themes in this analysis. These four themes will be used in the interpretation of the respondent's answers. This and the following to chapter the analysis of this research will be presented. First the developed policy from the 1970's until now will be analyzed in order to present a clear understanding of the ideas and motivations behind the developed and existing policies. The expected discrepancy between the aim and views of the policies and the personal meaning of the respondents might be the result of a strict policy focus that lost sights of the target group. In this chapter the process of definition within the policy will be discussed as well as the meaning towards its implications and policy outcomes. This process of defining the problem will show what focus was and is held by the policy maker and how or why this might not correlate with the desires of the specific target group in this research.

### 3. Development of the Dutch Emancipation policy

In 2003 the Dutch minister De Geus of social affairs and emancipation declared that the emancipation of the Dutch, white female was completed. But, he added, the emancipation of the migrant women had still not achieved its desired level. It is remarkable that within the current Dutch emancipation policy a great emphasize is put on the emancipation of women from non-Western origin, especially Muslim women. The 21<sup>st</sup> century is therefore characterized by policies aimed at the emancipation and integration of Muslim female migrants. This chapter will provide an analysis of the Dutch emancipation policy by determining how the problem of emancipation is defined, what causes are related to the problem, which solutions are sought and what policies are developed in order to specifically intervene in the position of Muslim migrant.

#### 3.1 Emancipation- and minority policies

The first emancipation policy in the Netherlands was developed in 1976, pressured by the women's movement who wanted more policies who specifically fostered women emancipation and development. This emancipation policy was aimed at the desires and needs of the Dutch women, there was little to nothing said about the state of migrant women. As the second emancipation wave was determined to change the existing traditional gender roles, the

main goal was to change this mentality that accepted these gender roles. Interventions were developed to promote traditional female characteristics and activities (Prins & Saharso, 2008, p.371). Later on at the continuing stage of this policy redistribution of power between men and women were more involved in the developed interventions, while women were more and actively encouraged to be economically independent (Prins & Saharso, 2008, p. 372). Here a revaluation of the feminine in society was clearly visible, where society had to be rebuilt into one where regardless the gender, everyone is able to live independent and free lives (Prins & Saharso, 2008, p. 372). Society should not only be formed by the traditional, masculine principles, femininity became more valued and an equal distribution was made more possible. In 1992 these policy intentions were formulated in three spearheads:

- More participation of women in political and social decision making;
- A redistribution of unpaid labor and care;
- A break with traditional ideas about femininity and masculinity (Prins & Saharso, 2008, p. 372).

The state of minorities was explained in the Minorities Report. Here it is stated that minorities:

- Have a social and economical disadvantage;
- Are not socially participating and are threatened to fall into social isolation;
- Have a weak, legal position and experience discrimination and a disadvantage (Saharso, 1995, p. 74).

In this Minorities Report integration is sometimes used, usually with regard to the process of learning to live in a multicultural society of respect, acceptance and knowledge of each other. Saharso call this cultural integration. Also, integration means that minorities should be equally represented in all layers and sectors of society. This is called structural integration (Saharso, 1995, p. 74). The developed policies on minorities emphasized more in the structural integration, rather than the cultural. So while the emancipation policies and the minority policies were developed independent from each other, women and minorities did have a common social problem: both had limited opportunities for social participation. Only one was defined as the emancipation problem, while the other as integration problem (Saharso, 1995, p. 73). Even though several departments from different ministries did develop policies for women and girls from ethnic minorities and the political will to target female minorities as a group did exist, *the emancipation of female minorities* was however not mentioned specifically and policy regarding this subject was limited. The developed policies



from the different policies emphasized more on the targets set by the Minorities Report, which meant that interventions were developed for the limited social (and especially labour) participation and improving their social and legal status in society (Saharso, 1995, p. 74-76). So while female minority groups were considered to have problems with their integration, their emancipation is considered to be a problem of cultural integration, which implies that as long they would integrate and adapt to the Dutch culture, cultural emancipation problems would also reduce (Saharso, 1995, p. 77). In this period of time, the limited focus on the emancipation of female minorities was considered to be a 'cultural difference', which would be solved by their integration (Saharso, 1995, p. 77-78).

During the first purple cabinet in 1995 until 1998, policies were based on multicultural principles and social diversity was considered to have a positive influence on the society. It was stated that because 'social diversity enriches society, diversity would form the basis for the emancipation policy' (Minderhedenbeleid 1998, p. 95). Migrant women were also here no specific subject in this policy, even though it was acknowledged that more migrant women had a hard time in entering the labour market. It was not until the millennium when women from ethnic minorities started to play a more central role in the developed emancipation policies (Roggebrand & Verloor, 2006, p. 161-162). This was accompanied by much more political and social attention, when awareness about the poor integration status of ethnic minorities grew, while a more critical and negative attitude towards 'backward' tradition roles from the Muslim society increased. It was in 2000 that Paul Scheffer wrote about the multicultural drama, where he stated that whole generations immigrants lagged in educational, cultural and social development and that the so far developed integration policies failed to accomplish their goal. Especially the Islamic culture, which doesn't accept the separation of church and state was the cause of Muslim migrant not integrating into modern Dutch society. He argued that a revaluation and affirmation of the Dutch culture and identity would solve most problems of the multicultural society. He emphasized on the Dutch values clear lines had to be drawn about what was and was not allowed from migrant. Scheffer's plea resulted in a tremendous public and social discourse of new realism (Prins & Saharso, 2010, p. 77). This social discourse of new realism is characterized by five features. First is emphasizes on the needs of the ordinary, 'autochthonous' people, as they know what is really going on in society. Second, new realism dares to face the harsh facts and speak up against politically correct views. Third, new realism calls for 'an affirmation of the values of Western civilization over and against Islam. The fourth feature is in line with the third, which implies

that new realism emphasizes on the national identity and promotes a revaluation of the Dutch 'Leitkultur'. And finally, the most important feature for this research is the fact that gender plays a very important role in the discourse of new realism (Prins & Saharso, 2008, p. 367-368). Gender and sexuality became one of the most important features to prove how important the debate on multiculturalism was and especially the debate against Islam. One of the most important representative of this gender debate was Ayaan Hirsi Ali, an ex-Muslim, who argued that the Islamic religion was especially backward when it came to the position of women. She suggested that the headscarf, arranged or forced marriages, honour killing, domestic violence against women and female genital mutilation were issues where Islam could be held accountable for. Thus Muslim, immigrant women were considered victims of their own, backward culture (and religion) and integration into the Dutch, free and equal society would be in their own interest (Prins & Saharso, 2008, p. 368).

Hence, since the end of 2002, migrant women played an important role in de Dutch emancipation policies (Pels & De Gruijter, 2006, p. 11). In 2003 the ministries of Social Affairs and Justice developed the 'Plan for action for the emancipation and integration of women and girls from ethnic minorities' (Plan van aanpak op hoofdlijnen voor de emancipatie en integratie van vrouwen en meisjes uit ethnische minderheden). Also the committee PaVEM (Participation of Women from Ethnic Minorities) was established.

The subsequent cabinets eliminated the appreciation of multicultural diversity from the developed policies and replaced it by the individual responsibility of migrants. The government was not responsible anymore for the successful integration of migrants. Even though integration exams were still compulsory, it was the individual responsibility of migrants to organize and finance their integration courses. The motive behind this idea of individual responsibility was to ensure the loyalty of immigrants to the Dutch culture. These Dutch values were also introduced into civic classes, where the equal treatment of women and men was specifically addressed (Prins & Saharso, 2010, p. 79).

The position of migrant women turned into the central aspect of the emancipation policy and their emancipation and integration became inseparable. Their culture and religion, the Islam, was considered to be an obstacle for their integration and emancipation, as it maintained unequal gender roles. Participation became the core concept for these policies and the solution for emancipating migrant women was sought in their partaking in paid labour, social activities and the public sphere (Roggebrand & Verloor, 2006, p. 166). Even though participation was the core concept of the emancipation policies, actual emancipation involved more than just

participation. The multiannual emancipation plan of 2000-2004 argues the ‘quality of existence’ meant physical and mental integrity and that both men and women should be able to develop their talents in the personal and public spheres (Pels & De Gruijter, 2006, p. 2). The next multiannual emancipation plan declares that ‘every Dutch citizen should be protected against violence (...), so that everybody is able to make choices in freedom’ (Pels & De Gruijter, 2006, p. 2). Participation and self-determination are the pillars of the emancipation policy and promoting equal rights, chances, freedom and the social responsibilities of women strives for:

- Economical independency through labor participation and social participation.
- Promoting respect for women and their freedom of choice and self-development.

In these policies emphasis was put on the personal autonomy of women, where the family was considered to be the place where oppression occurred. But it seemed as if also this policy outcome reflected the needs of the native Dutch women, instead of focussing on both them as female migrants. Authors that criticized this view argued that persons are socially and culturally embedded and that their identity is formed within the context of their social relations. That is why emancipation views are not always the same, which implies that the meaning of emancipation can differ and therefore these differences need to be accepted (Saharso, 2002/Ghorasi, 2005; from Pels & De Gruijter, 2006, p. 3).

Cultural change, however, was now the starting point of the emancipation policy. The Dutch culture started to become more important in the developed policies, which aimed at intervening against the unequal gender relations in minority groups. The Dutch culture based on freedom and equality was incompatible with the backward Islamic culture. By emancipating migrant women, they would not only free themselves from this backward and oppressive culture, the migrant community in general will be emancipated. The Dutch gender roles and the native women now became an example for the emancipation and integration of migrant women. The ‘already emancipated’ Dutch women became the norm and the role models for the traditional migrant women (Roggebrand & Verloo, 2006, p. 170). This essentialist view on culture argues that migrants are not able to reform or combine their culture with the Dutch identity, which implies that the Dutch culture and Islamic culture are incompatible. The only way to integrate into the Dutch society is by abandoning the own cultural identity (Ghorasi, 2006, p. 42).

This resulted in the long-term Dutch emancipation plan (2006-10), where a distinction is made between policies aimed at native Dutch women on the one hand and non-Western female migrants on the other. Increasing the socioeconomic participation and a higher representations of women working in top functions seem to be aimed at native Dutch women, while violence against women and preventing social exclusion are aimed at non-Western female migrants (Prins & Saharso, 2008, p. 374). It was acknowledged that participating in paid labour could not be realistic for some groups, hence migrant women should be stimulated to at least participate in volunteering work and prevent them from social exclusion (Prins & Saharso, 2008, p. 374/ Roggebrand & Verloo, 2006).

The emancipation policies that are described above changed migrant women into a oppressed group who play a role in maintaining the problems of integration and emancipation. Women are considered not only victims of the men in their environments, they are also considered to be victims of their oppressive culture and religion. This idea about migrant women contributed to the view of them being helpless and passive, a problematic group with a disadvantage in society. In an attempt to help (or free) these women, their personal competencies are omitted, while their voice and opinion in the decision making process are neglected (Ghorasi, 2006, p. 44). Migrant women are considered to be incompetent in developing or seeking solutions for their social problems, while little connections are experienced with the developed policies based on the example of the emancipated, white women. Halleh Ghorasi (2006) argues that the negative image that exist about migrant women is so persistent that it might become impossible to create a healthy partnership between the migrant women and the organizations that are established in order to intervene in the social position of these women (Ghorasi, 2006, p. 44-45).

### 3.2 Conclusion

The vision on the emancipation of migrant women in the Dutch society has changed over the recent decades and hence also the emancipation policies in the Netherlands. At first, migrant women were almost entirely excluded from the developed emancipation policy and diversity was promoted by the government. After the millennium the multicultural society received more criticism and the position of the migrant, Muslim women became a core aspect in the emancipation and integration policies. The current emancipation policies are based on cultural change and a revaluation of the Dutch culture, norms and values. Also, a distinction had been made between non-Muslim and Muslim women. Concerning the first group, the emancipation

policies emphasize on increasing the socioeconomic participation and independence by encouraging them into working more for their careers. Muslim women however, are considered vulnerable and deprived women who are encouraged to participate in all kinds of social work in order to prevent them from social exclusion and combat violence against them. From 2003 onwards the so-called PaVEM commission was established, for the participation of women from ethnic minorities, which goal was that before 2010 migrant women would have made up their arrears against native Dutch women. The premise was that the education and participation of migrant women would not only stimulate their personal development, within their role as mothers and wives they would also pass these developments to their husbands and children (Prins & Saharso, 2008, p. 367). The focus on Muslim migrant women was thus twofold: they are not only perceived as victims of their own oppressive culture, they are also considered to be important actors upon whom the integration of their whole society depends on.

Muslim, migrant women, now have to take an example from the already emancipated, white women. Different scholars however already argued that it is impossible to fit the Western criteria on emancipation to women from non-Western communities. The developed policy was on the other hand too much focused on the negative image of migrant women and their differences with native Dutch women. Because of this limited focus, the solution became an absolute truth and thus also limited, while the argument that it is impossible to fit Western criteria on non-Western people implies involving migrant women in the decision making process. By treating them as passive and helpless victims they seem rather excluded from it. This is a very important aspect and one of great relevance in this research.

## Chapter 4

### 4. Differences in women's thinking. Views on emancipation

This research is trying to find an answer to the question of the possible discrepancy between what view the Dutch emancipation policy holds on the nature and state of the emancipation of Arabic speaking female migrants and what these women personally think about emancipation, including their own needs in the matter. In this chapter the meaning respondents in this research give to the concept of emancipation is discussed. An analysis based on their quotes will be made, while their personal view on emancipation will be explained by linking it to the theoretical framework.

#### 4.1 'My personal emancipation?'

The concept of emancipation has been broadly elaborated on in the previous chapter and has been explained in the theoretical framework that is used in this study. Emancipation is a many sided concept that can be used for debating multiple issues, but in this research the term emancipation is used specifically for the emancipation of women, or, feminism. Women's emancipation has become a universal phenomenon, but it is made clear that it found its origin in the Western, democratic society. These Western societies based their political and social civics on the democratic values of freedom and equality. Hence the fact that the emergence of women's movements were able to take place and cause a domino effect in all the Western, democratic based countries.

It is however peculiar to think that women from non-Western societies have no idea about what women emancipation actually means and to not have been affected by a mass struggle for women recognition and equality that took place at the other side of the world. Especially considering the emergence of globalization and technological developments of the past century, it is impossible for women around the world to have been involved in what seems to be the biggest gender revolution in human history. It is however logical to consider the differences in the emancipation process between women from Western societies and women from non-Western or Islamic communities and the influence or importance religion for instance has on their idea of women emancipation.

That is why the first question that was asked to the women participating in these research was what their personal views on emancipation are. All of the respondents grew up in a Arabic, Islamic environment and found a great difference between their native lifestyle and the Dutch

lifestyle. The differences were however much smaller than for instances the differences between the group of migrants during the sixties and seventies and the native, Dutch society in that time, mainly due to globalization and technological developments. This question is of course straight to the point, but it does provide an overall impression about the thoughts and understandings on the emancipation of these women. Also, the personal conceptions of the respondents will be compared to the mainstream feminist theories to clearly present the problem analysis of the existing emancipation policy.

After introducing my research and the reason of this questionnaire, I started with explaining that the Dutch government puts much emphasize on the emancipation of migrant women. I then wanted to ask if they knew what emancipation meant and if they could explain to me what emancipation implies for their personal lives. I usually used the Arabic translation ‘tahrir al marrae’ (تحرير المرأة) here, which literally means women’s liberation. The emancipation of women that has been used in the theory of this research is of course much more than just the liberation of women, but ‘tahrir al marrae’ is the best Arabic equivalent I could find and use. This is because in Arabic a translation of the word ‘emancipation’ does not exist. The Arabic translation I used came closest to the overall meaning of female emancipation as is used in this research. Sometimes some respondents also recognized the French word ‘emancipation’. By using both translations I tried to provide a better explanation of the research’s subject. In this chapter, first the initial reactions of the respondents towards their idea on emancipation are presented to indicate how they not only perceive their own emancipation, but also in relation to what they think society considers their state of emancipation.

The striking thing is when the respondents are asked about what emancipation means to them, they start by stating that they are already emancipated and that women emancipation is stimulated in the writings of Islam and the Quran. One of the respondents pointed out to me that the emancipation of women has played an significant role in the Arabic society since the beginning of the Islam. She gave the example of Qasim Amin, an Egyptian lawyer (1863-1908) ‘who put the issue of women’s liberation on the political and social agenda by stating that women were liberated by the prophet Muhammad and the Koran’. He substantiated his arguments through the verses of the Koran and the Hadith (the tradition of the prophet Muhammad and his life). She then argued that ‘women’s liberation has been an Islamic heritage long before the Western societies even knew the meaning of equality’.

*'The Islam always allowed women to take part in social and sometimes even political life. Women did not have any rights before Islam came to existence, baby girls were even buried alive back then because a girls live was not worth anything. But the prophet Muhammad changed all this. He even married Khadija, who was a sales women with her own business. Why would the prophet of Islam allow his own wife to work outside their home and meet men, but argue that all Muslim women should not leave their homes? People here in the Netherlands do not understand our religion, but I understand why. Poverty does not allow for equal chances and in Morocco tradition is sometimes more important than religion. This is because a lot of people don't have any chances in life, no chance for education. How can they then know about equal rights for women and men. They only try to survive'. [Resp. 1]*

When I asked her how comes she has this knowledge but other people don't, she replied that she learned this from her mother. *'My mother divorced my father when me and my older brother were still very young. She then worked very hard to give us everything we need, in terms of education and personal development. For me emancipation means being responsible for your own life, for your own education and being responsible for raising my children'.*

Other respondents replied the same. One of the interviewed women replied strikingly: *'I know my own culture, so I am not afraid of another culture'.* When I asked her what she meant she replied that this emphasize put on emancipation and integration by the Dutch governments doesn't make a big impression on her. She knows her rights and the rights given to her by Allah, God.

*'Much of what we know comes from women. The most important hadiths are the ones that were narrated by Aisha. She was also the one who had great discussions with her husband, the prophet, and who was not afraid to give her opinion about certain issues that concerned her or other women, even if that meant she had to disagree with all the men around her. So if this independency was given to me by Allah, why should a man or a government take them away from me? I even decided to not change my maiden name when I got married. Also something Western and totally not Islamic, why should you take away my identity and replace it by my husband's?'. [Rep. 2]*

These were examples of women who linked emancipation and their personal view on it directly with their Islamic religion. The way they argued for women's liberation gave an impression as if it was the most normal thing in the world, even ordinary. They struck me as if



the whole discussion about the emancipation of migrant women and its implications of liberating these women from a backward culture was futile, even insignificant. They believe that equality is present in the Islamic teachings, just like the feminists during the early first emancipation waves. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, advocates of feminism argued for increasing female rights from the point of view of the Christian identity. The women in this research do the same, they argue that all of their rights are justified by Islam, which however also implies that these rights are delimited by their religion. Just like the first wave feminists, these women also consider the division of gender roles as a natural given, because God made women and men equal in status, but not equal in the role they are given.

Also, education is considered a need in order to not only develop oneself, but also to obtain knowledge about women's rights and obligations.

Hence, as stated by the respondents, the fact that a lot of women still lived in oppression because they did not receive the chance to develop or educate themselves. The mixture between tradition and religion was then usually seen as a cause for this 'oppression':

*'In Morocco poverty is still a very big problem for the educational chances and the development in mentality. When people do not get the chance to study, they will never learn to be critical about some backward traditions and the differences between tradition and religion.'* [Resp. 16]

It is peculiar that when asking the question to the respondents about what their understanding of emancipation is and how this relates to their personal life and meaning of life, they reacted in a somewhat defensive manner, by emphasizing on what for instance religion says about the rights of women. I suspect that this is also largely a reaction on the existing and dominant discourse of the social gender issue. Their answers should thus not only be interpreted from the theoretical concepts of the first feminist wave, the context of a reaction towards the dominant discourse should also be taken into consideration.

This Islamic identity is also very visible in other replies about the respondent's personal meaning of emancipation. Most women replied the fact that emancipated women should know what their responsibility is towards marriage, family and society. When asked what examples can be given of this responsibility, different answers are given, but they usually have to do with their responsibility as a mother:

*'Women should be able to stand up for themselves, take responsibility over their lives and make personal choices. Not only for work, but also in raising my children. I should have my own opinion about the education of my children and this has to be respected'. [Resp. 5]*

Or:

*'For me emancipation means that a women has a strong personality, who is not afraid to give her opinion and is not afraid to take her responsibility in her marriage and her role as mother. Of course she should also educate herself, she has a responsibility to use this knowledge for her children'. [Resp. 8]*

And:

*'An emancipated women knows how to handle her responsibility and is capable to act on this responsibility. This also means her freedom, because a women should have her freedom in order to determine what responsibility she can handle. Of course, this freedom should be in line with the Islamic rules'. [Resp. 10]*

Emancipation is very much related to these respondent's Islamic identity. They consider it a duty to their children to stand up for themselves, have their own opinions and be responsible, not only for personal development, but also for the development of their families, their children.

It is striking that Western feministic meaning of liberation from family, motherhood and religion, is in opposition to what these respondents consider emancipation. They describe emancipation within the framework of religion and directly related to their role as a mother. This is mainly reflected in their answers in which family and education are mentioned multiple times when describing their personal view on emancipation. They strongly believe that education is the key to women's emancipation and among others, that the emancipation of women should be accomplished in order to be used in the education and upbringing of their children. Being emancipated means being able to be responsible for your family and for your children and it implies being responsible for the role of being a mother (and in some sense a teacher). These conceptions can also be compared to the conditions women had during the First Emancipation Wave, where education was seen as a means towards becoming a better mother. Also, because of the first reactions given by the respondents on the meaning of emancipation, I tend to interpret these answers as a defensive reaction towards the image

Dutch society has on the position of Islamic women. These reaction can however be placed in a more traditional feminist view, especially when compared to modern Western feminism. The respondents in this research advocate strongly the so called 'equality feminism', which is also justified by the Islamic religion. This attitude towards gender and women's right is on the other hand fostered by education, because education resulted in the understanding of women's rights from a religious point of view and helps distinguish between religion and 'backward' tradition. So even though the respondents' view on emancipation corresponds with the 19<sup>th</sup> century Western feminism based on religion, they do not mention political participation or other specific forms of participation as a part of emancipation. It seems as if women's development is not only delimited by Islam, it also has to be at the service of motherhood. And while the first movement denounced women's place within marriage and demanded formal rights so they could assure themselves for a equal position, the respondents in this research claim they already have equal rights through their religion and a part of these rights imply an obligation towards family and children (and thus marriage).

## 4.2 Conclusion

The first answers the respondents gave seem a reaction towards the existing views in the Dutch society about the emancipation of Muslim, migrant women and can largely be placed within the framework of the first emancipation wave. Their answers have thus been interpreted from this perspective. The respondents reacted towards the prejudice about them not being able to live free and independent lives by firmly advocating for their rights given to them by their families in their home countries and as are defined by the writings of Islamic. People living outside these Western societies usually get accused of being undemocratic, in other words not respecting, protecting and maintaining the principles of freedom and equality. It seems as if the political world has been divided into two camps, the free and democratic West and the rest of the world. Especially after the horrible events of terrorism that happened in the US and some European countries in the past decade, the attitude of protecting the own Western norm and values has become largely shared in the most political and social agendas of citizens around the Western communities. This has lead to an idea that everyone outside these communities, and especially from Arabic or Muslim societies, form a threat and a social disturbance for the democratic society and its highly regarded norms and values. This also applies to the issue of women's emancipation. In fact, women's emancipation has become one of the most important aspects in proving that people living in non-Western societies should not be granted access without taking their social risks into account. That has caused the shift

in the Dutch emancipation policy towards more assimilated based requirements for migrant women from non-Western c.q. Islamic societies. These women are considered un-emancipated and the only way for them to have a full life is if they pursue the example of the native Dutch female, who has been shaped and formed and who has struggled for freedom and equality for more than a century.

However, as was made clearly by the respondents, the Islamic religion cannot be seen separately from women's liberation. All respondents made it very clear that one way or another, their rights as a female are not only given to them by God, it is also impossible for them to act or live outside these religious framework. Most of them do however acknowledge the fact that tradition can be used for the oppression of women, and that a lot of other Muslim men and women can mix tradition and religion up, especially when there is no educational development. But in the answers that are given, they argue in a defence way that emancipation and the Islamic religion are very well compatible with each other. Their emancipation is thus confined by their Islamic religion. This raises the question if their answers are just a defence reaction towards the dominant discourse about Muslim, female emancipation and how large the discrepancy actually is between mainstream feminist theories and their personal views on the subject. Also the questions remain to which extent motherhood and Islam allows them to interpret their emancipation in terms of marriage and family, education, social participation and political participation.

In the next chapter these four themes of marriage and family, education, social participation and political participation will be further elaborated on, whereas the role of motherhood and the Islamic religion will continue to return as a leitmotif in the analysis. The respondents will be divided into two groups: de high educated respondents who finished their education before marriage and the lower educated respondents. The reason why this division is chosen is because there seem to be important differences between how lower educated women perceive their new lives in the Netherlands, and what these perceptions of the higher educated women are. In order to make these differences as clear as possible, both groups are discussed separately. The results of the above mentioned four themes will be described in two chapters, each chapter for one group of respondents.

## Chapter 5

In the previous chapter, the respondents were asked about what emancipation means for them personally. It turned out that women's emancipation was linked to motherhood and formed, or delimited by the Islamic religion. Just like the advocates for equality feminism in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the respondents in this research consider women and men equal in status, but however not in (social) position. This position is very much formed by the role of motherhood, but is given meaning from different perspectives.

### 5.1 New chances and new possibilities

It is however very different how respondents with no or low education perceived their new lives in the Netherlands and how they view emancipation to be a part of their lives. In this chapter the respondents with a low educational background will be discussed. With a low educational background, the respondents have either no finished high school diploma (drop-outs), or just received the baccalaureate but did not continue with a college education. The educational system these respondents grew up in is however not comparable with the Dutch one, where graduating with a VWO diploma (pre-university education) cannot be considered a low education level. The Moroccan educational system for example is comparable to the American one, where everybody graduates at the same age, but exam scores and admission procedures determine whether or not someone is suitable for a scientific education. While the respondents in this group married at quite a young age, usually even before graduating and sometimes immediately after their graduation, for the convenience they are all considered having a low educational background, which is, compared to the higher educated women in this research, in fact true. Their answers will be analyzed in terms of the four themes family and marriage, education and political and social participation.

As has been made clear, these respondents grew up in a Arabic, Islamic country. When asking about their childhood and pre-marriage life, it becomes clear that their childhood was not exactly the same as the childhood of children in Western countries in that time, although all women stated to have been brought up in a more 'open' environment than their (grand)parents. Examples were given of the fact that their parents for example stimulated education more, also for women. Education may have been an important part in their childhood, it did not however mean that there were no differences between girls and boys in that time, on the contrary:

*'Before I got married, I had no freedom at all! Except regarding my education, of course. My dad always told me and my sisters that we could study as long as we want and whatever we want, as long as it did not mean for us to go out of study and live outside our homes. We were brought up very strictly, as a girl I was not permitted to go out with my friend, dress up or stay out. Sometimes I was allowed to go to my aunt, that was so much fun! But even then my aunts were always afraid my dad would see us in the streets and blame them for not taking good care of us. I think he thought the streets were dangerous for girls, that on every street corner some guy lured at us'.* [Resp. 9]

This is an example of a very strict childhood of one of the respondents. During the interview I asked if there she had any brothers (or male cousins) and whether there was a difference in rules regarding boys and girls. She replied that this was definitely the case. Boys were allowed to do much more, did not have to ask permission for anything or justify their actions in the families. She pointed out that this was and is still the case in most families. Girls are much more 'protected' and have to deal with more rules than boys, simply because gossip about girls can create more social damage than when it concerns boys. These emphasize on girls attitude towards boys is still considered the norm, however interaction between girls and boys has become more acceptable nowadays and differences between gender is not always maintained anymore. Here a small shift towards modern Western society can be observed, because the existing traditional gender roles become more questioned. However, there are still much social inequality between women and men, but this is something that seems accepted by the respondents. Compared to the first emancipation feminist, this was in fact one of the most important aspects that was fought against. But there seems to be no awareness or real resistance against it by the interviewed group in this research.

The question of how the respondents will deal with gender in their families is not relevant at the moment. Because their children are still very young, it is not yet clear how these women would act towards their own daughters when they become older, even though they do consider girls as more vulnerable than boys.

Another respondent did mention something about the differences between boys and girls, but also stated that there were some social changes regarding to, for example, the interaction between boys and girls:

*'Before I moved to the Netherlands, I came from a very open family. We did not have those strict rules about women and men not being able to sit in one room together, or a taboo*

*or shame in girls talking to boys. Of course, this was always allowed under strict conditions and as a girls you had to be very careful in how you interact with boys. You do not want to be known as 'easy' or too loose'. [ Resp. 4]*

When I asked what she meant about a girl being easy or too loose, she replied that there should be some level of respect between how a boy and a girl should interact, especially if that girl and boy are not related. She also pointed out that her parents were aware that she had to interact with boys on school, but that did not mean she could be friends with boys and meet with them outside school borders. The more 'open' environment this respondent mentioned should however be put into perspective. She grew up in a Berber village where interactions between boys and girls were traditionally prohibited, even within families there usually is a separation between men and women. When she stated that her family was more open, it related to this aspect of interaction between the sexes within a family. Compared to families in Casablanca for example, this 'open' character is still considered to be very strict and traditional. But there are changes occurring, even though they are still small. That can explain the fact that these codes of conduct were not mentioned explicitly by all the respondents, but it was made very clear during the interviews that there were self-evident rules about the interactions between boys and girls in that time. These rules of how girls (and boys) should act in society were also reflected in their choice for their husband and the process towards marriage. Whilst the process of change during the first emancipation wave was very explicit and demanding, the change in society towards traditional codes of conduct in the respondents' childhood seemed more a process of modernization instead of struggle.

As was stated before, all the women except one are married to a partner from the same ethnical background. Even though no respondent was married off, they almost all eventually got married in a traditional manner. Most respondents in this group knew their future husband from their families, they used to visit during the summer holidays and were neighbours, family friends, relatives or in-laws. Usually their husband saw them on some picture of relatives, or had seen them during the holidays at some party they both attended. The men then would asked around about this girl they saw and would try to contact her individually. Sometimes this would lead to one or two encounters, sometimes they would only contact each other through the phone and during some occasions the men would immediately go to the girl's family to ask her hand in marriage. But it didn't matter in what way, the respondents would not really know this guy they were getting married to until their marriage, at, in this case always, a young age.

*'I was almost 20 years old when I got married. My current husband saw me one day at my friend's place and asked her to introduce us. She told me that she knew this guy and his entire family, that they lived in the Netherlands and are known as very respectable and decent people. Of course the idea of a guy from the Netherlands who was interested in me was very exciting, but before he came to ask my hand in marriage from my family we had contact over the phone over a year. The next year he came to my family and we arranged our marriage'.*

**[Resp. 11]**

Some women did know their future husbands more than just that one short encounter during the summer holiday, and some were even in love with one another, but they still however did not have any personal contact except during the summer holidays when the men would visit their families and their encounters were usually under family supervision:

*'I have known my husband almost all my life, I saw him every summer when he came to visit his family and we have been neighbours since our childhood. So in some sense, we grew up together. So when he came to ask my hand in marriage, both our families were not surprised.'* **[Resp. 14]**

But sometimes also:

*'My husband and I were called Romeo and Juliet because everybody knew we were a couple. I have known him since I was 16 years old. He was 20 at the time, we wanted to marry but his family did not agree. Even though his family was against our marriage, we continued to have contact, also when he returned to the Netherlands. My mom knew about this and when I turned 19 we married against his family's wishes. My mother and brother both knew and his family eventually accepted, even though they never accepted me. Now I don't have any contact with them'.* **[Resp. 1]**

So even though the respondents in this chapter had the final say in whether or not they would marry, the process towards marriage usually was a very traditional one and could not take place without the family's consent. It was not acceptable for women to meet with 'boyfriends' before he officially came to her family to ask her hand in marriage and even then encounters only took place in public places and with little regularity. This of course was only the case for women, as is illustrated in the quote above, it was almost impossible for a girl to have contact with a boy without her family knowing. That was a risk that she could not take, which was in contrast to how boys could have relationships. The institution of marriage was



and still is very important. The liberated and modern Western view on sexual relationships outside marriage is unacceptable for the respondents. Just like the generally accepted early Christian social norms and values, the women in this research have implemented the Islamic teachings into their daily lives, without accepting almost any deviation from it. Emancipation views seem not to be specifically pronounced here, which gives the impression that the Islamic religion almost completely defines what is and what is not acceptable in term of liberation and emancipation. This is slightly comparable with the first wave (Christian) feminism due to the large focus on family and marriage, but while religious and traditional rules became more adaptable at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Islamic identity nowadays is not.

After the women immigrated to the Netherlands, their lives changed dramatically. The most important change was for them being far away from their parents and families. The first years were very difficult for all the women, as the change from a very family oriented and protective environment towards a responsible marriage made huge impressions on their lives. Even though their husband's family lived near, most women found it very hard to connect to their lifestyle. Also, once arrived in the Netherlands, they found themselves hopelessly dependent on their husband, as they had no knowledge of the Dutch language. This meant that they became totally immobile and home bound, until the husband came home from work. So most women quickly discovered the importance of learning the Dutch language. This way, they could find their own way in the Dutch society and eventually find their way to institutions in order to continue or start their education. Even though they found the Dutch language very hard to learn, they acknowledged the fact that without it they would stay helpless and even became isolated from the Dutch society:

*'The moment I came to the Netherlands I knew learning the language was very important. Without it I would definitely become dependent.'* [Resp. 1]

And also:

*'When I arrived in the Netherlands, I missed my family very much. At once I had to do everything on my own! I had to learn the Dutch language because my husband would not help me with most things. So I knew if I wanted to have thing done, I needed to study the Dutch language first.'* [Resp. 13]

However, it is striking to see that this insight about first and foremost learning the language and integrating into the Dutch society was not linked to the importance of postponing the desire of having children. They became pregnant mostly after the first year of their arrival in the Netherlands, even though most of them were still very young. The fact that they became pregnant so quickly had an important effect on their integration and personal development in the Dutch society. It meant they were now more homebound than ever because their husband worked full-time in order to support his new, expanding family and house chores and nurturing now became the full responsibility of the women, who became mother. When asked why they made this choice and if it was in agreement between them and their husbands, they all stated yes. They did not take any precautions towards pregnancy and even though these respondents were very still very young, they thought of having children was a completion of their marriage. One respondent even stated: *'I think having a child so soon is the only way to know whether you have a reliable future with your husband. If everything goes well after having your first child, you know the rest of your marriage will probably be also fine.'* [Resp. 4]

During the interviews I asked the respondent about whether having children that soon did form an obstacle for their personal development in the Netherlands, none of them agreed. Some seemed a little bit agitated by the question, as if the question was condemnatory. Having children seem a standard that should not be questioned. Even though having a child so soon was usually not planned, it is considered a logical consequence following their marriage. It however seems as if having children has been something to fill their lives with. This is of course not said by any respondent, but at their arrival they had to take integration lesson without almost any interference from the government, due to the integration policy's emphasize on 'integration as a personal responsibility'. Even though they all acknowledge the importance of the Dutch language, the non-supportive attitude of the government makes it much more difficult to focus on language and integration first. This is also because their social environment is much more supportive towards having children than towards taking language of integration classes. In some sense, having children becomes something they do have control about and are certain of, while the complex task of integration and language education remains a threshold they can hardly overcome. Here the government's task lies in providing more support and guidance towards the State Exam and for those who already have children, support through childcare so the women do not feel they have to compromise family for personal development.

As was stated before, after most women got pregnant they became more homebound and they became more responsible for the household chores alone. Their husband worked full-time in order to support his new family and after getting pregnant most of the respondents stayed home to prepare for the baby. They find it their responsibility to make sure the most chores around the house are done without involving their husband. As he works all day and she stays mostly home it became her responsibility to make sure dinner is ready when he comes home from work. Also, the bigger chores cannot be left for him to do, even though the respondents all state that their partner does help in the smaller, daily chores:

*'My husband works all day and I work in the house. But he is very easy, he does not expect of me to always have dinner on the table, when I'm sick we order something. He cannot cook! He also helps with the dishes and vacuuming. This is how we do things at home. My husband works all day, I cannot expect of him to come home and cook when I have been home all day.'* [Resp. 9]

And also:

*'If some day my husband doesn't work, we both do the daily chores. He does not force me into cooking and cleaning for him, even though he sometimes jokes about the reason why he married me. At my parents' house I learned how to do household chores, my mother always used to say: practice in your father's house in order to do it better in your husband's. So yes, eventually I do most of the things in house, but only because he is not good at cooking and cleaning.'* [Resp. 3]

It also seems as if the respondents spoiled their partners when they first arrived to the Netherlands. After their marriage and when they first arrived in the Netherlands they found themselves being stuck in a passive position. So they actively started to take over all the household chores from their husband:

*'When I grew up I was used to girls taking care of almost all the household chores and the husband not having to help in any of them. So when I first got married, I did everything on my own, even though before marriage my husband was used to cooking for himself and cleaning as he lived alone! But I did not let him do much work around the house at the beginning and eventually he got used to it. Now I first have to ask him to do something before he does it. He does not refuse, but he will also not take the initiative.'* [Resp. 13]

Even though most respondents think of the distribution of household chores being equally divided because their husband works full time and they not, the moment they have children they start to realize it is too much for them to handle on their own. They do expect more from their partner, but usually they have to specifically ask for help. Even though most partners do not refuse, they still only engage in smaller household chores as helping with the dishes, vacuuming or taking care of the children for some hours. I asked every respondent about who was more actively involved with the education of their children and all of them replied that this was something both partners take care of. Of course during the day the mother is more present so at daytime the children are mostly her responsibility, but generally both partners are involved in every aspect of the education of children. It is however striking how these women perceive their role within the household. Just like during the first emancipation wave, women's part in society only meant something when she was married and was a mother for her children. While the women during the first emancipation wave became aware of this aspect and fought against these traditional distribution of gender roles (husband works, mother takes care of the children), the respondents in this research seem not. They do not even relate emancipation to the role they have as a mother, it is more something that comes naturally. I think however that most respondents are pushed in this position because of their marriage. That does not mean they are not happy with being a mother, but if they have had other opportunities and more supportive chances they might have made different choices. Now it seems that having children might have been desirable, it was usually not planned and at the young age most of them became mother they were almost pushed into being housewives.

## 5.2 Education

In the previous chapter education was already briefly mentioned by some respondents. Education is something that is considered as important, but more as a right and chance for women. The group of respondents that are presented in this chapter did barely graduate from high school before marriage. In the Netherlands some of them continued their education and eventually graduated at MBO level 3, while others are still trying to pass the integration exam and participate in language classes. Either way, they consider these possibilities as chances for personal development, taken however in their own pace.

As is stated before, this group of respondents are not highly educated. As they married at a young age they usually did not even finish high school and sometimes just graduated before

getting married. In the Netherlands they did participate in language of integration courses, but usually in a very slow pace. Three respondents graduated from MBO level 3, within approximately ten years of their immigration to the Netherlands.

Even though education levels vary, everyone stated the importance for education, especially education for girls. But it seems as if opinions about education changed after their arrival in the Netherlands. Even though they have not continued their education, it is considered a powerful tool and right of girls in obtaining independency, respect and personal responsibility. And also, education is again linked to motherhood. From this perspective, there is no difference between education for women of men.

*'Education provides a future. What kind of job to you get these days if you don't have any diplomas? I think this is not only the case for girls, but also for boys. This way boys do not go astray. And for girls, they should go to college, graduate as soon as possible so they still have time for marriage. This way they can provide a certain independent future for themselves and their children. I regret the fact that I didn't finish my school, but God willingly my daughters will'.* [ **Resp. 3**]

And:

*'I went to high school until the fourth class, then I got engaged. I did not finish my high school because I knew I would marry. This doesn't mean I am stupid, it was just that for marriage you don't need an education. Of course I wouldn't want my daughter to quite school at such a young age, but I wouldn't mind it if she wanted to marry after 18 either. But nowadays things are different, especially here in the Netherlands. Being independent as a female is very important and the only way to become independent is to have some sort of education. Because it will provide chances for decent work. For a women this also means that she will not have to hold up her hands to her husband if she wants to buy something for herself or her children.'* [ **Resp. 4**]

There also seems a shift in mentality towards education. Some respondents who did not finish or barely finished high school did not have any interest in education before marriage:

*'Before I got married I had a totally different mentality that I have now. I was spoiled and did not work or go to school. I quitted high school against my parents' wishes. My life was simple and I knew that eventually I would marry anyhow.'* [ **Resp. 13**]

So even though there is a link between quitting school and marriage at a young age, it does not always mean that in the Netherlands these women had no interest in education at all. The respondents as described above did not consider education as a requirement for marriage, so it was easy for them to quit school in order to get married. However, after arriving in the Netherlands, most of these respondents found themselves still very young and had the need to do something for their personal development.

When the respondents in this group knew they would be getting married, they did not continue their education. This doesn't mean that they had no aspirations to get some education once they settled in the Netherlands. Of course they had some difficulties when first arriving in their new home country, they missed their families and found it hard to now become responsible for their own, independent household. Especially the Dutch language was considered difficult. However, after they started language and integration courses, they found that there were a lot of possibilities for them to explore. One respondent even stated that one of her requirements towards her husband before she would move to the Netherlands was looking for an education or something else to fill her life with:

*'I did not continue my education because I would marry my husband and move to the Netherlands. Even though I was accepted at a university, I chose marriage. I knew in the Netherlands I would have a very different life, also a less social life. So I demanded from my husband that he would let me search for an education to continue. So when I arrived in the Netherlands, I participated on an entrance exam for a Higher Education (HBO) bachelor study and I was accepted! But then I got pregnant, so I was forced to stop. I did however passed my integration exam during the pregnancy and after my son turned 1 year old I took courses for office assistance and went on an internship at Saxion. Here I graduated from MBO level 3 and for a short period of time I could continue working at Saxion on an on-call basis.'* [Resp. 14]

These women have absolutely no difficulties in adjusting to the Dutch way of live. At their arrival they usually started the language courses and integration course. In between they got pregnant and temporarily stopped the courses they took. Of course they still were obligated to pass the integration exam, so after giving birth they slowly continued their integration classes and even participated in other programs or workshops or continued for naturalization in order to obtain the Dutch nationality. There are no regrets into moving to the Netherlands, because

they found their lives improving, first by having children, but also because all the courses or programs they participate in next to the daily household chores:

*'When I arrived here in the Netherlands I started the level 1 integration courses. I stopped after one year because I was pregnant, by after my son was two years old I continued this course. I wanted to continue after I passed this exam in order to obtain the Dutch nationality, but I did not know how or where to start. After my husband got unemployed and started to receive social benefit contribution I was called by social services to continue my integration courses. I now take several courses and workshops and this way I stay active. Better than to stay home and get bored'.* [Resp. 8]

These respondent also emphasize the importance of being a good mother, rather than participating in an education that consumes all of your time. As long as they have young children, them being mothers is what counts as most important. They have no problem being just that and fill their daily lives with household chores, their children and sometimes some part-time jobs in cleaning or educational courses that are organized by the municipality.

*'When I married my husband I was just 19 years old. I did not graduated from high school because I knew I would marry and move to the Netherlands. I had to difficulties adjusting here because my husband is my cousin and I found myself surrounded by my family. After six month I wanted to have a baby, to be a complete family. My children are my top priority, I feel I achieved something in this live if one day they will have achieved something in their lives, lived decent and respectful live in compliance with the Islamic religion. That is what will make me proud!'* [Resp. 4]

And:

*'I was 18 years old when I married my husband. All I wanted was the perfect family, the perfect children, the perfect marriage. I immediately got pregnant and I was so happy. After my third child I got depressed and I wanted to do something else. So I got my driver's license and I started with some Dutch language courses. No my children are older, I have my friends and my family and I am happy with my live. I really feel like if I am living the Romeo and Juliet story...'* [Resp. 1]

These respondents have found that the Netherlands have provided a much better living for them than in their home countries. Here, at least women have the opportunity to get part-time

jobs, easily get their drivers license and also the variety of activities that are offered through schools and other governmental or educational institutions. Not only their children have better educational chances, even they themselves can live more independent because of their part-time jobs, their drivers' license and other outdoor activities. From the educational aspect, the Dutch policies provide much opportunities, even if they have to be explored independently. With no education at all at the moment of their marriage, the language and integration courses form a good possibility to explore other options for further educational development. As it seems, some respondents from this group even continued a MBO level 3 education. Even though most women continued with their education after having children, they did miss the first years of their arrival to the Netherlands because of the passive attitude from governmental institutions. However, the fact that there is still an obligation for passing the State Exam, all of them eventually had to take integration and language courses. Once in this process more possibilities become visible, something that is welcomed by most of them. Slowly, most respondents found their way and are now much more aware of the educational development possibilities. Even though education is still an aim that has to be achieved partly to become better as a mother and provide the children better chances, there seems to be a little change in mentality towards personal development and away from traditional accepted roles. Some respondents even made clear agreements with their husband to finish an education and while this was slowed down due to pregnancies, eventually they did pick up where they left and finished or are still busy with an education. Traditional rules become more questioned, mostly in terms of whether or not they are Islamic, and personal independency and development are more perceived as important aspects achieved through education. Hereby it looks if the respondents drift between the features of the first emancipation wave and the second one. While with their focus on motherhood and Islamic teachings is comparable with the first wave feminism, their strive to more independency and personal development apart from their husband relates more to the mentality of the second wave feminists. The possibilities in the Netherlands contribute to this strive for more personal development, and although these possibilities are mostly discovered later, all of the women acknowledge the fact that the Netherlands provided chances which they might not have if they stayed in their home country.

### 5.3 Participation

At the last paragraph about education, some things have already been said about work or other out-door activities the respondents participated in. In this paragraph this participation will be



further elaborated on, divided into two sections: social participation and political participation.

Social participation is about how and or these women participate out-doors, whether it is working at a paid job, being active at some volunteering work or other out-door activities. The respondent that are described in this chapter have never worked outside before they immigrated to the Netherlands. As they immediately got married after of during their high school period, they also never had the chance. After some years in the Netherlands, and usually one or two children later, these women started to feel the need to get a job for themselves. Usually because it would give them some independency, with their own part-time job they would earn money themselves and they would not have to hold up their hands for their husbands. Some respondents do understand the value of work, but do however not think of it as too important as long as the husband can provide for them:

*'Work is something that can help a women to be financially independent, if she finds difficulties in asking her husband for money. But if this is not the case, I now do not have the need to work. Sometimes I help at my husband's own business, and maybe I would like to do something as a volunteer. But not now, as long as my children are still young I want to be a mother first. And luckily my husband never denies me anything.'* [Resp. 1]

And:

*'There is no shame in a women working. But if my husband can support me and my children I can find no reason to work, at least not until my children are still young. First I want to put all my time and effort in raising my children. They ask a lot of attention and time. When they get bigger I want to look for other things to do.'* [Resp. 3]

Other respondents did want a part-time job because after they finished a study at the MBO 3 they wanted to work and use their skills in practice. From the three participants who graduated at the MBO 3, only one is currently working a position compatible with her study. The other one is unemployed, and the last one cannot find a job and now only works at a part-time cleaning job:

*'After I graduated I couldn't find a job, every job I applied for I got turned down, because they wanted someone with experience and I had no experience, besides the few hours*

*I worked at Saxion. After my second son was born I started working a part-time cleaning job.'*

**[Resp. 14]**

When I asked how come she settled for a cleaning job instead of something suitable for her education she replied:

*'I really wanted to work, because it means that I am doing something else with my life, being someone just for myself, not only a mother to my children. But I never got the chance to work a real job I studied for. After my youngest son turned four I started orienting again. I participated in some courses like Language in Action (Taal in actie) and Route plan (Routeplan), but these things were all below my level of capacities. So I then made a decision, whether I find a paid job, or I start a new education or I will do some voluntary work. Well, I got no paid job and a new education was impossible because I could not find an internship. So now next to the hours I work at cleaning I am also very busy with a lot of volunteering activities. Once a week I do administrative work at a youth centre, through Humanitas I volunteer as a coach and I work as a volunteer at Alifa. I really like being busy, especially now that my children are older. But I eventually would like to have a job within the administrative field.'* **[Resp. 14]**

This respondent is trying her best to try and find a paid job that suits her education, but unfortunately she can't. It is however surprisingly how much energy and motivation she has in staying active and being more than just a mother and a wife. Most respondents felt the need for working out-doors usually after their children started growing up, going to school and not needing them 24/7 anymore. Before, working a paid job is financially impossible, because they could not pay for daycare or if their husband is on social welfare, they lose part of their social income. So it seems as if they have the most difficulties with improving their social status because of the existing or not existing social arrangements. First because of the early mentioned daycare that is not provided any more within the integration policy and second because their job can mean the loss of social allowances, which leads to less family income. This is a typical case of the so called poverty trap, which effects the further development of these women. Just like in the case of the following two respondents:

*'After I passed my integration exam, I continued with courses for labor qualified assistance. I continued this study even after I gave birth to my first child. My husband and my sister in law really motivated me into not quitting. I even started a new study for dental*

*technology and I already received a job opportunity. But this was a full-time job and I wanted to work three day maximum. They refused, so unfortunately I couldn't finish this study. I then decided to study at the ROC for administrative assistance. At the end of this study I was pregnant with my second child, but I made sure I passed my driver's license exam first. Now I am unemployed, but only until my youngest goes to school. Then I will try to find a job. I would like to work now, but that is financially impossible. I am only available for one or maybe two days, but those working hours would not even cover costs for daycare.'* [Resp. 11]

And:

*'I have been home for too long now. My son is now old enough to be able to take care of himself. I would like to work now, but if I do, my husband might lose part of his social benefit income and we definitely lose some of the allowances. So until he finds a job, I will continue with all the courses and extra activities I attend. I am busy four days a week, so I have enough to keep me from just sitting home.'* [Resp. 8]

Social participation is mainly visible through some of the part-time jobs the respondent have. They usually start to feel the need for more than just being a wife and mother around the time their children start growing up and they obtain more spare time. Most women work in part-time cleaning jobs, as those are the jobs that are usually most easy to get. Working some hours provides them with more independency, as they now can provide for themselves without constantly having to ask their husband for pocket money. This shows how strongly these women value a sense of independency, not only around the house, but also out-doors. This sense of independency through paid labor is also was also characterized by the second emancipation wave. These respondents became more dissatisfied by their solemn role as housewife and feel the need to work more for their own independency, and this dissatisfaction grows more than ever while the children become older. It looks just like a small Feminine Mystique, but even though this discomfort is expressed, it is less gender focused then during the second emancipation wave. This probably has two causes: one due to the fact that the mother role is still very highly valued, especially due to the Islamic belief, second because it were not the gender roles that pushed them into being housewives, it was the lack of support within the existing policy goals which did not provide any guidance towards education and/or labor. Even now some of the respondents have difficulties with finding a suitable job and eventually settle with part-time cleaning jobs. Of course the prevailing economical crisis makes employment more difficult, but still there are small incentives from governmental

institutions that motivate for internships or work experience placements. Maybe that is why voluntary work is not always a number one option. It seems as if it does not give these women the feeling they are working on something that they personally contribute to but, also gain by. Their role as wife or mother is already a kind of voluntary work and when making the decision to work out-doors it has to benefit them instantly with something they can use. Work however should not interfere with the education of their children and they mainly want to focus on them first before making decisions for other jobs or other out-door activities. Some even state that if their husband can provide for them they see no incentive to work at all. At least, certainly not until the children grow up.

Unlike the social participation, it seems as if the importance for political participation is not that visible. Besides voting during national elections, these women have no real interest in politics. They usually know what kind of political parties there are, but not by name. Mostly they state that certain parties are for the more richer people, while other parties take also foreigners' interests into account. While not all the women have the Dutch nationality, voting is also impossible, but some women who have usually discuss with their husband who to vote for.

*'I don't vote because I don't have the Dutch nationality. But I don't bother keeping track of the political changes here. If I could vote, I would vote for the PvdA. Because my husband always votes for them.'* [Resp. 3]

And:

*'My husband always watches that show, Pauw en Witteman and 'De Wereld Draait Door' then I watch with him. I learn a lot about politics from these shows. And my husband likes to discuss politics, he sometimes gets agitated about some subjects and then discusses them with his brothers. I always listen, because it is not only interesting, but also important to know the political situation in the country you live in.'* [Resp. 9]

When I asked if she votes and how she makes the decision to vote she replies:

*'I don't vote because I don't have the Dutch nationality. But if I could I would definitely do it. People should use their rights to try and make changes in the social and political situation. That is everybody's duty.'* [Resp. 9]

This respondent and her husband are more interested in politics than was expected. It turned out that her brother in law was a member of Parliament and her family-law is mostly involved in politics because of him. His brother, her husband, sometimes has discussions with him and he is interested in politics mainly because with his brother in Parliament, politics become very personal in the family.

Most women in this chapter have the similar opinions about politics or voting. On the surface they do know some things about the political situation and even vote, usually for the same political party, but it seems as if language deficiencies make it more difficult to follow political debates and shows:

*'I am up to date about the major political situation he, but I am not actively following political changes. I usually watch Arabic stations, those are more easily to follow. I however do vote, for instance to vote against that man with that ugly blonde hairdo. Wilders, yes! If I vote, I dismiss another vote for him!'* [Resp. 11]

This clearly shows that respondents do know something about politics, but probably just the more populist politics which are hardly to ignore due to all the media attention given to it. The above mentioned respondents does know about a politician being against her values, though she does not immediately recons his name, so she makes the decision to vote because she beliefs that her vote can make a change in society. Most respondents in this chapter think this way even though they not always fully understand what the politics are about.

*'I vote like every other person because I want my interests to be looked after. My interests are that my family and my children can live a decent life in the Netherlands as Muslims and that people accept each other, regardless your religious background. So when I vote, I want my vote to be against Wilders. It's my duty.'* [Resp. 1]

Political participation is thus mostly limited to voting. None of the respondents is politically active or visits political meetings. Probably because the language deficiencies, but also because the political interests are limited to how much media attention a social subject or political party gets. Wilders is mentioned multiple times as a reason to vote because they feel threatened by his statements. They vote against him by choosing a left-wing party, not questioning about what a right-wing party might think about Wilders and how big the differences actually are in the current Dutch political party system. Their political activities, which are limited to voting, seem to be again a reaction towards the current political

discourse, even though less thought is put to it than for example the dominant discourse about migrant women. There is some trust in politics, or else some of the respondents would probably not vote. But while the women during the first emancipation wave fought hard to obtain political rights, the respondents seem to be quite indifferent. This might be because politics are still complex social issue which does not address most people. This was even the case during the first emancipation wave, the bourgeois, more intellectual women strived for political rights while the civilian women found no interest in politics. This is comparable with the status of these women.

## 5.4 Conclusion

Although they realized the importance of integration and Dutch language lessons, almost all of the respondents got pregnant after their first year in the Netherlands. This pushed them back into a more homebound role, as their husbands worked full-time and they stayed at home in order to take care of the children. The division of household chores became unequally divided because their partners worked and they stayed home. Here the Dutch emancipation policies lacks in support because it does not provide any support or guidance through the complex process of finding suitable language and integration courses or maybe childcare so these women do not feel they have to compromise family for their own development. Family remains a very important aspect in these women's lives, especially because of the Islamic identity that almost completely defines what is and what is not acceptable in terms of liberation and emancipation. Education is however considered very important and in the Netherlands they found a lot of opportunities for personal development, a chance they grabbed with both hands after the children grew up. But there seems to be a process of a changing mentality of these women, a process which was held back at first. But the possibilities in the Netherlands contribute to their strive for more personal development, and although these possibilities are mostly discovered later, all of the women acknowledge the fact that the Netherlands provided chances which they might not have if they stayed in their home country. As one respondent stated:

*'I will never be able to go back to Morocco, even though I really missed it at the beginning. Here in the Netherlands I now do things I would never have one would I have stayed in Morocco. I continued my education here, I have my driver's license and I can live my life like I want, without having family that interferes with every aspect of your life. My feature is now here.'* [Resp. 13]

The social and political participation in this chapter are discussed in terms of out-door activities like paid jobs or voluntary work and the extent to which the respondents in this group are politically active. The respondents usually have part-time cleaning jobs the moment their children start growing up and they start feeling the need to provide more for themselves and their children. The most important reason is for them to be more independent from their husband. The value of independency is highly valued, even though some respondents stated they felt no need for working if their husband can sufficiently provide for them and their children. However, some respondents do find difficulties in working a paid job, mostly due to financial reasons. Expensive daycare and the issue of the poverty trap holds them back in improving their social status, an aspect that is not currently addressed within the emancipation policies. Also, while the existing policy considers them vulnerable and deprived it seems as if these respondents found their way to education and labor all by themselves. This is a totally different attitude that calls for a different approach within the policies. Their need for development already exists, and the way they organize their live is mostly determined by the Islamic religion. The policy should however not aim at 'saving them from a backward culture', instead it should provide supportive opportunities to help ease the way to education and social participation for these women. Also, it must be taken into consideration that these women perceive emancipation totally different than the existing Western view. This is seen in the fact that they drift between the ideas of the first and second emancipation wave feminist and that their emancipation can absolutely not be seen apart from their Islamic identity. Their new lives in the Netherlands did however made them more aware of the difference between tradition (like attitudes towards girls and boys) and religion.

## Chapter 6

In the previous chapter, the respondents who are low-educated were covered, by discussing the four theoretical concepts family and marriage, education, social participation and political participation. In this chapter, the other group of respondents are covered. Before they got married, these respondents continued a higher education study and graduated with a Bachelor or Master degree. They are experiencing a totally different way of life than the other women in this research. Also, a very important and peculiar fact is that these women married men who are less educated than them! In this chapter I will elaborate on this group, by not only explaining this fact, but also discussing how with their marriage and immigration to the Netherlands, in relation to their early education had a huge impact on their social, educational and emotional state of mind.

### 6.1 Hoping for a better future

As I stated before, the group respondents that are discussed in this chapter all were highly educated women before they married. Even though there are no important differences in social codes of conduct between these respondents and the previous ones, they did experience a certain form of freedom when they grew up. This was usually because their families were also educated and thus more ‘open’ than others:

*‘My family has always been very open and tolerant. Both my parents worked within the field of education, my mother as a teacher and my father as a policy maker at the Ministry of Education. There were no clear division of household chores, everybody helped. My mother always played a very important role in our lives, and also my father’s, but never a submissive or secondary role. On the contrary, she was in charge. But there was respect, and that was most important.’ [Resp. 2]*

And:

*‘When we were little and we would come home with good grades, my father would go to my mother and kiss her. He always would put her on a pedestal whenever we would graduate or succeed in anything we did. This way he wanted to show her what she meant for him and her family and the strength and power a women can have in raising good children. Family was important for us and we all worked together to help each other achieve*



*something. My parents were my number one, I respected them because they respected and supported me. Now I want to do the same for my children.*’ [Resp. 7]

The family structures were based on respect, honesty and openness. Their families supported them in making something out of their lives and in order to achieve something in live, they had to work hard, but also feel safe and respected in their families. As one respondent stated:

*‘My parents moved back from Germany to Palestine because they wanted to provide us with a trusted environment to grow up in. Important was also for us girls, because I only have sisters, to grow up in an Islamic culture, so we never would feel different or looked down upon. Even though my dad had a very good job in Germany, he decided to go back. He and my mother both put our future and happiness in front. Of course there are social and religious rules, but we never felt as if we were deprived of something or that we were denied certain things just because we were girls. I had a wonderful childhood and I wish I could go back to Palestine.’* [Resp. 15]

Living by the rules of Islam has always been important, but these women never felt as if these rules withheld them from some aspects in their lives. Just like the respondents in the previous chapter, there were social rules of conduct, but they had no significant impact on these respondents’ lives. This is probably because at the one hand they accepted some of these rules, provided they were based on the Islamic religion, on the other hand because a lot of cultural or socially embedded rules did not play a great part in their lives when they grew up. This ‘open’ attitude in their family relations is also visible in this aspect, as their parents, who usually were also high educated, did not seem to accept every social embedded rule as true or right.

The fact that socially embedded rules were not always accepted, but religious rules were is clearly visible in these respondents’ process towards marriage. This aspect is in that matter not very different from the respondents in the previous chapter, so I will not elaborate too much on it here, but there are however some major differences I need to address before continuing. Just like the other respondents, these women did not know their future husband before or were not involved in a love relationship with him before he came to ask her hand in marriage. Some respondents did know who this particular guy was, sometimes even were in love with him, but unless they met during family receptions or accidentally visits at friends, there was no real interaction:

*'I really wanted to marry my husband, I always had a crush on him. I knew him and his family from their yearly visits and also they were in-laws. We never really had much contact, because after high-school I went to another city to study. But one year when he came to Morocco he was determined to marry and so he came to ask my hand in marriage.'*

**[Resp. 6]**

And:

*'My husband would use to come and visit my family, because he was a very dear friend of my brother's. He already lived in the Netherlands and one time he asked my brother if he was okay with him asking my hand in marriage. My brother discussed this with me and my parents and I accepted. Because I knew he was a good and honest person, also a religious one and I trusted him to be a good husband. You know, he has been my brother's friend for years, and that means something.'* **[Resp. 7]**

This illustrates how the structures of marriage worked for them. Most of the time, family or friends are ways in how marriages can be arranged. If a relative or a very dear friend proposes a possible marriage from some guy, the girl's family seems more open and positive towards this idea, as if it is not possible for a trustworthy relative or friend to come with a poor candidate for their daughter. For the respondents, this was also a genuine reason to accept the marriage. Usually, because they were already older than most women who were married, an acquaintance seemed a good opportunity for marriage. When choosing to continue their education, it also meant not being able to marry and that was a sacrifice they were more than willingly to make. This is also one of the big differences between these women and the respondents from the other chapter, they married at a much older age, almost a decade later!

Another difference is that the respondent's partners are less educated than they are. This difference became visible only after their marriage. It seems as if in the first instance, these men seemed capable for and already having achieved something by the way they presented themselves before marriage. The most important thing was that they had jobs, even though it was not specifically asked what job, considering the fact that they had own cars, usually own (rented) houses and a nice appearance. One must understand, in Morocco, or Algeria or Palestine, these things are only confined to the middleclass people, and middleclass usually means having had a decent education and thus a decent job. The respondents are usually unaware of the fact that social differences are not clearly visible in the Netherlands as they are

in their home country. So when some guy with his own car and nice clothes comes to marry a girl, he immediately is considered being a decent candidate. Usually these men do live a decent life, they do work at some job, but the intellectual differences between them and their wives eventually became visible:

*‘When I arrived I discovered that my husband’s family were not really educated, they could not help me find something to do besides the easy integration lessons. They had a totally different mentality!’ [Resp. 6]*

These were the first problems the women run in to. Before marriage, they had a strong sense of self-determination and emancipation. After high school they continued an academic education, usually while living apart from their families. They were very much aware of the fact that their education meant putting aside marriage, something that was/is still considered as the main goal in life in their home countries. Even though these women chose not to comply with these ‘traditional habits’. These women were already very much emancipated in their home country, considering the fact that they were very much aware that marriage could form an obstacle for the opportunity of self-development and intellectual education. They can be compared to the second wave feminist, who did not comply with their social status of being just a wife, but took matters into their own hands.

But, after these respondents arrived in the Netherlands, their lives changed dramatically. They did not have any trouble with living away from their families as the other respondents did, because these women were already used to live alone during their education. This made the impact of moving to the Netherlands less big. They did however find a very large difference in lifestyle in the Netherlands, as they became much more dependent of their partner and much more bound to home than ever. Just like the other respondents, the Dutch language was the most important reason for this feeling of isolation. They did however almost immediately started with language and integration courses, even though the level of the lesson were mostly too low for them. Still, their first important goal after their arrival was learning the Dutch language:

*‘When I first arrived to the Netherlands my husband helped me with everything. The first weeks he made my appointments, we went out together and he would go with me to the doctor or other places. But eventually I got really tired of him taking care of everything, he would only have time when he came home from work and he could not always go with me to*

*appointments during his working hours. I then soon realized how important it was for me to learn the Dutch language. ' [Resp. 12]*

And:

*'I always had a curiosity towards learning new languages. Before I married, I lived in Belgium as a exchange student. When I knew I would marry my husband, I took some Dutch courses in Belgium and I continued when I moved to the Netherlands. The Dutch language is very difficult, but in order for me to live here, I need to master it. ' [Resp. 2]*

Even though these respondents almost immediately started with language and integration courses after their arrival, they also soon got pregnant with their first child. Even though this was also not always planned, it was however much more thought through than the other group of women. For them, having children was not only a logical next step in marriage, they also considered the fact that they already finished an education and that they were much older than the 'normal' standards. Age was however mostly the main reason for having children so soon:

*'I was 29 years old when my daughter was born. I felt it was the time for me to become a mother, especially because I really missed my own family and being around one. Now it was time for me to have my own. ' [Resp. 7]*

And:

*'I was 37 years old when I married my husband. I immediately wanted to have a child, because at my age it is not easy to have children any more. Also, my husband was 60 years old, he already had children from a previous marriage, but I didn't want to risk waiting and making it more difficult for us to have children. ' [Resp. 10]*

And also:

*'My husband already had two young children from a previous marriage, who live with us. So I immediately wanted to have my own children after my marriage. I then made the decision not to wait too long, because I didn't want to have much difference between their ages and I wanted them to grow up together, as one family. ' [Resp. 2]*

So even though having children that soon after their marriage, it happened on totally different terms than the other respondents. Also, one must consider the fact that they did not think

having children would mean the sacrifice of a career or an education, at least, not at that point. They already had finished their education and once they were married, it was time for them to have children. When asking them if they now think it was a good idea to have children that soon, no clear answer is given. It seems as if having children has never been an issue, during the rest of the interview it is revealed that they never thought their decision for marriage in general would ever mean for them to have no educational or career prospects any more. More about this will be elaborated on in the paragraph about education.

But having children did however result in them becoming almost completely responsible for household chores. Even though they were more aware about the decisions they made and are more self-reflecting than the other respondents, especially about their role as housewives. Because their partner works full-time it was almost logical that they would stay home for the children. But this was actually not a desirable course of events, as most respondents recognize the fact that working only around the house and taking care of the children also costs a lot of energy:

*‘Around the house I do almost everything, my husband only helps with the groceries. He sometimes helps with cleaning the table, but not always. I did try to make him more involved in the daily chores, but I gave up. Now I learn my son to help with everything around the house. He and my daughter split up their chores equally.’ [Resp. 10]*

And:

*‘When I first arrived in the Netherlands and my husband worked all day, I really wanted to make sure he came home to a clean house and found dinner was ready. At the beginning he did help with some chores, but I always repeated them after him, I was not satisfied with how he did them. So at one point he stopped helping with the chores he did and I had no problem with that. Now it is starting to become too heavy for me, with two small children and a husband who doesn’t help.’ [Resp. 12]*

And even:

*‘I do everything around the house. My husband does not help. Of course I would like to have him be more supportive and helpful, but what can I do if he refuses. I was used to women doing most of the work at home, usually because the men worked. But even since I got a part-time job he still expects of me to have dinner ready every day.’ [Resp. 5]*

Even though most women do not accept the way the household chores are divided and some men do help sometimes, they are largely responsible for most of the chores. This is of course because the partners work full-time jobs, but it sometimes seems as if the partners have no interest or feel no need to do more around the house. And even though these women accept this from their partner, they do not accept this from the children. Within their own small world that largely consist of home they try to wage a struggle for equality and away from the traditional gender roles by emancipating both their sons and their daughters. This way they try to make a difference, even though they will not benefit from it personally. And the most striking part of this is that even though these women are not aware of this, there is a process of emancipation going on in their homes towards a common goal for their children.

## 6.2 Education

As has already become clear, education has played a very important role in the lives of the respondents in this chapter. When they decided to marry someone from the Netherlands, none of the respondents thought they had to give up on any of their dreams and the hope was to be able to continue further after the marriage. In this paragraph more will be elaborated on the respondents' educational background and the delusion they found themselves in after their immigration.

From the total respondents, this groups of respondents makes out 50% as being highly educated. The educational background of these women vary from industrial engineering to law and history. From these highly educated respondents only one respondent is currently taking action to continue her studies in becoming a teacher. Education is considered to be a very important aspect of life, not only for women to obtain self-development and intellectual development, also in order to have respectable and responsible lives. The aspects of respect and responsibility is also reflected in how these women perceive themselves as mother. There are however no differences in how these women think about education for girls and boys, on the contrary:

*'Religion and science are the portals to intellectual development. Living your life without education is as living with a handicap. It opens the door towards respect and appreciation. Both for men and women. There are no differences between men and women, only in capacities and birthright.'* [Resp. 12]

When I asked what she meant by the last sentence she replied:

*'Well, men and women are not born equal. What women lack can be found in men and what men lack can be found in women. So you cannot state that men and women are the same, women have their own, special position in society and in religion. This should be respected'.*

**[Resp. 12]**

When elaborating more in this subject it was revealed that with this specific position entitled to women also her responsibility towards her husband and children is taken into consideration. Here again a sense of religious emancipation can be observed. Women and men are considered equal in status, but not equal in capacities. The Islamic teachings almost completely define what a woman's role is in life and the respondents retrieve their liberation and equality from it. Also, for women this meant being a good mother, and while education provides personal development, it should also be used for the education of their children.

*'Education provides a person at least with self-respect and pride, because it helps you achieve something. Even though I have no possibilities to use my education here in the Netherlands, it helps me in raising my children into being good people. Because of my education I find it less hard to study the Dutch language and culture for example. I need this knowledge if I want to be a good and responsible mother.'* **[Resp. 7]**

On the other hand women and men are not perceived equal by birth, but are very much considered equal towards the right for education and personal development (thus equal in status).

*'Without education you have almost nothing, you become dependent. Education is so important, it makes you capable of taking personal decisions, especially for women who have not been tolerated outside the house for so much decades. Now you cannot deny that women and men are two different individuals, all with own roles in society.'* **[Resp. 2]**

Education is thus not only important for personal and intellectual development, it is also considered a powerful tool for girls. Even though there are no differences between educational possibilities for girls and boy, education for girls seems to be perceived as a chance for greater things:

*'A man will work whatever he does, learn or not. Society provides him with more chances for survival than it provides girls. But when a girl is educated, it raises her status, it makes of her a respectable and highly valued woman. She then demands to be appreciated*

*and is independent from every man. If for example, she marries a guy and it doesn't work out, she doesn't have to be afraid to lose everything, because she is capable to provide for herself and for her children.* ' [Resp. 5]

These statements are not much different than the statements made by the other group of respondents. The difference is that for these women, education has always and is still playing a major part in their lives. But while the other respondents mostly stress gender equality, these respondents tend to emphasize on the differences instead. Just like the difference feminists they appreciate the differences between women and men and stress out that God made women and men not equal. But while difference feminism sought to bring more femininity in society and away from the traditional mother role, these women especially value the differences between women and men in terms of the importance of motherhood for women. Only just like the second wave feminists, education helps to be independent from their husband, but then rather as independent *mothers*. This caring role cannot be seen apart from their emancipation. Yet there is a mismatch between this important aspect in their lives and the policy aims. The Dutch emancipation policies do not take this into account enough. They take the Dutch mentality of having children at daycare in order to work and try to stick this to these women. This does not work however, as is made clear before their role as mother is too important for them and they feel they have to compromise for their children.

So, education for girls is considered not only a tool for independency, it is also important for being a good mother. It seems however, as if the respondents in this chapter are using their role of being a mother as the final purpose in life which makes their education not completely lost. Where at one hand the respondents from the previous chapter found much more chances and possibilities in the Netherlands, these women were far more pessimistic about their future and the choices they made by immigrating to the Netherlands. They feel as if that piece of respect and personal responsibility that was received by their education was lost the moment they came to the Netherlands and found themselves without any career or intellectual perspective:

*'I studied Islamic law and received my Bachelor degree. When I knew I would move to the Netherlands, I had high expectations of the possibilities here and of my capacities. But when I arrived I immediately was lost in the difficult language that I first had to learn. My husband and family in-law did not help me in finding my way to institutions that might have been able to show me the way I could use my higher education here in the Netherlands or*



*maybe retrain myself so I would not lose my Bachelor degree. I did take integration lessons but sometimes when I tell my daughter about the importance of education she asks whether I really did receive my Bachelor degree and how come I work a cleaning job. At those moments I feel so embarrassed and sad.*’ [Resp. 5]

When I ask her what she would have done differently she replies that she should never had moved to the Netherlands. *‘It hurts when people say: Hey, here comes the cleaning lady!’*. *If I would have stayed in my country I would still have my dignity’*.

This regret about coming to the Netherlands is typical for the higher educated respondents. When they decided they would marry someone from the Netherlands, the first thing that pops into their minds is hope and possibilities. As a meritocratic society, Europe is known as the place where higher educated people are welcome and are provided with chances for further intellectual development or in their career. But this turns out to be a great disappointment and they feel they are perceived as helpless, uneducated and oppressed women, not only by society, but also by the government. In their home countries they enjoyed respect and independency as highly educated and intellectual women. This changed in an instance the moment they moved to the Netherlands. One can only image the psychological impact this has on someone and the delusion they found themselves living in.

*‘I studied French law and I received my master degree. When I decided to marry my husband my father was against it, because I had the chance to go to France for a PhD education, but I refused. I thought that with my educational background I would definitely find something to do in the Netherlands. I never thought the moment I made that decision I would give up on my entire education and future. When I arrived I discovered that my husband’s family were not really educated, they could not help me find something to do besides the easy integration lessons. They had a totally different mentality! Now I have two children and my education at least helps me being a good mother to them. I should probably have listened to my father in the first place.’* [Resp. 6]

*‘I received my Bachelor degree in history. When I arrived here I was told by the governmental institutions that my diploma was not worth anything here in the Netherlands. I had to start all over again, as if I was illiterate, a zero, with no education or intellectual capacities. I suppose I am no more than just the ordinary housewife in the Netherlands’*.  
[Resp. 10]

These respondents trusted the Netherlands to be open and helpful towards highly educated women, but the only thing they heard was that their diplomas were not valid here and that they had to start all over again. Of course, these women did not have a supportive environment where their husband or family in-law could help them find their way towards educational institutions. Usually these women were more educated than their partners, so there was a difference in the importance of educational development from the beginning. Also, they got pregnant really soon after their arrival in the Netherlands and with no financial possibilities for daycare, they were forced to stay home with their children. Now that these women have more children they seem to have accepted their situation and almost have no future dreams or plans, except for their children. They feel sad and depressed about the choices they made and feel as if they ruined their future by immigrating to the Netherlands. One respondent even stated:

*'Education for girls opens a new world for women, it provides her with a totally different (future) perspective. But education can sometimes also be a trap. Look at me, I feel as if I am stuck in my head. I studied so hard to obtain a degree, but with my situation now, I will never accept my life as it is. Sometimes I even think I should have just married at a younger age, had children much younger, it would eventually not make any difference in my situation.'* [Resp. 10]

These respondents feel trapped with their marriage and migration to the Netherlands. Their hopes are crushed and even though most of these women are still young, the average age is 39 years, they feel as if there is no place for dreams or future plans any more, except their children:

*'If I look back, I should have never come here. All I do all day is sitting around the house, if I wanted this for my life I would not have bothered to study. I always wanted to be a teacher, but I know this can never happen anymore.'* [Resp. 10]

At this point the emancipation policies do not provide for these women's needs at all! Not only a great human capital is lost by not guiding these women towards educational retraining or helping them in finding suitable career options, these women are forced into a housebound role and into social isolation. With no supportive social environment these women are really abandoned by the government. While the problem analysis of the emancipation of migrant women considers them as victims and vulnerable, their real vulnerability begins the moment

they immigrate to the Netherlands. In an instance they are changed from independent, future-oriented young women into socially isolated and home-bound housewives. The emancipation policy is too general and does not provide space for intellectual outliers to be detected. Now, all the women are considered having an educational lag that is sufficiently closed through language and integration courses, while the fact is that higher educated migrants are increasing. If these higher educated women were detected the moment they entered the Netherlands, they could have been presented with a total different integration course which focuses more on higher education and leading these women towards further educational and social development.

There are luckily some carefully formulated hopes and goals for the future, but they are all postponed until the children grow up. Most women do not know where to start and how they can do it, but there is still a little educational flame that is burning inside. These women however believe that they will never be able to obtain that same level of respect and achievement they had before. More about this will be discussed further in this chapter, at the part about participation.

Their children have a chance at a better education and they live less controlled lives than in their home countries. As one respondent states:

*'Here you can do whatever you want. In Palestine people interfere with everything, especially family. When or where you have children, what you do outside your houses and everywhere there is gossip. There is gossip here too of course, but it is not the same as over there. There, you cannot live your life without interference!'* [Resp. 16]

### 6.3 Participation

In the previous paragraph education has been discussed. The respondents in this chapter all have a high education background. In the Netherlands however, they turned to be less flexible in adapting and more difficult to activate. In this paragraph their participation will be further elaborated on, divided into two sections: social participation and political participation.

Just like in the previous chapter, social participation in this chapter elaborates more on the activities the respondents participate in out-doors. A big difference between the respondents in this chapter and the previous one is that the women from the lower educated group never worked before they married. This group is different. As some women graduated an Bachelor

or Master degree but not immediately got married, they worked in their home countries for several years. However, when arriving in the Netherlands, having a child and eventually realizing they will not be able to use their diploma's anymore, these respondents took two different decisions. Some started a part-time job, usually in cleaning, others decided not to work at all until the children are older. Some women try to take (language) internships, at least, if they find a place and the time:

*'I have to work. I work at a cleaning-job because I wanted to be able to provide for myself and my children without having to ask my husband for money all the time. Sometimes he just could say no. And my children are now getting older, they have more needs and I want to save some money for their education.'* [Resp. 5]

When I asked if she has other plans or ambitions besides working at this cleaning job she replied:

*'Not really, at least not now. I participated on an internship at the hospital, but I had to stop because of the governmental cut offs. Through this internship I thought about taking a one year training to become a nutrition consultant, but I don't have any specific plans. First I want my children to be older, more independent and prevailing at school. Also, after you pass the State Examination 1, the rest is not paid for anymore. At the moment, with two small children I cannot pay for the courses myself.'* [Resp. 5]

The children becoming these women's top priority applies to all the respondents. The part-time jobs seem not only a way to be more self-providing and active, it also is something they used to do before marriage. Respondent 5 that is quoted above worked one year at a private school after she finished her Bachelor study. Just like continuing with a higher education, working after graduation is considered a logical next step. In the Netherlands however, this 'logical' next step was interrupted, not because they had children, but because they were not given the opportunity to continue. The only thing they heard were all the deficits they had, instead of responding to their qualities. Just like what happened to the next respondent:

*'After I graduated I wanted to teach. Unfortunately there were no history teaching vacancies, so I started to work at a logistics company as a office manager. I worked here for nine years before I married my husband.'* [Resp. 10]

When I asked what expectations she had from immigrating to the Netherlands, she replied:

*'Well, this probably sounds stupid, but I really thought I could eventually start teaching. (Laughs), this was definitely not the case. I was told that my diploma was not valid here, I had to start all over, as if I was illiterate, a zero, with no education or intellectual capacities.'* [Resp. 10]

This respondent is currently not working or participating at any (language) internships. She told me that at one point she received a letter from the municipality, stating that with her level 2 integration she was already integrated sufficient, they would not provide any courses any more. She now had to continue practicing her language by communicating with neighbors and when she goes out for groceries. She is willingly to continue taking courses or participating at internships, but it is too expensive. With all the governmental cut offs, there seems to be little opportunities left for her. The will to work exists, but the chances do not. And while the dominant discourse states that these women are socially isolated and hard to activate, no possibilities are created to help these more than willingly women to find suitable jobs or provide them with educational courses. The governmental cut-offs affects them so much, while their input in society would be so much greater if they would just get a chance for participation. This is definitely a great loss for society.

Hence the fact that even though these women are quite young and dissatisfied with their current situation, they seem to take no actions in trying to change their current status. Some of them have a part-time cleaning job, but this is to provide themselves and their children with some extra pocket money. It seems as if the children are now not only their top priority, also they put a large deal of their own hopes and ambitions on their children's' future, even though they feel a big loss themselves:

*'I am currently not working, and I am not planning to until my youngest child goes to elementary school. I want to be the best mother for my children, so they will not be deprived of anything that can stand in the way of their future.'* [Resp. 7]

When elaborating more on the subject of work and children, she eventually states:

*'Sometimes I do feel uncomfortable not working. I get this feeling of uncertainty. Working is not only making money, it also means personal development, meeting new people and learning from each other. It gives you a certain meaning.'* [Resp. 7]

This meaning work provides seems to be a deeply treasured norm. Especially for women. Even though it is not always stated out loud, and even if they state their children to be their top priority, it seems as if a job can provide for something children cannot provide for.

*'When a women works for her own money, she becomes a stronger person. She will never have to be afraid of her husband leaving her alone with no one to provide for her. Of course having children is the most beautiful thing and it's a selfless job. But if a women doesn't know how to survive outside her house, she will always have this feeling of uncertainty.'* [Resp. 6]

It seems as if their emancipation did not flourish after their arrival to the Netherlands, instead it seems to be going backwards. The women in this research were so aware of their position in society, their capacities and their future plans, but almost all of them seem to have become insignificant towards the future. Social participation is only visible through the part-time cleaning jobs some of them have, a job that is too humiliating for them. While the other group of respondents gained more in terms of education, participation and even emancipation, the women in this chapter lost all of those aspects they already possessed. The highly gendered mother role becomes more and more important for them which eventually pushes them back in terms of emancipation and towards a traditional social status.

The level of political participation of the group respondents in this chapter seems not to differ too much from the other group. Most women are aware of the current political situation in the Netherlands and they vote if they can, but they are not very active in politics. It seems however as if the respondents in this chapter think politics more through, comparing it with the political situation in their country. They acknowledge for example the fact that in the Netherlands political power happens through people's voting, while for example in Morocco, the political system is based on the monarchy.

*'Voting is important for all of society, it makes everyone contribute and equality is preserved. In my country political freedom has not always been self-evident. It is now slowly changing and people have the right more to speak out, but there is still a piece of freedom missing.'* [Resp. 2]

This respondents even states that she could consider becoming active within a political party if her Dutch was sufficient. She would then want to be active in subjects concerning women. This is however just a thought and when elaborating more on the subject no concrete ideas

come forward.

Some respondents even were politically active during their college years, but are currently not. Even though some respondents do not vote, they do try to understand political structures. This sometimes contradicts their first reaction on not being interested in politics. When however elaborating more on the subject they make links between the Dutch political situation and the political situation in their country.

*'I am not really interested in politics. I cannot vote because I do not have the Dutch nationality. Sometimes when I watch the news I hear things about politics, but it is not always easy for me to follow.'* [Resp. 5]

When she was asked if she would have been more interested in politics if she would understand everything being said she replied:

*'During my college years I was pretty active, I often attended political student meetings. But then again, I understood where I was active for, here I don't. Political understanding is essential for understanding the society you live in. In my country for example, there is a lot of corruption, you know that, so you also know what to expect from governmental officials and so on. Maybe that is why I do not understand the Dutch society completely, because I do not understand her politics.'* [Resp.5]

The last sentence was being said a little sarcastic, but is true though. This respondent made a point, social structures are very much dependent of the current political values (and vice versa). If you already lack a political awareness, much discussions of social prejudice remain incomprehensible. Like one respondent said about Wilders: 'What is his problem?!' And that is true, they know this political person to be anti-Muslim or anti-migrants, but they have no idea where his statements are based on.

As one respondent certainly concluded:

*'I watch politics on television very much and I often listen to what Wilders has to say. I came to the conclusion that this man has no intellect at all! How can someone who knows that so many Muslim people live in the Dutch society still advocates against Islam? There are no solutions for the problem he is raising, only denial.'* [Resp. 12]

So even though the respondents very much feel agitated about what for example Wilders has to say about Islam, it seems only so because it became such a hot topic in society. But

whether their political interests are only raised because of the populist politicians that are currently receiving too many attention still remains unclear. In contrast to the other group of respondents they do however put more thought into politics than just voting for an obvious political party and are more aware of the importance of politics in general. This is probably explained because of their academic education and comparable to the first wave feminist who thought political participation meant an equal status between men and women. The respondents in this chapter however did not grow up in a democratic country, so political participation does in fact and in essence not mean the same as for the first wave feminists.

## 6.4 Conclusion

The respondents in this chapter were not only higher educated than the other group, they also married at a much older age. This choice was deliberately made, as they first wanted to finish a higher education. It also meant that these women were much more independent even before marriage, so they did not have much difficulties with leaving their families. They did however experience a different shock after their marriage, due to the educational differences between them and their partners, who were mostly less educated than they were. Also this group of respondents became pregnant soon after their arrival in the Netherlands, but unlike the other respondents this was a very conscious decision. They all were around the age of 30 during their first pregnancy and while they already continued an education, marriage and children was a logical 'next step'. This would not compromise their emancipation because they felt already emancipated before marriage and having children would not change this. However, due to the lack of support from the social and governmental environment these women did not get the chance to actively participate out-doors. This resulted in the fact that these women were much more pushed back into a dependent and immobile lifestyle than they were used to. It seems as if their marriage and immigration to the Netherlands meant much more a step backwards, opposite to the other group of respondents.

This lack of support also meant that their educational background was either not acknowledged or was overseen. This resulted in these women experiencing a great feeling of loss, not only because they could not benefit from their academic education but also and largely because they changed from respected and intellectually developed strong women into vulnerable, non-educated victims. But their real vulnerability begins the moment they immigrate to the Netherlands, when at that point the developed emancipation policies do not provide for these women's needs at all. In an instance they are changed from independent, future-oriented young women into socially isolated and home-bound housewives. The



emancipation policy lacks in detecting differences between women's capacities which leads to a great loss in human capital. While some of the respondents obtain a part-time cleaning job, they feel humiliated to admit this to their children and because of the Dutch perceive them as uneducated and 'backwards'. Once in their home country their emancipation and personal development was flourishing, but after their immigration to the Netherlands this only went backwards. Their roles as mother has become the most important part of their life and they think that it is the only thing that can still benefit from their education. They are now not only excluded from the entire decision making process for the emancipation policies which currently does not achieve any results for these women, due to the imbalances and the one sided negative view of the existing policies these women are pushed back in terms of emancipation and towards a more traditional status.

## Chapter 7

### 7. Conclusions and policy recommendations

This research has tried to find an answer to the question of what view the Dutch emancipation policies holds on the state of the emancipation of Muslim, migrant women and if this view is consistent with their own needs, capacities and ideas on emancipation. Sixteen Arabic speaking, Muslim migrants are interviewed in order to present an adequate result of their vision on the subject. During the interviews I found out that there were big differences in perceptions between the respondents who were low educated and higher educated. Therefore a division is made between those two groups in discussing their results.

The Netherlands have had a large history of women emancipation. With the emergence of two emancipation waves, women not only in the Netherlands, but in all Western societies have fought for their rights and freedom for decades now. While the first emancipation wave was characterized by the solidarity of women participating in the women's movement to obtain formal rights, the second emancipation wave occurred in a need for equal opportunities and equal recognition of the masculine and the feminine in society. Both emancipation waves however proved that no longer can be assumed what emancipation actually means and that through history different women ascribed other meanings and content to feminism. In this research Muslim migrant women got a chance to have their say.

Within the Dutch emancipation policies, it took some decades before migrant women were included specifically. While diversity was promoted at first, it was thought that women from minority groups would emancipate when they integrate. After the millennium this attitude towards migrants changed dramatically, especially concerning Muslim minorities, whose Islamic religion withheld them from integrating and accepting the Dutch values of freedom and equality. An important feature that became a core element in this discussion was gender, what led to a greater emphasis on Muslim, migrant women and their position. They now were perceived as victims of their own backward culture and religion and were considered vulnerable and deprived while the emancipation policies aimed at encouraging them to participate in all kinds of social work in order to prevent them from social exclusion and combat violence against them. This was a major shift in the policy arena, because while at first only participation was considered a policy goal, now social exclusion and violence replaced this aim. This resulted in an emancipation policy which related to the integration

policy and where more or less cultural adaptation seemed desirable. For Muslim, migrant women this meant adapting to the dominant ideal image of the emancipated native female. But by assuming there is this ideal image and forcing it on these women, the policies ignore any input and any perceptions or needs migrant women personally have. There is however one paradox in the developed policies: while on the one hand these women are considered victims with no power to change their position, they at the other hand are considered to have the power to emancipate their families with them, especially their children. So even though they are treated as passive and helpless victims, their influence is considered to be huge. Different scholars have already argued that it is impossible to fit the Western criteria on emancipation to women from non-Western societies. While within the Dutch emancipation policy, this is exactly what is done, the first recommendation of this research is to involve these women more in the decision making process. If one thing has become clear, it is that the women in this research are in no way passive and helpless victims, on the contrary. They know exactly what they want and need, but there are however no encouraging policies to help them obtain a certain individual position in society. By including these women in the policy making process, not only will they be more addressed, their motivation will increase while the Dutch society can benefit from the large capacities these women usually have.

The women in this research were all very much aware of the negative view that exists about their position in the Dutch society. Their first reaction towards their emancipation was a very defensive one, claiming they were already emancipated and stating that their rights are described in the Islamic, historic writings. This already implies that there is absolutely no acknowledgement of what the developed emancipation policies state. There are however some great aspects they mentioned that should be addressed if the policies really aim at helping these women. First I will present their scores in the coding scheme to display the themes and their significance in this research, see table 7.1.

<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Family &amp; Marriage</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Social Participation</i>	<i>Political Participation</i>	<i>Total</i>
Respondent 1	2	2	1	3	7
Respondent 2	2	3	2	3	10
Respondent 3	1	1	1	1	4
Respondent 4	1	1	2	1	5
Respondent 5	1	3	2	2	9
Respondent 6	2	3	2	2	9
Respondent 7	2	3	1	3	9
Respondent 8	1	2	2	2	8
Respondent 9	2	1	1	2	6
Respondent 10	1	3	2	1	7
Respondent 11	1	2	1	2	6
Respondent 12	1	3	1	3	8
Respondent 13	1	2	2	3	6
Respondent 14	2	2	2	2	8
Respondent 15	3	3	1	1	8
Respondent 16	1	3	2	2	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>33</b>	

Table 7.1: Coding scheme

Every theme can obtain a total score of 48 points. The educational theme received the highest score. This is however caused by the fact that half of the respondents finished a higher education before their marriage. Political participation is second, even though the individual scores of the respondents differ very much. Most respondents are politically aware, but due to language deficiencies they cannot always understand what is said about politics on TV or in news papers. Also, some of the respondents do not have a Dutch passport, so they cannot

vote. In order to conclude with some effective recommendations that were obtained through this research I will now discuss the themes separately, with the exception of the theme Political Participation. This because of what was said before. But first I will shortly conclude with some theoretical insights that have been retrieved from mainly chapter 4, where the respondents all spoke out about their ideas of emancipation.

### ***Theoretical feedback***

The first and foremost important aspect is the fact that Western views on emancipation cannot be imposed on non-Western women. A ‘theory of the feminine’ is impossible because there is no universal concept of women, gender of emancipation for that matter. A universal feminine identity might well be possible in a homogeneous society, but in a globalized world where mixture between culture, ethnicity and religion has become the rule one should take different attitudes and views about almost every social matter into account. With the concept of emancipation this is no different due to the assumption that different groups in society pursue different interests. Western feminism suggests an educated, modern female who is independent and free to make personal choices. This idea on Western feminism has on the other hand a vision about non-Western women being uneducated, victims of their traditional culture and family oriented. Within this vision there is a clear sense of what is considered ‘good’ emancipation and what is considered ‘bad’. This research has however shown that most of the respondents do not at all consider themselves as victims or oppressed, on the contrary, especially the higher educated women seem to have gone backward in their process of emancipation after their marriage and immigration to the Netherlands. They do not take the Western view on emancipation as a starting point for their emancipation, but their Islamic identity. This means that in a diverse society as the Dutch one Western feminism seems outdated. Instead, a cultural (and historical) context based feminism should make her entrance.

This leads me to the second theoretical insight that can be derived from this study and that is the concept of Islamic emancipation. Just like the Christian feminism during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Islamic identity can absolutely not be disconnected from emancipation. The most striking thing that was made clear by all the respondents is the fact that they use the Islamic teachings to give interpretation to their emancipation, their rights as women and thus also their obligations. This for example includes motherhood and the importance of providing a good caring environment. There seems to be an emerging Islamic feminism that is impossible to ignore, not in the academic world, but certainly not in the policy world. This Islamic

feminism looks like a third emancipation wave that emerged from the Black Women's Movement, only this is not a reaction towards white feminism, it looks like a reaction towards the existing dominant discourse about Islam. This was clearly visible through the defensive reactions the respondents gave when asked about what emancipation meant to them. Also throughout the rest of the interview living according to the Islamic rules is considered in every aspect of life. It has become impossible to ignore or neglect this religious identity, at least not if social cohesion is desirable within a society.

In the next four subparagraphs more will be elaborated on what implications this has on policy interventions.

### *Family and Marriage*

All the respondents in this research were married in a traditional manner, usually through interventions from family or friends. After their marriage and immigration to the Netherlands they almost immediately became pregnant. There are however differences in the ages at which the two groups of respondents had children, as the lower educated women married at much younger age they also became mother very young. The higher educated women married at a much older age, after a Bachelor or Master study, so when they became pregnant it was not only at a older age, it was a self-conscious choice they made that seemed logical for them. These choices however did result in them being pushed into a more home-bound role, as their husbands worked full time jobs. They became almost fully responsible for the household chores, which were unequally divided between them and their partners. Here a more intensive governmental interference is desirable because it might provide these women more opportunities than they had. Due to multiple causes, like a non-supportive social environment, the emphasize on integration as a personal responsibility and a typical case of falling between two stools these women eventually got pregnant, lost every other purpose in live besides being a mother and household chores became again traditionally divided between them and their partners. Having children and being a mother is considered a very important norm though. Even if they acknowledge the fact that because of their children they are currently less capable to work out-doors, their role as mother is considered a very important one and cannot be separated from their identity. Emancipation policies should be developed from this framework: focussing on only social participation remains contra-productive if these women's identity that is formed by their mother role continues to be ignored. Their emancipation and care for their families are interrelated, so developing policies that aim at the cooperation of both and is more aware of the position of family might result in a much better policy outcome

than is the case now. This means that emancipation policies need to become more aware of the role of care, while policies on care need to become more aware of women participation. This awareness can mainly be achieved through for examples education programs, financial allowances for day-care, and increasing possibilities for extra-curricular activities like sports or music. Also, their Islamic identity should be respected and taken into consideration, instead of displaying it as a harmful aspect of their life. The Islamic identity cannot be denied as part of the Dutch society and by involving it only through biased assumptions the target group will never be reached. Policy has effect when the target group feels respected, considered and listened to. With the current policy interventions there is a typically top-down approach that tries to impose certain Western views on lifestyle towards non-Western citizens. A bottom-up approach has much more effect and intervenes much more in the 'core business' of the target group.

### *Education*

The educational background of the respondents in this research can be divided into two groups: the higher educated women and the lower educated women. Both groups immigrated having totally different expectations of their future in the Netherlands. While the lower educated women found a lot of opportunities in the Netherlands, the higher educated group felt trapped. Not only were they shocked by the fact that promising Europe could not mean anything for their academic background and treated them as illiterate, uneducated marriage migrants, the differences between them and their husbands were huge. All of them have had a higher education than their husband and when arriving to the Netherlands they found that their family in-laws had a total different mentality. With their educational background these women thought they would be able to continue their career in the Netherlands, a country that has been known for her open attitude towards knowledge. This however turned out to be a delusion, as most women did not have any opportunities to use their education in this new country. While integration courses were not organized by the government anymore, these women had no help in finding their way into educational institutions that could provide some sort of retraining based on their intellectual capacities. While before marriage they obtained a status of respect, admiration and independency, in the Netherlands they became dependent, immobile and insecure. Future hopes and dreams are now limited to their children, while they perceive themselves as hopelessly lost. It is peculiar to think about the huge capacities the Dutch society misses because of the social immobilization of these women. The current emancipation policy bases her idea on one vision of migrant women, while however the

different backgrounds and context where these women come from require a flexible approach. The women who have a higher educational background can not only mean something for the entire Dutch society, their motivation, intellectual and sometimes scientific knowledge can even help change the existing views on the position on Muslim, migrant women. These women should be identified immediately after their arrival and should be provided with sufficient opportunities to help them acquire a position within the Dutch society as soon as possible, by investing in the education of migrants, instead of leaving them trapped in their social and emotional status. Considering the fact that one respondent even missed a chance for a PhD position in France by immigrating to the Netherlands and now works a part-time cleaning job, one can only imagine the loss for the entire Dutch society because of the limitations within the developed policies. If these women were more involved into the decision-making process their needs and input in society can become more recognized. In order to do this, more research is needed about the backgrounds of migrants, their capacities and (intellectual) skills. Also, a more intense screening of migrants is needed to provide support where needed or guidance towards interests, capacities and skills. Instead of emphasizing on just the Dutch integration program additional capacity and ability assessment can lead towards career (or education) trajectories. This already gives so much guidance and even if migrant women get pregnant for example or fall out for some other reason, they have something to fall back on once they decide to make a new start or resumption. These so called empowerment projects can be very helpful in the long-run.

### *Social Participation*

The social participation for both groups is mostly limited to a part-time cleaning job or no job at all. Most women feel the need to work after the children start to grow up, so they can be somewhat financially independent. However, some women whose husband is on social welfare cannot work or are not allowed to because that would mean that they would lose some of the social allowances which causes a lower family income. Working may well be beneficial for their social participation, but the financial consequences are too large to weigh of the options. The social situation of these women provides no opportunities for improvement because of this so called poverty-trap. Intervening in this mechanism would benefit the social situation of these women, who usually are more than willingly to work. Some of the causes of the phenomenon of the poverty trap are the large cut-offs in social welfare. In order to intervene in the poverty-trap that opposes women's participation it should be made possible to set up some sort of minimum wage that is allowed for women to earn. This way they can have



a personal input in how much they want to work while overseeing the consequences. And of course, due to the financial crises poverty increases, so promoting employment is always a positive incentive.

The kind of work the respondents mostly do are cleaning jobs, which is especially frustrating for the higher educated women. Empowerment projects that increase and recognize these women's capacities and needs, not only encouraged higher educated women to value a paid job more, it will also stimulate lower educated women into more social participation and outdoor activities. These ideas behind these projects are basically the same as what is discussed above at the educational subparagraph.

**Recommendations listed:**

- Including the target group into the decision-making process and recognizing and respecting their religious values as a given.
- Involving their care-based identity in the emancipation policy by acknowledging that their emancipation and motherhood are interrelated.
- Developing a flexible and context based emancipation policy that responds to the capacities and needs of individual migrant women.
- Intervening into the mechanism of the poverty-trap to benefit the social situation of women and setting up empowerment projects that encourage and stimulate social participation.

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