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GENDER AND MINORITIES

Developing statistics on gender and ethnicity:  
Some general considerations and the Dutch case as an example\*

Submitted by Statistics Netherlands

1. INTRODUCTION

1. More than 830,000 women belonging to non-Western ethnic minorities live in the Netherlands (on a total population of 16 million). The largest groups among the ethnic minority populations are from Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese or Antillean origin. Two-thirds of the non-Western ethnic minority-women belong to one of these four groups.

2. The position and participation of women from ethnic minorities is an important issue in Dutch policies. The reason for this is that the participation of these women, very often, is much lower not only than that of women of the mainstream group (indigenous women), but also lower

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than that of men of the same ethnic group. In addition, these differences vary between and among the groups, for instance looking at their age and position within the household.

3. The aims of this paper are twofold. The first aim of this paper is to look at some basic questions that need to be answered while developing gender statistics taking diversity among ethnic groups into account. The questions addressed are: How to define ethnic minorities? Which indicators are of particular relevance regarding gender and ethnicity? What data sources can be used and how can we get a representative picture of the lives of women and men from different ethnic backgrounds?

4. The second aim of this paper is to present some information about the position of women from different ethnic minorities in the Netherlands. The paper also compares the position and participation of minority women with the women of indigenous group and also with the men from their own minority group. The themes considered are: level of education, labour market participation, numbers of hours worked and attitudes on the roles of women and men in society. Furthermore, the paper will not only describe the differences between the groups, but also try to explain differences in labour participation between the groups.

## 2. GATHERING DATA ON GENDER AND ETHNICITY

### 2.1 How to define ethnic minorities?

5. Almost one fifth of the Dutch population can be classified as ‘foreigners’ (CBS 2005). In publications of Statistics Netherlands, ‘foreigners’ are defined as persons who are living in the Netherlands<sup>1</sup> and of whom at least one parent is born abroad. A distinction is made between foreigners of first and second-generation and between western and non-western. A first generation foreigner is someone who is born abroad and with at least one parent born abroad. A second-generation foreigner is born in the Netherlands and has at least one parent is born abroad. Western foreigners come from Europe (excluding Turkey), North America, Oceania, Indonesia and Japan and non-western foreigners come from Turkey, Africa, Latin America and the rest of Asia.

6. In Dutch policies, the term ‘foreigners’ is not used for non-indigenous population, but they have used the term ‘ethnic minorities’. The members of ethnic minorities not only share their ethnic identity but also have a relatively fair chance of being deprived in the society. For that reason, in the Dutch minority policies, they were designated as target groups. About 10 per cent of the Dutch population belongs to the ethnic minorities. In Dutch minority policies the same distinction is made between first and second-generation minorities, as mentioned above<sup>2</sup>.

7. Although there is a large overlap between ‘non-western foreigners’ and ‘ethnic minorities’, the overlap is not complete. Persons of Southern- and Eastern European background, for instance, are counted as ethnic minorities but not as non-western foreigners. The largest groups among both the non-western foreigners and the ethnic minorities are persons of Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese or Antillean origin. Two-thirds of non-western foreigners belong to one of those four groups.

8. The Dutch definitions of foreigners, and minorities are different than the corresponding definitions used in other countries (see: CBS 2005). Statistics Sweden, for example, defines ethnic minorities as persons living in Sweden and who are born abroad. On the one hand, the Swedish definition is narrower, since it takes only the first generation into account. But on the other hand, it is broader, as there is no restriction concerning the countries of origin.

9. Other countries (for instance Belgium, France and Germany) use citizenship as indicator for the identification of minorities. In the United Kingdom people themselves are asked to which ethnic group they belong (generally referred to as self-identification).

10. For international comparisons, these differences in definitions are of course problematic. Not only do they lead to different estimates regarding the number of the minority populations, but also the comparison between groups are difficult. In order to compare the share of ethnic minorities in the total population, statistical offices could use foreign citizenship as an indicator since this information is often available. Statistics Netherlands recently published figures for 6 countries (see Table 1). These figures are based on the definitions that countries used by themselves independently. As shown in Table 1 the Netherlands shares the largest proportion of minority populations among six countries if they are considered based on the population of foreigners (18.8%) while it shares the smallest proportion (4.1%) of minority population if the consideration is based on the citizenship.

Table 1. Share of foreigners in the population using two different definitions, 2003/2004

	Regular definition	Share according to regular definition	Share according to citizenship
Belgium	citizenship	8.2	8.2
France	citizenship	12.2	12.2
Germany	citizenship	8.9	8.9
Netherlands	at least one parent born abroad	18.8	4.1
United Kingdom	personal perception	7.9	not available
Sweden	born abroad and (one of the) parents also	12.0	5.3

Source: CBS 2005.

11. For Dutch policies, the use of a definition based on the country of one's own birth and that of the parents is much more useful than the use of a definition based on nationality. This is because the first is a better indicator to identify deprived groups. This does not only help to monitor their position in the society but also helps to take decisions what policy measures need to be adopted.

## 2.2 Minority policies and the choice of indicators

12. The aim of the Dutch minority policies the integration of ethnic minorities in Dutch society, or one could also say: the assimilation of ethnic minorities in society. This integration should manifest itself in economic as well as in social and cultural aspects of life. Not only should ethnic minorities participate at the labour market, but they should also have (regular) contacts with indigenous Dutch populations in order to learn and practice basic Dutch norms and values. The central themes in Dutch integration policies therefore are: strengthening the integrative effects of education for minorities, stimulating the labour market participation, housing directed at integration and the emancipation of women from ethnic minorities (TK 2005-2006).

13. It is also interesting to note that the emancipation of women from ethnic minorities is one of the main themes of Dutch minority policies. According to the Minister for immigration and integration, the emancipation of women from ethnic minorities “touches the core of integration policies” (TK 2005-2006, p.5). Just shortly after the new Dutch government (Balkenende 2) took office, the cabinet published an Action Plan with the outlines of policies on the emancipation and integration of minorities women and girls. (TK 2003-2004). This plan focuses especially on underprivileged women- women with no education or only a low level of education. Despite this focus, the government points out that many of these women may not reach to have enough qualification to take up jobs in the near future. Due to this reason, the national government stimulates local governments to focus their programmes on these women and get them out of their isolated environment, by organising all kinds of possible ways that are easily accessible to reach and sensitize them. Improving the mastery of the Dutch language is one of the main objectives, together with increasing participation of minority women in the activities of civil societies. The ultimate goal at the end is to increase the labour market participation of minority women. It should become equal to the participation rate of the indigenous Dutch population. But since labour market participation will probably not be within reach for many minority women, their participation in voluntary works is also stimulated.

14. Another important issue in the policies are traditional opinions that hinder the emancipation of minority women. The government facilitates the discussion within ethnic minorities on issues such as arranged marriages, honour-related violence, and the role of women in society.

15. The content of the policies gives important indications that data on minority women and men need to be collected and disseminated. The brief summary of Dutch policies on women from ethnic minorities calls for data on: mastery of the Dutch language, educational level, labour market participation, attitudes on the roles of women and men in society and participation of minority women in civil society.

16. Another source of information for the decision-making on the choice of relevant indicators can be the expertise of minority groups, especially the expertise of minority womens' groups. The experiences of minority women based on their own living and working conditions can point out additional themes that need to be addressed by policies and therefore also point at other possible indicators that should be included in statistics. In the Netherlands we try to do this by including representatives of E-Quality (the Dutch knowledge centre on gender and ethnicity) in the advisory board for the Dutch Emancipation Monitor.

## 2.3 Sources and methodological issues

17. After having an idea of which indicators we should incorporate in statistics to address on gender and minority issues, an important question to be answered is : what data sources can be used? In the Netherlands, mixed data sources are available. For example, basic demographic information is available from registrations, which come from the administration of the Dutch municipalities. Also part of the information on the level of education, the participation at the labour market and on incomes is available by the administrative system of Dutch Municipalities. Some statistics also come from the surveys.

18. However, the regular statistical sources do not provide all the data that we would like to present. This is partly due to the fact that ethnic minorities often are underrepresented in the datasets. This can be a consequence of lower response rates, for example caused by language problems. But another problem can be that the sample size is not big enough, in order to include enough respondents of different ethnic backgrounds.

19. The response and non-response rates are always an important issue for researchers. When the response is low among for example ethnic minorities, it is impossible to present an adequate picture of their position and participation in the society. And although there are statistical techniques available to adjust the selectivity of the data to a certain extent, if the response-group is not representative for the minority population, the problem continues to exist.

20. When one needs to use regular surveys to gather information about ethnic minorities, different strategies are necessary to tackle the different causes of non-response among ethnic minorities.

- (a) One of the causes of non-response is that some groups, among whom minorities, are less often able to participate. Language problems are an important cause of that. Therefore, it is necessary to use interpreters or to translate the questionnaire in their own native languages. It is also important to note that if a substantial share of the minority population is illiterate and the survey consists of a written questionnaire, one should consider carrying out face-to-face interview with these groups;
- (b) Another cause can be that members of ethnic minorities more often refuse to participate in the survey. Often, extra incentives are used to try to raise the response rate. But recent research in the Netherlands has shown that this hardly had any effect on the response rate of ethnic minorities;
- (c) In addition, a high non-response rate can be caused by difficulties in getting in touch and make an appointment for the interview with the potential respondents. For example, in the Netherlands, Surinamese men are notoriously difficult to get in touch with. Moreover, if an appointment for an interview is made, it often happens that the interviewee is not present after all. Research has shown that increasing the number of efforts to get in touch with the respondent leads to higher response rates among ethnic minorities (CBS 2005).

21. Another problem that is already mentioned above is that the sample size might be too small in order to be able to get representative information about the ethnic minorities in question. In principle, there are two options to tackle this problem. One is to make use of an additional sample of ethnic minorities. Another is to carry out a specific survey among ethnic minorities and a group of indigenous persons to make comparisons. In the Netherlands, both methods are

applied. Most of the information that will be presented in the rest of this paper come from a specific survey among ethnic minorities. The survey was conducted in 2004/2005 using face-to-face interviews with roughly 4000 respondents, from the four largest ethnic groups in the Netherlands (Turks, Moroccans, Surinamese and Antilleans), and with a group of indigenous Dutch respondents. Since roughly 75 per cent of the members of these minority groups live in one of the fifty largest cities in the Netherlands, the survey was carried out in these cities. In order to make participation possible for those Turks and Moroccans who do not understand the Dutch language, the questionnaire was translated into Turkish and Arabic languages. (see: Keuzenkamp and Merens 2006)

### 3. WOMEN FROM ETHNIC MINORITIES IN THE NETHERLANDS

22. After these more general issues on gathering data on gender and ethnicity, I will present some data on women from ethnic minorities in the Netherlands. I focus on some of the indicators that I mentioned in paragraph 2.2: mastery of the Dutch language and level of education, labour participation and attitudes on the roles of women and men. At the end of this paragraph, I will try to explain differences in labour participation of women from different ethnic backgrounds, by looking at some of these factors.

#### 3.1 Language and level of education

23. Let us first look at the mastery of the Dutch language. Turkish and Moroccan women less often speak Dutch at a (reasonably) good level than Antillean and especially Surinamese women, for whom the Dutch language is rarely a problem. (Turkenburg and Gijsberts 2006) The Surinamese and Antilleans often speak Dutch in their country of origin.

24. One can also see that among the Turks and the Moroccans the mastery of the Dutch language is more often a problem for women than for men. And it must be mentioned that the picture for the women might in fact be worse than the data suggest. In the survey that was used here, this information is only known for the 'head of the household' (most often the man). As one can see in the next Table, the level of education among Turkish and Moroccan women is lower than that of the men of these groups.

Table 2 Mastery of the Dutch language (as assessed by the interviewer) of heads of households, 2002 (%)

ethnic origin	women			men		
	good	mediocre	bad	good	mediocre	bad
Turkish	39	32	29	38	44	18
Moroccan	55	31	14	56	35	9
Surinamese	95	4	1	95	4	0
Antillean	86	12	1	90	9	1

Source: ISEO/SCP (SPVA'02)

25. The majority of Turkish and Moroccan women (almost two thirds) have only been to Primary school or not even that (see table 3). Nineteen per cent of the Turkish women and 39 per

cent of the Moroccan women who are living in the Netherlands have not even been to Primary school or only been for a few years (Gijsberts 2004). It is entirely clear that among women, on an average, the indigenous Dutch women, have achieved the highest level of education. The share of women that has only been to Primary school is very low (10%). Almost a quarter of the indigenous women are highly educated – compared to 3 per cent and 5 per cent of the Turkish and Moroccan women respectively. In all ethnic groups (including the indigenous group) men are, on average, better educated than women.

Table 3 Level of education, population 15-64 (those who are still at school are not included), 2002 (%)

ethnic origin	women				men			
	none or max. primary school	lower secondary (vbo/mavo)	higher secondary (mbo/ havo/ vwo)	tertiary (hbo/wo)	none or max. primary school	lower secondary (vbo/mavo)	higher secondary (mbo/ havo/ vwo)	tertiary (hbo/wo)
Turkish	61	19	17	3	43	27	22	8
Moroccan	63	13	19	5	53	15	22	10
Surinamese	25	33	30	13	19	33	32	15
Antillean	22	34	27	18	18	31	29	23
indigenous	10	25	41	24	9	20	43	28

Source: ISEO/SCP (SPVA'02), CBS (EBB'02)

26. It must be mentioned that within the last decade, the level of education of men and women from ethnic minorities has increased considerably (and faster than that of the indigenous population). The level of education of women from ethnic minorities however increases less fast than that of men (Gijsberts 2004). It can be expected that the level of education will continue to rise in the coming years, because the proportion of second generation among minorities will grow. At present, about 46% of the Turks, 48% of the Moroccans, 41% of the Surinamese and 36% of Antilleans belong to the second generation.

### 3.2 Labour market participation

27. As one can see from Table 4, among all women, the indigenous (66%) and the Surinamese (64%) are the ones who are the most often active at the labour market (at least 1 hour per week). Women from Turkish (38%) and Moroccan (41%) origin are comparatively least active.

28. In all categories, the activity rate is higher among men than among women. The largest gap between the employment of men and women can be seen in the Turkish group and the smallest gap can be seen with the Surinamese. Among men, the Moroccans are the ones who share the smallest proportion of labour participation.

Table 4 Labour market participation of women and men (15-64), 2004 (%)

ethnic origin	women	men
Turkish	38	59
Moroccan	41	54
Surinamese	64	68
Antillean	53	63
indigenous <sup>a</sup>	66	80

a Second quarter 2005

Source: SCP (LAS'04/'05), Eurostat.

29. It is well known that working part-time is a very common phenomenon in the Netherlands. But it is also interesting to see whether the working pattern is the same among women from different ethnic groups. Table 5 shows that working part-time and full-time is not consistent with all groups. The indigenous women who work full-time share the smallest proportion (25%) while there is no such group where more than 40% of women work 35 hours per week or more.

30. Small jobs (less than 12 hours per week) are most common among Turkish women (20%), followed by the indigenous women (17%). Surinamese and Antillean women more often work more hours. The highest share of full-time work is found among Surinamese women (40%) although the share from other groups of women shows more or less similar pattern. (Merens 2006)

Table 5 Number of hours women work (per week) according to their contract, 2002/2003 (%)

ethnic origin	1-11 hours	12-19 hours	20-34 hours	>= 35 hours
Turkish	20	10	33	37
Moroccan	16	19	30	35
Surinamese	11	12	37	40
Antillean	11	11	48	30
indigenous	17	17	41	25

Source: ISEO/SCP (SPVA'02), CBS (EBB'03)

31. As mentioned earlier, in policies, a distinction is made between first and second generation ethnic minorities. An interesting question is whether there is a difference in activity rate between women and men from both generations. One could expect that as integration of minorities' progresses, the members of the second generation will show a higher participation rate.

32. Before presenting the statistics, it is however important to mention that the average age of members of the second generation is much younger, which implies for instance that they are more often still at school and will less often have children. Further on in this paper, I will elaborate more extensively on the determinants of the labour market participation of the different groups, but for now let's focus on differences between the two generations.



33. As one can see in Table 6, for women the activity rate in the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation is often (much) higher than that of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation, while this is not the case for the different groups of men. Only among the Surinamese the women of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation more often have a job than the women of the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation.

Table 6 Labour market participation of women and men of the 1st and 2nd generation (%)

ethnic origin	women		men	
	1 <sup>st</sup> generation	2 <sup>nd</sup> generation	1 <sup>st</sup> generation	2 <sup>nd</sup> generation
Turkish	35	48	62	51
Moroccan	37	50	55	47
Surinamese	65	60	71	60
Antillean	49	73	64	61

Source: SCP (LAS'04/'05)

### 3.3 Attitudes on the roles of women and men

34. Attitudes towards work and care play an important role in the explanation of differences in women's labour market participation. As one can see from table 7, among women the indigenous women have the most modern opinions on the roles of men and women in society while the opinions of Turkish and Moroccan women are the most traditional. The contrast is largest between indigenous and Turkish women. Almost three times as much Turkish than indigenous women agree with statements that express a traditional view on the division of labour and responsibilities between the sexes.

35. The picture of the differences between the groups of women more or less corresponds with the labour participation of women. Turkish women have the lowest activity rate and the smallest proportion with a modern attitude towards gender roles, and indigenous women are the group with the largest proportion of women who work and of women with modern role opinions. Some outcomes are however remarkable. The activity rate of the Surinamese women (64%) does not differ much from that of the indigenous women (66%). But Surinamese women less often have a modern attitude on gender roles (54% compared to 71% of the indigenous women)

Table 7 Opinions about the roles of women and men from different ethnic groups, (% that agrees fully or somewhat)

	women					men				
	T	M	S	A	ind.	T	M	S	A	ind.
If a man does not want his wife to work, the woman should reconcile herself to that	27	24	8	8	3	32	29	9	12	3
A woman should quit her job when she becomes a mother	31	31	15	17	13	44	46	23	25	21
It is best that the woman bears the responsible for the household	72	62	50	51	27	71	64	45	44	35
It is best that the man bears the responsibility for the money	45	33	15	24	8	51	42	25	29	13
An income of one's own is more important for boys than for girls	30	20	15	21	10	30	29	28	30	23
Proportion with modern opinions on the roles of women and men <sup>a</sup>	26	35	54	45	71	13	20	38	38	52

<sup>a</sup> A scale was constructed on the basis of these items, varying between a score of 1 (traditional) and 5 (modern). After that each respondent was categorised as traditional (score lower than 3), modern (score higher than 3.8) or neutral (score 3 - 3.75)

Source: SCP (LAS'04/'05)

36. The table also clearly shows that in all groups, women are more modern than men. The differences between the sexes (in percentage points) are largest among the indigenous population.

#### 3.4 Differences in women's labour participation explained

37. For policymakers it is of course of relevance to know which factors are most important for the explanation of the differences in labour participation among women and men from different ethnic groups. Would the level of education be the most important factor, policies should focus on this issue. But if attitudes are the most important factor, policies on improving the level of education might still be useful, but a major part of the problem remains unaddressed.

38. In a logistic regression analysis, the impact of different factors is analysed. As we have already seen before, the level of education as well as attitudes are correlated with labour participation. It is therefore logical to include these factors in the analysis. On top of that, I included the following variables. A first one is the 'migration generation': does it make a difference if one is born in the Netherlands or not. As I mentioned before, 36% to 48% of the different ethnic groups belong to the second generation (see paragraph 4), and their share will

grow in the future. However, it is of importance to mention that the second generation is relatively young: almost 80% of the women of the second generation are younger than 20 years (and still at school). The analysis is carried out only for those who no longer attend school.

39. Because men more often have traditional views on women's role in society, it can be expected that the presence of a partner will have a negative effect on women's labour participation. Moreover, some women quit their job when they become a mother – certainly in the (recent) past, this factor was very important for the explanation of the low participation rates of Dutch women at the labour market. The variables 'living with a partner' and 'having children (still living at home)' are therefore also included in the analysis. And finally, the impact of age is included.

40. Table 8 shows the outcomes of the analysis. Before going into that, however, one remark must be made. The outcomes for the indigenous population are only valid for the 'urban population', as the survey was carried out in the 50 largest cities in the Netherlands. Only 35% of the indigenous Dutch population lives there, and this group deviates on different indicators from the indigenous Dutch population in general (for instance: the level of education and the participation at the labour market are higher in cities).

Table 8 Determinants of the labour participation of women from different ethnic groups (odds ratio's <sup>a</sup>), women aged 15-64 <sup>b</sup>

	Turkish	Moroccan	Surinamese	Antillean	indigenous
education (max. primary school=ref)					
lower secondary	(1.05)	(1.34)	(1.53)	(1.47)	(1.27)
higher secondary	2.23	2.08	4.06	4.63	2.71
tertiary	(1.79)	4.16	7.77	11.09	3.43
opinions (trad = ref)					
middle	1.71	(1.22)	(1.55)	(0.96)	(1.28)
modern	2.66	2.23	2.59	(1.69)	(2.65)
migration generation (1 <sup>st</sup> = ref)	(0.97)	(1.24)	(1.14)	3.84	
living with partner (no = ref)	(1.34)	(0.80)	2.17	(1.43)	(1.91)
living with children (no = ref)	0.54	0.44	(1.13)	(0.92)	(0.64)
age group (15-24 = ref)					
25-44	(0.87)	(0.95)	(1.75)	(1.08)	(0.55)
45-64	0.22	(0.48)	(0.71)	(1.29)	0.22
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>	.19	.22	.27	.28	.20

a p < 0.5; if not significant the outcome is presented in parenthesis.

b Women who attend school are excluded.

Source: SCP (LAS '04/'05).

41. The importance of education is evident: in all groups higher educated women participate at the labour market more often than lower educated women. In most groups, the age of the women is not of relevance, probably because other factors (like having a partner or having children) are more decisive.

42. As one can see, the migration generation also is not important for the explanation of differences in labour participation, except for Antilleans: Antillean women of the second generation are more often active at the labour market. The fact is that in reality, women of the second generation participate at the labour market more often, probably due to their higher level of education and better mastery of the Dutch language.

43. Attitudes towards women's and men's roles in society are important in some groups (Turkish, Moroccan and Surinamese) but not in others (Antilleans and indigenous Dutch citizens). The groups also differ when we look at the relevance of demographic aspects. For Turkish and Moroccan women, living with a partner is in itself not of importance, but when there are children that need to be taken care of, chances are big that the mothers are not working. For Surinamese women, we see the contrary: having children has no significant effect, but living with a partner does- cohabiting Surinamese women more often have a job than women who don't live with a partner.

44. On the basis of this (rather quick) analysis, one could say that policies aimed at improving the level of education is very useful in order to advance the labour participation of women from all groups. Looking at other factors, some are important for some groups and other for other groups. So, different groups would each ask for a specific approach by policymakers.

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<sup>1</sup> People should be registered in the administration of the municipalities.

<sup>2</sup> In the near future the third generation will come up: children of persons of the second generation. It has not yet been decided whether the members of the third generation will also be considered as target groups of Dutch minority policies.

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