Boundary Organisations and Policy Punctuations
The case of the Scientific Council for Government Policy and Dutch immigrant integration policy

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Boundary organisations between science and politics not just speak truth to power, but can also provide strategic opportunities for policy change (Guston 2000). Beyond providing information or data as input to the political decision making process, think-tanks and other types of science-based organisations for policy advice can also play more strategic roles in the resolution of wicked policy problems (Stone 1998). Such problems involve controversies over problem framing and often bring about policy stalemate or intractable conflict (Rein and Schön 1994). The position of boundary organisations on the boundaries of science and politics endows them with scientific as well as political capital that can be used as resources for punctuating such controversies (Bourdieu 1975; 2004). On the one hand, their scientific independence and reputation provides them significant authority in policy processes, creating an image of ‘speaking truth to power’ (Wildavsky 1979). On the other hand, they are also involved in governance networks and sometimes even have an institutionalised role in policy processes, which provides them a central position for influencing policy processes (Miller 2001). However, generating scientific and political capital requires a delicate balance between distance and proximity to both fields; too much distance to politics could threaten their political legitimacy, whereas too much proximity to politics could threaten their scientific authority (Hoppe 2005). Successful balancing work can make boundary organisations into powerful actors in policy processes, to be taken account of in analyses of policy dynamics.

Wicked policy problems demand critical reflection about the proper issue framing and the proper institutional policy structure (Rein and Schön 1994). They are resilient to resolution by merely examining the ‘facts’ or the ‘truth’, but rather demand critical dialogue amongst policy actors so as to agree on how an issue should be framed and what policy structure should be developed and consequently to agree on what gets accepted as ‘facts’ and the ‘truth’ in the first place. Through their scientific and political capital, boundary organisations can create as well as prevent strategic
opportunities for frame reflection. For instance, their scientific independence and political status can allow them to create openings in situations of policy deadlock so as to stimulate critical frame reflection and generate positive feedback toward policy change. Or, they can allow policy actors to delegate issues to scientists or unreflectively accept scientific legitimisations of the status quo so as to avoid critical reflection and potential political conflict and generate negative feedback in support of policy stability. As such, boundary organisations can be sources of negative as well as positive feedback in the resolution wicked policy.

The issue of immigrant integration has evolved into one of the most resilient policy problems in the Netherlands over the past decades. Nonetheless, specific boundary organisations do appear to have played a central role in policy development in this domain. Reports of one organisation in particular, the Scientific Council for Government Policy (or WRR, in Dutch abbreviation), have marked several major turning-points or ‘policy punctuations’ in this policy domain. The WRR is an independent institute that provides science-based policy advice directly to the Dutch government and has acquired a special position in the Dutch political system. At least two of its reports on immigrant integration, ‘Ethnic Minorities’ from 1979 and ‘Immigrant Policy’ from 1989, appear to have provided important impulses for the reframing of the issue of immigrant integration as well as for institutional redesign of this policy domain, whereas a third report, ‘The Netherlands as Immigration Society’ from 2001, appears thus far to have had relatively little impact.

In this paper, I will analyse the role of the WRR as a boundary organisation in policy dynamics in Dutch immigrant integration policy. How and why were the various reports on immigrant integration produced and how and why did they affect policy dynamics? How did the WRR reproduce scientific and political capital, and how did this affect its role in policy dynamics? And to what extent did the WRR contribute to the resolution of such a wicked policy controversy as immigrant integration? The analysis is based on analysis of primary documents, including minutes and notes from the WRR as well as from relevant policy departments. In addition, a series of interviews has been conducted with a variety of actors involved in this policy domain, including scientific researches, experts from the WRR, policymakers and representatives of interest groups. Finally, use has been made from available secondary sources.

Policy dynamics; Frames and Fields
Understanding the role of boundary organisations in policy dynamics requires first a conceptual model of policy stability and change. Policy dynamics involves first of all either supporting or challenging how a policy problem is defined or ‘framed.’ Rein and Schön (1994) speak in this context of ‘issue frames’, or ‘underlying structures of belief, perception and appreciation’ (ibid: 23) that provide a ‘way of selecting, organising, interpreting and making sense of a complex reality to provide guideposts

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1 Records from the WRR until 1992 are publicly available in the National Archives in The Hague
for knowing, analysing, persuading and acting’ (1991: 146). Such frames do not float in an institutional void; rather, they are embedded to specific institutional venues or ‘forums’ by which they are generated and propagated (ibid 1994: 31-32). This can involve political venues such as parliament or the government coalition in which issues are framed, but also corporatist venues in which issues are framed through negotiation with interest groups, venues of science in which scientific knowledge and authority is brought to bare on how issues are framed, and so forth.

Policy stability is maintained as long as there is a ‘mutually reinforcing logic’ between venues and an issue frame (Baumgartner and Jones 1993; 2002). Such mutually reinforcing logic creates policy monopolies that are particularly difficult to challenge as they generate ‘negative feedback, discouraging challenges to the policy status quo, and leading to a relatively homeostatic policy process and mainly incremental policy-adjustments (ibid 2002: 12). In contrast, policy change involves generating ‘positive feedback by breaking the mutually supportive logic of images and venues. Positive feedback can be generated by manipulating issue framing or by challenging the authority of institutional venues. The former has been widely recognized in the literature, as part of the politics of problem definition (Rochefort and Cobb 1994). However, the latter has been much less conceptualised. In the theory of venue shopping (Baumgartner and Jones 1993; Guiraudon 2000; Pralle 2003) it is argued that challengers to the policy status quo may attempt to find other venues that are responsive to their policy images, so as to claim authority over a policy field through this venue. In addition, challengers may try to change how venues function, so as to make them more responsive to their images; the relationship between institutional venues and individual action must therefore be seen as ‘highly interactive’ (Hall and Taylor 1996: 948). This means that the institutional structure of policy fields must be regarded as endogenous rather than exogenous to the policy process; ‘the policy process itself can alter the manner in which institutions function’ (Baumgartner and Jones 2002: 4). So, manipulating the institutional venues in which issues are framed is as much a stake in the politics of problem definition as the direct manipulation of policy images itself.

Venues are often defined rather vaguely as ‘rules for making decisions’ (Baumgartner and Jones 2002: 24), ‘locations where authoritative decisions are made’ (ibid: 1993) or ‘decision settings’ (Pralle 2003: 233). Venues or institutions are in this literature mostly defined rather broadly, including ‘not just formal rules, procedures or norms’ but also ‘the symbol systems, cognitive scripts and moral templates that provide the frames of meaning guiding human action’ (Hall and Taylor 1996: 947). In this sense, it approximates Bourdieu’s notion of a ‘field’, or social worlds characterized by particular objective structures that are produced and reproduced by actors with particular dispositions or a particular habitus or ‘a nose’ for something (Bourdieu 1975; 2004). Various such fields that are involved in policy processes can be distinguished, including as politics, government (or bureaucracy), science, the market and the legal system. Each field is governed by particular structures and meanings that guide the behaviour of actors; for instance, the field of politics is
governed by different structures and meanings, such as symbols of charisma and rules of proper political conduct, than the legal system.

Conceptualising venues as fields also allows for a clear distinction between venues and policy entrepreneurs. The latter can be understood as agents, being either individual or organisational actors that advocate a particular policy idea and seek to influence policy in a particular direction. Although entrepreneurial behaviour is generally considered to be strategic (Kingdon 1995 (2/e)), entrepreneurs are also endowed with specific dispositions or a ‘habitus’ that structures their behaviour. On the one hand, entrepreneurs acquire such a habitus in the context of specific fields, but on the other hand they are not determined by immobile fields but also play a role in reproducing or altering a field. A field is then a ‘system of objective relations’ between various agents, characterized by a specific distribution of particular sorts of capital (economic, social, cultural, political, scientific capital), that structures the behaviour of agents as well as is produced and reproduced through these actors’ behaviour. For instance, the market is a field that is characterized by specific rules of the game (e.g. competition) and distribution of economic capital, that structures actor agency in this field as well as maintained or altered through agency behaviour.

**Boundary organisations between science and politics**

So, one way to induce either policy stability or change is to select or manipulate specific fields for supporting or challenging the way an issue is framed. The role of one field in this context has been little examined, out of a belief that it would not be a field or a ‘venue’ in the first place; science. Schneider and Ingram (1997: 154) have described this as the ‘scientific exceptionalism’ of policy theory, due to a blind acceptance ‘that science is exceptional (...) because it is involved in the search for truth (and because) scientists are accepted as arbiters of facts on the basis of their professionalism, autonomy and superior intellect.’ Most research to the scientific field is based on certain premises on what the scientific field would be, which are mainly kept exogenous to policy processes rather than endogenous. Also, policy theory has focused mainly on how the knowledge that is generated in this field is subsequently utilized in other fields such as government and politics (Hoppe 2005). Following the Laswellian tradition of a science for policy, science in policy and science of policy, the policy sciences have engaged in a so-called ‘rationality project’ (Stone 2002 (2/e)) or a rational and scientific approach toward policy development. The goal of policy science would be to ‘speak truth to power’ (Wildavsky 1979) for instance through a gradual enlightenment of agents in other fields (Weiss 1977). However, this has hampered the development of a more reflexive ‘science of science’ (Bourdieu 1975; 2004), in which the constitution of the scientific field is seen as endogenous to policy processes. In fact, a more reflexive science of science would require taking the scientific field itself as object of analysis.

Serious attempts to move beyond this scientific exceptionalism have been made over the past decades in a growing body of literature on the strategic importance of scientific knowledge and expertise in policy processes. For instance, Fischer (1993)
has analysed the politics of expertise surrounding Washington think-tanks, where conservative political forces set up conservative think-tanks so as to develop counter-expertise in a ‘war of ideas’ with think-tanks that had been a driving force behind New Deal politics. Or, Ezrahi (1990) who analysed the legitimising function of science toward state control, depoliticizing the ideological character of government politics by instrumentalising policies in terms of objective cause-effect relationships.

This literature has focused in particular on think-tanks or policy research institutes that appear to play a key role in connecting scientific and political fields and involving science in policy development in particular ways. These organisations not only operate ‘on’ the boundaries of these fields, but can also play an active role in creating particular types of science-policy relations and influencing developments within both fields as well. Whereas they are generally been conceived of as ‘bridges’ or ‘transmission belts’ between science and policy, they often also play a more active role in constituting these fields and establishing cross-field relations. In this context they have been conceptualised as ‘boundary organisations’, or ‘hybrid organisations containing elements of both science and politics’ (Miller 2001). Such boundary organisations involve ‘participation of actors from both sides of the boundary, as well as professionals who serve a mediating role’ and exist ‘on the frontier of two relatively different social worlds of politics and science, but (having, PS) distinct lines of accountability to each’ (Guston 2000).

The policy influence of these boundary organisations can be explained by how they mobilise scientific authority and credibility, or in Bourdieu’s terms ‘scientific capital’, in the context of policy processes. Whereas powerful interest groups such as industries can mobilize economic capital for influencing policy for instance through lobbying or political groups can mobilize social capital so as to form advocacy coalitions, boundary organisations can deploy scientific capital as a resource for policy influence. Such scientific capital can be generated by reproducing as well as functionally blurring boundaries between the scientific field and other fields (Hellström and Jacob 2003). Stone (1998) has argued that ‘it is in the interest of think-tanks in general to maintain the myth of the distinction between knowledge and scholarship on the one hand, and politics, policy and interests on the other’, as being ‘portrayed as a bridge or a transmission belt from the scholarly domain (...) gives them a safe distance from politics and protects their credible and charitable status.’

In the domain of science studies, such social and discursive practices aimed at constructing scientific authority and credibility have been described as ‘boundary work’, or ‘the attribution of selected characteristics to the institutional of science (i.e., to its practitioners, methods, stock of knowledge, values and work organisation) for purposes of constructing social boundary that distinguishes some intellectual activities as ‘non-science’ (Gieryn 1983). As such, boundary organisations not only operate on boundaries, but also do boundary work when balancing between distance and proximity to both science and politics. They have to distinguish themselves as scientific organisations as well as prove their institutional legitimacy in the political system. In this respect, Jasanoff (1990) has pointed to research institutes that ‘keep
politics near but out’ so as to simultaneously prove their legitimacy in the political system as maintain a certain distance for protecting their scientific autonomy.

The resolution of wicked policy controversies
Boundary organisations can be important sources of policy dynamics through their scientific and political capital and connecting the scientific field to fields of government and politics. As such, they can be agents in the politics of problem framing as well as the politics of venues shopping. However, this does not yet say anything about what the effects of their involvement will be for policy development and for the resolution of policy problems. Especially when so-called ‘intractable policy controversies’ (Rein and Schön 1994) are involved, the conceptualisation of boundary organisations as mediators that bring the objective scientific truth into the policy process becomes problematic. In the case of policy controversies, the framing of a policy issue is inherently contested, involving conflict over the proper selection and interpretation of facts as well as conflict over what norms and values are relevant. They involve multiplicity in the form of at least several competing frames that stress different facets of a policy issue (ibid.). Communication across frames can be problematic, risking decay into ‘dialogues of the deaf’ as agents with different frames tend to name the relevant aspects of an issue in different ways and to frame these in very different normative policy stories (Van Eeten 1999). This means that for boundary organisations it will be more difficult to rely on their image of truth-tellers, as there is uncertainty about what relevant facts are and how these should be interpreted. Moreover, complex policy problems tend to be characterized by a multiplicity of scientific knowledge claims as well (Nelkin 1979), bringing frame-conflict into the field of science itself.

In postempericist strands of policy analysis (Fischer 2003; Hajer and Wagenaar 2003), a normative conception of policy advice has been developed, redefining the role of experts from telling the truth to helping policy agents ‘making sense together’ (Hoppe 1999). In this deliberative model the role of policy advisors is defined as helping actors to bring about a frame-reflective dialogue. Such a role in stimulating critical frame reflection would involve articulating competing frames in a policy domain and making these frames the object of reflection, for instance by conflicting then with each other as well as with data about developments in the problem situation (Rein and Schön 1994). This involves a very different type of relation between the fields of science and policy, as the scientific capital generated in the scientific field is then not so much used for reframing a policy issue based on authoritative scientific knowledge, but rather as a source of authority for helping policy agents reflect upon their own frames and engage into frame-critical dialogue with other agents.

The involvement of boundary organisations in policy controversies can create positive as well as negative feedback. Positive feedback can be created as the deliberative role of scientific advisors enlarges the scale of debate, by drawing in the frames of a various actors and thereby creating more and more momentum toward
policy change, or the scope of debate, shifting attention to new facets of a certain problem situation. Positive feedback can also result when boundary organisations certify new policy ideas with the authoritative label of science, enlarging their chances of punctuating the policy status quo. Negative feedback can be created for instance as critical frame reflection offers a way out of intractable conflicts, mobilising support for a particular issue frame, or as boundary organisations lend scientific support and legitimacy to the policy status quo.

**Immigrant integration as a wicked policy controversy in the Netherlands**

This paper concerns the involvement of a boundary organisation, the WRR, in a wicked policy controversy, immigrant integration in the Netherlands. Immigrant integration has developed into one of the most salient policy controversies in the Netherlands over the past decades, even being labelled the new ‘social question’ of this era. Over the past decades, the issue of how to incorporate immigrants into Dutch society has kept returning on the agenda. The struggle of government to come at odds with this policy issue is illustrated by the series of policy turning-points that mark the policy discontinuity in this policy domain (Scholten and Timmermans 2004; Entzinger 2005). Various frames of what immigrant integration is, why it is a problem, and what should be done so as to advance it have come and gone. Thus far, no single issue frame and institutional strategic for dealing with it has been able to survive for more than a decade or so. The recent turmoil surrounding this policy issue indicates that this wicked policy controversy is yet far from being resolved.

The wicked nature of this policy issue appears to be related to specific traits of this issue as well as of its institutional environment. First of all, the integration issue has a highly complex and multifaceted nature. It involves questions concerning social-economic participation, social-cultural adaptation and political-legal emancipation of immigrants as well as broader issues of society at large such as discrimination, cultural diversity and viability of the welfare state. In various episodes of policy development over the past decades, emphasis has been put on different problem facets. Second, immigration and integration have developed over the past decades in rapid and often unpredictable ways. As a consequence, policy often ran behind the facts. For instance, government did not recognize that the presence of specific immigrant groups or ‘minorities’ was permanent until the later 1970s. The recognition that immigration as such also was a permanent phenomenon came only later, in the early 1990s, whereas the realisation that immigration and cultural diversity are pervasively affecting the structure of Dutch society is still object of much controversy today.

Specific factors in the institutional policy context have also contributed to the wicked nature of this problem. First of all, it has long been surrounded by a sphere of taboos or political correctness (Werdmölder 2003) and political sensitivity (De Beus 1998; Guiraudon 2000). This political correctness concerned a strong reservation in discussing ethnic and cultural differences, also because of the historic persecution of minorities during World War II; critical remarks regarding immigrants easily led to
accusations of racism (Vuijsje 1986). Moreover, a fear that politicization could benefit rightist parties that would ‘play the race card’ led to a tendency to depoliticization; it was considered ‘too hot to handle’ for politics (Rath 2001). Second, controversy around integration has risen sharply after the turn of the Millenium due to a long series of national and international focus events (Snel and Scholten 2005), including the 11th September attacks in the United States, radical statements by an Islamic religious servant (El-Moumni), the rise of a rightist politician in the Dutch political arena and the murder of a Dutch film-maker (Van Gogh) by a Muslim extremist. These focus-events drew increasingly negative attention toward cultural diversity, and appear to have woken a ‘silent majority’ that had been wary of multiculturalism but thus far unable to speak out (Entzinger 2003). In recent years, the image of a failing immigrant integration process has even been become a symbol for broader popular dissent with Dutch government and democracy. As such, it figured at the centre of the so-called Fortuyn-revolution in Dutch politics in 2002.

The Scientific Council for Government Policy: a boundary organisation with scientific and political capital

One boundary organisation has played an especially important role in policy development on this controversial issue; the Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR). With three reports over the past three to four decades it has developed a tradition of involvement in this domain, and some of these reports have had important influence on several policy punctuations. How and why has this boundary organisation been so strongly involved in this controversial policy domain, and what have been the effects of its involvement in terms of resolving this policy controversy?

The WRR was established in the 1970s to provide advice to government on issues that involve multiple policy sectors, multiple scientific disciplines and that are of relevance to long-term government policy. It was established by a law on the WRR, guaranteeing its independence and autonomy but also positioning the WRR within the government organisation itself, under the General Affairs Ministry of the Dutch Prime Minister (De Hoed 1995). It can be considered an institutional legacy of the consensual style of using expertise in the Netherlands at that time, which meant that scientific knowledge and expertise were utilized in a technocratic manner so as to create political consensus and rationalize government policy. Just as much as a result of need for scientific advice from the demand side of politics, it was a result of a strong willingness of social scientists in that time to get closer involved with government policy; the Dutch social sciences were then still very much attuned to the political culture of the Netherlands (Blume, Hagendijk et al. 1991). The institutional position of the WRR can be considered rather specific to Dutch political system. On the one hand, the consensual style of using expertise allows for the establishment of a relatively strong advisory body for government policy. On the other hand the fragile coalition character of Dutch politics necessitated a certain (scientific) distance and independence of the WRR in its relation to government. A too close relation to the Prime Ministers Office would make his position too dominant in fragile coalition
relations (Den Hoed 1995). Also, such a relation would further reinforce the imbalance between parliament and government in terms of access to scientific knowledge and expertise (Hoppe and Halffman 2004).

Over the past decades the WRR has managed to acquire a strong scientific as well as political reputation, or in other words, a significant amount of scientific and political capital. Its reports often have strong impact on scientific research as well as on political developments. Only recently, the ‘special position’ of the WRR was illustrated by its survival through one of the most dramatic reforms of the Dutch system of advisory bodies, with the Prime Minister stating that the position of the WRR was not to be challenged as there was a constant need ‘for a more reflective form of advice, not (always) related to the present political agenda.’

As a boundary organisation, the WRR contains elements of both science and politics and has managed to maintain lines of accountability with both fields. This hybrid character is not only illustrated in the name of the WRR, but also in the selection of council members based on scientific reputation as well as political affinity, the political appointment of the Council’s chairman, the alteration of the council composition once in every five years so as to create disparity with the four-year political election cycle. In general, the WRR continuously balances between distance and proximity to science as well as politics, so as to maintain its scientific reputation as well as its legitimacy as perceived from the political system.

‘Ethnic Minorities’ (1979)
The first WRR report was issued at a time when immigrant integration was already on the agenda and government had already announced a reform of current policies. Until the 1970s, the need for an integration policy had been ignored as the presence of immigrants was framed as merely a temporary phenomenon. This issue frame was supported by specific actors from the fields of government, interest groups as well as politics, who formed ‘iron triangles’ that for a long time inhibited policy change. Specific government departments held on to the myth of temporary migration as this would be the most beneficial for the Dutch economy. The main political parties also held on strongly to a norm that the Netherlands should not be a country of immigration. Finally, organisations for and from immigrants were often themselves also strongly attached to the idea of returning to their home countries, and receiving support for retaining their own cultural identities and group structures.

In the 1970s, a series of terrorist acts committed by members of an immigrant group (the Moluccans), triggered attention to the tensions between the norm of not being a country of immigration and the fact of permanent immigrant residence (Entzinger 1975). This created positive feedback toward policy change, by undermining support for the current issue frame and iron triangles, and opening a window of opportunity for specific entrepreneurs that advocated a new frame. One department in particular, the Culture Department, had an entrepreneurial role in

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2 Treaties of 2nd Chamber of Parliament, 1995-1996, 24232, nr. 5:9
reframing the immigrant issue into a permanent issue that demanded an integration policy. In its attempts to punctuate the iron triangles, it pursued a deliberate strategy of generating scientific capital so as to create more momentum toward policy change. It established an Advisory Committee on Minorities Research (ACOM) that brought together prominent researchers and coordinated research on cultural minorities (Rath 2001). This stimulated the development of research in which mainly researchers from a cultural anthropological tradition were involved, who focused on immigrants as ‘cultural minorities’, which fitted the ideas of the Culture Department who saw itself as responsible for all cultural minorities, including immigrants. This reframing of immigrants as ‘ethnic’ or ‘cultural minorities’ is important as it stresses their position within Dutch society rather than their immigrant background. Finally, in 1978, government accepted a motion that had been issued in parliament, which called for a general minorities policy, accepting the new issue frame of immigrants as minorities and of integration as a permanent phenomenon.

The initiative of the WRR in that same year to issue a report on ethnic minorities was well-timed in the context of these developments. Its initiative was also actively supported by members of the ACOM, who found that the ‘central position’ and ‘prestige’ of the WRR could help in convincing government of the need for a general minorities policy. The frame that was developed in the WRR report, naming immigrants as ‘ethnic minorities’ and framing the Netherlands as a ‘multicultural society’, corresponded very well with the frame that was advocated by the ACOM and the Department of Culture and had recently been accepted by government. Basically, the WRR for the first time systematically elaborated this frame in terms of its implications for government policy.

Also, for the then still young WRR, a report on this controversial policy issue provided an opportunity to show that it could really ‘matter’. The WRR wanted to ‘test’ their working methods and abilities to advice on the short term. In other words, a report on immigrant integration could not only make use of the scientific capital of the WRR for influencing policy, a report on such a difficult issue could also deliver the WRR political capital. Perhaps as a consequence of the desire of the WRR to test how far it could go in policy advice, its report was clearly orientated at promoting policy change. It ventured clearly beyond providing a scientific state of the art of available knowledge and more specifically advice on ‘the contours of a minorities policy’ and the ‘contents of a minorities policy in headlines’. Clearly, the young WRR had become sufficiently confident for extending its balancing work from generating scientific capital to generating political capital as well.

There was a very direct relation between the 1979 WRR report and the development of the Minorities Policy. In fact, it was in a Reply Memorandum to this report that government for the first time announced the contours of a Minorities Policy, which were later elaborated further in a Minorities Memorandum (1983).

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3 Minutes of 10th meeting of the WRR Council, 23 May 1978.
Most of the WRR recommendations were ‘silently taken over in government policy’ (WRR, 1987: 44). An explanation for this direct relation can be found in the timing of the WRR report, but also in the tendency toward depoliticization of this controversial issue. Because of its strong scientific and political reputation, the WRR provided an alternative route for policy development whilst avoiding politicization. Also, there were close social contacts between researchers and policy-makers, who were then still relatively small in number. For instance, important parts of the WRR reports were based on a preparatory study of a researcher that had first been involved in the ACOM and later became civil servant at the Culture Department and became one of the co-authors of the Minorities Memorandum (1983).

The new policy frame of the Minorities Policy developed mainly through a technocratic symbiosis on the interface between the fields of science and government (Rath 2001), in which the WRR appears to have played a central role. This technocratic symbiosis had developed in particular between the Culture Department and the network of researchers that was brought together in the ACOM, which provided the Culture Department with intellectual ammunition for advocating a Minorities Policy and provided the researchers of the ACOM with resources for research and with considerable policy influence. In fact, the concept ‘minorities’ appears to have been a product of this symbiosis (Rath 1991). The WRR for the first time systematically elaborated this new policy frame, based on available scientific research, into a well-articulated design for a Minorities Policy. It was the combination of its scientific and political capital that made the WRR in such an important policy actors in this case. Its scientific capital made it into a welcome alternative venue for policy development while avoiding politicization and allowed it access to the research network of the ACOM. Its political capital provided it with a central position for influencing government policy in a very direct way. In addition, its close relation to the ACOM and its direct involvement in the development of the Minorities Policy provided the WRR support in terms of its scientific as well as political capital, strengthening its position as a young boundary organisation in the Dutch political system.

The WRR report in particular and the technocratic symbiosis in general provided an authoritative source of closure for the debate that had emerged after the terrorist acts from the 1970s. As such, it was primarily a source of negative feedback, providing scientific legitimisation for a new problem frame and the elaboration of a new policy structure. This negative feedback involved limiting the scale of the debate to the interface of science and government, thereby excluding the fields of government, politics and interest groups and punctuating the power of the iron triangles that had existed before. Moreover, it involved connecting the fields of science and government in a very particular way, stimulating a strong policy orientation among integration researchers, limiting not only the theoretical development of this field but also the diversity of theoretical perspectives to be found in this field (Rath 2001; Penninx 2005). Rather than promoting critical frame reflection, this technocratic symbiosis provided a pragmatic way of coping with
increased problem pressure whilst avoiding politicization. Furthermore, it hampered further opportunities for critical reflection by limiting the scale of the debate and excluding particular fields but also by limiting the diversity of frames that was considered to the Minorities Policy frame that was supported by this symbiosis. However, this technocratic monopoly around the Minorities Frame would not end the intractable controversy over this issue, as a silent opposition to this frame would return on the agenda with a vengeance about a decade later.

A second report from the WRR was to play an important role in a second policy punctuation in this domain. By the end of the 1980s, there were signs of stagnation, with rising immigrant unemployment, continuing immigration and concerns about the viability of the welfare state. The policy image of emancipating minorities in a multicultural society and a policy structure based on technocratic symbiosis and depoliticization became increasingly difficult to uphold. Yet, opportunities for policy innovation were restricted, because of the norm of depoliticization and the persistence of taboos on discussing ‘tougher’ approaches toward integration (Werdmölder 2003).

The Home Affairs Department, already coordinating department of the Minorities Policy, was one of the first sources of positive feedback. During the 1980s, its coordinative role had been undermined through decentralisation to local governments and deconcentration to various other departments. A new Home Affairs Minister decided to request a new report from the WRR, expressing its doubts about the current policy approach and asking for ‘creative and practical suggestions’ for policy renewal (in: WRR 1989). This provided the Minister with a way of coping with increased problem pressure whilst still avoiding politicization. At the same time, the WRR had a renewed commitment to policy change in this domain. The Council at that time had a special agenda on welfare state reform, advocating a more activating welfare state (Fermin 1997). Immigrant integration fitted well in this agenda. Furthermore, receiving an advisory request provided an illustration of the institutional legitimacy of the WRR as well as an illustration of commitment to policy follow-up of the report, both strengthening the political capital of the WRR.

This coalition of convenience between the WRR and the Home Affairs Department led however to a report that did not entirely fit the Department’s expectations; for instance, its coordinative role was fiercely criticized by the WRR report. More in general, the policy perspective that was developed by the WRR differed fundamentally from the current policy perspective, stretching beyond the creative and practical suggestions the department had requested. The WRR used deliberate boundary work strategies so as to distinguish its perspective from the current policy perspective and to stress its independent and scientific character. It deliberately resorted to different terminology, for instance reframing minorities into ‘allochthonous’ or ‘non-natives’, and baptising the policy they advocated as an
'Integration Policy’ so as to be clearly distinguished from ‘Minorities Policy’.\(^5\)
Moreover, the WRR endeavoured to deploy as much as possible a distant and objective rhetorical style, so as to stress its scientific character.\(^6\) In the 1989 report, ‘Immigrant Policy’, the perspective of a multicultural society was replaced by the perspective of an activating welfare state. Such demanded a different approach toward immigrant integration, pursuing a restrictive approach toward further immigration, and concentrating in particular on the social-economic participation of present immigrants. A more obligatory approach was proposed, calling upon civic responsibilities, rights as well as duties, of immigrants as new citizens of society.

The main effect of the WRR report was at first that it triggered much debate, within the media, but also within the field of science and eventually also politics. In the media, the WRR report was received as an indication that the Minorities Policy had failed. From scientists, especially a number of scientists that were also involved in the ACOM, this second report received fierce criticism. It triggered a fierce struggle between scientists involved in the WRR report and other researchers in this domain, which reflected different ideas about the role of the scientific field in this issue domain. The WRR not only developed a more obligatory, approach toward immigrant integration that differed strongly from the dominant ‘Minorities Paradigm’ in integration research, but also because it adopted a more sociological rather than cultural anthropological research perspective and method. This sociological perspective and method implied amongst others a different sort of commitment with the social position of immigrants, less empathetic than in the anthropological tradition and focusing more on civic responsibilities and participation than on issues as discrimination and multiculturalism. In an exceptionally critical report, the ACOM even denounced the WRR report as ‘inspired by science’ rather than ‘scientific’ (ACOM 1989). Clearly, these researchers were still able to mobilize significant negative feedback so as to protect the problem frame of the Minorities Policy, to which they had so importantly contributed. Eventually, the debate expanded to the field of politics as well. In 1990, it was the Prime Minister himself who punctuated he norm of depoliticization with statements about too strong reliance of minorities on welfare state arrangements, which he quoted from the WRR report. Still several years later, the leader of the main opposition party triggered an even broader National Minorities Debate, calling for ‘more courage’ in the approach toward immigrant integration.

Although the 1989 WRR report did not directly lead to policy change, it had a taboo-breaking effect, by for the first time arguing for a ‘tougher’ approach to immigrant integration and for the first time triggering political debate. It broadened the scope of the debate by connecting the integration issue to concerns about the viability of the welfare state. Also, it enlarged the scale of the debate as more and more actors were drawn into the debate, including from the field of politics.

\(^5\) Minutes of 4\(^{th}\) Council meeting in 1989
\(^6\) Ibid.
Indirectly, the report appears to have contributed more substantially to policy reframing several years later. It was rediscovered in the context of National Minorities Debate in 1991/2, and several of its ideas were taken over in a new policy approach of an Integration Policy. In 1992, two authors that had been involved with both the 1979 and 1989 WRR report were even asked to provide a new advice to government, clearly echoing the 1989 report. The ACOM, that had offered such fierce resistance to the new ideas that were raised by the WRR, was dissolved in 1992.

This case clearly shows the political function that boundary organisations can have in situations of policy deadlock. By the end of the 1980s, policy found itself in a situation of stagnation as the immigration situation worsened rather than ameliorated and in a situation of deadlock as taboos hampered a critical debate. The WRR as a boundary organisation offered a way out of this situation, as its scientific capital allowed it to break with the taboos that held the debate in a deadlock, and as its political capital made it sufficiently authoritative and convincing for influencing policy in a new direction. Distinguishing itself as an independent scientific organisation, by using different terminology and a different rhetorical style, were necessary for the WRR to reproduce sufficient scientific capital. At the same time, its institutional reputation, and the commitment for policy change that was created through the advisory request from government, were necessary for reproducing sufficient political capital. This combination of scientific and political capital made the WRR into a powerful source of positive feedback, putting a ‘tougher’ approach to integration on the agenda and setting in motion a process that eventually led to a different policy. Moreover, its balancing work between scientific and political capital allowed the WRR to influence policy in accordance with its own institutional agenda on welfare state reform. This balancing work came however at a certain risk, as its scientific capital challenged by other scientists in this domain, and as its political capital was challenged when the report appeared at first to be ignored by the policy institutes that had requested it.

Because of its taboo-breaking effect, this report also contributed to critical frame reflection. This contribution did not so much concern the content of the report, but rather its different tone toward the integration issue, which triggered debate within the fields of media, science and politics. It was only indirectly that this report also contributed to policy reframing several years later. In this case, the WRR report was a source of positive rather than negative feedback; it broadened the scale and scope, thereby ridding the taboos and norms of depoliticization and political correctness that had thus far obstructed critical reflection. It also dissolved the technocratic symbiosis that had prevented policy change thus far, clearly illustrated by the dissolution of the ACOM in 1992. The WRR involved the scientific field in this case in a very different way; not as a source of policy relevant knowledge for the framing of policy problems, but as a field in which new policy ideas can develop independent from political constraints. This means that the technocratic relation between science and politics had now been replaced by a more dialectical relation, more favourable toward critical frame reflection. However, this dialectical relation was conditional
upon sufficient belief in science and success of the boundary organisations as the WRR to reproduce sufficient scientific capital. This dialectical relation was to be disturbed several years later.

‘The Netherlands as Immigration Society’ (2001)
Again about a decade later, the WRR decided to continue its tradition of involvement in this policy domain with a third report, ‘The Netherlands as Immigration Society’. However, this report did not play such an important role in another policy punctuation as had done the two earlier reports. After the turn of the Millennia, a dramatic policy reframing did occur, this time clearly due to developments in other fields than science. In fact, the development of an ‘Integration Policy New Style’, containing a tougher approach toward immigrant integration and focusing on social-cultural adaptation as well as social-economic participation, coincided with a rising cynicism toward the involvement of scientists in this policy domain.

The WRR took the initiative for another report on immigrant integration at a time that this issue stood not high on the agenda. The aim was to put a different policy perspective on the agenda, which would stress the need for structural adaptations of central institutions in Dutch society to the reality of being an immigration society characterized by constant immigration and pervasive cultural diversity. To this aim, the WRR wanted to ‘debunk’ or ‘demythologise’ some of the central assumptions of the Integration Policy. Such debunking concerned for instance the link between immigration policy, integration policy and the state of law. A central assumption of the integration policy had been that a restrictive immigration policy and an effective integration policy would void the need for structural adaptations of institutions of society itself. The WRR wanted to develop a more coherent perspective on immigration policy, integration policy and the state of law of Dutch society, so as to be able to adapt more structurally to being an immigration society.

This third report appears to have been overhauled by developments in the problem context. Already before its publication, for the second time a broad national debate emerged about immigrant integration. This debate was triggered by critical reports in the media that declared the multicultural society a ‘tragedy’, but also sparked fierce political debate in parliament. A new issue frame emerged, that stressed the need for immigrants to adapt to basic norms and values of Dutch society. The WRR decided however not to engage itself in this emerging debate, but decided rather to remain at distance and to attempt to set a more nuanced tone in contrast to the sharp tone of this minorities debate. In this sense, it attempted to reproduce the same dialectical relationship as with the report in 1989. Moreover, several weeks before publication of the report, the 11th September Attacks in the US took place. This too broadened the scale and scope of the debate on immigrant integration and made the tone of the debate on immigrant integration more negative.

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7 Minutes of 17th and 19th meeting of the Council in 1998.
8 Memorandum to the Council, 7 March 2000.
In 2002, immigrant integration was made the main topic during the parliamentary elections, especially due to the rise of the populist politician Pim Fortuyn. He made the failing integration into a symbol for broader popular discontent with the functioning of Dutch government and democracy. After that his party was included in a new government later that year, a decidedly different approach was adopted toward integration, somewhat euphemistically called ‘Integration Policy New Style.’

This new policy approach did not build forward nor reflect any of the central ideas from the 2001 WRR report. In fact, this WRR report remained largely ignored, as it triggered only very little debate in the media, and as government now did not respond to this report with an elaborate reply memorandum, as it had done with previous reports, but only addressed several paragraphs to it in a policy memorandum that appeared later in 2001.

This marginal role of the third WRR report on immigrant integration appears due to the somewhat unfortunate timing of the report, but also to a very different type of science-politics relations in this case. The surge of popular dissent with government and politics had led to a firm re-establishment of political primacy in many policy domains but in the domain of immigrant integration in particular as this had become a symbol of the political crisis. In regaining its political primacy, the political field developed a so-called ‘articulation function’ (Verwey-Jonker Institute 2004), which meant that public demands were articulated and amplified in the field of politics so as to clearly indicate that the public was taken seriously by the political system. Politics now firmly remained ‘on top’, with science more ‘on tap’; policy development took place on the interface between politics and media rather than on the interface of politics and science. This meant that the political capital of boundary organisations as the WRR declined as government demand for independent scientific advice declined, especially concerning the dialectical and less serviceable type of advice as provided by the WRR. Only boundary organisations that stood closer to government and provided a more serviceable and instrumental type of advice, such as the Social and Cultural Planning Office, continued to play an influential role. In general, government more and more adopted a ‘pick-and-choose’ strategy toward scientific expertise, selecting only those strands of expertise that could provide legitimacy to policy plans (Penninx 2005).

In the context of this political controversy, the scientific capital of the WRR became fiercely contested. Some time after publication of the WRR report, popular dissent about the failing integration policy was also projected on the involvement of scientific advisors in the development of this policy domain. Public debate emerged on the close relations between scientists and policy-makers in this domain. It was argued that this scientific involvement had been undemocratic, by delegating policy development to the scientific field instead of the political field, and that it would have contributed to a multiculturalist bias in policy, which was now commonly

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Treaties of 2nd Chamber of Parliament, 29203, Nr.1: p.8
dismissed as a failure. Consequently, the authority of not only the WRR, but more in general of researchers involved in this domain, became fiercely contested.

In this case, the WRR neither clearly contributed to positive nor to negative feedback. Although the aim of the WRR report was at first to set a new perspective of the Netherlands as an immigration society on the agenda, its influence on the positive feedback that was generated in the fields of politics and media appears to have been negligible. As the report was overhauled by developments in the policy context, it became regarded as a source of negative rather than positive feedback, defending a positive image of an immigration society against the increasingly negative tone on immigration and integration in political debate. However, the report appears to have been forgotten rather than that it became an effective source of negative feedback.

This case clearly illustrates the difficulties of the role of boundary organisations in stimulating critical frame reflection in situations of policy controversy. In principle, this third WRR report was designed so as to promote critical reflection about some of the ‘myths’ of the Integration Policy, whilst also proposing an alternative issue framing, that of an immigration society. In this respect, the design of this third report resembled that of the second report, that was also aimed at triggering debate. However, the controversial context and in particular the sharp politicization of debate and the articulation function of the political field, blocked the opportunities for critical reflection. A new frame was now developed rather on the interface of media and politics, in which immigrant integration was treated as a symbol of a broader macropolitical agenda rather than that it was based on critical reflection on developments in the problem situation at hand.

Conclusions
This analysis of the role of the Scientific Council for Government Policy in a wicked policy domain, Dutch immigrant integration policy, has shown that boundary organisations can play a strategic role in policy dynamics. Their location on the boundaries of science and politics provides strategic opportunities for connecting the fields of science and politics in particular ways so as to stimulate either policy stability or change. The case of the WRR shows that boundary organisations can be sources of negative as well as positive feedback in policy dynamics. Its 1979 report, ‘Ethnic Minorities’, played a central role in creating a technocratic symbiosis on the interface between science and government in support of a Minorities policy frame. This symbiosis allowed for the development of a Minorities Policy by a small network of scientists and policy-makers, excluding other actors with other frames within the fields of politics, interest groups as well as other government departments. Its second report, ‘Immigrant Policy’, triggered rather positive feedback, as the WRR used its independent scientific position for taboos that had created policy deadlock and reinforced policy stagnation. Here, the field of science was involved in the policy process in a more dialectical manner. Finally, the third report, ‘The Netherlands as Immigration Society’, appears to have been largely
ignored, at least partly due to a renewed political primacy, putting politics clearly ‘on top’ and science ‘on tap’ and creating cynicism towards too strong involvement of scientists in policy domains.

Boundary organisations have been traditionally conceived of as ‘bridges’ between research and policy, but appear to be much more than that. Indeed, they often maintain an image of ‘speaking truth to power’, which endows them with special (scientific) authority in problem framing. However, they also provide strategic opportunities in the politics of problem framing as well as the politics of venue shopping. Especially when the framing of a policy issue triggers controversy, boundary organisations can play an important role in the construction of ‘truths’ by providing scientific legitimacy to particular policy ideas or ‘frames.’ For instance, the 1989 WRR report made a citizenship oriented policy frame acceptable by providing it with scientific authority, while such a frame was a taboo in the fields of politics and government. Moreover, in terms of the politics of venue shopping, their boundary position allows boundary organisations to strategically connect the fields of science and politics. This means that boundary organisations not only offer access to science as a venue, but also play a central role themselves as entrepreneurs in involving science in policy development in particular ways. As such, the construction of particular science-politics relations must be considered an endogenous stake in policy processes rather than an exogenous given to it. Boundary organisations can for instance involve the scientific field in policy processes so as to allow for depoliticization, as with the 1979 report, to provide scientific authority and credibility to new policy ideas that call for policy change, as with the 1989 report, or to debunk modes of political discourse, as with the 2001 report.

Essential for understanding the role of boundary organisations in policy dynamics is how they generate of both scientific and political capital. The WRR case in this paper shows how the WRR reproduces and utilizes both sorts of capital as resources for influencing policy. On the one hand, the WRR constantly strains to distinguish itself as a scientific organisation so as to acquire scientific authority and credibility. For instance, it deliberately distinguishes the terminology in its reports from that of policy terminology uses an objective rhetorical style so as to stress its scientific objectivity. Also, general institutional traits such as the name of the WRR and the scientific reputation of its staff are used for distinguishing it as a scientific organisation. On the other hand, the WRR also constantly strains to maintain political capital so as to maintain its institutional legitimacy and reputation as an institute that provides useful policy advice. For instance, with its first report on immigrant integration in 1979 the WRR wanted to show that it could really ‘matter’ as an institution for the resolution of wicked policy problems, at a moment that was well-timed with ongoing policy developments. The second report in 1989 was also issued out of a special commitment with policy change in this domain. Finally, the last report, in 2001, was issued out of a desire to continue to successful tradition of involvement in this policy domain that had provided the WRR with such a powerful reputation in this policy domain.
Although the WRR clearly contributed to policy dynamics, its contribution to resolving the wicked policy problem of immigrant integration appears less clear. Rein and Schön have argued that resolving wicked policy controversies demands critical frame reflection, to which scientists can contribute by taking frames as objects of analysis and by stimulating frame reflective dialogue. This would reframe the role of scientists in policy process in a more deliberative way. On the one hand, the WRR case shows how it can promote critical frame reflection, for instance by allowing for the generation of new policy ideas independent from the political context, and by offering an authoritative venue (‘science’) for confronting government and politics with new policy ideas. On the other hand, in the case of the 1979 report, the authoritative involvement of the WRR in this policy domain was clearly an impediment to critical frame reflection, as it helped to avoid political conflict and critical debate on this issue ‘too hot to cope with for politics.’ Furthermore, the 2001 report illustrates the difficulties for stimulating frame reflection, as the involvement of boundary organisations can become fiercely contested at moments of political conflict, threatening both the scientific and political capital of boundary organisations.

More in general terms, the involvement of boundary organisations in policy dynamics shows that the scientific field is not ‘exceptional’ to policy processes. Instead, the construction of science-policy relations appears to be an endogenous stake in policy processes, and a central stake for boundary organisations in particular. The WRR connected science and policy in three cases in three different ways. What is more, these different types of science-policy relations not only influenced developments in the fields of politics and government, but also in the field of science itself. The first report promoted a strong policy-orientation in integration research and a dominant position of the minorities frame, even labelled, the ‘minorities paradigm.’ The second report helped to dissolve this dominant position of the minorities paradigm and erode the technocratic symbiosis between scientists and policy-makers. However, in all cases the WRR did not just crossed science-policy boundaries, but also constructed these boundaries in particular ways so as to maintain their scientific authority and credibility. Boundary organisations not only operate on the boundaries of science and politics, but also do boundary work themselves. So, the image of boundary organisations as ‘speaking truth to power’ is a product of their successful reproduction of scientific and political capital rather than an accurate description of their involvement in policy processes. Rather, wherever this image of ‘speaking truth to power’ is raised, critical questions should be raised as well, concerning, what truths are spoken (and why they are considered truths), to what powers, at what moments and in what way, so as to understand endogenous construction of this image in the context of policy processes.
Literature


