

# **Policy Frames and Implementation Problems: The Case of Gender Mainstreaming**

## **State of the Art and Mapping of Competences in The Netherlands**

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## State of the Art and Mapping of Competences in the Netherlands

### Summary

Gender mainstreaming cannot be said to be a new strategy in the Dutch policymaking circles dealing with gender equality and women's emancipation. Since the 1970s - when "the women's issue" was prompted onto the national policy agenda, the government chose to follow a two-track approach in dealing with emancipation matters. Apart from specific measures to improve women's positions and participation in different policy sectors – commonly known as 'sector policy' – a so-called 'facet policy' was developed in which emancipation was meant to be integrated in different policy areas as a sector-crossing issue.

Even though the government still adheres to this two-track approach, several conceptual shifts can be identified in the history of the Dutch policies on emancipation. The first policy plan on emancipation (1977) primarily aimed at breaking role models and re-valuing "female characteristics and activities". In the early 1980s, the attention widened from consciousness raising and changing mentality towards breaking structural power differences between women and men. According to its long-term policy plan of 1985, the government did not only pursue a redistribution of public positions, but also a change in the social organisation of sexuality and pre-destined models of femininity and masculinity. In practice, however, the government's policies were mainly targeted towards promoting independent lives for women (read: economic independence). Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the Dutch emancipation policies focused primarily on increasing women's labour market participation.

Since the late 1980s the Dutch government made repeated efforts to spread responsibilities for implementing emancipation policies over all departments. It remains to be seen whether these efforts will be successful. At first sight some good initiatives have been developed, such as the implementation of several gender impact assessments within ministerial departments (EER-pilots), the adoption of an Action Plan on Emancipation Tasks of Departments (1998-2002), and the publication of a Manual on Gender Mainstreaming for civil servants (2000). But the government's strong emphasis on the organizational aspects of gender mainstreaming seems to have overshadowed the need for well-founded, coherent policy concepts. Illustrative in this respect is the entire absence of any problem definition in the government's latest strategic plan on gender mainstreaming (2001). The 2000 Short and Medium Term Policy Plan on Emancipation does not help to solve this problem. It provides a confusing mixture of definitions in which concepts as 'emancipation', 'gender equality', and 'diversity' are used interchangeably without any further description. Paradoxically enough, since the official enhancement of gender mainstreaming the government silently withdrew from its explicit transformative goals: emancipation is no longer defined as a matter of removing obstacles in the structure of society, but is re-defined in terms of "creating pre-conditions".

## 1. The Dutch emancipation policies

### Introduction

The Netherlands played an important role in promoting the strategy of gender mainstreaming at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. At the time it was one of the few countries that already had developed a mainstreaming instrument (Verloof and Roggenband 1994) and in fact, it was the only one actually applying it. Despite the country's early experiences with gender mainstreaming - or maybe actually because of it? - the concepts underpinning the policy often appear to be poorly elaborated, sometimes even multi-interpretable. Are these vague formulations merely a characteristic of the Dutch polder model and its typical drive towards creating consensus, even if only at the surface? Or do they reveal a more generally shared problem in the implementation of gender mainstreaming?

### The Dutch 'polder model'

Even in the post-Fortuyn period, the Dutch political system can be characterised as a consensus democracy. The pursuit of compromise is deeply rooted in the political culture, which is clearly expressed in the way in which policy processes are organised. In order to promote a broadly shared consensus a plurality of interests is taken into account in the policy process (Lijphart 1976). Dutch politics are also characterised by neo-corporatism. In the 1950s and 1960s an extensive corporate sector developed in which the defence of group interests took place through the representation and the institutionalisation of interest groups networks. These policy networks were often institutionalised in the form of officially recognized advisory bodies. Even if the number of advisory bodies has decreased dramatically during the 1990s, consultation with organisations representing specific interests is often still legally prescribed (Kickert and In 't Veld 1995, 52).

The style of policy making in the Netherlands can be described as open. In particular the ministries are relatively open organisations, not only populated by civil servants, but also connected to many external consultants and scientists who contribute enthusiastically to policymaking and legislation proscripted (Kickert and In 't Veld 1995, 56). This policy style - with its strong accent on consultation and consensus building - has gained international attention as the Dutch polder model (see for instance: Haverland 1998). Policy processes are characterized by a strong tendency to involve different, often contesting interest groups. A pattern of sponsored pluralism completes the picture. Movement-based organisations often receive financial funding from the Dutch State, though usually on a temporary base.

The Dutch emancipation policies are an evident product of this consensus model. Generally, the government does not choose to enforce equal opportunities by law or regulations, but prefers to use 'soft' policies such as information, communication, setting norms, establishing preconditions, or monitoring. Law enforcement – such

as compulsory quota for political party candidate lists - only becomes an option if all other measures have failed. One rare example is a stipulation promoting women's representation in advisory bodies, which was incorporated in the legislation streamlining a major reorganisation of the Advisory System in 1997. The stipulation demanded an *attempt* to achieve proportional representation of women and men in all newly installed advisory bodies. The only other compulsory instrument known in the history of the Dutch emancipation policy – a law to promote women's participation in senior positions in science and higher education – has been less effective so far.

The style of policymaking within the Dutch government varies considerably across policy areas and issues. Departmental autonomy of officials is matched by the autonomy of ministers in the Cabinet. The Dutch civil service is said to be relatively fragmented, sometimes referred to as 'the kingdom of the disunited ministries' (Toonen 1998, 108-129). Each ministry has its own legal and policymaking culture, partly due to different traditions and the absence of a centralised recruitment system for civil servants (Waarden, van 1995, 333-372). In a number of areas, such as environmental policy, close and functional relationships have existed between civil servants, academics and movement activists, not unlike the 'iron triangle' described in the US between governmental departments, parliamentary committees and interest associations (Leroy 1995, 38; Verloo 1986, 201-231). Concerning gender and emancipation issues achieving such an iron triangle continues to be a challenge.

## **Emancipation policies in the Netherlands: organisation and major shifts since the 1970s**

### *The 1970s: agenda setting and institutionalisation*

The start of the Dutch policies on emancipation is usually located in 1974. Stimulated by a combination of factors – the political pressure of the women's movement, the growing support in Parliament and the oncoming UN Women's Year in 1975 – the Dutch government decided to assign a temporary advisory group of experts to explore the possibilities for developing a so-called 'emancipation policy'. Until 1981, this Emancipation Commission played a key role in formulating a conceptual framework and designing an organisational infrastructure for emancipation policies. The commission's moderate way of translating various women's movement demands in policy goals contributed to a broad acceptance of emancipation as an appropriate area of government intervention. This was also endorsed by the Christian-liberal coalition replacing the former left-wing cabinet in 1977 (Outshoorn and Swiebel 1998).

The first Dutch policy plan on emancipation (CRW 1976) largely mirrored the policy lines as set out in the Emancipation Commission's first report titled "Design for a Five-Year Plan" (Emancipatiekommissie 1976). Its broad aim was to increase the freedom of choice for women and men to shape their own lives. This aim was elaborated in three policy goals: (1) breaking role patterns that limit the behavioural repertoire of women and men; (2) resolving women's arrears in public life and men's arrears in private life; (3) promoting a higher

valuing of characteristics and activities traditionally associated with women. From the start, the government chose to follow a two-track approach in dealing with emancipation. Apart from specific measures to improve women's positions and participation in different policy sectors – commonly known as 'sector policy' – a so-called 'facet policy' was developed in which emancipation was meant to be integrated in different policy areas as a sector-crossing issue.

The institutional infrastructure designed for emancipation policies - the foundations of which were established during this first phase – reflected the same two-track approach. In 1976 an Interdepartmental Coordination Commission on Emancipation Policy (ICE) was installed with the task of advising the Dutch Ministers on the facet policy and guarding the coherence of initiatives within the different ministries. Representatives of each ministerial department participated in this commission. Most ministries also established internal committees on emancipation. The position, power, visibility, and activity of these bodies varied widely among the departments. The Direction Coordination Emancipation Policy (DCE, 1978) - a civil servant's unit located in the Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Welfare - was charged with the task of coordinating the implementation of both sector and facet policies. One year before, a Secretary of State in the same Ministry had been assigned to emancipation. Within parliament, emancipation issues were dealt with by a "Parliamentary Standing Committee on Emancipation Policy" (1979).

#### *The 1980s: promoting women's economic independence*

In 1981 – with the inauguration of a new cabinet composed of Christian democrats, social democrats, and progressive liberal democrats - the Emancipation Commission was replaced by a permanent advisory body called the Emancipation Council. A new Secretary of State for emancipation issues pleaded effectively for shifting the policy focus from the realm of changing attitudes towards resolving structural power inequalities between women and men. A temporary expert group was charged with the task of elaborating policy concepts and developing a coherent vision on emancipation, the results of which were published in 1982 (A, van der, and Dijkstra 1982). Along with the new conceptualisation of the problem, the civil servant's unit DCE was removed from the Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Welfare to be installed in the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. The Secretary of State had a double mission: formulating a facet policy for the long term, and setting up sector-based temporary projects in the areas of positive action, minority policies, and health care for women. The latter proved to be quite successful.

In 1985 - along with the momentum of the First UN Conference on Women in Nairobi – a policy document was adopted that would serve as the major reference point for emancipation initiatives until the early 1990s: the interdepartmental Policy Plan on Emancipation (SZW 1985). Officially this plan re-affirmed the conceptualisation of emancipation as a matter of structural power inequality as developed in the early 1980s. It presented not only a redistribution of public positions as its goal, but also a change in the social organisation of sexuality (Benschop 1993). In practice, however, the new government inaugurated in 1986 – a coalition of Christian democrats and conservative liberals - gradually reduced this broader policy focus to

measures promoting women's participation on the labour market (Keuzenkamp and Teunissen 1990; Outshoorn 1995; Outshoorn and Swiebel 1998). The growing association of emancipation with social-economic issues was partly related to DCE's institutional location in the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. More strongly it reflected the government's general pursuit of economic growth at the time.

In 1986 the government made an effort to materialize the facet policy by extending the notion of integration to the institutional infrastructure. A high status Cabinet Committee for Emancipation was set up to co-ordinate the spreading of emancipation responsibilities over all Ministers. This seemed to be a forceful initiative but its impact was undermined by the fact that the administrative bodies lacked the power to effectively support the implementation of the facet policy. Though a broad political consensus existed on the aims pursued in the facet policy– except within the small right-wing Christian parties - in practice this support faded away as soon as concrete action had to be undertaken (Benschop 1993). Due to its troubled relationship with the women's movement and the Emancipation Council, the civil servant unit DCE had never been a powerful actor. In 1986, it lost the guidance of the Secretary of State on Emancipation; the issue had been integrated in the portfolio of the Minister on Social Affairs and Employment. ICE's impact was undermined by the fact that the officials assigned tended to be replaced often, and hardly ever occupied senior functions within their own ministries. Except in a few areas like Development Cooperation, developing an 'iron triangle' between governmental departments, politicians and women's organisations proved to be difficult (Prins 1989; Outshoorn 1995).

Some researchers tend to describe the late 1980s as the "heyday" of Dutch equality policy (Hondegheem, Cromboom, and Nelen 2002), by which they probably are referring to the establishment of the high-status Cabinet Committee for Emancipation. Others are pointing to the fact that issues of emancipation tended to loose support as soon as departmental interests were at stake (Benschop 1993; Verloo 2000). An example supporting the latter claim is the government's failure to integrate sector-based projects – like the ones implemented in the early 1980s - in the regular policies of ministerial departments.

*The 1990s: strengthened government action in the area of labour and care*

In the early 1990s a new Secretary of State on Emancipation – appointed in 1989 by a cabinet composed of Christian and social democrats - made an effort to re-extend the scope of emancipation policies beyond the sphere of the labour market, partly in reaction to criticism from women's studies circles (Oldersma 1998). In a short-term policy plan, adopted in 1992, three new priority areas were identified: women's participation in public decision-making, the redistribution of unpaid labour, and the breaking of prevailing images on femininity and masculinity in society (SZW 1992). These priorities proved to be short-lived, as a few years later the first 'purple cabinet' – a coalition between social democrats, conservative liberals and progressive liberal democrats that governed the Netherlands from 1994 to 1998 – re-focused the scope back to labour market issues.

In 1995 a new policy plan was presented in which other issues were seemingly dealt with as well, such as sexual violence, distribution of power and influence, and poverty – in line with the agenda of the Fourth UN World Conference on Women in Beijing (SZW 1995). But these topics were merely summed up without any in-dept analysis of the problem (Oldersma 1996b).

In practice the policies reflected a liberal-conservative emphasis on labour and economic independence, though more attention than before was paid to the combination of paid and unpaid labour (Outshoorn 1998). The 'double-earners-household' became the standard that continues to underpin government action today.

Partly because of this focused attention, the 'purple cabinet' managed to adopt several relatively forceful measures that had been longstanding issues on the feminist agenda, such as the equalisation by law of part time and full time workers, and the formal acknowledgement of registered partnerships which opened the way to the 'gay marriage'. Shops were permitted to extend their opening hours allowing for shopping in the evenings, and eventually even on Sundays. The government interfered in the private sphere more strongly than before, obliging welfare mothers with children over 5 years old to apply for a paid job. The focus on promoting women's participation in paid labour has been joined by an accent on the responsibilities of the social partners, with child care facilities as the obvious solution to the prioritised problematic of "the combination of paid labour and care" (Outshoorn 1998).

Meanwhile the government continued its 'integrative strategy' regarding the institutional infrastructure. With more and more emphasis, policy documents – including the 1992 and 1995 policy plans – stated that all government departments had to take their own independent responsibility concerning the implementation of emancipation tasks within their policy area. This pursuit went along with a pulling down of existing bodies. In the early 1990s a vain attempt was made to abolish DCE, causing quite some turbulence and loss of professionalism. In 1991 the Cabinet Committee for Emancipation, set up several years before with the task of streamlining this process, was abolished. The same happened to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Emancipation Policy in 1994; since then, emancipation issues are being dealt with by the Standing Committee for Social affairs and Employment (Hondegheem, Cromboom, and Nelen 2002; Outshoorn 1998). In 1998 the formal responsibility for emancipation was transferred to the Secretary of State for Social Affairs and Employment, which implied a disappearance of the separate State Secretary on Emancipation.

In 1997, the Dutch advisory system was subject to a major reorganisation with the aim of reducing public expenditure and promoting efficiency in the governmental apparatus. This resulted in a dramatic reduction of the total number of advisory bodies. In the new system, all advisory bodies were supposed to provide advice on emancipation matters as far as relevant for their own area, which implied the end of the Emancipation Council's existence (Verloo 2000). Along with this reorganisation, a successful attempt was made to increase the number of women in the new advisory bodies (see above). Initially the advisory bodies received some guidance and support for their new task of integrating the emancipation perspective through the newly

appointed temporary committee TECENA. In January 2001, this temporary advisory body (4 experts) was discharged from its task.

All in all the developments in the late 1990s signified a declining support for women's emancipation, which was also reflected in a reduction in the government's budget for feminist civil society organisations (Outshoorn and Swiebel 1998). In a further effort to materialise the spreading of responsibilities, the second 'purple cabinet' (1998-2002) adopted an Action Plan on Emancipation Tasks of Departments (SZW 1999a). It demanded an annual report from all ministerial departments identifying measurable targets achievable within four years, which were attached to the department's core tasks as well as to the government's overall emancipation policy. Two rounds of departmental Progress Reports (2000 and 2001) were followed by a Final Report in 2002. By that time several tasks had not yet been achieved, though the results varied widely among the different departments.

*Current developments: adoption of gender mainstreaming as the official government strategy*

At the moment of writing, it is hard to say whether or not the Dutch policies on emancipation have entered a new phase since the 1990s. Recently the term 'gender mainstreaming' has been structurally embedded in all policy documents on emancipation. But as has been the case often in the past, this merely seems to reflect a change in terminology. The strategy as such is not at all new in the Dutch policy context; it can be seen as a logical succession to the strategy of 'facet policy', one of the two policy tracks jointly embraced since the seventies. In the mid 1990s, the Dutch government had been the first to apply a mainstreaming instrument (Verloo and Roggenband 1994). Although the instrument's name - 'Emancipatie Effect Rapportage' (EER) - refers to the traditional Dutch notion of 'emancipation', it is fully grafted on the principles of gender mainstreaming. It entails a gender impact assessment designed for government actors to be applied in the first (planning and preparatory) phase of policymaking. Several descriptions of the EER and application experiences are available in English (Verloo 2000; Plantenga 2000; Verloo and Roggenband 1996).

The latest Short and Medium Term Policy Plan on Emancipation (SZW 2000a) adheres to the same two-track policy approach as before, but the first track is now called gender mainstreaming. Like before, much emphasis is put on the need of spreading gender mainstreaming responsibilities over all departments. The plan proposes to charge an Interdepartmental Working Group on Gender Mainstreaming with the task of "developing an (inter)departmental strategy and structure for gender mainstreaming". The working group's final report (Interdepartementale Werkgroep Gender Mainstreaming 2001) and the according Cabinet Position Paper on Gender Mainstreaming (SZW 2001) oblige all departments to produce a report regarding five gender mainstreaming prerequisites: (1) commitment at the top, (2) concretely formulated targets, (3) clearly assigned responsibilities, (4) gender expertise, (5) formation, budget and instruments. A newly installed steering group of coordinating officials - attached to ICE - is charged with assessing the reports.

The Short and Medium Term Policy Plan identifies five priority issues for action. Apart from the 'old' theme of labour and care, four issues are marked as priorities: daily routine (work-life balancing), power and decision making, human rights, and women's position in the knowledge-based society. In line with the Dutch tradition, most of the measures proposed are 'soft' measures, such as setting target figures (women in decision making), providing information (work-life balancing facilities), and developing codes of behaviour (sexual harassment, equal treatment at the work place). The new policy hype are digital discussion and information platforms: currently three (!) major campaigns on gender role models and combining labour and care are online. It is too early to assess the impact of the measures implemented so far, but the turbulence in the Dutch political arena since the 2002 elections - within 87 days the new cabinet of Christian democrats, conservative liberals and the new rightwing LPF has been dismissed, resulting in a government vacuum that lasts until today - certainly has not positively affected the implementation process.

Despite the target figures adopted in 2000, the 2002 cabinet counted just one female minister: a decline of 300% as compared to the cabinet before. Probably the cabinet's major achievement was re-assigning a Secretary of State to "Emancipation and Family Affairs", with the altered title referring to the Christian-democratic notion of the family as the basis of society. But the first policy document published by this Secretary of State - an annual letter containing the Secretary of State's policy proposals for the next year - was devoid of any concrete policy initiatives (SZW 2002). During the current coalition negotiations, which started in January 2003, new policy initiatives are unlikely to be developed.

## Equality legislation

Equality policies in the Netherlands cannot be said to be heavily dominated by a focus on law and legislation. As 'de jure' equality has been largely achieved today, the main concern now is ensuring that 'de facto' equality is achieved as well (SZW 1999b, 10). Article 1 of the Dutch Constitution contains a general prohibition of discrimination (Asscher-Vonk 1995). It states: "All persons on Dutch territory are treated equally in the same circumstances. Discrimination on the grounds of religion, creed, political faith, race, sex or on any other ground is not permitted<sup>1</sup>." In the late 1970s the government started to adjust all legislation that makes a distinction between women and men, and between married and unmarried people. By the early 1990s, just a few distinctions in family and personal law were left.

In the 1990s, three important legislative measures were adopted. The *Equal Treatment Act* (AWGB, 1994) covers discrimination not just on the grounds of sex, but also on other grounds (i.e. religion, belief, political opinion, race, nationality, sexual orientation, or marital status). This prohibition of discrimination does not

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<sup>1</sup> "Direct discrimination includes a distinction on the ground of pregnancy, confinement and maternity. Indirect discrimination means a distinction on the grounds of qualities other than sex, for instance marital status or family circumstances, which results in discrimination on the ground of sex", Article 1 Equal Treatment Act.

extend to indirect distinctions that are justified on objective grounds. Direct discrimination is prohibited unless the Act expressly makes an exception to this rule. Group action is possible. The *Equal Treatment (Working Hours) Act* requires that part-time and full-time workers are treated equally. Since part-time workers are mainly women, this legislation is relevant to combat indirect discrimination against women. The *Equal Pay Legislation* in the Civil Code states that an employer may not discriminate between men and women in their terms and conditions of employment. The Equal Opportunities Act specifies that the employee with whom the comparison is made should work in the same enterprise, or even more narrowly a branch in the enterprise.

In its last CEDAW report the government expressed the opinion that this is not correct, and intends to amend the law to allow for a comparison between people in the service of the same employer (SZW 1999b). Specific legislation has been adopted on sex offences, on sexual harassment (as part of the Working Conditions Act 1994), on representation in Advisory Bodies (1997), on Parental Leave (1997), and on Proportional Representation of Women in Managerial Posts in Education (1997).

The Dutch anti-sex discrimination legislation has not been heavily influenced by EU law or EU membership. Most initiatives to eliminate discriminatory elements from existing law – as well as the Equal Treatment Act (AWGB) - were the result of long-term processes and pressure inside the Netherlands. In some cases - such as sexual harassment regulations - the influence has been the other way round. In 1994, the Dutch government finally came up with a law to prevent sexual harassment. In this law, sexual harassment is defined as a problem concerning labour conditions. According to the law, employers have the duty to protect their workers against sexual harassment. The law has had some effect, as more than 50% of the collective labour agreements in 1998 had a paragraph on sexual harassment.

The Equal Treatment Commission plays a role in the implementation of legislation. This body, an autonomous commission of nine experts, can investigate whether or not a prohibited distinction has been made. Anyone who believes that he or she has been discriminated against may file a petition free of charge. The opinion of the Commission is not binding, but in practice, its opinion is usually accepted. The Commission can make recommendations to the person responsible for the discrimination to facilitate solutions, and it does so regularly. The Equal Treatment Commission can apply to the courts for a binding decision, but between the years of 1994 and 1996 the Commission did not do so. The majority of the 421 petitions in 1996 were petitions against sexual discrimination, followed by petitions against racial and nationality based discrimination (25%).

### **Civil Society Actors**

Since the start of the Dutch emancipation policies interest groups and women's studies representatives played an important role in affecting the government's policy. In the early 1970s the public debate on

women's issues had been stimulated by the ludicrous actions of the feminist group 'Dolle Mina'. The more moderate organisation Man-Vrouw-Maatschappij (Men-Women-Society) managed to set emancipation on the political agenda by initiating a letter campaign declaring it was time for a national emancipation policy (Outshoorn and Swiebel 1998; Prins 1989). Since then an increasing number of women's organisations - operating in as different areas as education, information, health care, or violence against women – played a role in affecting the government's policies, either by consultation or by advice or actions uncalled for. Many of them were receiving state funding, though usually on a temporary basis.

The late 1990s marked a decline in the national support for feminist organisations, which resulted in reorganisation and merges after the usual rounds of consultation. As of 1999, a few institutions are left: E-Quality (an expertise centre on gender and diversity), the IIAV (archives and information on the women's movement), the Clara Wichmann institute (experts on women and law), the Vrouwen Alliantie (an umbrella organisation of the women's movement), Toplink (a database of expert women), and the Opportunity in Business Campaign. A budget is still available for project subsidies (Verloo 2000).

### **Trends in the history of the Dutch emancipation policies: shifts in concepts and priority issues and tensions in the implementation of policy goals**

Several conceptual shifts can be identified in the above-sketched history of the Dutch policies on emancipation. In the 1970s, the main goal pursued was to "increase the freedom of choice for women and men to shape their own lives". The government's choice to shelter DCE in the Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Welfare – and its earlier decision to assign emancipation issues to the portfolio of a Secretary of State in the same Ministry – reveals how the problem was conceived at the time: as a matter of awareness raising and changing attitudes. Breaking role models and re-valuing 'female characteristics and activities' were two key notions in the government's first policy plan on emancipation.

Although the vagueness of these notions contributed to a broad political consensus on the legitimacy of the emancipation policy, they hindered its implementation at the same time. The policy plan didn't provide for a vision on how the government could play an active role in stimulating the mentality change pursued and political debate on the feminist problematic - with according starting points for policy action - didn't materialize. The foundations were laid for the institutionalisation of the emancipation policy at the administrative and political level, but the bodies established were lacking a clear mission concerning the facet policy. As a consequence, the focus was directed mainly to promoting equal opportunities by removing discriminative elements from governmental rules and legislation (Prins 1989; Benschop 1993; Outshoorn and Swiebel 1998).

A crucial move in the 1980s was to define gender inequality as a problem of power differences between women and men. The attention of policy makers widened from cultural aspects and consciousness raising to changing structures in society. The focus shifted from formal equality to procedural equality. Even the government's own role in confirming and re-enforcing gender role models in regular policies was discussed, stimulated by a working group paper entitled 'Analysis of the Women's Question' (1982). In the 1985 policy plan, the government's main goal was described as: "promoting the development of today's society - a society in which the differences between the sexes are still institutionalised to a great extent - into a heterogeneous society in which everyone has the opportunity - regardless of gender and civil status - to acquire an independent existence and in which men and women are able to realise equal rights, opportunities, freedoms and responsibilities" (SZW 1999b, 12). Part of the new analysis of the problem was the social organisation of sexuality in pre-destined models of femininity and masculinity, but a materialisation of this notion to concrete policy measures has never been achieved (Prins 1989). This was legitimised by a reluctance of the State to interfere in people's private lives. So far sexuality is an outcast in the Dutch emancipation policies; the 'gay marriage' was not commonly considered to be part of this policy area either.

Despite the broad definition of the problem adopted in 1985, the measures implemented in the subsequent years were mainly targeted towards promoting independent lives for women, independence being merely understood as *economic* independence (Keuzenkamp and Teunissen 1990). This one-sided focus persisted throughout the 1990s. In line with the general policy course of the Dutch governments at the time, the main goal was to increase women's participation in the labour market. Looking back, the policies certainly have stimulated women's labour participation in the Netherlands, but still most of the jobs held by women today are part time jobs concentrated in sectors traditionally associated with women, such as health and child care. Men's emancipation – in terms of increasing their participation in caring responsibilities and the household – has been neglected for years. Consequently the Dutch labour market developed towards a "one-and-a-half job model", with men working full time and women working part time (Visser and Heijmerijck 1997). In the late 1990 several measures were implemented that were welcomed warmly by feminists, such as an increase in child care centres and a policy offering more opportunities for part time work for everyone. But the sad consequence of the government's two-decade-long focus on the labour market was that the facet policy shrunk down to almost nothing.

Repeated attempts - in the 1980s as well as the 1990s - to integrate gender equality in the regular policies of ministerial departments largely appeared to be vain. The Action Plan on Emancipation Tasks of Departments as adopted in 1999 turned out to be a poor compensation for the loss of expertise caused by the pulling down of committees and advisory bodies on emancipation. The Action Plan stipulated that each department had to list three action points for emancipation, but it failed to provide a long-term vision in which these actions could be embedded. The result was a disappointing list of targeted, ad hoc measures (TECENA 2000). The plan's effectiveness was undermined further by insufficient implementation: several targets had not yet been achieved when the Action Plan was evaluated in 2002.

The EER promised to be a good instrument for conceptually supporting the facet policy, but a study evaluating the first seven EERs applied in Dutch Ministries showed that the instrument's impact has been undermined by insufficient embedding in the decision making process (Graaf, van der, Mossink and Gröflin 1999). So far there is no systematic procedure to guarantee that the EER is actually used. Besides, until now the instrument has often been applied at a rather late stage in the policy making process and hence - with some exceptions - has failed to affect policy plans and resolutions before the moment of adoption. The evaluation report recognizes these problems and gives recommendations to solve them. As of yet, it is too early to see if these recommendations will change the practice. The EER is still more of a promise for the incorporation of a gender perspective in policies than a reality (Verloo 2000).

After the millennium break, the facet policy has been officially re-named as gender mainstreaming. Simultaneously, the 2000 Short and Medium Term Policy Plan traditional illustrates that the concept of 'emancipation' continues to play an important role. Yet, emancipation is no longer defined as a matter of removing obstacles in the structure of society – which had been the prevailing conceptualisation since 1985 – but is re-defined in terms of creating pre-conditions. Thus, despite the protests of civil society organisations and gender studies practitioners, the notion of structural power differences has been removed from the agenda. A new dimension - diversity – had been added in 1997, emphasising the connection between gender and other mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion in society (SZW 1996). Accordingly, the 2000 goal is defined as “creating preconditions for a heterogeneous society in which everyone, despite sex – in interference with other social structuring principles such as ethnicity, age, marital status, physical abilities and sexual preference, has the opportunity of living an independent life in which men and women can achieve equal rights, opportunities, freedom, and (social) responsibilities” (SZW 2000a).

Typically enough, even though the government says to embrace gender mainstreaming the concept 'gender' - still part of the problem definition in 1997 - has been changed to that of 'sex'. At the same time 'gender equality' is presented as a goal as well, referring to the definition of gender mainstreaming as formulated by the Council of Europe (Council of Europe 1998). This contradiction could point to window dressing and a general lack of commitment, which could also explain why the 2001 plan 'Gender Mainstreaming, A Strategy for Quality Improvement' does not define gender mainstreaming at all; it solely focuses on the *organisation* of mainstreaming within the ministerial departments without describing the *meaning* of the concept.

The way in which the other policy track (sector policy) is defined reveals a remarkable shift as well (E-quality 2001). Until 2000, this track was described as a “specific emancipation policy”, meaning measures directed to specific groups with the aim of resolving arrears or unequal starting positions (SZW 1999c, 11). One year later, the government's focus had been changed to “innovation, developing commitment and strategic alliances” (SZW 2000b, 4), whereas the Short and Medium Term Policy Plan spoke of a “policy that promotes innovation from an umbrella vision, places new themes on the political agenda, develops instruments, and engages in strategic alliances with civil society partners” (SZW 2000a). In view of the invisibility of specific policies in the

latter definitions, civil society actors stressed the continuing need for specific policies, such as setting up facilities for victims of violence, or promoting the public participation of black, migrant and refugee women (Equality 2001). So far, these efforts have not resulted in change.

At first sight, the five priority areas identified in the Short and Medium Term Policy Plan seem to point to a re-widening of the policy scope, but at the same time the plan emphasizes that “the cabinet still perceives the promotion of women’s economic independence by labour market participation as the core of the emancipation policy” (SZW 2000a, 9). Besides in most priority areas the problems addressed are conceptualised insufficiently or one-sidedly. Concerning the issue of ‘power and decision making’, for example, the goals mentioned merely consist of target figures to enhance equal representation in different public sectors (which had been effective indeed to enhance women’s participation in politics during the 1990s), while an in-dept analysis on the concept of ‘power’ is lacking. In a similar way, human rights are conceptualised restrictively as matters of violence and equal treatment at the work place, ignoring the broader human rights definition as promoted by the UN Women’s Treaty.

#### **Future challenges: the need for a consistent conceptual framework**

A stubbornly recurring problem in the history of the Dutch emancipation policies appears to be the failure to effectively integrate facet/mainstreaming goals in the policies of ministerial departments. This problem can be traced back partly to the fact that emancipation policy goals - even if broadly supported at the surface – are always competing with other departmental or political interests in practice. An equally important barrier, however, appears to be the insufficient elaboration of concepts, combined with a lacking effort (or will, or time, or budget, or vision?) to translate the broad policy goals into concrete sub-goals suitable for action, without doing injustice to the essence of these goals.

The Dutch facet or mainstreaming policy so far is characterised by a strong emphasis on organizational aspects, such as spreading responsibilities and increasing the department’s independence concerning emancipation tasks. This emphasis tends to overshadow the need for developing well-founded, coherent policy concepts. Illustrative in this respect is the entire absence of any problem definition in the 2001 strategy plan on gender mainstreaming (Interdepartemantale Werkgroep Mainstreaming 2001; SZW 2001). The same is reflected in a Manual on Mainstreaming for civil servants published in 2000: it describes in great detail how to (re)organise policy processes in order to ensure that all policy actors pay attention to gender equality, but it hardly explains what gender equality (or emancipation for that matter) is or how it relates to the policies of specific departments (Beckhoven and Meesters 2000). Currently a new manual is being produced that will hopefully avoid this pitfall.

A necessary first step for developing a coherent conceptual framework on gender mainstreaming, which can serve as a guidebook to departments and other actors, seems to be an in-depth discussion on the concepts promoted so far. What does the government want to achieve? How are these goals perceived by other actors, such as women's organisations, gender studies representatives, and 'common' women and men? The government's current mainstreaming strategy as set out in the 2000 Short and Medium Term Policy Plan is founded on a confusing mixture of definitions. Concepts such as 'emancipation', 'gender equality', and 'diversity' are used interchangeably without any further description; instead of explaining the concepts, the plan solely lists instruments that may be applied in the context of gender mainstreaming. Accordingly, the 2001 strategy speaks only vaguely of "taking into account sex differences" (Interdepartementale Werkgroep Mainstreaming 2001, 5).

An important issue to be taken into account in this discussion is the question of what happened to the 1985 definition of emancipation as a matter of structural power differences. Despite the fact that this definition was never changed explicitly until recently, throughout the 1980s and 1990s it was poorly elaborated in terms of its implications for the types of government action required (Keuzenkamp and Teunissen 1990; Prins 1989). So far, discursive practices are the only area in which a more systematic approach towards power relations has been developed, stimulated by several publications such as 'Shaping Images in Policy' (Mossink and Nederland 1993), 'Invisible Distinction' (Schaapman e.a. 1995), and 'A Matter of Masculinity' (Brouns, Scholten and Nederland 1997). All in all 'gender mainstreaming' seems to be a misleading term in the Dutch policy context. It is used as an umbrella term for all kinds of actions mainly pursuing re-distributive justice, while neglecting the quintessence of gender mainstreaming: transforming systems and structures in order to resolve gender biases.

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## **2. Academic research on the Dutch emancipation and gender mainstreaming policies**

Quite some literature - Dutch as well as international - is available on the Dutch government's policies on emancipation and gender mainstreaming. The major part consists of articles published in professional journals or chapters in comparative books on gender and welfare states. Given their limited size, these articles often provide a broad reflection on shifts in policy goals or scopes. Generally such shifts are explained by describing the interaction between "femocrats", women's organisations, and politicians, in the context of the political tide at the moment. So far women's emancipation policies have been largely neglected as an object of discourse analysis. In-dept studies on the political-theoretical notions and ethical principals underpinning the Dutch emancipation policies hardly exist. The only two publications that are extensively dealing with those matters have been published years ago, and accordingly are restricted to the first two decades of the history of emancipation policies in the Netherlands. Given the conceptual vacuum that characterises the current Dutch strategy on gender mainstreaming – and the confusing mixture of notions popping up in recent policy texts - such a study would provide for an urgent need.

### **Reflective studies on the Dutch emancipation policies**

The bulk of publications available on the Dutch policies on gender and emancipation are professional journal articles or chapters in comparative books. Just a few of these texts are dealing explicitly with the strategy of gender mainstreaming, though in this context we want to stress that the Dutch government's facet policy – enhanced since the 1970s - can be seen as a predecessor to this strategy. Most publications on gender mainstreaming are focused on the problematic of materialising the pursuit of spreading responsibilities, trying to identify success factors or pitfalls for the actual incorporation of a gender perspective by all policy actors. Some stress the importance of political-organisational factors (Verloo 2001, Benschop and Verloo 2000, Verloo 1998), while others concentrate on aspects in the field of public administration (Nelen 2000), or point to the poor conceptual founding of the Dutch government's gender mainstreaming strategy (Verloo 2002). Several articles provide an overview of gender impact assessment instruments available in the EU, including the Dutch EER (Plantenga and Hansen 1999; Plantenga 2000). Others evaluate the first application experiences with the EER in Dutch ministerial departments (Graaf, Mossink and Gröfin 1999, Verloo 1997). Several early gender-mainstreaming practices of the Dutch government are reflected upon in a comparative book on efforts to integrate gender into law and policy making in different countries (Verloo 2000).

The majority of journal articles provide reflections on shifts in the Dutch emancipation policies during one or more cabinet periods. Most of them tend to ascribe opportunities and failures in the implementation of emancipation goals to political developments, combined with interactions between governmental

departments, advisory committees and women's organisations (Keuzenkamp and Outshoorn 1992; Huisman 1991; Dijkstra and Swiebel 1982). Sometimes this focus is combined with a more systematic effort to explain the tensions between goals, concepts, and practice (Benschop 1993). Other articles reflect upon the government's policy from a moral-political point of view (Mushaben, Meehan and Sevenhuijsen 1994), or more specifically, from an ethics of care perspective (Sevenhuijsen and Hoek 2001). Another issue reflected upon is the integration of theoretical notions on gender and power in the emancipation policy (Keuzenkamp 1999). Several articles compare the Dutch emancipation policies to these of other countries, either with the aim of identifying factors facilitating the administrative implementation of horizontal policy strategies (Cromboom and Nelen 2002), or in the context of a more political-theoretical reflection on gender, equality and welfare states (Sainsbury et al. 1997; Sainsbury et al. 1998). Some researchers also have published more or less ad-hoc reactions to recent developments, such as the goals presented in new policy plans or the government's inadequate reaction to evaluation outcomes (Oldersma 1996b, Outshoorn 1998, Keuzenkamp, Outshoorn and Schaapman 1996). A common characteristic of many journal articles is that they combine criticism on the Dutch government's policy on emancipation/gender mainstreaming with identifying challenges for future policy.

Another group of reflective studies are chapters in books comparing equal opportunity policies in different welfare states. Most of them focus on the role of different actors in the Dutch policy system, questioning whether or not a network or 'iron triangle' between civil servants, women's organisations and parliamentary committees has been developed concerning the emancipation policy (Outshoorn 1997a&b; Outshoorn 1995). Additionally some articles sketch which principles - such as distributive justice, re-distributive justice, or regulation - are underpinning the Dutch policies (Outshoorn and Swiebel 1998) or to which extent the Dutch welfare state can be called 'women-friendly' as regards the distribution of welfare rights, income and paid labour, and participation in decision making (Leijenaar and Gardiner 1997). One comparative study deals with the moral-political principles reflected in equality policy (Sevenhuijsen and Meehan 1991). Recently a collection of articles has been published concerning equal opportunity initiatives in different sectors and organisations in the Netherlands and Belgium - such as banks, universities, churches, and government institutes - as well as the changing notions and concepts underpinning the government's policy, such as equality, diversity, and gender mainstreaming (Benschop and Dröes 2002).

### **Academic Studies on the Dutch emancipation policies**

Until today the gender mainstreaming policy of the Dutch government has not been analysed as part of an in-dept academic study. Only two extensive academic studies are available that relate to the national policies on emancipation in the Netherlands. The first is a PhD-thesis entitled "Emancipation of Women in Movement" (Prins 1989). It analyses the developments in the Dutch government's emancipation policy between 1974 and 1989 not only from a public administration perspective, but explicitly includes the role of

women's organisations as society actors affecting the state's policy. Apart from elaborating a critique of existing Public Administration models, the PhD-thesis provides an extensive description of the history of the first 15 years of emancipation policymaking by the Dutch government. One development described is how the ideology gradually changed from an approach to feminism on the basis of equality to one which stressed the sex-gender differences. Yet this change in political-ideological views appeared to induce lesser weight attached to women's emancipation in politics and society. As a consequence the policymaking was characterized increasingly by less general theorizing and more concrete - but often partial (i.e. labour market-oriented) – measures. The study identifies several factors that hindered a full and effective implementation of the government's 'Dual Purpose' strategy (i.e. the so-called factor policy - aimed at the integration of emancipation in all policy sectors - combined with specific sector-based projects), even though women's emancipation as a political goal was broadly accepted. For one, the women's movement and the civil servant's unit DCE more or less grew apart during the course of time, undermining the mobilisation of political pressure at macro-level. Other factors mentioned are the meagre specification of the government's facet policy goals in concrete points of policy-action, and the lacking of an operationalized criterion of evaluation. In the author's opinion this criterion "could and should be emancipation aiming at equality and equity amongst men and women in order to attain 'justice'." (Prins 1989, 181)

Another PhD-thesis related to the Dutch emancipation policies is a study on gender and representation in the Dutch advisory system (Oldersma 1996a). It investigates the causes of women's low representation in the advisory bodies formally established by the Dutch government to provide information and advice on the course of the national policies. In this respect the Dutch case does not subscribe to the assumption of the American political scientist Kathleen Jones that the pursuit of consultation and consensus building enhances the accessibility of political systems for women. The study does not only focus on women's physical representation in the advisory system in terms of their membership share, but also on the way in which women's interests and fields of expertise are (said to be) represented. The research consists of two parts. Four committees were chosen as 'cases' for an in-dept study of the formation of the bodies and the selection of members: which problem definitions are reflected in the commissions' missions and why are specific people chosen as experts? Although the Dutch emancipation policy as such is not the prior issue of attention in the study, the cases that were analysed –committees on urban renewal, health care costs, social security arrangements, and unemployed teachers – were selected because they were considered to be 'gendered' areas in Dutch politics. Being politicised by the women's movement, they were adopted by the government as 'women's issues' in the emancipation policy. The study showed that women's organisations – just like environmental and consumer organisations – had found some entrance to advisory bodies, but that their membership and influence remained extremely marginal compared to economic and professional interests, with according consequences for the policies developed.

Of course many other academic studies are available that are highly relevant to the Dutch government's gender mainstreaming policy in the sense that they reflect on gender relations and government policy in

specific policy areas – thus conforming to the very quintessence of gender mainstreaming – but a summing up of all these works goes beyond the scope of this State of the Art. Several relevant works of Dutch scientists and other experts are referred to in the section on ‘mapping of competences’.

### **Evaluation Studies and Instruments / Government Publications**

Several evaluation studies on the Dutch policies on gender and emancipation have been performed by order of the government, or directly funded by DCE. Some of them focus directly on the goals and results of the Dutch emancipation policies (Bussemaker 1996; Keuzenkamp en Teunissen 1990). While first reference mentioned evaluates the goals and (potential) instruments in relation to recent developments in society, the second contains a more fundamental analysis of the concepts underpinning the Dutch emancipation policy during the 1980s. It signals the poor elaboration of the definition of emancipation as a matter of structural power differences in concrete policy goals, the complete neglecting of the organisation of sexuality (in the form of role models on masculinity and femininity) as an area of government action, and the increasingly limited focus on paid labour during the 1980s. The evaluation also points to the ambiguity of the central policy goal since 1985 - in which the principles of independence and freedom of choice struggle for priority - and to the dominance of masculine norms and activities in the government’s pursuit of equality. Apart from recommendations for future policymaking and a renewed political debate, the report also identifies three areas for further research: (1) the way in which norms on masculinity and femininity are embedded in government policy and how this can be changed; (2) the way in which the redistribution of power can be translated in concrete policy goals and tools; (3) re-defining and clarifying the principles underpinning the emancipation policy to avoid the confusing mixture of concepts that are used interchangeably, such as pluriformity, freedom of choice, equality, structural power inequalities.

So far the government has only made work of the second recommendation. During the 1990s several evaluations have been published on the way in which the government confirms and re-enforces existing gender role models in its regular policies, either focusing on ‘invisible distinctions’ or seemingly gender neutral rules that appear to affect women and men differently in practice (Schaapman et al. 1995), on the prevalence of masculinity as the implicit norm in policy texts (Brouns, Scholte and Nederland 1997), or on assumptions on masculinity and femininity in national policy documents (Mossink and Nederland 1993). The Dutch gender impact assessment instrument EER – developed by researchers at the request of the government (Verloo and Roggenband 1994) – is another initiative proceeding from the increased attention to the way in which gender-related norms and values are embedded in government policy. In 1999 the results of the first seven EERs applied in Dutch Ministries have been analysed (Graaf, H. van de, M. Mossink & J. Gröflin 1999), the results of which have been briefly summarized in the first part of this State of the Art.

A few other publications are explicitly dealing with gender mainstreaming. The first is a Manual on Mainstreaming for civil servants describing how to (re)organise policy processes in order to ensure that all policy actors pay attention to gender equality (Beckhoven and Meesters 2000; see also part 1). Another is an evaluation of the temporary committee TECENA – assigned to guide and support advisory bodies in their task of mainstreaming gender equality (1997-2000) – assessing the effectiveness of the emancipation tasks of ministerial departments (TECENA 2000b). In its final report TECENA presents conclusions and recommendations concerning the sustainable integration of emancipation aspects in the activities of advisory committees, as well as on women's representation in the Dutch advisory system (TECENA 2000a).

A final instrument to be mentioned is the Emancipation Monitor that assesses the progress on emancipation in the Dutch society by publishing sex-segregated statistics every two years in four areas: (1) education; (2) labour, care, and income; (3) political and public decision making; (4) violence against women. The first Emancipation Monitor was published in 2000 (Keuzenkamp 2000). In 2002 two new policy areas were added: daily routine/work life balancing, and the knowledge-based society (Keuzenkamp 2002). The government intends to use the Emancipation Monitor in order to assess the impact of the policy measures implemented, using the target figures as set out in the Short and Medium Term Policy Plan on Emancipation (2000) as a starting point.

### 3. Bibliography

This bibliography contains academic publications dealing directly with the Dutch government's national policy on emancipation and gender mainstreaming. Texts concerning mainstreaming initiatives in specific areas of policy making – such as development co-operation, research, health care or social security – are not included, but some of these works are referred to in the section 'mapping competences' in order to indicate specific fields of expertise. The same holds for non-academic publications on the Dutch gender mainstreaming policy.

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## Dutch Publications

### *Gender Mainstreaming*

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#### 4. Mapping of Competences on Gender Mainstreaming

Expertise on gender mainstreaming can mainly be found at universities, apart from a limited number of private consultants. A few experts are either working within research institutions, or independently. The bibliography in the previous section gives more information on the work of many of these experts. In the overview below a limited number of relevant publications are mentioned from experts whose research has mainly been on gender mainstreaming or equality policies outside the Netherlands, or who are experts in a very specific field. The overview focuses on gender mainstreaming experts at the national or regional level, but we have also included researchers that are specialized in the use of specific gender mainstreaming instruments, such as the EER, as well as specialists in research on gender equality policies in general. Experts on gender mainstreaming at the local level are not listed.

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- Vleuten, A. van der. 2001. *Dure vrouwen, dwarse staten : een institutioneel-realistische visie op de totstandkoming en implementatie van Europees beleid*. Nijmegen : UB Nijmegen. With bibliography and summary in Dutch, dissertation University of Nijmegen:  
[http://webdoc.ubn.kun.nl/mono/v/vleuten\\_j\\_van\\_der/durevrdws.pdf](http://webdoc.ubn.kun.nl/mono/v/vleuten_j_van_der/durevrdws.pdf)

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- Lamoen, I. van, and I. Stevens. 2001. *Manual on Gender Mainstreaming at Universities, 'Equal Opportunities at Universities. Towards a Gender Mainstreaming Approach*. Leuven/Apeldoorn: Garant, 2001. See: <http://www.kuleuven.ac.be/gkg/>

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