Political participation of women from ethnic minorities
The case of the Netherlands

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1 I thank Paul Dekker for his suggestions and comments in writing this paper.
Introduction

The integration of ethnic minorities is very high on the political agenda these days. Women get special attention in this respect, and among them, especially Turkish and Moroccan women. These women often have no or only a lower education, are often not working, and are seldom economically independent – all important indicators of women’s emancipation in Dutch policies. Recent research from Gijsberts and Merens (2004) showed that when these indicators are used, two third of the Turkish and Moroccan women are in a deprived position. The Dutch government wants to stimulate the participation and emancipation of women from ethnic minorities, in order to advance their integration in Dutch society. The focus of these policies is on education and labour market participation.

In Dutch emancipation policies in general, education and participation at the labour market have also always been core issues. According to the government the ‘structural inequality between women and men’ will diminish when more women are involved in labour. But another important angle of the emancipation policies as of old is women’s participation in decision-making. Women should get more power in society and have a greater say in decision-making at all levels of society. During a few years (1993-1995) women from ethnic minorities were the focus of a special project of the ministry of the Interior.

In Dutch minority policies, education and labour market participation also are core themes. Political participation however, is not. The only general measure taken in this respect is granting migrants (under certain conditions) the right to vote and to be elected in municipal elections. Although education and labour market participation of course are major issues, it is also important that in a democratic society such as the Netherlands, the political participation gets attention as well.

We must conclude that although the political participation of women from ethnic minorities gets some attention in emancipation policies of the national government, it is no part of the mainstream. At present, the ministry of the Interior is not in any way involved in advancing the political participation of ethnic minorities. This is seen as an issue of concern for political parties and not so much for governmental policies. And as I mentioned before, it is also not an issue in minority policies.

As part of a large project on women from ethnic minorities in the Netherlands I am assessing the actual situation as far as their political participation is concerned. I will describe the political participation of women from different ethnic minorities and compare that with that of men from these groups and with indigenous women. As far as possible, I will also try to explain the differences I find. For this project I will use different sources: literature, a large survey which my office is carrying out at present and (group)interviews. Unfortunately, the dataset from the survey is not yet available, nor are the interviews conducted. Therefore I will have to restrict myself to describing what can be said on the basis of the literature and making some provisional analyses on two other datasets.

In the first part of this paper, the share of women among municipal councillors will be described. After that I focus on the voter turnout. And finally political involvement in a more general sense will be dealt with. I will finish the paper by drawing some conclusions and putting questions that need looking into later on in the project.
2 Municipal councillors

One could argue that the main goal concerning political participation is that the political system represents the composition of the population. The proportion of women and men, of older and younger people, of ethnic minorities and indigenous people in the political system should be roughly the same as that in the population it is related to. An equal representation of all groups in society will lead to more legitimate decision-making and a broader acceptance of decisions that are taken. Besides, in this way knowledge of different groups will be included in the decision-making processes.

Since 1985 all immigrants who live legally in the Netherlands for at least five years, are eligible to vote for and be elected in municipal elections. The main reason to grant immigrants the right to vote (and to be elected) was that this would stimulate their integration in Dutch society.

Table 1 shows the number of migrants elected for local councils in the Netherlands. In the first year 47 councillors belong to an ethnic minority, mostly Surinamese and Turks. Over the years we see a strong increase. In 2002 204 municipal councillors come from ethnic minorities: 2.4% of all councillors. In 1986 their number was 47 (0.4% of all councillors). More than half of them (in 2002) have a Turkish background.

Unfortunately, there is no general information about the share of women among these groups. Only for 2002 we know that 55 of the municipal councillors are female. This means that 26% of the ‘migrant councillors’ is female, which is a little higher than the percentage of women among all councillors in the Netherlands (22%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turks</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moroccans</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surinamese</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antilleans</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moluccans</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In table 2 a comparison is made between the share of ethnic minorities in council and that in the population of the municipality, looking only at the largest groups (Turks, Moroccans and Surinamese). It is clear that the minorities are not equally represented, although there are major differences between the cities. Especially in Rotterdam a large gap exists between the share among the councillors and that in the population. This gap has even increased since the former elections. For a matter of fact, there also are towns where the shares are proportional (Nijmegen) and sometimes the share of minorities in the council is greater than that in the population (Enschede) (Klaver and Tromp 2003).
Table 2  The share of ethnic minorities (Turks, Moroccan or Surinamese) of all municipal councillors in the four largest cities of the Netherlands and their share in the population, 1998 and 2002 (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1998 share among councillors</th>
<th>1998 share in the population</th>
<th>2002 share among councillors</th>
<th>2002 share in the population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amsterdam</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotterdam</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Den Haag</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utrecht</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Klaver and Tromp 2003.

There are many factors which contribute to the explanation of the underrepresentation of women and that of ethnic minorities, both at the individual and the institutional level (see Berger et al 2001, Klaver and Tromp 2003 and Leyenaar 2004). Personal characteristics, such as level of education, professional experience, and motivation, and the way of recruiting and selecting candidates, the dominant culture within politics and political parties are all of influence.

3 Voter turnout

Much to my surprise, there are no regular, national statistics on the voter turnout of ethnic minorities in the Netherlands. Only in some cities the voter turnover has been studied. From these studies we know that the voter turnout of ethnic minorities is lower than that of indigenous people and that there are large differences between ethnic groups. Table 3 shows the percentages of people who went to vote during three municipal elections in five cities. From this table it is clear that most of the time the Turks display the highest voter turnout among ethnic minorities. In 1994 in Amsterdam it was even higher than the total voter turnout in this city. One can also see that between 1994 and 1998, the voter turnout has decreased in general but especially among the ethnic minorities. However, in Rotterdam the voter turnout among ethnic minorities has increased in this period. Only for Amsterdam and Rotterdam information about the latest local election is available. This tells us that in Amsterdam the decrease continues (except for the Surinamese and Antillean population), whereas in Rotterdam voter turnout among immigrants keeps increasing.

Table 3 Voter turnout* at local elections in 1994, 1998 and 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Amsterdam</th>
<th>Rotterdam</th>
<th>Den Haag</th>
<th>Utrecht</th>
<th>Arnhem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turks</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moroccans</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surinamese/Antilleans</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*a  These statistics should be used with some caution, for there are differences in the way the information was gathered and some figures are based on estimates.

There are several explanations for the low voter turnout of ethnic minorities. The members of these groups are both lower educated and younger, two factors of which it is known that they are of importance in this matter. But these factors cannot explain all differences. For instance, Turks and Moroccans are very much comparable considering their age and educational level,
but they show large differences in voter turnout. And also the differences in turnout rate between the cities can’t be explained by these factors. For the latter, specific local circumstances can be of importance, like campaigns that are held in order to stimulate migrants to vote (Fennema et al 2000). But this again does not explain the differences between the groups.

In order to explain intergroup differences, the Dutch researchers Meindert Fennema and Jean Tillie have come up with the following explanation: the degree of ethnic civic community as a predictor of political participation (Fennema and Tillie 1999). The degree of civic community is measured using the networks between ethnic organisations. Thus, the high voter turnout among the Turkish population is explained by the fact that Turks have many ethnic organisations, between which many structural bonds exist. A Turkish community exists, with many networks that are based on mutual trust. This trust and the social capital at the group level leads to a higher political participation rate.

In Dutch studies about voter turnout of ethnic minorities in the Netherlands, gender is seldom an issue. This is remarkable, for in the public debate about integration, the participation of women gets much attention. Especially for Muslim women it is often assumed that their participation in the public domain is low, for they are not allowed to do so or because of traditional gender norms (like: men should represent the family affairs in the public domain). I have found only one article in which gender gets attention (Tillie 2004). Tillie finds that gender indeed has a significant effect on political participation, but this is not measured by voter turnout, but with a broader scale. I will come back to this in the next paragraph.

Looking for studies in other countries, I found only one article in which the voter turnout among women from ethnic minorities is analyzed (Togeby 2003). Her questions are twofold. The first question is whether mobilization is occurring and, if so, whether the mobilization processes are collective (determined by interests) or individual (based on social resources such as knowledge, money, time and social contacts). Her second question is how differences in scope and types of mobilization can be explained. She elaborates on the theories of Verba, Nie and Kim (1978) for the analyses at the individual level and on those of Oberschall (1973) and Tilly (1978) for the analyses at the group level. The concrete topic is ethnic minorities’ participation in local elections in 1997 in the Danish cities Copenhagen and Aarhus. As we saw for the Dutch cities, the research of Togeby also shows considerable variation among ethnic groups and between the cities. But there are also differences between men’s and women’s voter turnout and they vary among ethnic groups. In some groups the turnout among men is much higher (at least 7 percentage points) than that of women: Somalis, Syrians, Egyptians, Jordanians, Moroccans and Ethiopians. But there are also groups where women’s turnout is higher: Gambians, Chileans, Ghanaians, Ugandans, Hungarians, Czechs and Filipinos. Often the percentages between women and men do not differ greatly (for example: the difference between Turkish women and men is only 1 percent).

Although the data contain many cases (all eligible voters), not many variables are available. In addition to voter turnout, the dataset includes only information about gender, age, citizenship, marital status, dependence on social welfare assistance, length of residence in municipality, and demographic composition of local areas. This implies that only limited analyses are possible, especially concerning the collective mobilization process. Hereafter I mention only the main conclusions concerning gender. According to Togeby all groups demonstrate signs of a specific women’s mobilization. “Either the women’s voter turnout was generally higher than the men’s, or the voter turnout among young women was higher than among young men. (…) most groups, as a result of residence in Denmark, break
with the gender roles that reserve political activity for men, and this constitutes a specific mobilization of women.” (p. 146) She also finds that patterns of mobilization differ for men and women. For men, there is usually a strong coherence with marital status: married men vote more than single men. For women, marital status often interacts with other variables, including age (middle-aged married women vote more often, than young and older ones). Voter turnout varies considerably between different groups within the individual minority. High voter turnout is common among single women, women with Danish citizenship, and employed women, while it is low among young and older married women, older single women as well as women who are relatively new in the city or live in areas with few immigrants (p. 146).

4 Political involvement

Voter turnout is only one (yet very important) element of political involvement of citizens. In research also other indicators are used, like political interest, the intention to vote if elections would be held and visiting meetings where political issues are discussed (for instance concerning the neighbourhood). An example of this kind of research is that of Jean Tillie (2004), which I mentioned earlier. In his analysis of data about citizens in Amsterdam he found a significant effect of gender on political participation. A scale measured political participation with five different items on political involvement, varying from being active in ‘neighbourhood matters’ to the probability of voting at local elections if they would be held now. In a multiple regression analysis several models are estimated, whereby at first all ethnic groups are put together. In those models gender is significant (controlled for several other factors, such as educational level, employment and ethnic membership). Women from ethnic minorities participate less in political activities than men. But controlling for ethnic group (Moroccans were used as reference group), the differences between women and men disappear. It is rather difficult to understand why this is the case, Tillie does not elaborate on it. It could be that the distribution of men and women in the sample in the ethnic groups is unequal, but even then, the concrete results remain rather incomprehensible.

At present, there is no dataset available that makes it possible to study different aspects of the political participation of migrant women in the Netherlands. However, thanks to the fact that the Social and Cultural Planning Office is carrying out a large survey at the moment, this will change within the next months. Large samples of Turks, Moroccans, Surinamese and Antillean respondents (750 per group) and 650 indigenous persons are being interviewed on many aspects of their daily life. Political participation (in a broad sense) is one of them. Anticipating analyses that I will carry out later this summer, I have done some analyses on two other datasets. One is a small, local dataset, which has been made available by the Department for Research and Statistics of the municipality of Amsterdam (Amsterdam Citizen Monitor 2004). The other is the National Housing Survey 2002, which contains two questions on political involvement. I will use these two datasets to get a first look at possible differences in political involvement of women and men from different ethnic groups, starting with the Amsterdam Citizen Monitor. This local dataset contains more information about different aspects of political involvement, but only little information about demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the respondents. The number of cases (concerning different ethnic groups) is also rather small, which makes further analyses difficult. The National Housing Survey on the other hand provides little information about political involvement, but the sample size is much larger and the dataset contains more information about other characteristics of the respondents.
4.1 Amsterdam citizen monitor

The Amsterdam Citizen Monitor contains no information about voter turnout, but only on the probability of voting if municipal elections would be held tomorrow. In the first section of this paragraph, I will show the percentages of women and men from different ethnic backgrounds that say they will do so. After that section, I will focus on the broader concept of political involvement. Thereby I will distinguish between involvement in a more narrow and in a broader sense. But first: the imaginary local elections.

Propensity to vote

From table 4 it is clear that in all non-western groups the share of people who say that they will certainly vote if local elections would be held tomorrow, is smaller than that of the indigenous population. The percentage is highest among Turkish men, followed by South-European men, and lowest among Surinamese women. (It is also low among Antillean men, but their number in the sample is too low to draw conclusions). Only among people with a Turkish or Surinamese background or coming from ‘other non-industrialized countries’ a clear gender gap exists: men more often say than women that they are certainly going to vote if local elections would be held the following day. The prevailing assumption, that Turks and Moroccans have more traditional opinions about the role of men and women in the public domain is not fully supported by the outcomes. Moroccan men and women only differ slightly in their response. And if we combine the answers ‘certainly’ and ‘maybe’ the differences become even smaller. The responses from the Surinamese group are other than one would expect. According to the definition of Dutch emancipation policies, Surinamese women are considered to be the most emancipated of all non-western ethnic groups and more or less at the same level of emancipation as the indigenous Dutch women. One would therefore expect their propensity to vote to be very high (at least comparable to that of indigenous Dutch women). The figures however, learn that it is in fact much lower than that of Surinamese men and the lowest of all ethnic groups.

Looking from the opposite angle – who are the (probable) non-voters? – we find that Moroccan men and women and women from ‘other non-industrialized countries’ show the highest percentage. About a quarter of these groups says they will certainly not vote or they don’t know yet.

We can conclude that the gender gap in the propensity to vote is not always as one would expect and also that it often is not very large.
Table 4  Probability of voting at local elections of citizens of Amsterdam that are entitled to vote, if local elections would be held the following day, by sex and ethnic background  (2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic background</th>
<th>men</th>
<th>women</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moroccan</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surinamese</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antilleans (30)</td>
<td>(52) (17) (62) (29) (10) (44)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-European</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other non-industrialized countries</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrialized</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Dutch</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>1591</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The number of Antilleans in the sample is too low to draw conclusions.

Source: Amsterdam Citizen Monitor 2004

Political involvement in a broader sense

In addition to (probable) voting behaviour there are also other possible indicators of political participation. Leyenaar (2004) for instance presents some figures about participation in political discussions. The gender gap for men and women who say they often participate in public debates, is much larger in European countries (data from several Eurobarometers), than the gender gap for voting intentions.

The dataset from the municipality of Amsterdam also contains a few items that provide some information about political involvement. On the basis of these items, two scales are made: one covering political involvement at the local level. The other scale refers to being involved in organisations with a (more or less) political nature.

Four items measure political involvement at the local level:
- being interested in local politics (of the city of Amsterdam);
- being interested in politics at quarter (neighbourhood) level;
- being engaged in some action focussed at living in this neighbourhood / town (alone or with others);
- visited a hearing or informative meeting organized by the local government in the last 12 months.

Table 5 presents the outcomes. If the answer is yes on all items the score is 4 and the political involvement at the local level is high. This score is very rare. In the table the scores are clustered: the political involvement of people who agree to one item at the most is low. Respondents agreeing with two or more items are categorized as high. The overall picture indicates that political involvement at the local level is low in all groups. In most groups only one out of ten persons can be considered as being (somewhat) politically involved at the local level. There are some differences between ethnic groups, but they are small.

When we look at the gender-dimension we find that in four of the groups men are more involved in local politics, but the differences are not always large. Among Moroccans, Surinamese and indigenous Dutch people this difference is statistically significant. The groups in which (according to the table) women are more often politically involved are South-Europeans and people from ‘other non-industrialized countries’. These differences, however, are not significant.
Table 5  Degree of political involvement at the local level for seven ethnic groups in Amsterdam, persons 18 year and older, by sex, 2004 (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turks: men</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turks: women</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moroccans: men</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moroccans: women</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surinamese: men</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surinamese: women</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Antilleans: men)*</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Antilleans: women)*</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Europeans: men</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Europeans: women</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other non-industrialized: men</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other non-industrialized: women</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous: men</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>718</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous: women</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>872</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The number of Antilleans in the sample is too low to draw conclusions.

Source: Amsterdam Citizen Monitor, 2004

The other scale concerns membership of organisations of a more or less political nature: political parties, housing organisations and ‘idealistic’ organisations (like Amnesty International, Greenpeace etc). The table shows the percentages of women and men from different ethnic groups that are a member of at least one of these kinds of organisations. Before describing the results, a note must be made. It is quite possible that the membership of these organisations is a ‘household-matter’ and that all persons living in one household consider themselves to be a member of an organisation, while in fact only one person is a registered member. This issue needs to be looked into more in depth in a later phase of the project (comparing single men and women), when the new data will be available.

Looking at the table one would say that Turkish, Moroccan and South-European women are more politically involved, when this is measured by membership of ‘political’ organisations, but the differences are not statistically significant. The only significant difference is found for the Surinamese: men are more often member of such organisations.

Table 6  Degree of political involvement measured by membership of ‘political organisations’ for seven ethnic groups in Amsterdam, persons 18 years and older, by sex, 2004 (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Background</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moroccan</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surinamese</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Antilleans)*</td>
<td>(57)</td>
<td>(48)</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern European</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other non-industrialized</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrialized countries</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Dutch</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1592</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The number of Antilleans in the sample is too low to draw conclusions.

Source: Amsterdam Citizen Monitor 2004.
4.2 National Housing Survey

When the data from the survey that my office is carrying out will be available, I will try to explain differences in political involvement (if they are found) between men and women of different ethnic groups. At this moment I have only done a few analyses on the National Housing Survey to see which determinants explain individual variation in political interest and in probable voting behaviour. Firstly, in table 7 the distributions are displayed of women and men from different ethnic backgrounds as far as their political interest and probable voting behaviour are concerned. The elections referred to in this survey are elections for the national parliament (lower house). In all ethnic groups men more often than women say they are interested in politics. The results for the probable voting behaviour of the different groups are less identical. In some groups the propensity to vote is higher among men. Especially Turkish men are more inclined to vote, but both Moroccan and indigenous Dutch men also have a higher score on this issue. In the other groups the difference between women and men is rather small (Antilleans), there is no difference (Surinamese) or the probability is even a little higher among women (South-European women).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ethnic background</th>
<th>political interest: yes</th>
<th>probability of voting: yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>men</td>
<td>women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moroccan</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surinamese</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antillean</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South European</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other non-industrialized countries</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrialized countries</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Dutch</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: National Housing Survey 2002

Logistic regression analyses are carried out, one for each of the eight ethnic groups in the dataset. Only ‘political interest’ is analysed as dependent variable. Four independent variables are included in the analysis. In the first place of course sex, one of the two central variables in this paper. But differences in political interest between men and women might be the cause of other differences between the sexes. For instance, if educational level is of influence and men are higher educated than women, the level of educational might explain the difference in political interest and not gender. Therefore also educational level and employment status are included in the analysis. Finally, a variable ‘migration generation’ is also included (except in the analysis for the indigenous Dutch). It could be argued that the second generation, consisting of people who have grown up in the Netherlands, differ from the first generation of migrants, in a sense that their socialization process has developed differently.

We learn from table 8 that the direct effect of gender is not significant in all groups, if we control for the other variables. It is for indigenous Dutch people: women more often say they are not interested in politics than men. The same conclusion can be drawn for the Turks, the Surinamese, people from ‘other non-industrialized countries’ and people from ‘other western countries. The outcomes are somewhat unexpected when we look at the Turks and the Moroccans. We see that among people of Turkish origin, women are less often interested in politics than men, but among Moroccans this is not the case. The inclusion of other variables
in the analysis makes the difference between Moroccan women and men that we found in the previous table disappear.

Looking at educational level it is clear that this factor has a significant effect in all ethnic groups. Higher educated people more often say they are interested in politics than lower educated people. In some groups the effect is stronger than in others: among South-Europeans it is most strong, followed by the Moroccans and Surinamese.

Employment status has only an effect in the indigenous Dutch and Moroccan group (controlled for other variables). The outcome is a bit surprising for the indigenous Dutch group: working people less often say they are interested in politics than those who are not working. Among Moroccans the opposite is the case.

For Moroccans, and people from ‘other non-industrialized countries’ or from ‘other western countries’ the migration generation has a significant effect. The second generation is less interested in politics.

### Table 8 Political interest explained (persons 18-65 years) (odd’s ratio’s)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>indigenous Dutch</th>
<th>Turks</th>
<th>Moroccans</th>
<th>Surinamese</th>
<th>Antilleans</th>
<th>South-European</th>
<th>other non-industrialized countries</th>
<th>other western countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sex (men = ref.cat)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>women</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>n.s</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>n.s</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>educational level (max. primary school = ref. cat)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>lower</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>n.s</td>
<td>6.41</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>n.s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>middle</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>4.88</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>10.96</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>35.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high</td>
<td>9.02</td>
<td>8.49</td>
<td>14.24</td>
<td>10.86</td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>35.48</td>
<td>8.44</td>
<td>6.838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>employment status (not working = ref. cat)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>working</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>n.s</td>
<td>n.s</td>
<td>n.s</td>
<td>n.s</td>
<td>n.s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>migration generation (first generation = ref.cat)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>second generation</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>n.s</td>
<td>n.s</td>
<td>n.s</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n.s. = not significant (p > 0.01)

Source: National Housing Survey 2002

### 4.3 Some final remarks

In discussions about integration, participation and emancipation, political participation is not a very important issue. The focus is mostly on education and learning the Dutch language, participation at the labour market and on deviant norms and values that are attributed to the Islam. It is with good reason that in emancipation policies the concept of ‘participation’ has a much broader content than linking it will paid labour. Participation in politics and decision-making has always been an important issue and this will probably remain so in the future.

There still is an unequal representation of women and men in political decision-making (see Portegijs et al 2004). As we have seen in this paper, women from ethnic minorities are unequally represented as well. It is however interesting to note that the share of female councillors among ethnic minorities is somewhat higher (26%) than the share of women among all councillors (22%).

The main focus of this paper was to describe the political participation of women from ethnic minorities compared with that of men from these groups and that of indigenous Dutch women. This was a first step in a larger project. Since little is known about this issue, I need firstly to make up the score. Moreover, at this moment, there are only few data available to get a good look at differences in political participation of women from different ethnic
background. Within a few months data will become available, which enable me to analyse different aspects of political participation in more detail. Determinants of (differences in) political participation will be studied more thoroughly. Besides, also other factors than the ones I included in this paper will be analyzed, such as marital status / presence of a partner. I will try to distinguish between participation in activities that are more linked to the government and the political arena and other activities, like doing voluntary work in schools or in the neighbourhood. Thus, the concept of participation will be widened and include also other forms of contribution to the functioning of our society.

Literature


IPP 2002 *Allochtone gemeenteraadsleden* (not published)


