

CALLING ALL WOMEN

EXPLORING THE FRAMES OF WOMEN IN RELATION TO ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN DUTCH EMANCIPATION POLICY

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FOREWORD

This thesis has been, on the one hand, a labor of love and a product of almost a year of dedication to learning and understanding how the Dutch government approaches gender and women's emancipation. On the other hand, it has been the most gruesome and trying experiences, pushing me to challenge not only my intellectual capabilities but also my self-control and work ethic. After taking the leap to pursuing my passion for Gender Studies several years ago, I have come to discover that it is my true appreciation for the interdisciplinary and diverse nature of this academic discipline that has kept me going. It has shown me that there is always a gender question in everything, and I am dedicated to continue to create awareness for this gender aspect as I move into my professional career. I also want to dedicate this thesis to my mother. After years of being a fulltime mother, she is now refinding her way by starting her own business. Her determination and courage has inspired me, and in writing this thesis I have gained an admiration for her life-choices.

There are several people that I would like to thank for making this journey possible and successful. First of all, my supervisor and mentor Dr. Domitilla Olivieri deserves a special shout out for trusting me and helping me keep my head up when I was freaking out about deadlines and the sheer size of the project that lay ahead of me. Also, I want to thank my colleagues from my internship at the Directorate for Emancipation at the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. Without the opportunities I received there, as well as the valuable work experience, this thesis would not have been possible. I am grateful for their openness and inclusiveness during my time there.

Of course I also want to thank all my friends and family. Though I believe that most still do not understand Gender Studies completely, they have endured my several attempts to explain and continue to ask with interest what it was that I am actually doing. A special thanks goes to my boyfriend, Roland, who made a habit out of asking me daily how my thesis was going and pushed me to continue writing and working on my thesis. Also, thanks to my dear friend Joske, who frequently listened to my complaining and doubts with regards to my thesis process, only to assure me that it was all completely normal and part of the experience. This thesis ends a period of five years in which I fell in love with Gender Studies. I can only speculate as to whether it is also the end of my academic career in broadening my understanding of Gender Studies. Though I do not know what lies ahead in my future, I am confident that I have found a passion for life, and know that this will continue to guide me in what is yet to come.

It was an explanation of her views on women's emancipation in an interview with the Dutch newspaper "Trouw" that sent Dutch men and women into a frenzy. What particularly drew the most attention was Minister Bussemaker's statement on women's economic position: "Too often, women are not translating their academic achievement and academic level into equivalent career choices" (Abels 2013). Throughout the interview that Bussemaker had with Trouw, she elaborated further on the idea that women in the Netherlands did not seem to realize that their economic position is too precarious, and that depending on the income of one's husband cannot be a wise choice considering the high divorce rates. Perhaps more personally, she proclaimed that high-educated women who do not put their education to use should feel guilty towards the government for not utilizing the investment that the government and society has put in their education (Bhikhie 2013). Reactions to the interview were mixed, with several women being outraged at Bussemaker's alleged attempt to scapegoat women with this accusation. Others welcomed the Minister's recognition that especially in financially unstable times, it is imperative that women protect themselves by becoming more economically self-sufficient from their husbands.

It was not only the general public that reacted heavily to the statements of Bussemaker, as several Dutch political parties questioned the Minister's statements during the Chamber debate on her Emancipation Policy. The Dutch Reformed Political Party (Staatkundige Gereformeerde Partij, SGP) stated that families should decide for themselves how they want to design their professional and personal lives, to which Bussemaker defended herself by stating, "I understand those women who choose the remain at home to take care of their young children. I reject the notion that I am attempting to dictate how women should live their lives" (Bhikhie 2013). This defense mechanism, claiming that critics "misunderstood" her statements, proved effective during the Chamber debate, as the matter was dropped. However, it is questionable whether the initial reactions to the Minister's statements are really such great misunderstandings, considering her rather clear and harsh statements on, for example, the sense of guilt towards the government.

After receiving continuous attention in the Dutch press and media for roughly a week, it seemed as if a broader public feminist debate on the position of women in the Netherlands had been re-opened. However, nothing could have been further from the truth, as the issue slowly subsided and lost attention from the media. Nevertheless, Minister Bussemaker's statements will continue to have a lasting effect on Dutch society throughout her term at the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences (Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, MinOCW), as her views are directly reflected in the *Hoofdlijnenbrief Emancipatiebeleid 2013-2016 (Dutch Gender and LGBT-Policy 2013-2016)*¹. The question arises whether

¹ Considering that this thesis is based on a translation of the original Dutch version of the Emancipation Policy, it is not unimaginable that certain intended meanings have been lost in translation. Though the Dutch version is intended for its Dutch audience, and is therefore the primary version used by policy officers in their work, the English version, intended for an

women without work, educated or otherwise, are framed as the emblematic policy problem that results from Dutch education policy and emancipation policy.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore that influential cultural texts such as the *Dutch Gender and LGBT-Policy 2013-2016* (from here on Dutch Emancipation Policy) inevitably contribute to societal views on emancipation. As a cornerstone document, it has a substantial impact on all actions that the Dutch government takes on women's emancipation. Also, the representation of policy in the media, as illustrated above, shows that the text contributes to the societal discourse surrounding women's emancipation issues. Not only does it address the role of women in a more public sphere, but it also targets more intimate and personal matters, such as the role of women in family life and the impact of women's personal choices on the well-being of women and society as a whole. It is important to understand what the policy document states in order to get a better understanding of how the Dutch government structures the relationship between women and the state.

Additionally, understanding the ties between women's emancipation and labor positions draws us back into a long history of feminist activism that aimed to include women in society through demanding their rights to economic power. The Dutch government sees a role as contributor to women's emancipation in aiding women by strengthening their economic self-sufficiency. Not only does this display a relationship between women and the state, but it also suggests a triangular relationship between women, the state and the economy, specifically a neoliberal economy. It is the intersection between the government's role in women's emancipation and in economic stability that creates the discourse on the subject of women and work. Like a go-between amongst women and the economy, the government aims to kill two birds with one stone by functioning as an intermediary that uses the economy to better women's positions in society, as well as benefiting the economy by encouraging the emancipation of women through increased participation in the labor market. How the government sees and performs this role in society will be analyzed through looking at the discourse of the Dutch Emancipation Policy.

PUBLIC CONTEXT AND IMPORTANCE OF THE DOCUMENT

As an intern at the Directorate for Emancipation (Directie Emancipatie) at the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, it became very clear to me that the Emancipation Policy was of paramount importance to the Directorate. On my first day in March 2013, I attended a team meeting with the entire Directorate to review the previous week. It was apparent that not everyone was happy. One colleague was simply devastated, and this was predominantly due to the fact that the Minister had harshly rejected the Emancipation Policy, which she had written for the Minister, despite having been analyzed by several

international audience, is equally valid. Taken as an accurate translation of the Dutch version, this thesis will rely on the English translation provided by the government in its analysis of the discourse used.

auditing boards. Throughout the following month, my colleague was busy rewriting the document, allowing for me to have a view into how policy is made. Perceiving this process made me question whose view of emancipation was really being presented, and to what extent women's interests were at the center of this document².

The Directorate of Emancipation is located within the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences and, therefore, Minister Bussemaker presides over the actions that the Dutch government takes in order to better the position of women. It is habitual that Ministers entering into office are eager to revise policy in order to reflect their own views and intentions on the issues they preside over. In these policy documents, views with regards to several dynamics of a broader issue, such as emancipation, are elaborated upon. It is important to note that though a particular Minister may present a policy, this does not mean that said Minister takes complete ownership of the views in the document. In the case of the Emancipation Policy, the document reflects the position of the entire Dutch Cabinet. The document, therefore, is not just a product of Minister Bussemaker and her Directorate for Emancipation, but rather a reflection of comprehensive work between several Ministries.

Through working together, a battle ensues on cumulatively creating a definition of the issues. This results in some aspects of issues being organized in and out of the document, as several Ministries need to approve the document. This results in some parts of social issues of these differing Ministries to be discussed and others given up for the sake of consensus (Roggeband and Verloo 2007, 273). This discursive decision can be considered a strategy of policymaking. While some ministries insist on the inclusion of particular issues, others request the exclusion of policy problems. As ministries are inter-related, and it frequently occurs that several ministries work together to create and fund policy solutions, the creation of a policy document that is workable for other ministries and that, perhaps most importantly, does not conflict with other policies of other ministries, is paramount for its success. This also means, however, that valuable issues and solutions may be lost to this strategic method if they do not appease to other ministries.

Because the document reflects the views of the entire Cabinet, it is frequently used by several Ministries to validate actions taken on the subject of women's emancipation. Most pointedly, it is used to validate every action performed and any subsidy given by the Directorate of Emancipation. Projects that do not reflect the views presented in the Emancipation Policy, therefore, are rarely enacted. However, considering the broad

² The process of how the Emancipation Policy is written is in itself interesting to analyze from a gender perspective. As the text written by one policy officers at the Directorate for Emancipation, revised and critiqued by policy officers from different ministries, and finally presented to the people in name of the Minister on behalf of the Cabinet after revisions by several auditing boards, it is quite unclear who's voice we hear in the document. Though this issue will not be addressed in this thesis, it is important to note that the discourse lacks, in a certain sense, a single politics of location. It has been my personal decision to attribute what is being said in the document to its stated author, which is Minister Bussemaker. For more information on the creation of Dutch Emancipation Policy and the politics of writing this document, see *Visitatie Commissie Emancipatie 2007* and *Outshoorn 2007*.

terms used in the policy, the document is not too constricting on projects, allowing room for interpretation. Furthermore, it is within the interest of the Directorate of Emancipation to create government projects that enact upon the points of the policy, as it gives the Minister the opportunity to show that progress is being made on women's emancipation.

STRUCTURE OF THE DUTCH EMANCIPATION POLICY

This policy document is divided into two major parts. After an introduction by Minister Bussemaker, the document illustrates a chapter on policy headlines and a chapter on actions that the Minister plans on taking between 2013 and 2016.

Within the section on policy headlines, Bussemaker begins with a short historical context of emancipation in the Netherlands, not only of women but also of the LGBT community. Subsequently, a description of the core values that “the present government is adopting in policy relating to emancipation” is listed: autonomy, resilience and equality (MinECS 2013). Next, a section named “Responsibilities for the government” is introduced, outlining the perceived role of the government by the present government in the path towards emancipation of women and the LGBT community. Shortly after, the policy priorities are listed. While there is no clear distinction made between policy priorities pertaining particularly to women or to the LGBT community, in their description it becomes rather clear that not every policy priority is equally relevant for each target group. For example, the priorities “Participation in view of the consequences of the economic crisis”, which this thesis will be focusing on, exclusively relates to the issues that women face, rather than those of the LGBT community. Other policy priorities include “Differences between girls and boys in education”, “The social safety of women, girls and LGBTs” and “International polarization”. This first chapter is rounded off by a section named “Exploration of new themes”, in which the Minister outlines her personal roles as coordinating Minister for Emancipation and recognizes that her prioritizing role gives her the opportunity to explore four new themes within emancipation. Her themes include “intersex”, “women and health”, “women and the media” and “the success of the girls or the boys problem”. She further elaborates on these themes in this section.

In the second and last chapter of this document, Minister Bussemaker presents her proposed actions for 2013 to 2016. She uses the exact policy priority themes introduced in the previous chapter to outline these actions. Also, she delves further into the themes by presenting subthemes that she will specifically attempt to tackle within her term. For the theme “Participation in view of the consequences of the economic crisis”, the subthemes are: “Balance between paid and unpaid work”, “Semi-literacy”, “Divorce and economic dependence”, “Equal pay”, “Women to the top”, “Employment participation by transgenders” and

“Supporting young LGBTs with safe meeting places”³ (MinECS 2013). Noteworthy here is that though LGBT issue were not initially presented in the illustration of the policy problem of “Participation in view of the consequences of the economic crisis”, there is a policy action on this theme for LGBTs. After presenting all proposed actions on every theme, the document ends.

PREVIOUS WORK ON DUTCH EMANCIPATION POLICY

It is difficult to indicate how much research has been published on this issue in recent years. Nevertheless, it is safe to say that no academic papers have researched the current Emancipation Policy, considering its recent inception in May of 2013. However, Dutch scholars have recently taken Dutch Emancipation Policy as a subject of research more and more. Since 1995, there have been continuously more studies that look specifically at the discourse of the Dutch Emancipation Policy, focusing on the particular effects of this policy on the Dutch people rather than in relation to other European countries in a more comparative analysis. The rise of Dutch social scholars interested in this subject may have to do with the large number of publications by Mieke Verloo on the subject⁴.

Verloo, a professor of Comparative Politics and Inequality at the Radboud University, is specialized in the field of “equality policies, feminist methodology and social movements” (Radboud Universiteit 2013). Furthermore, she was the scientific director of QUING (Quality in Gender + Equality Policies), a project funded by the European Commission that ran from 2006 to 2011 (QUING 2012). This project aimed to compare European gender equality policies in an effort to answer questions such as “what is the nature of gender equality policies in the practice of national and European policy-making” and “what is the quality of these current policies, especially in terms of their transformative potential” (QUING 2012). Top social scholars, such as the well-known Sylvia Walby, contributed to this initiative, which has provided comprehensive research results for the countries of several participating scholars.

QUING built upon research from an earlier project, also funded by the European Commission, named MAGEEQ (Multiple Meanings of Gender Equality: A Critical Frame Analysis of Gender Policies in Europe). This research project, though smaller in size, was similar in nature to QUING, and developed the Critical Frame Analysis, a methodology that analyzes policy frames of gender equality policies. This methodology is most easily summed up in three steps, which consist of 1) collecting relevant data, 2) identifying frames, and 3) comparing the policy frames of different countries. Mieke Verloo builds the concept of policy frames in the QUING research around the following definition: an “organizing principle that transforms fragmentary or incidental information into a structured and meaningful problem, in which a

³ The last subtheme listed here appears to be rather out of context. After reading the description I believe that this may have been a slight error in the document, as this subtheme appears to pertain more appropriately to the theme “The social safety of women, girls and LGBTs”.

⁴ For an extensive overview of Mieke Verloo’s publications, see <http://www.ru.nl/politicologie/@678123/pagina/#Publications>.

solutions is implicitly or explicitly included”(QUING 2012). In this instance, the information that is analyzed predominantly refers to the discourse of policy, in which policy themes and solutions can be found. The meaningful and structured problem is the inequality of women. Within the frames, a distinction is made between issue frames, document frames, and metaframes (QUING 2012). It is with the basis of this methodology that I will build the methodology for this thesis. Furthermore, the QUING project developed its research based on three specific issues outlined in gender equality policies: gender-based violence, intimate citizenship and non-employment. It is the latter that I will use in my thesis to attempt to explain the significance of my research for a broader audience.

Not only is Mieke Verloo reputable for her work with QUING, but also her publications on Dutch Emancipation Policy are of particular interest in contextualizing the previous literature that this thesis builds upon. Her longitudinal analysis of policy frames on gender and migration from 1995 to 2005 are of specific importance. This study, done by Conny Roggeband and Mieke Verloo, demonstrates the manner in which migrant women were framed as a political problem, and finds that this frame not only reinforced the “dichotomy between the autochthonous ‘us’ and the allochthonous ‘them’”, but also implies that there is no problem with the dominant, autochthonous Dutch culture (Roggeband and Verloo 2007). The proposed solution can most accurately be illustrated as the view that migrants, especially Muslim migrants, should adapt their culture in order to integrate more efficiently into Dutch society. Though this thesis will not be a longitudinal study, nor will it focus on aspects of gender and migration, I will elaborate on this study by continuing the analysis of the most recent Dutch policy frames and their implications. Understanding policy framing and policy effects is, like Roggeband and Verloo’s study, at the heart of this analysis.

It is also important to note that Minister Bussemaker herself published on the issues of women and work in 1995. Here, she illustrates how modern feminism has had a wavering relationship with the Dutch welfare state. She elaborates that feminists have rejected the breadwinner model on which the welfare state is based, but have also requested this same welfare state to better equality through several measures, such as gender specific facilities and social rights. Bussemaker speaks of a paradox of individualism, as the relationship between women, the welfare state and their independence continues to be problematic (Bussemaker 1995). It is quite interesting to consider that she received the rare opportunity to put her scholarly work to practical use due to her powerful position as Minister.

SIGNIFICANCE OF TOPIC TO WOMEN’S STUDIES

Though there appear to be several scholars of sociology that contribute to the issues of policy-making and its implications for women, this topic appears to be relatively unpopular for discussion amongst feminist scholars. The significance of this topic to gender and women’s studies remains, as understanding our current hegemonic paradigms requires feminist scholars to continuously rethink their abstract notions of gender constructs in society. It may be quite conventional to look at the policy versus, for example, popular social

media when addressing issues of gender in society. However, two biggest reasons why it remains important to analyze policy are its continual evolution and its interminable contribution to the lives of Dutch citizens. For one, the Dutch government remains a power institution that adapts its stance on women's emancipation depending on the political weather and its perception of the state of women's emancipation. Second, Minister Bussemaker's outspoken stance on women's emancipation in labor, as illustrated earlier, is reflected in a rather strident policy that pushes the boundaries of what government can demand from its citizens. This will be explored further in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

It is specifically this last point that is of particular interest to gender studies, as women have a long tradition of being prescribed acceptable forms of labor by institutions, governmental or otherwise. Works such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Women and Economics* (1898) battled Darwinist notions of the naturalness of women's economic dependency on men, and stressed her position that people are determined by their social and economic environment (Gilman 1966). Feminists critiqued Marxism distinctions of women's labor, posing domestic labor against capitalist labor. This critique led to socialist feminist frames. Sociologist Eli Zaretsky argued that the rise of capitalism dissociated the public and the private sphere, resulting in a "split" between material production and capitalism in the public, socialized sphere and the private labor performed by predominantly women within the domicile (Donovan 2012, 79). Building upon Zaretsky observations, Heidi Hartmann, a prominent feminist economist, acknowledges in her article, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union" (1981), that stereotypical behavior of men and women, such as career and life choice, are functional to the current capitalist system, as stereotypical masculine traits are valued in the industrial capitalist public sphere, while characteristics related to stereotypical femininity - nurturing, emotionality, etc. - are rejected (Hartman and Banner 1974). More radically, Mariorosa Dalla Costa, an Italian feminist scholar, suggested that a woman's economic dependency is an alienating factor to her participation in the public sphere, but warns that simply entering the public sphere of production will not alleviate women of their alienation. According to Dalla Costa, women must defy "the myth of liberation through work" (Donovan 2012, 76). This myth is expressed in practices such as the continuing devaluation of women's labor, as well as the existence of the gender wage gap. Lastly, it is feminists like Nancy Hartstock who have called for the need of feminists to re-conceptualize the concept of work, emphasizing that "the real redefinition of work can occur only in practice" (Donovan 2012, 85).

It is apparent that socialist feminist literature on the relationship between women and work is abundant. However, it is more challenging to find scholars who have aimed to understand the role of government as a prominent influential institution in the design of the relationship between the two. As mentioned earlier, the state has as a major position in the interrelationship between women, the state and the economy, and understanding how the state influences the relationship between women and the economy has rarely been analyzed. Understanding this complex relationship benefits women's studies, as it gives a better sense of

direction in which to understand how women and work is a topic guided by government policy. Without an understanding of the manner in which the government drives this policy we can hardly understand the position of women and labor in the Netherlands in the first place. Though it cannot be said that the Dutch government is responsible for all changes in women's position in the economy, it is generally known that governments are held accountable for the state of their economies, including the employment rates of its citizens. It is therefore through taking into account that the government has a hand in influencing these factors that we can come to a greater understanding of how women's economic stance is shaped in the Netherlands.

RESEARCH QUESTION AND SCOPE OF WORK

In this thesis, I will analyze how women's lack of economic self-sufficiency is constructed as a key issue in Dutch Emancipation Policy. The research question that will be used as the basis of this thesis is: ***HOW DOES THE DUTCH EMANCIPATION POLICY FRAME THE LACK OF ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY AMONGST WOMEN?*** The analysis will be done by examining the discursive setting in which the Dutch Emancipation Policy is written, addressing who is framed as the benefiter of the policy actions, and, lastly, discovering who is being left out through this framing decision. In order to do so, I will deconstruct the discourse used in the policy document concerning women who are not economically self-sufficient, and analyze the politics of the emancipation discourse through reading between the lines of the document. I will argue that the current Dutch Emancipation Policy targets a specific type or class of women in the Netherlands in their aim to improve the issues surrounding women and economic self-sufficiency, and that this choice in discourse rejects the potential to empowering a broader scope of women in the Netherlands in their path to becoming more economically self-sufficient. Aiming to perform this analysis successfully, I will first attempt to illustrate why we look at this issue in terms of gender and the connection of this topic to neoliberal postfeminist discourse, which is reflective of the current Western political climate. Second, I will question which women are addressed by the Dutch Emancipation Policy and how. Lastly, I will attempt to show how we can expose unspoken categories of women, and hence look towards a new, more inclusive policy, as well as towards tools that can be used as constructive instruments in achieving this new form of policy, perhaps when the Dutch Emancipation Policy is due to be revised.

This thesis will focus on the newest version of the Dutch Emancipation Policy since the global recession of 2008. As the policy previous to Minister Bussemaker's Emancipation Policy of 2013 was published in September of 2007, it is not inconceivable that the current policy takes greater account of this drastic economic shift that also impacted the Netherlands. Though it would be reasonable to look at the discrepancies in views on women's economic position between the two policies, this thesis focuses on only the current policy in order to delve deeper into the specific discourse used. Through looking at the discourse, the aim of this thesis is to come to a greater understanding on the power relations between the government

and women, and how the government constructs their perception of issues surrounding women and work, a perception that purports practically every governmental action taken on women's emancipation.

As previously mentioned, the creation of this document presents an interesting story in itself. As the authorship of the document cannot be attributed to a single individual, analyzing how the departments work together in order to create a document that Minister Bussemaker presents in name of the entire Dutch Cabinet is particularly interesting in itself. Understanding how this document came to be would give a greater insight into the positioning of the Directorate for Emancipation within the governmental structure, as well as into the professional relationship between policy-makers and the Minister, and between the Minister and the Cabinet. For the purposes of answering the research question, however, such an analysis will not be part of this thesis, as this would shift the focus from what is being said to who is saying it. Rather, I will consider this document to be presented by the Minister in name of the Cabinet, representing a current and fleeting political climate within the institution known as the Dutch government. The state, therefore, will be considered as acting towards its citizens through the embodiment of the Minister. However, I do hereby recognize that this actor is not monolithic, but rather pluralistic due to the nature of the policy-making process.

The thesis starts with a section on the structure of the thesis, theoretical framework and methodology in Chapter 1. This chapter will present the main epistemological views used for the analysis, namely the feminist postmodern perspective, as well as the methodology used, which is conceptual framework analysis. This thesis will then proceed to elaborating on discourse, focusing on postfeminism, neoliberalism and neoliberal postfeminism, and will then relate how this discourse is reflected in the Dutch Emancipation Policy. The analysis of the Dutch Emancipation Policy, in which a close-reading of the document's frames occurs, is then done, followed by a chapter in which the results are interpreted and discursive decisions are considered. Finally, the conclusion will revisit the strongest and most important statements to be made from the observations, refer back to the research question and how the used methodology led to the conclusion reached, and consider the broader implications of the results.

STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to get a greater understanding of the scope of the issues I address in this thesis, I will attempt to understand the nexus between women, the state and the economy by using a theoretical framework that outlines the current political discourse in which the Dutch Emancipation Policy is written, as well as understanding the discursive decisions of the Dutch government in this policy. The discursive decisions are in effect distributive decisions, in which the government makes clear who is going to receive extra attention with regards to this policy issue (Stone 2012). As the government has a hand in both women's emancipation and economic stability, understanding this distributive decision is of paramount importance when attempting to fathom the implications this policy document can have for Dutch women. Realizing how this distributive decision fits into a particular political discourse, namely "neoliberal postfeminism", creates a greater understanding as to why the Dutch Emancipation Policy is what it is: a document that considers women's emancipation to be achieved through greater economic self-sufficiency of women (Braidotti 2012).

In this first chapter, I will elaborate on the theoretical framework, as well as the methodology used in this thesis. The illustration of the theoretical framework will mainly consist of outlining which concepts and authors I will rely on for my analysis. Rather than devote a separate chapter on clarifying the theories and concepts of these authors, I have chosen to do so throughout the thesis and where relevant. Chapter 1 continues with a description of the methodology used, in which the epistemology is also defined. The epistemological framework adopted in this research can be most accurately named as feminist postmodern perspective, in which deconstruction and discourse analysis take a leading role. I will use texts by Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida and Stuart Hall to explain how concepts such as "discourse" and "deconstruction" work and are relevant to the feminist postmodern perspective. Furthermore, I will refer to Frederic Jameson to elaborate on the relationship between postmodernism and capitalism in order to show how capitalism influenced the transition from modernism to postmodernism, and how this furthermore influenced epistemology within feminism. This chapter will close with an explanation of the methodology used in this thesis, namely "conceptual framework analysis" (QUING 2012). I will expand on how this methodology was originally developed by the QUING group and will show how I adapt this methodology to suit my research.

The second chapter will attempt to frame the political discourse in which the policy document can be placed. First, I will elaborate on postfeminism according to the texts of Rosalind Gill and Christina Schraff, in order to illustrate the current political attitude towards feminism and the feminist movement. Furthermore, I will delve a bit more extensively into neoliberalism, again using the texts of Gill and Schraff, and expanding a bit on the psychology of neoliberalism using Nikolas Rose. Lastly, I will explore the relationship between

neoliberalism and feminism through using texts by Valerie Walkerdine. With this last elaboration on neoliberalism, I will transition into a chapter on neoliberal postfeminism, attempting to portray how interconnected postfeminism and neoliberalism are, as well as defining what neoliberal postfeminism is using texts by Rosi Braidotti. Lastly, I will attempt to exemplify how we can find evidence of neoliberal postfeminist thought in the document analyzed, so as to demonstrate how a broader political sentiment influences policy.

The third chapter will start the analysis section of this research by attempting to answer the question, “Whom is the Dutch Emancipation Policy addressing?” Understanding that the aim of policy documents is to distribute limited resources (in this case subsidies and attention) as equally as possible amongst affected citizens, I will use political theory to understand how this aim always results in a distributive conflict (Stone 2012). Using sources by Harold Lasswell and Deborah Stone, I aspire to show that though the Dutch Emancipation Policy may not overtly make any decisions as to which women it will help through its actions, there remains a specific group of women that this policy affects more directly than other women. I will attempt to define this group through an analysis of the discourse used in the document. I will elaborate on how the Dutch Emancipation Policy refrains from explicitly stating their distributive decision to benefit these women, and will argue that this discursive choice is a reflection of neoliberal postfeminism.

The fourth chapter will continue the analysis by answering the question, “Who is being left out?” Using texts by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, I will attempt to understand what role intersectionality plays with regards to the identity of the individuals addressed in the policy. In order to understand how addressing a specific audience through the Emancipation Policy can be problematic, I will use texts by Patricia Hill Collins on identity politics and its relationship with oppression. My argument will entail that the Dutch Emancipation Policy addresses a specific class of women in Dutch society that is identified as a barrier in improving the status of women’s economic involvement in the Netherlands. Furthermore, I will question what impact this political choice will have on the pace of development of Dutch women’s economic position. I will support my concerns for this discursive choice by defining three different identity markers that are excluded from the document, but that I deem essential in framing the issue of women’s lack of economic self-sufficiency name these three markers. I will involve texts by Mieke Verloo and Conny Roggeband, Valerie Walkerdine and Harriet Bradley to illustrate my concerns. Lastly, I will conclude the chapter by addressing the implications this has on women’s emancipation.

Finally, the general conclusion will review the thesis and outline the results that were found in the analysis. Most profoundly, I will challenge the distributive decision to focus policy on the ranks of education, partnership status and motherhood, and the omission of ethnicity, class and age as axes of identity on which to concentrate the Emancipation Policy. Finally, I will propose how the Emancipation Policy can be improved through the use of feminist tools, such as intersectionality.

EPISTEMOLOGY: FEMINIST POSTMODERN PERSPECTIVE

The epistemological framework used in the thesis can most accurately be described as the feminist postmodern perspective. The postmodern perspective is pointedly defined by Layton (1998, cited in Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2007, 87), who states that this perspective “points to the social construction of reality and how some interests may be served by particular constructions”. It is specifically the constructions created through discourse that the feminist postmodern perspective is particularly apt to analyze. Rather than attempting to extract the grand narratives of our society, which is more suited to the modernist perspective, postmodernism emphasizes the need for a study of difference through analyzing the relationship between power and knowledge. This emphasis rejects the thought that knowledge is based on objectivity and positivist thought, as well as binary thinking which, according to Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber and Patricia Leavy, defines modernism (Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2007, 88).

DECONSTRUCTION AND DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

In postmodernism, it is the cultural texts that societies create that are considered reflections of a complex web of power-knowledge relations. This conceptualization of power can be attributed to the work of Michel Foucault, an influential French scholar of 20th century philosophy (Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2007, 89). In “The History of Sexuality Volume One”, Foucault mostly focuses on the manner in which power operates through discourse, and links this to sexuality: “The object, in short, is to define the regime of power-knowledge-pleasure that sustains the discourse on human sexuality in our part of the world” (Foucault 1978, 11). With Foucault’s contribution, he recognizes that “knowledge is contextually bound and produced within a field of shifting power relations” (Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2007, 89). With this starting point, researchers can come to understand these power relations through analyzing the discursive practices and products, or cultural texts⁵.

Building upon Foucault’s conviction of the dominance of power-knowledge constructs, Stuart Hall, a prominent cultural theorist, emphasizes that within cultural texts hegemonic thinking is embedded, and that taking a discursive approach to understanding the constructed representational systems that give meaning to cultural texts can reveal this hegemony. Originally a concept proposed by the Italian theorist Antonio Gramsci, hegemony illustrates “the notion that particular social groups struggle in many different ways, including ideologically, to win the consent of other groups and achieve a kind of ascendancy in both thought

⁵ The Dutch Emancipation Policy includes both text and images to illustrate the text. Together, they make up the discourse of the document. It is therefore possible to analyze this document not only by deconstructing the written text, but also by deconstructing the imagery used. Despite this being a very valid and interesting aspect of analysis, this thesis will not go into the use of imagery and its connotations. For more on the use of imagery by institutions and the politics of representation, see Hall 1997.

and practice over them” (Hall 1997, 48). Herein, an elaboration is presented in which one can perceive how power-knowledge constructs can be used in society through the use of cultural texts in order to benefit particular groups.

It is important to understand that discourse is not simply powerful due to what it is being said, but also due to what is not being said. Returning to Foucault, we come to learn how the silences in texts strategically enhance the power of discourse:

There is no binary division to be made between what one says and what one does not say; we must try to determine the different ways of not saying such things, how those who can and those who cannot speak of them are distributed, which type of discourse is authorized, or which form of discretion is required in either case. There is not one but many silences, and they are an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourse. (Foucault 1978, 27)

Thus, Foucault puts equal importance on the silences that are in the text, or what is chosen not to be stated. This reflects the idea that the discourse of cultural texts exceeds the content that is literally perceivable, and that one must read between the lines of the texts in order to come to understand the power-knowledge relationship that is expressed in the discourse.

It was Jacques Derrida who proposed that the manner in which we can uncover what is written in between the lines is through a practice named *deconstruction*. Derrida presents this strategy for reading and writing texts simultaneously in the publication of three of his key texts: “Of Grammatology” (1967), “Writing and Difference” (1967) and “Speech and Phenomena” (1967) (Aylesworth 2013). According to Derrida, this form of internal critique within a text is “based on the notion that the meanings of words happens in relation to sameness and difference” (Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2007, 90). It is within “differences” that Derrida believes the concealed and left out “other” is contained. The “other” is the something else that contrasts what is affirmed in a text. Deconstructive reading is the act of highlighting the space in a text “where the function of the text works against its apparent meaning, or against the history of its interpretation” (Aylesworth 2013). Feminists such as Luce Irigaray recognize that this postmodern perspective is particularly beneficial for the purposes of feminist research, as it results in the “jamming of the theoretical machinery”:

... the issue is not one of elaborating a new theory of which women would be the subject of the object, but of jamming the theoretical machinery itself, of suspending its pretension to the production of truth and a meaning that are excessively univocal, repeating/interpreting that way in which, within discourse, the feminine finds itself defined as lack, deficiency or imitation and negative image of the subject, they would signify that with respect to this logic a disruptive excess is possible on the feminine side. (Irigaray 1985, 78)

While performing this act of “jamming” in postmodern feminist analysis, Irigaray proposes that one effectively expels the notion that new theories produce “excessively univocal” truths and meanings (Irigaray 1991, 126). Getting rid of this traditional theoretical machinery opens up the possibility for a multiplicity of truths, coming from different voices. The reason why this technique is particularly used within postmodern feminist analysis is that through deconstruction we can also recognize differences in the voices of women, allow for a distinction in not only gender, but also ethnicity, age, sexuality, etc. This is what occurs when deconstructive reading goes against the grain of traditional interpretation, providing a space where feminist research can take place.

METHODOLOGY: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK ANALYSIS

The methodology used in this research can most accurately be described as an adaptation of the methodology used for the research done by the QUING group, which was previously mentioned in the introduction. The QUING group used a methodology that was developed around the concept of ‘policy frames’, and studies the frames within policy documents by identifying three types of frames: issue frames, document frames, and metaframes. For the purposes of the research presented in this thesis, I will focus on the specific issue frame of women and work. Analyzing issue frames means researching the “relatively coherent reasoning in which issue-specific prognostic elements respond to issue-specific diagnostic elements” (QUING 2012). The research question, “how does the Dutch Emancipation Policy frame the relationship between women and capitalist labor?”, specifically refers to one issue within a more detailed and elaborate Emancipation Policy.

The QUING group methodology further continues with the following methodological steps: collecting relevant documents, identify issue frames within these documents, and comparing different countries based on the issue frames retrieved from these documents. It is this last step that I will not be using as a methodology to this research, as there will be no comparative component in this particular research. Rather, the emphasis will remain on the Netherlands, so as to learn more about the positioning of the Emancipation Policy within Dutch society rather than in relation to other (European) countries.

Within these three larger steps the QUING group methodology includes several smaller sub steps, namely:

1. Issue histories - compiling a timeline of policy developments between 1995 and 2007
2. Sampling documents - selecting the more relevant documents for closer analysis and categorizing documents into relevant sub-issues
3. Coding - entering document in digital database
4. Code standardization- organizing codes entered

5. Frame building - identifying issue frame by finding frequently co-occurring sets of code
6. Contextual data - collecting background information so as to place data into context

Considering that the research done by the QUING group is of a significantly larger scale than the research done in this thesis, some primary adaptations to this methodology for the purposes of my research on the Dutch Emancipation Policy, namely omitting step 1 and adapting step 3 and 4.

The QUING group's form of contextual frame analysis uses a system of coding with the use of a computer program in order to efficiently gather desired data from a much larger data set than used in this research. This form of research can also be considered rather quantitative in nature, as it attempts to establish "patterns in authorship, subject matter, methods, and interpretation" by identifying co-occurring sets of code in several texts at once (Reinharz in Hesse-Biber 2007, 22). Considering that the data set used in this research is markedly smaller, steps 3 and 4 were replaced by qualitative analysis that interprets just one part of one document (the Dutch Emancipation Policy). As stated earlier in the section on epistemology, an important part of textual analysis for feminist researchers is deconstructing a text by analyzing not only what is literally written but also what is omitted, absent, missing or silenced. This aims not to speculate about what should have been written, but rather emphasizes that conclusions can be drawn when discovering what is revealed or what emerges from the text when deconstruction is used. Furthermore, what makes the research methodology used in this thesis less needing of quantitative methods is the fact that it is significantly less linear than the research method proposed by QUING.

After beginning with the process of writing a research question and defining the topical area of the thesis, I ensued with analyzing a subset of relevant data from which I generated a code and an analysis, and continued to reanalyze code and build more data as the research ensued. The first level of research began by reading the Dutch Emancipation Policy in search of answering the subquestion: Who is illustrated as the recipient of policy and how? After reading, I analyzed the code present, and related my findings to both feminist theories and political science theories. Second, I began my second cycle of research by re-reading the policy document in an attempt to answer the subquestion: Who is being left out? Having coded and analyzed my findings, I related my findings to predominantly feminist theory and developed a critical analysis, as well as providing a potential solution to the issues I discovered. Lastly, I researched the larger political discourse in which this document can be placed by researching neoliberalism, postfeminism and neoliberal postfeminism, and related my findings on these theories to the policy document so as to match the policy to these particular theories. Throughout the research process, added data created new codes and refined older code in order to create a better understanding of the frame used in the Emancipation Policy. The issue frame identified, therefore, continued to gain complexity as the research process occurred. Through this cyclical manner of research, a meta-analysis of the framing of the current Dutch Emancipation Policy emerged.

In order to better understand the setting of the Dutch Emancipation Policy, it is relevant to place the document in the context of current philosophical thought. In the late 20th Century, particular philosophical movements, such as postmodernism, have been influential to political philosophy. Out of the various philosophical movements, I have selected three philosophies, two feminist philosophies and one political, in understanding the philosophical frame in which the Dutch Emancipation Policy was written. To begin, post-feminism, though various in its definition according to different feminist theorists, illustrates the manner in which Western government have claimed the feminist goal of women's emancipation. Second and more broadly, neoliberalism presents a political theory that supports not only less government regulation and more privatization, but that also calls on citizens to seek success (with an emphasis on financial success) through incessant personal development. Third, neoliberal postfeminism combines these two theories by attempting to illustrate how the path to emancipation has shifted towards one that prioritizes women's economic self-sufficiency as a goal, influencing our understanding of what emancipation is. Like neoliberalism, neoliberal postfeminism can be considered a technology of subjectification, one that prescribes the terms for ideal governed subjects. Finally, I will explore how these philosophies are reflected in the Dutch Emancipation Policy, positioning it in a specific philosophical movement.

POST-FEMINISM AND NEOLIBERALISM

POST-FEMINISM

In the 21st Century, postfeminism has become an integral part of feminist theory. The term has come to be used in several different ways, and thus has ascribed it several different meanings. While one theorist uses postfeminism to describe a time period in which feminism has become less activist, others use postfeminism to describe a more anti-feminist movement of recent years that counterattacks gains of feminism in society by attempting to reinstate and reinforce patriarchy (Gill and Schraff 2011). In the context of this thesis, however, postfeminism will be regarded as an “object of critical analysis”, whose culture is characterized by “the way in which a selectively defined feminism is both ‘taken into account’ and repudiated” (Gill and Schraff 2011, 4). This rather cryptic description of postfeminism points towards the manner in which Western governments have embraced “faux-feminism”, one which acts as a marker of freedom (McRobbie 2009, 1). Angela McRobbie explains what this suggests for women as follows:

But this is only one side of the equation, and the abandonment of feminism, for the sake of what Judith Butler would call intelligibility as a woman, is amply rewarded with the promise of freedom and independence, most apparent through wage-earning capacity, which also functions symbolically, as a mark of respectability, citizenship and entitlement. (...) The young woman is offered a notional form of equality,

concretized in education and employment, and through participation in consumer culture and civil society, in place of what a reinvested feminist politics might have to offer. (McRobbie 2009, 2)

Referring to Judith Butler throughout her book, McRobbie displays how this claiming of feminism by Western governments has resulted in “both a doing and an undoing of feminism” (Gill and Schraff 2011, 4). Receiving particular kinds of freedoms and empowerment allows women to trade in feminist politics a form of citizenship that is certified by such governments, such as through education and employment. Ties between postfeminism and neoliberalism can be found when looking at perceptions towards the role of participation in production and consumption.

NEOLIBERALISM

Unlike postfeminism, neoliberalism has a quite clear starting point. As a political theory, neoliberalism became more prominent in the 1980s during the presidency of Ronald Reagan in the United States and Margaret Thatcher’s premiership in the United Kingdom (Gill and Schraff 2011). Indicative of both their leadership philosophies were an emphasis of privatization, deregulation and a more hands-off approach with regards to the government’s social provisions. David Harvey most adequately explains the theory of neoliberalism as follows:

Neoliberalism is, in the first instance, a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade.
(Harvey 2005)

Though it may appear that this type of theory would be indicative of a time of conservative political thought, such as during the presidency of Reagan and premiership of Thatcher, neoliberalism carried on into the liberal Clinton era. Neoliberalism did not merely introduce a new political theory, but also a new ethic of politics and economics that saw potential in the market to benefit society beyond providing sufficient means to live. Shortly stated, neoliberalism “sees market exchange as an ethic in itself, capable of acting as a guide to all human action, and it holds that the social good will be maximized by maximizing the reach and frequency of market transactions” (Gill and Schraff 2011, 5). As it spread, neoliberalism became a technology “for governing subjects who are constituted as self-managing, autonomous and enterprising”, which altered not only the relationship between governments and its citizens, but the entire act of governing itself (Gill and Schraff 2011, 5). The perception of the governed subject as autonomous and self-managing

was instilled during the Clinton administration through the “psychological internalization of individual responsabilization” in the United States (Ong in Gill and Schraff 2011, 6)⁶.

This psychological internalization and the role of psychology in neoliberalism for governing bodies is clearly defined by Nikolas Rose: “The significance of psychology within advanced liberal modes of government lies in the elaboration of a know-how of the autonomous individual striving for self-realization” (Rose 1999, 90). Here, we see the clear relationship with the aim of neoliberalism to achieve success through self-determined proactivity. Rose further reaffirms neoliberalism as a technology of subjectification by affirming that forms of regulation in neoliberalism “do not crush subjectivity. They actually fabricate subjects – human men, women and children capable of bearing the burdens of liberty” (Rose 1999, viii). This burden of liberty that comes with this neoliberal thought is an “obligation to be free”, an obligation in which “each individual must render his or her life meaningful as if it were the outcome of individual choices made in furtherance of a biographical project of self-realization” (Rose 1999, ix). However, it is still questionable whether these fabricated subjects are indeed capable of bearing this burden properly. Other scholars, such as Valerie Walkerdine, argue that to “become somebody”, the task of neo-liberalism, is an impossible task, revealing “the delusionary character of self-determining, individualistic and autonomous ideas of subjectivity” (Gonnick 2001 in Walkerdine 2003, 247). When we look at this assignment of neo-liberalism for women, we can further challenge to what extent it is possible for women to attain neo-liberal success.

Walkerdine furthermore illustrates another essential dimension of the technology of subjectification: class. Walkerdine explains, “the history of technologies of class/ification would allow us to understand the changed ways in which class has functioned as a technology of the social and of the subject”, and uses this explanation to illustrate how a shift from externally regulated technologies to neoliberal self-regulated technologies of the subject has melted away class differences (Walkerdine 2003, 238). This effectively leads her to identifying that “the neo-liberal subject is the autonomous liberal subject made in the image of the middle class” (Walkerdine 2003, 239). It is in this middle class that we find a neoliberal subject that is primarily a “new worker”, a hopeful citizen who is free from “traditional ties of location, class and gender”. Though borne of the middle class, “the affluent worker has given way to the embourgeoisement of the population and so the end of the working class is taken to have arrived” (Walkerdine 2003, 240). Understanding that neoliberalism is a technology of subjectification, as well as a technology for governing,

⁶ Though the development of neoliberalism can be illustrated through an analysis of the United States’ and United Kingdom’s governments, the reaches of neoliberalism were not limited to the borders of these countries, as I will illustrate in my analysis of the Dutch Emancipation Policy. Though this thesis will not elaborate on the progression of neoliberalism in the Netherlands, the fact that neoliberalist attitudes can be found in current Dutch Emancipation Policy is a reflection of its infiltration into the Dutch political mindset. Similarly, postfeminist sentiment can be detected in this policy, which brings us to the resonance between postfeminism and neoliberalism.

we can question what effect the loss of the working class can imply for society, and, more specifically, what this means for women in neoliberal times.

NEOLIBERAL POSTFEMINISM

In their introduction to their book on new femininities in neoliberal and post feminist times, Rosalind Gill and Christina Schraff identify three levels on which postfeminism and neoliberalism operate simultaneously. To begin, they both illustrate how individualism has “replaced notions of social or political, or any ideas of individuals as subject of pressures, constraints or influence from outside themselves” (Gill and Schraff 2011, 7). As Western governed subjects in neoliberal times are psychologized to internalize a sense of responsibility for one’s own successes by their governments, these same governments remove the credibility of feminist arguments of women as an oppressed group through claiming to provide women with ample freedoms, choices and opportunities to succeed. Secondly, this individualism leads to similarities between the perceived subjects of neoliberalism and those of postfeminism. This parallel can be found in that subjects of neoliberalism are independent, analytic and in control of their life path, subjects of postfeminism are self-determined, free and able to reinvent themselves. The ties between these two subjects reflect, according to Gill and Schraff, “that postfeminism is not simply a response to feminism but also a sensibility that is at least partly constituted through the pervasiveness of neoliberal ideas” (Gill and Schraff 2011, 7). Thirdly, and in the eyes of Gill and Schraff the strongest evidence of the bonds between neoliberalism and postfeminism, is the fact that women are to a large extent the center of the call for these neoliberal and postfeminist subjects. Whereas men have already achieved an attitude of self-determinism through their participation in the labor market, women’s lack of participation historically, as well as tradition of patriarchy, has placed women outside of the sphere of autonomous subjects. The room for transformation of the women into neoliberal subjects, primarily through participation in neoliberal capitalist systems of production and consumption, is ample. This leads Gill and Schraff to question whether “neoliberalism is always already gendered, and that women are constructed as its ideal subjects?” (Gill and Schraff 2011, 7).

This connection between neoliberalism and postfeminism is further complexified when analyzing shifts of discourse in our society, according to Walkerdine. In her essay on the discourse of upward mobility in relation to femininity and neoliberal subjects, she points to the manner in which an “erosion of a discourse of the working class” has led to a need for a new subject (Walkerdine 2003, 241). Walkerdine uses class to illustrate how the erosion of this discourse, which traditionally tied upward mobility to the masculine work-class subject and production capabilities, has been altered by the enticing of autonomous subjects to be self-reflexive and introspective, which feminizes the working-class and gives new attention to the feminine (Walkerdine 2003). Walkerdine elaborates on this feminization as follows:

So, we have the erosion of a discourse of the working class, which is also pushing onto women the old place of the displacement of radicality onto a middle-class conservatism, while at the same time bringing in values

of emotionality, caring and introspection – the values of a psychology and interiority usually ascribed to women. Women can thus become understood as the carriers of all that is both good and bad about the new economy in the sense that the erosion of a discourse of classed identity can also be seen as a feminization.

(Walkerdine 2003, 242)

The working class is therefore no longer understood strictly in terms of the masculine and male working-class laborer⁷. Rather, through the feminization of the discourse of the working class, a new space is created in which women and men are both encouraged to become self-reflexive subjects. Nevertheless, Walkerdine warns that this more inclusive stance towards women in the new economy, one which is service-based over manufacturing based, does not result in a lessening of inequality, but rather “that this inequality is differently lived because low-paid manual and service workers are constantly enjoined to improve and remake themselves as the freed consumer, the ‘entrepreneur of themselves’” (Walkerdine 2003, 243).

With this shift in discourse of the working class, we can find that postfeminism and neoliberalism do not only run parallel, but that they combine to refer to one sensibility, one which we can call neoliberal postfeminism⁸. Neoliberal postfeminism, like neoliberalism, refers to a technology of subjectification, however this technology specifically relates to the subjectification of women. According to Rosi Braidotti, this neoliberal postfeminism is characterized by three defining features, the first of which refers to the “financial success or status as the sole indicator of the status of women” (Braidotti 2012, 175). Conversely, failure is a reflection of a deficiency of emancipation, primarily due to a lack of money. She states that in neoliberal times, “money alone is taken as a means of freedom”, and is therefore a primary indicator of women’s emancipation (Braidotti 2012, 175). The second features continues with this conception of money and financial means in a more globalized context, as Braidotti illustrates that the “global value of profit” is distinguished as a driving force behind progress for women (Braidotti 2012, 176). Women’s progress due to principles such as solidarity is cast aside and rejected as an archaic means of attempting to achieve emancipation. Lastly, Braidotti defines how a third defining dimension of neoliberal postfeminism is its profound ethnocentric nature, in which “it takes the form of a contradictory and racist position, which argues along civilization or ethnic lines” (Braidotti 2012, 176). This is predominantly reflected in a liberal discourse in which “our women” are contrasted with “their women” (Braidotti 2012, 177)⁹. Whereas “our

⁷ Walkerdine makes sure to mention that though the perception of the working class as being exclusive to strictly men is one that barely exists in the West. With this note, Walkerdine recognizes that perceptions of working class may differ elsewhere in the world, however due to the focus of her research she chooses not to exploit this topic further. For more on the division of labor between men and women in the working class internationally, see Nash & Fernandez-Kelly 1983.

⁸ While I believe that there is some argument for making a distinction between neoliberal postfeminism and postfeminist neoliberalism, theorists such as Rosi Braidotti, who uses the term interchangeably, do not make a discrepancy between these two terms. See Braidotti 2012.

⁹ In her text, Braidotti illustrates that a Western, Christian, predominantly white or “whitened” nature and upbringing in “the tradition of secular Enlightenment” typify “our women”. She explains further that “their women”, in this case, are characterized by a non-Western, non-Christian, not white or not “whitened” nature and perceived unfamiliarity with “Enlightenment tradition” (Braidotti 2012).

women”, or autochthonous women, have been sufficiently emancipated and “thus do not need any more social incentives or emancipatory policies”, “their women”, or allochthonous women, are targeted specifically by emancipatory policies due to their “backwards” outlook or by “even more belligerent forms of enforced ‘liberation’” (Braidotti 2012, 177). The biggest threat that Braidotti sees in this ethnocentric dimension of neoliberal postfeminism is that it loses sensitivity towards the complex issues of the women in between these two polarities. As Braidotti states, “It fails to see the great gray areas in between the pretentious claim that feminism has already succeeded in the West and the equally false statement that feminism is nonexistent outside this geopolitical region” (Braidotti 2012, 179). It is these gray areas that should be predominantly placed on the agenda, according to Braidotti.

REFLECTIONS OF NEOLIBERAL POSTFEMINIST ATTITUDES IN POLICY

When we return to the Dutch Emancipation Policy, there is one quote in particular that rather blatantly reflects the neoliberal postfeminist sentiment:

“Many married women who do not work do not seem to realize that if they lose their husbands’ incomes, their families will not have anything to fall back on. Furthermore, where individuals might rely on financial support from the government in these situations, this must not be regarded as self-evident any more either. Thus, it is quite justified on the part of the government to ask women to utilise the talent and knowledge they have in the interests of society, particularly given the better educational results that girls and women are continuing to attain” (MinECS 2013).

This quote, which falls under the section named “Responsibilities for the government”, explicitly states the convictions that the government is reasonable in demanding that women rely more on themselves rather than on the government. This attitude falls in line with neoliberalist traditions of deregulation and increased privatization. Though it is left unspoken how the government specifically would like its citizens to use their knowledge, we can readily assume that it is for entrepreneurial and economic benefits, as utilizing talents and knowledge is directly related to finances in this quote. This reaffirms the first feature of neoliberal postfeminism as defined by Braidotti, which considers financial freedom as a primary indicator of women’s emancipation. The government uses risks in loss of income and financial stability for women to justify this request for using knowledge that women already hold. Between the lines, we can read that reliance of women on the government is seen as a financial reliance through welfare. Talent and knowledge lead to financial liberation, both for themselves and for society. The more women are economically self-sufficient the lesser the burden on themselves and on the government, and also in turn on society to support these economically vulnerable women. As Walkerdine identifies in her article, producing this kind of discourse is also a tool for “making citizens responsible for their own self-regulation”, especially by overtly stating this expectation of the government (Walkerdine 2003, 238).

This belief in development of talents and knowledge as an emancipating factor is also mentioned earlier in the document:

“... it is also the responsibility of the government to collaborate with social organisations to identify the strengths that people have and to encourage these strengths. We expect people to use their knowledge and talents. History shows us that rules, legislation and government interference do not guarantee better positions for women or vulnerable groups” (MinECS 2013).

Yet again, we see the neoliberal sentiment of self-improvement appearing. However, what we also see is rather a blunt statement that rules, legislation and government interference has not proven to be a guarantee for a better position of women in society. Here, we can detect an example of a Hobson’s choice. As Stone describes, in a Hobson’s choice “ the author, speaker, or politicians offers the audience and apparent choice, wearing all the verbal clothing of a real choice, when in fact the very list of options determines how people will choose by making one option seem like the only acceptable possibility” (Stone 2012, 198). In effect, what this quote is making clear is that out of all the possible actions the government could take, the only real option is self-realization. Though it is true that there are several proposed actions presented in the document with regards to women’s economic self-sufficiency, none of the actions include legislation or government interference. The apparent plethora of actions offers the illusion of options in policy solutions, but in reality all options are in fact the same: a request on the individual citizen for more self-control and self-determination in creating a better personal economic position in society. This emphasis on individual improvement for the purpose of a better economic position is indicative of the second principle of neoliberal postfeminism as defined by Braidotti, which casts aside women’s solidarity and collective movements, instead embracing women’s progress through the conception of individual financial means.

What is noteworthy to mention is that the last indicator of postfeminism, according Braidotti, is an ethnocentric discourse that posits “our” Western women against “their” non-Western women. It appears that this policy document refrains from any reference to this binarism in their description the problem of women’s lack of economic self-sufficiency. Though I can only speculate, it is my belief that the Minister recognizes how problematic it can be to include this binarism in the policy document, as is evident from the criticism that previous Emancipation Policy documents have received in the past¹⁰. Nevertheless, I would like to divert from Braidotti’s principle of neoliberal postfeminism and propose that omitting this binarism is even more indicative of neoliberal postfeminist sentiment. As neoliberalism strongly advocates self-realized success, it is my conviction that a policy that presents the possibility for all citizens, regardless of their ethnicity, to achieve success through hard work and self-development is even more relatable to neoliberal sentiment than a policy that makes a distinction between citizens based on ethnicity or heritage. This

¹⁰ See Roggeband and Verloo 2007.

upholds the idea that anyone can achieve success if they participate in the persistent habit of self-improvement, and is essentially the most effective way for the government to circumvent the necessity to remain active agents in the lives of specific target groups, such as allochthonous women. Refraining from mentioning these target groups specifically in the Dutch Emancipation Policy is a discursive choice that is therefore still very much revealing of neoliberal postfeminist attitude, in which all women are requested to individually strive for emancipation of their gender through economic means. Issues that arise due to the exemption of ethnicity in the current Dutch Emancipation Policy will be further explored later in this thesis.

With these findings, we can place the Dutch Emancipation Policy within the movement of neoliberal postfeminism, and throughout the document there are several more instances that show evidence of neoliberalist, postfeminist and neoliberal postfeminist attitudes alike. Understanding the larger political discourse in which this document partakes, we can now delve deeper into the frames of the document itself, attempting to comprehend how discursive choices reveal the issue frames of the Dutch Emancipation Policy. Though there are several issue frames to be analyzed in the policy document, it is of particular interest, considering the political discourse of the document, to analyze how issue framing on women in relation to the economy is shaped. This returns us to the nexus of women, the state and the economy, and our aim to understand how they interact. With neoliberal postfeminist attitudes present, knowing who is considered the issue and whom the policy aims to aid reveals not only whom the government considers most likely to benefit from increased economic stability, but also from whom the economy can benefit most. This is made clear in the following quote:

Emancipation can contribute to a stronger economy if efforts are made to achieve knowledge and talent development (MinECS 2013).

This portrays that the path to emancipation through increased economic stability of women is not a one-way street, but that the government plays a key role in ensuring that both emancipation and the economy are bettered. This solidifies the interconnection between women, the state, and the economy, and places the state as a mediator between women and the economy.

UNDERSTANDING WHO MATTERS

It is a general given that policy aims to provide policy solutions to societal problems. These solutions, whether of goods or services, are to be distributed with the idealistic goal to do this in an equal manner. According to Harold Lasswell, a leading American political theorist, the study of political science has largely to do with this issue of distribution, and can be summed up as the study of “who gets what, when, and how” (Lasswell 1936, 1). Deborah Stone, professor of Political Science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, states that policy issues can be considered distributive conflicts, as it is practically never the case that there is complete consensus on issues of distribution. One area of conflict is between distributing in an equal manner versus distributing in an equitable manner:

I have used the word “equality” to denote sameness and to signify the part of distribution that contains uniformity – uniformity [...] of voting power, for example. I have used “equity” to denote distributions regarded as fair, even though they contain both equalities and inequalities. (Stone 2012, 42).

Though both policy makers and citizens may desire an equitable solution, the aim to achieve this through “equality”, which is defined by Stone as *uniformity in distribution*, can result in a policy paradox. She states, “Equality may in fact mean inequality; equal treatment may require unequal treatment; and the same distribution may be seen as equal or unequal, depending on one’s point of view” (Stone 2012, 42). The policy paradox, therefore, is that a policy solution based on equal distribution may not be considered an equitable solution, and that this is highly dependent on perception. Policy solutions such as equal distribution of subsidies, for example, are rarely considered equitable solutions, as not all citizens require subsidies to maintain their quality of life, while others are very dependent on them.

One manner to devise solutions for distributive conflicts is to take the perspective of the citizen who is likely to benefit from a policy solution. The challenge in taking this first step is to answer the question “Who should count as a member of the class of recipients?” Two ways to answer this question are by focusing on group-based distribution and on rank-based distribution. In this case, “group” is defined as a collective of people who share immutable traits, such as sex and race. “Rank” categorizes individuals according to measurements based on an individual’s past performance or achievements, such as career and education. The assumption behind rank-based distribution is that rank is correlated with merit (Stone 2012).

Understanding a choice in distributive method can be done by reading between the lines of policy documents. This means understanding the process of issue framing, a powerful rhetorical tool that is used in policy documents. This practice entails the selection of “some aspects of perceived reality and making them more salient ... in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral

evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation” (Entman 1993). These frames draw our attention to specific issues, while diverting it from others. In this way, the number of policy problems, as well as that of the proposed solutions, is controlled, and several other problems, evaluations and recommendations are kept off the agenda. As Deborah Stone puts it, “keeping things off the agenda is as much a form of power as getting them on. If an alternative doesn’t float to the surface and appear on the list of possibilities, it can’t be selected; to keep it off is effectively to defeat it” (Stone 2012). Issue framing, therefore, is a powerful strategic measure that influences the manner in which certain problems, explanations and solutions are prioritized over others.

In several cases, it is the human behavior that presents the problem, and the framing of such problems towards the behavior of specific individuals in society has drastic effect on the manner in which this “problem” is dealt with by a government. In the case of the Dutch Emancipation Policy, it is clear that group-based distribution is already being practiced, simply due to the focus on women specifically. However, I would like to argue that rank-based distribution is also occurring, specifically in reference to women’s economic position and the solutions for these issues that are proposed. This rank-based distribution is apparent in three specific classifications (education status, relationship status, and motherhood) that Minister Bussemaker uses to define women who lack economic self-sufficiency. Not only does this provide us with some insight as to answer the question “who gets what?”, but also allows us to question the implications of this selective discursive practice of issue framing. First, “education” will be analyzed as an axis of identity, proceeding with “partnership and divorce”, followed by “motherhood” and concluding with an analysis of what the frames surrounding these three axes reflect about the distributive decision in the Emancipation Policy.

AXES OF IDENTITY

EDUCATION

“Emancipation can contribute to a stronger economy if efforts are made to achieve knowledge and talent development.” (MinECS 2013, 15)

The first frame that I will identify is the *education* frame. As the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences is the ministry responsible for women’s emancipation, it is perhaps not surprising that the emphasis of education and schooling is central in this policy document. In total, the word “education” occurs 92 times in the text, which consists of 48 pages in total. It is apparent that in this document, the value of education to the economy is extensively emphasized. With this value comes an accent on the importance of education for emancipation. A clear example of this is the prioritization of the term “education” in the structure of some sentences:

*“Traditional views about the division of roles between men and women may also impede the **education** and work careers of women...” (MinECS 2013, 12)*

*“Two-thirds of this difference can be explained by the disadvantages that women experience in terms of their **education** and work experience.” (MinECS 2013, 16)*

*“The object of the Technology Pact is to promote collaboration between the **education** sector and the business sector, ...” (MinECS 2013, 33)*

As it is apparent, the combination of the terms “education” and “work”/“business” frequently occurs. Upon closer inspection, it is evident that most of the solutions proposed to these policy problems are an increase in the quantity or quality of education. In doing so, the description of the policy problem is therefore also education oriented¹¹. For example, in the framing of the struggle of women who lack economic self-sufficiency, a policy priority in the chapter titled “Participation in view of the consequences of the economic crisis”, it becomes clear that a lack of education for a particular group of women is the main concern of Minister Bussemaker:

*“It is also evident that more than 50% of women with a **limited education** find themselves outside the employment market; some of them even find themselves outside society too.” (MinECS 2013, 11)*

*“Today, in 2013, 48% of women in the Netherlands are not economically independent and almost one million educated women with a **limited education** are financially dependent on the income of their partners.” (MinECS 2013, 15)*

This particular frame plays upon the larger idea that good education is the basis for a strong economic position in the Netherlands. It is the belief that with a stronger educational basis, one’s economic position is strengthened as well. Though it is not officially described what is considered “limited education”, the solution proposed is to further the education of these women. The policy solution presented, the “At Your Own Force project”, attempts to guide and encourage “less well education women” to further their education. In reaffirming the mantra that more education results in a better economic position, the text explains the need for this guidance as follows:

“Better qualifications improve their chances of joining the employment market, when it picks up. Many women who are not entitled to benefits do not have any idea at all of how to make the transition to the employment market – even if they wanted to do so. These women seem to be cautious about investing in themselves (at this stage). However it is important for them to do this, because a shift in employment to

¹¹ While most policy problems in the Emancipation Policy are oriented around education for women, there is one policy problem that is a major exception. One of the policy priorities, labeled as the “Differences between girls and boys in education”, points towards the danger of boys falling behind in their education as girls continue to do much better (MinECS 2013, 11).

higher MBO (senior secondary vocational education) levels would seem to be manifesting itself in the healthcare sector – which has, traditionally, been an attractive employer of women.” (MinECS 2013, 28)

As is apparent in the first sentence, increasing chances of joining the employment market is also recognized as dependent on the condition of the employment market. Nevertheless, increasing education of these women is labeled as the solution, not just to increase their chances but also to give them better insights in how to transition into this market and as an investment in themselves. At the same time, it appears that one particular sector, namely the healthcare sector, is one that this increase in qualification and education would lead to. Thus, one could conclude that there is already a clear vision of where this particular group of women can be placed in society: healthcare jobs, a safe and dependable employer of women.

It can be concluded, therefore, that with regards to education Minister Bussemaker has made a particular framing decision. Considering that 1 million women with limited education are dependent on the income of their husbands, the proposed solution is not necessarily the creation of jobs by the government for these specific women, but rather an extension on their education in order to encourage their increased participation in the employment market and in society in general. And yet, these 1 million women only make up 1/3 of the number of women who are not able to provide for their own livelihood (Atria 2012). According to Atria, the Dutch Institute on Gender Equality and Women’s History, 3 million women are currently not economically self-sufficient. A large part of these women are dependent on the income of a partner, which brings us to the second frame.

PARTNERSHIP AND DIVORCE

“Today, in 2013, 48% of women in the Netherlands are not economically independent and almost one million educated women with a limited education are financially dependent on the income of their partners.” (MinECS 2013, 15)

The quote mentioned here was already used in the section above to explain the manner in which the policy document focuses on women with limited education, and in re-using it I am attempting to display the important way in which heterosexual partnership is used as an identity marker in this policy document¹². Upon further reading, it becomes apparent that it is not just any type of partnership that is referred to, but a heterosexual partnership, one in which the husband is the breadwinner of the family while the wife bides her time with something besides fulltime paid labor. It is through this breadwinner model that women become dependent on their partner’s income, making them even more economically vulnerable in case of a divorce or the death of the husband. The government considers this to be a major policy issue, considering that 20% more women than men receive welfare, largely as a result of a lack of economic independence (CBS 2014).

¹² Considering that this thesis does not allow for an extensive analysis on compulsory heteronormativity, it is important to recognize that the feminist literature on this subject is vast. See Rich 1980 and Jackson 2006.

One of the government's most prominent policy solutions towards decreasing the number of women dependent on welfare benefits is through encouraging their economic independence:

“If a woman gives up (some of) her economic independence when starting a family, when she gets married or enters into a registered partnership, this may cause her to become financially dependent on her former partner should the relationship end. In certain circumstances, a woman may even experience poverty or become reliant on benefits. For the man, this can result in long-term financial commitments in the form of spousal maintenance, depending on his ability to pay. Thus, the breadwinner situation may give rise to these unintended consequences.” (MinECS 2013, 28)

We are reminded that the partnership described by this policy statement is primarily referring to heterosexual partnership, where the woman is a victim of economic instability in case of a separation from her male partner. Here, we see that the threats for women in the case of a divorced are illustrated as possible poverty or dependence on welfare, whereas her husband would face the rather different future of paying spousal support, but certainly not having to experience poverty or live off of welfare benefits. Next to heterosexuality, divorce in heterosexual partnerships is highlighted as a major life event that further threatens the economic position of women. Lastly, the document reiterates the status quo of the breadwinner model, which is specifically mentioned here, recognizing and affirming its current and continued existence in the Netherlands.

The breadwinner model in the Netherlands is closely related to the Dutch welfare system. It is Minister Bussemaker who wrote extensively on the subject of individualization, gender and the welfare state in the Netherlands during the 1990s. She explains in her text “Individualization as Paradox: Independence and Privacy as a result of the Dutch Social Security Act” how the welfare system was originally meant to support families, and considered the nuclear family as the principle unit on which to base social security. As Marga Klompé, politician and founder of the Dutch Social Security Act in 1963, argued, this arrangement impaired women, as the system considered men as the head of the household, and thus the receiver of welfare benefits. Women were only indirectly aided by welfare through relationship with their husbands. The feminist solution to this was to individualize the welfare system, allowing people to benefit from welfare regardless of their gender or family situation (Bussemaker 1995). This resulted in the possibility of single women and single mothers to obtain welfare. Bussemaker defines two forms of individualization with conflicting definitions that are used to talk about welfare. The feminist solution refers to what Bussemaker calls judicial individualization, and leads to an increase in (financial) solidarity between the government and its citizens. On the opposite end, policy individualization is about solidarity between the government and couples or partners, paying attention to the needs of individuals with a consideration for their specific living situations and relationships (Bussemaker 1995). The current welfare situation is one that

is still dependent on the concept of the family unit¹³, and can still be seen as a form of policy individualization.

It is the disruption of couples that muddies the efficiency of policy individualization. As the Minister illustrates in her policy statement, divorce is one of the largest threats to women's financial position:

“[...] If we consider that more than one in three marriages in the Netherlands fail, it is clear that women may find themselves faced with personal financial problems and, in the worst case scenario, even real poverty. Many married women who do not work do not seem to realize that if they lose their husbands' incomes, their families will not have anything to fall back on.” (MinECS 2013, 16)

Notably, divorce is expressed as a “failure” of marriage as well as the loss of the husband's income. Referring specifically to a “husband” affirms the heterosexual nature of the partnership. Furthermore, this attention to the husbands' income restates the dependency of women on men for financial stability, and thus the breadwinner model. When questioning what is not being stated, we can turn towards the lack of mention of LGBT partnerships and the economic situations that are faced when divorce takes place in these partnerships. Furthermore, this policy statement points to the issue of divorce, but refrains from detailing the nature of this group of women. It is left unsaid what percentage of divorced women lacked economic independence previous to their divorce. Due to the sentence structure of the quote above, the reader is prone to deduce that women who divorce are also the women who are not economically independent, justifying why the government targets divorced women as a policy issue.

Lastly, it should be noted that in the two quotes mentioned above, the relationship between women, partnerships and divorce is also strongly tied to families and motherhood. In the two quotes referring to divorce, it is automatically stated that a divorce can lead to economic hardship for a woman and her family, illustrating that single women may not be the biggest concern, but rather single mothers. This intersection between relationship status, sexuality, as well as parental status brings us to the most expensive group of people for the Dutch government when it comes to welfare: single parents. In the case of single parent families, single parents receive 90% of minimum wage, whereas individuals without children receive 70% of minimum wage in welfare benefits (Overheid.nl 2014). Furthermore, they receive child welfare benefits to maintain their children. The incentive to minimize the economic dependency of women on the government's welfare system, therefore, goes beyond emancipating women, but can also be seen as a manner to cut back on the amount of welfare distributed by the government on a yearly basis.

¹³ In the Netherlands, the family unit is formally described as follows: a private household consisting of a (married) couple with children who live at home or a single parent with children who live at home (CBS, 2014). Though this definition remains rather open to including single parenthood in the concept, I would argue that in practice the Dutch government still relies heavily on the average family formation, which consist of a couple and 1-2 children in the Netherlands, in order to shape their policy.

To illustrate just how much the government could save, we can examine a situation in which two single parents who are dependent on welfare decide to form a family unit through marriage or registered partnership. In the case that this couple remains dependent on welfare, their status as single parents is revoked and replaced with a status of family unit. The economic effect of this is that together the couple receives roughly €7000 less per year in welfare benefits than if they had retained their single parent status, and this amount increases if the couple has more than two children in this newly formed family unit (Overheid.nl 2014, Rijksoverheid 2013). One could reason that this decrease in welfare suggests a drastic saving for the government in the case of less divorce, more partnerships, and more economic independence. The effect of this rhetoric surrounding divorced women leads to the following question: what happens to women who are divorced but who do not have children? How do they fare economically?

All in all, the economic independence of women is framed in the policy in terms of their heterosexual relationships. The assumption of being wed or having been wed to a male partner obliterates the recognition of other groups of women, such as young single women and lesbian and bisexual women. Furthermore, as mentioned previously, marriage is automatically tied to motherhood, as is evident from the manner in which complications in economic self-sufficiency due to divorce are illustrated. The following chapter will expand on the manner in which motherhood is used as a frame in this policy document.

MOTHERHOOD

“Also, if fathers are involved in the raising of their children, there would be more opportunities for mothers to participate in the employment market.” (MinECS 2013, 16)

In this frame, I will shortly elaborate on the third axis of identity on which the discussion of women and economic independence is shaped: the motherhood frame. Though the discussion on women’s economic position is quite extensively related to all different kinds of women, there are two parts of this discussion that remain predominantly centered around women with children, regardless of their relationship status¹⁴. These two parts are work-life balance and literacy. It is within these two discussed topics that almost no discrepancy is made between women with and women without children, and I will show how this presents a policy problem that is geared towards mothers specifically.

CHILDCARE

As the quote above suggests, the path towards the employment market for many women is seen as obstructed by childcare. Furthermore, its reasoning intersects with a frame that was presented earlier,

¹⁴ It is noteworthy to mention that documents and research on mothers in general, regardless of their relationship status, is nearly impossible to find. When motherhood is discussed in relation to emancipation, the issue of single mothers dominates the discourse. This reflects the interconnectedness between motherhood and relationship status, as well as displaying that motherhood issues are strongly related to single motherhood.

namely the partnership frame. Assuming that such mothers have conceived these children in heterosexual partnerships, a call upon fathers to help out with childcare is perhaps justified. However, in several ways this is dependent on the presence of the father in the family, which is rare in cases of families of divorce couples. In the Netherlands, women run 82% of single-parent families. Whether single fathers are prepared and willing to take on more active parenting roles and whether this will result in an increase of the entrance of single mothers to the employment market is still uncertain (Moonen 2013). The proposition that fathers take on more caretaking responsibilities may be more feasible for families in which a divorce has not taken place, assuming that these fathers more readily take an active role in parenting. The call for the active involvement of fathers displays this mixing of frames, namely of partnership and motherhood. This intersection occurs as heterosexuality in partnership is assumed, and where motherhood roles are related to fatherhood roles. In the case of a lesbian partnership, for example, the quote mentioned above would not be as applicable.

The following quote illustrates how the discussion on work-life balance is centered on the role of women as mothers:

... the possibilities that women themselves have to achieve a good balance between their work and private lives are important too. These possibilities include flexible working hours and good, affordable childcare.

(MinECS 2013, 26)

Here we see that this “good balance between work and private lives” is predominantly set in terms of a woman’s relationship with her domestic life. The ensuing paragraph that continues on this subject also emphasizes the quality of childcare, as well as the further efforts that Minister Bussemaker plans on making in order for women to be able to combine their work and care responsibilities. The interpretation, namely of one’s private life being dominated by care responsibilities for children, reaffirms the position of working women as primarily mothers, as well as reaffirming the caretaking responsibilities that rest on their shoulders. The needed question that arises here is if there are any concerns for women who do not have a private life that is dominated by their children. The chapter from which the quote above is taken is named “Balance between paid and unpaid labor”. Though childcare is one of the most time consuming unpaid forms of labor for mothers, other forms of unpaid labor, such as general domestic housework like cleaning, doing the laundry, etc., persists for women with and without children alike. This double burden is something that women in the Netherlands are familiar with as well. While roughly 75% of women participate in one hour or more of cooking and housework every day, only 35% of Dutch men show the same behavior (European Institute for Gender Equality 2013, 83). This statistic shows that time spent on housework and dedication to domestic responsibilities during one’s private time is not simply tied to the status of being a mother. Recognizing that gendering of domestic duties exists in heterosexual couples even before the coming of a child is important to illustrate that troubles arise from ingrained conceptions that tie women to

domestic, unpaid work. Similarly, like the double burden of domestic duties, a lack of literacy can hold women back.

LITERACY

The importance of literacy for the emancipation of women is a subject I previously discussed when illustrating the education frame. In this frame, I emphasized that the burdens of economic instability are largely attributed to a lack of education, and that more education is considered a primary manner in which to promote the economic self-sufficiency of women. When it comes to the chapter in the Dutch Emancipation Policy on the proposed solutions for semi-literacy¹⁵, the discussion centers on mothers specifically. This is explicitly stated, and the following reasoning is provided for this focus on mothers:

“If both mother and child (and the father) improve their language proficiency at the same time, this results in a self-reinforcing, positive spiral as regards participation (parental involvement, for example) and, ultimately, economic independence.” (MinECS 2013, 28)

Language proficiency, here, is seen as paramount to the development of both mother and child, and their ability to fend for themselves economically. Though it is not elaborately explained how a simultaneous improvement of language proficiency would result in a positive spiral that improves economic independence, the assumption is made that an improvement in literacy is tool to become more economically independent. Once again, the bridge is made between economic welfare and education. From an analytical point of view, it is clear that the reasoning behind literacy is strongly tied to the benefits that it brings to both mother and child. However, this begs the question what happens to women who are not mothers, but who are lacking in their language proficiency.

In her analysis of the politics of literacy, Kathleen Rockhill illustrates how women’s literacy is deeply bound to the politics of language. She concludes that language and literacy of women is tied to how women use, or ‘live’ language and literacy, rather than it being a women’s mere right to be literate (Rockhill 1987). Women’s literacy is considered by institutions to be primarily important for how they can use it in their daily lives, rather than being important because of a right to education and literacy. When we use Rockhill’s analysis to approach the discourse of literacy in this document, we can question what function literacy has for women according to this policy statement. The focus here is that education is important for women to increase their economic independence; however literacy is seen as important for mothers specifically due to their interaction with their child(ren). Literacy is, therefore, particularly necessary for women who function as mothers.

¹⁵ The policy document does not specify what is meant by semi-literacy. From the document, we can infer that what is meant by semi-literacy is literate yet poorly skilled and lacking proficiency in literacy.

With this in mind, we can question what happens to illiterate women who are not mothers, or elderly women who do not have young children to teach how to read their first words. Is their right to literacy also recognized despite the fact that they may not use it for the purposes of teaching their children how to read or improving their economic welfare? Furthermore, the policy related to literacy targets an even narrower group of mothers: mothers that predominantly have young children living at home. While literacy is commonly expressed as a right for children, it is just as much a human right for adults, men and women alike. The benefits for literacy amongst adults are equally great as the benefits for children, and include economic benefits. In the policy document, the value of literacy is not expressed as a right, but rather as a tool that is necessary for the fulfillment of the function of motherhood. In framing the increase of literacy of mothers as beneficial for children, the right to literacy as a freedom and as gateway to several benefits for women is not sufficiently recognized.

CONCLUSION

By illustrating how the axes of education level, partnership status and motherhood are specific targets of the emancipation policy, we have addressed to some extent the “who” part in the question “who gets what, when and how?” In identifying and elaborating on these axes of identity, it already becomes clear that there are intersections between these axes of identity. For example, motherhood and literacy address both the educational level and motherhood status, and partnership and motherhood are similarly intertwined within the discourse on single mothers. What is evident is that the discourse of the Dutch Emancipation Policy is shaped in such a way that it attempts to address various kinds of women. The aim is provide a policy document that relates to the largest group of women possible. Through including these identities, it strives to approach women who relate to the issues of motherhood and divorce, but also women who relate to issues of lower education levels and economic dependency on a husband. To avoid the creation of a specific target group, the discourse spreads the frames of all these identities throughout the text, never mentioning all three identity groups in one quote. Though it is unjustly to say that there is explicit discursive evidence in the policy document to suggest that all identity markers identified in this thesis create a specific target group, it does appear that this is implicitly the case when reading between the lines. It is on the subject of motherhood that we find the ties between the three. It is in the identity marker of motherhood that issues of partnership, as well as issues of education level can be found, revealing that an intersection is created. The following chapter will develop this finding further.

What we can conclude is that despite attempting to create a group-based approach of distribution by seemingly creating an emancipation policy that speaks to all women, the policy does make selective rank-based groups to aid specifically. When we return to the distributive conflict of policy making, we can see from the discourse of the text that three effective ranks are created, namely the axes of identity illustrated above. As rank-based distribution assigns individuals to groups according to measurements of an

individual's achievement, life choices or performance, it is quite evident that educational level is a rank-based measurement for distribution. Partnership is considered a rank-based distributive measurement in this thesis, as partnership status (married, divorced, etc.) can be flexible (therefore not immutable) and is a life choice¹⁶. Lastly, motherhood also remains in an ambiguous place, as the politics of motherhood resides somewhere between rank-based and group-based distribution. While one could argue that giving birth to a child changes the status of a women permanently into "mother" (an immutable trait), the experience of women and motherhood may differ drastically¹⁷. With these three axes of identity, it is clear that throughout the text, rank-based distributive decision are being made, giving us a clearer answer as to who is at the receiving end of policy. What we have yet to explore is who is not considered in this distributive decision.

¹⁶ Sexuality is also implicitly mentioned in this document in relation to partnership. As sexuality can be considered both flexible and immutable, it falls neither in the rank-based measurement (which are based on merit and life choices) nor the group-based measurements (which are based on absolute identity markers).

¹⁷ For example, mothers who have given their children up for adoption and do not raise them personally experience different lives than mothers who give birth to children and proceed to raise them. For more on the politics of motherhood, see Luker 1984.

Despite my attempt to illustrate three different identity markers that are used in this policy document to frame the lack of economic independence of women, I have found that it is rather impossible to elaborate on these identities without recognizing the intersectionality between them. It is this concept of intersectionality that illustrates my largest critique on this policy statement, namely, that there is not enough recognition of it.

Before theories of intersectionality arose, identity politics brought to light the importance of recognizing the voice of marginalized groups. A concept stemming from several large-scale political movements such as second wave feminism and the Black Civil Rights movement, identity politics “starts from analyses of oppression to recommend, variously, the reclaiming, redescription, or transformation of previously stigmatized accounts of group membership” (Heyes 2012). This reclaiming of one group led to powerful critiques by for example the Combahee River Collective, which pointed out the manner in which second wave feminism predominantly fought for the rights of white women, and how the Black Civil Rights movement lacked the complete inclusion of black women. Along with recognizing identity politics came the stark realization that other groups within these groups remained in the margins.

Out of this critique, the concept of intersectionality was born. Most pointedly, Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw critiqued that “the problem with identity politics is not that it fails to transcend difference, as some critics charge, but rather the opposite- that it frequently conflates or ignores intra group differences” (Williams Crenshaw 1991, 1241). Crenshaw uses this account to illustrate the need for understanding how intersections work on “multiple grounds of identity when considering how the social world is constructed” (Williams Crenshaw 1991,1241). In her article on intersectionality and violence against women of color, she elaborates on the discrepancies between structural, political and representational intersectionality. Crenshaw writes about how structural intersectionality points to the implications of an intersection of race and gender on the daily-lived experience of women of color, how political intersectionality refers to the manner in which feminist and antiracist politics have relegated the political position of women of color and how representational intersectionality creates a cultural construction of women of color that “becomes yet another source of intersectional disempowerment” (Williams Crenshaw 1991, 1245). Crenshaw uses battering and rape to demonstrate how structural intersectionality results in, for example, a greater chance of battering amongst women of color, simply due to daily factors, such as poverty and domestic violence, that these women have to face. Political intersectionality is explained through illustrating how women of color find themselves between the political agendas of antiracists and feminists, which frequently fail to address the issues of women of color adequately. Lastly representational intersectionality refers to the constructed cultural imagery that are built on “a confluence of prevalent narratives of race and gender, as well as a recognition of how contemporary critiques of racist and sexist representation marginalize women of color” (Williams Crenshaw 1991, 1283). An example of this is the misogynist objectification of Black women as

targets of sexual violence by the 2 Live Crew, a hip-hop group from Miami, Florida. Though Crenshaw uses the specific case of women of color in her article, intersectionality can be used to approach the position of different identity intersections as well, such as those based on age, religion, sexuality, and handicap, to only name a few. In her article, Crenshaw mentions that intersectionality is never solely based on one intersection alone. Mostly clearly referring to the benefits of applying intersectional analysis is that “[...] intersectionality might be more broadly useful as a way of mediating the tension between assertions of multiple identity and the ongoing necessity of group politics” (Williams Crenshaw 1991, 1241). It is with this tool and understanding of intersectionality that we will perceive the group politics of women illustrated in the Dutch Emancipation Policy by using political intersectionality.

INTERPRETING THE RESULTS

In interpreting the results that I have gathered from my data analysis, I will use intersectionality to look at the relationships between these results. As I already determined, it is difficult to speak of one of the mentioned frames (education, relationship and motherhood) without including references to other frames. As the frames can be correlated to identity markers, it becomes clear that the separate frames coincide to locate a specific group of women within the larger group of economically vulnerable women: lower-educated, heterosexual mothers. In the discourse on the self-sufficiency of women, lower-educated women are seen as those necessitating the more education in order to better their economic position, women in heterosexual relationships are likely to become too dependent on the income of their male partners, and mothers need to increase the quality of their work-life balance and their literacy for the sake of not only themselves, but also their children. Intersections between level of education and heterosexual partnership as well as intersections between heterosexual partnership and motherhood create niches of women within the larger group of economically vulnerable women.

The mechanism underlying these results is that policymakers are forced to make a distributive decision. As mentioned earlier, this distributive decision of “who gets what?” is researched in this chapter. With 48% of women not being economically self-sufficient and with limited resources, the task to provide solutions for this policy problem is dependent on rank-based distribution, one in which resources are assigned based on past performances, achievement and decisions (Stone 2012). Before I begin to analyze which percentage of this 48% is analyzed, I find it important to mention that this figure is based on women between the ages of 20 and 65, resulting in an exclusion of women above the age of 65. This is the first manner in which the government narrows down the number of women considered in this policy problem. As the larger 48% is of women is too large to approach, the first form of narrowing the group down is by considering lower-educated women, which include about 1/3 of women unable to provide for their own livelihood. In this way, policymakers have narrowed down their target group from 48% to 16% of all women. The second category that cuts down this number is those women who have been in heterosexual partnerships. As the policy

document elaborates on women's dependency on the income of their partners, it becomes clear that heterosexual partnership is meant, thus revealing the compulsory heterosexual attitude of the document. With roughly 6% of women considering themselves LGBT, we can estimate that this leaves us with roughly 15% of women regarded in this distributive decision (Keuzenkamp, Kooiman and Van Lisdonk 2012). Lastly, the number of women out of this 15% who are also mothers is almost impossible to determine. Figures about motherhood that is not tied to partnership status are virtually non-existent. One can, however, assume that this 15% is cut down even further, as women in the Netherlands have their first child at age 29 on average (Wobma 2011). To put an exact figure of the number of women that is targeted in this policy statement with regards to economic self-sufficiency, the Central Bureau of Statistics in the Netherlands has determined that out of 540,000 mothers, single or in a relationship, unemployed or unable to participate in the labor market roughly 210,000 have a low education level (CBS 2013). Though this figure does not include all women who are not economically self-sufficient, these 210,000 women can be considered the primary target group of this particular strand of discourse in the entire Emancipation Policy. Thus, perhaps more important than understanding who is included by this policy is understanding who is excluded. In relation to previous work, it can be seen that making such distributive decisions is always problematic, and especially so for a large governmental institution. As illustrated earlier, the current Dutch Emancipation Policy uses primarily rank-based distribution to identify who is the one the receiving end of policy. I would like to approach the question of how using group-based distribution, namely distribution that creates groups based on immutable qualities, can create a view into which parties are left out. For this analysis, I will use ethnicity and age to explore how these fixed identities are not included in the issue of framing women lacking economic self-sufficiency. Also, I will briefly analyze class to understand how the discourse in this document sidesteps the recognition of class, and how this is indicative of neo-liberalism in the sense that classlessness is an ideal within neo-liberalist thought¹⁸.

ETHNICITY

Returning to Conny Roggeband and Mieke Verloo's work, we can see a continuation and a shift in the policy problem defined through comparing their analysis of the Emancipation Policy from 1995 to 2005 to my analysis of the Emancipation Policy of 2013. To begin, Roggeband and Verloo reaffirm the government's dependency on the breadwinner model in Emancipation Policy, noting that, "recent policy measures take the family income as a point of departure, while diminishing the individual social security rights of those who depend on this family income" (Roggeband and Verloo 2007, 285). This can also be seen in the discourse on women's economic dependence on their partners in the 2013 policy. Furthermore, Roggeband and Verloo claim: "It is argued by policymakers that since women are principally responsible for taking care of and educating their children, it is mainly the women that can and should educate their

¹⁸ For more on women and the politics of class, see Brenner 2000.

family towards (cultural) change” (Roggeband and Verloo 2007, 286). In relation to the 2013 policy, though it is not explicitly stated that women are primarily responsible for the care of their children, the references to women’s literacy portray that strong connection between mothers and the education of their children.

A clear shift between the policies that Roggeband and Verloo analyze and that I analyze in this thesis is the focus on migrant women as the main policy problem. Roggeband and Verloo conclude that the distributive decision in Emancipation Policy from 1995 to 2005 is to target Muslim migrant women:

Since migrant women have an even higher rate of economic dependence and lower levels of labour market participation, gender equality policies have also targeted this group since the 1980s. Since 2003, the implicit frame of the government has been that autochthonous women have accomplished gender equality, but that allochthonous women still do not fit into the Dutch gender model. This frame has put migrant women centre stage in gender equality policies. (Roggeband and Verloo 2007, 285)

As a result, Roggeband and Verloo argue that minority and migration policies have been transformed from de-gendered policies, or policies void of attention for gender inequalities, into gendered policies and that the practice of framing in the Emancipation Policy strengthens the dominant frame in society of “the dichotomy between the autochthonous “us” and the allochthonous “them”” (Roggeband and Verloo 2007, 286). A clear shift can be seen in that in the Emancipation Policy of 2013 there is barely any mention of a discrepancy between allochthonous and autochthonous women. This discourse is avoided all together throughout the document, with the exception of the mentioning boys of Moroccan and Antillean origin in relation to the “the success of girls or boys problem” in education (MinECS 2013, 17, 23).

Roggeband and Verloo also illustrate how this distributive decision of framing between 1995 and 2005 is also politically motivated by the parties that were in power at this time. They illustrate the following:

The position of the right (VVD) fits strategically both with neo-liberal frames of ‘restricting’ state intervention and (nationalist) positions opposing immigration. For the Christian Democrats their position on gender equality has always been ambivalent, as they are the party mostly stressing ‘family values’. The shift to ethnicizing gender equality policies eliminated the need for them to give attention to gender equality among their own constituency. (Roggeband and Verloo 2007, 285)

We can conclude that political climates can drastically influence the emancipation policies of the time, and that these policies reflect the ruling political thought. During the Emancipation Policy of 2013, the VVD and the Labor Party (PvdA) hold the political field. While the VVD upholds its neo-liberal preference to a limitation of state intervention, the opposition towards immigration is less outspoken. Primary focus lies on stabilizing the country’s government through a stimulation of the economy. The PvdA, representing a leftist agenda, holds position on emancipation that is targeted towards the economic position of women and demands increased efforts on equal pay, installing a quota for the number of women at the managerial top of

Dutch organizations, and the prevention of the poverty of women (Partij van de Arbeid 2013). With Minister Bussemaker belonging to the PvdA party, it is perhaps not surprising that her policy is heavily centered on work. Neither party appears to actively strive to address culture clashes and conflicts that happen in society.

In contrast to Roggeband and Verloo's conclusion, today's Emancipation Policy has attempted to eradicate the discrepancy between autochthonous and allochthonous women in an effort to shake this long tradition of policy framing. This poses a new issue, namely that there is not enough consideration for migrant women. Whereas 67% autochthonous Dutch women participate in the labor market, only an average 51% of migrant women do, with 42% labor participation amongst migrant women of Moroccan background and 47% labor participation amongst migrant women of Turkish background (Merens, Hartgers and Van den Brakel 2012, 56). This Turkish and Moroccan group of women also holds a very low level of economic self-sufficiency, namely 28%, and 50% of Moroccan single mothers are receivers of welfare benefits (Merens, Hartgers and Van den Brakel 2012, 64, 72). While the critique of Roggeband and Verloo may be that in 1995 to 2005 politicians refused to confront the issues faced in the autochthonous community, my critique would be that the current Emancipation Policy has turned its back to the specific issues that migrant women face by disregarding the intersectionality of ethnicity with gender. The result is what Kimberlé Crenshaw Williams calls "vulgar constructionism":

Vulgar constructionism thus distorts the possibilities for meaningful identity politics by conflating at least two separate but closely linked manifestations of power. One is the power exercised simply through the process of categorization; the other, the power to cause that categorization to have social and material consequences. While the former power facilitates the latter, the political implications of challenging one over the other matter greatly. (Williams 1994)

Thus, in both the policy analyzed by Roggeband and Verloo and in the policy analyzed in this thesis, meaningful identity politics has not been reached. The issue herein lies in the challenging of the first power, namely the process of categorization. The effect can be found in the second power, in which the categorization leads to a physical effect through the programs the government implements to work on the issue illustrated in the policy. This issue is not only problematic with regards to ethnicity, but also towards class and age.

CLASS

In making the distributive decision to target lower educated women, this decision can be considered perhaps just as exclusive as the decision to target Muslim migrant women. As already shown, focusing on lower-educated women targets less than 15% of women who struggle for their livelihood. However, this reference to education level goes deeper than a general concern for the education of women. Rather, it is indicative of social class, an identity marker that is largely avoided in the policy document.

The relationship between education and class runs deep, as the modernist identification of class is determined by labor positions, and labor position is in part determined by education. Though theorizations of social class differ between modernists and postmodernists, both “share an understanding of capitalist societies as stratified by class, in which the ruling class achieves dominance over the working class through control of property, production and the market” (Archer 2005). Louis Althusser recognized that in capitalist society the education system attempts to reproduce of “the conditions of capitalist production”, and Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis specifically claim that rather than creating the equal opportunity for students, the educational system further “reproduces a capitalist division of labour, preparing children for class-determined careers in the labour market” (Archer 2005). Education and the education system as a government institution is therefore by no means a neutral player in the creation of classes.

Nevertheless, recognition of the term “class” in reference to social class is non-existent in the Emancipation Policy and the importance of the concept as a shaper of gender specific struggles is not mentioned either in this document. Rather than referring to working class women, the policy document refers to women of lower education levels by using at times overly complicated terminology, such as “less well educated” (MinECS 2013). It is Valerie Walkerdine who distinguishes the hesitance and ambivalence that is present in the discourse of class, especially with regards to women (Walkerdine 2003). In her essay on upward mobility, she emphasizes the manner in which the discourse on class has changed with the coming of neo-liberalism. Most pointedly she defines how the theorization of class becomes extremely problematic within social sciences and the humanities:

The issue becomes one of how it is possible to think about both the place it has in the making of subjects now and the possibility of talking about exploitation and oppression in terms of social, cultural and economic differences which have not gone away and which therefore need to be understood as a central part of any politics in the present. (Walkerdine 2003, 239)

Walkerdine argues that the pinnacle of this conflict in theorizing class is reached in neo-liberal times, primarily due to attitudes in which success and upward mobility are constantly preferred and, in some way, expected. In neo-liberalism, the subject is understood to be free of (limiting) ties, such as location, class and gender, and is therefore responsible for one’s own destiny (Giddens 1994). Walkerdine illustrates the sight of friction between neo-liberalism and theorization of class as follows:

So, what I am saying is that the sets of political and economic changes which have led to neo-liberalism (the loss of power of trade unions, the end of jobs for life, the increase in short-term contracts etc.) have emerged alongside a set of discourses and practices already well in place, but in which certain discourses and practices of class which stress class as oppositional have been replaced by those which stress that the possibility of upward mobility has, in a sense, now become a necessity (Walkerdine 2003, 240).

This desire and need for upward mobility is also expressed rather urgently in the Emancipation Policy, as discussed in Chapter 1 of this thesis. The necessity for upward mobility is conveyed in the hammering on education as a tool to break from economic dependence on a partner or on the state. Circumventing the use of the term “class” is typical of neo-liberalism. Bradley argues that the post-war era and the technology age have slackened ties to social class identities, which has in turn obscured inequalities and social classes altogether. In the process of attempting to determine social classes, individualization stands in the way. As mentioned before, neo-liberalism has brought a lot of responsibility on the individual. The autonomous subject is now free to choose and to succeed in education and career, replacing notions of linear systems, such as permanent employment over a lifetime at a single employer (Walkerline 2003). Classlessness becomes the ideal in neo-liberalism. Bradley demonstrates how this impacts discourse on class:

Class identities are submerged identities, pushed out of sight by others which jostle more urgently for public attention. Moreover, people are often reluctant to talk in class terms in a society in which classlessness, though not attained, is seen as the desired ideal. Class becomes a stigmatized or spoiled identity, rather than one which people acknowledge with pride. (Bradley 1996, 72)

An inability to arrange upward mobility, and escape the working class is, therefore, a source of stigma and perhaps shame. As Bradley points out, despite attempting to achieve classlessness, attaining it is another feat. The effect of endeavoring to erase class all together is a display of ignorance towards persistent social inequalities. It is precisely those inequalities that the Emancipation Policy is avoiding.

AGE

The discursive decisions made in the policy show unawareness to the lack of economic self-sufficiency of women of other education levels, LGBT women, and women who are not mothers, which can be included in the remaining 33%. Not only do these identity markers jump out, but also a consideration for age is disregarded. The result is that ambiguities arise with regards to who is and is not included, as well as the issue of missing age-specific issues for women.

Though age is obstructed in the policy statement, it is clear from the primary sources used in the document which age groups are specifically addressed. The Emancipation Monitor, a biyearly report published by the Statistics Netherlands and the Netherlands Institute for Social Research, is one of the most influential documents for the Emancipation Policy. The monitor provides ample information that is in particular backed up by quantitative information provided by Statistics Netherlands. Quantitative information with regards to women’s employment is particularly interesting and helpful in understanding the current issues that women in the Netherlands are facing. Nevertheless, in the selected methodology on this research, women between the ages of 20 and 65 are included in determining the economic position of women. Despite the fact that this

includes a broad range of women, there are difficulties that arise for women of all age groups due to this selection.

The biggest critique that can be given to this form of age stratification is that it neglects the differences of gender, class, ethnicity, etc. within age groups through assuming homogeneity (Bradley 1996). This assumption of homogeneity does not pay justice to these discrepancies, and this in turn results in an inaccurate and generalized image of women's economic status. For example, with regards to female university students studying in their twenties, their choice to study and therefore become less economically self-sufficient is decreasing the percentage of women who are considered economically self-sufficient, despite the fact that this investment in their education is likely to improve their career and earning opportunities in the future. A solution to this form of stratification may be to look at generations rather than age groups of women. Recognizing generations avoids "presenting age difference and conflicts as universal constants" (Bradley 1996).

Chronological age stratification also creates a very clear delineation of exclusion, in particular with regards to women of older age. This has to do with the pensionable age, which is currently 65 in the Netherlands. Harper and Thane describe, "In the post-war period, more universally than before, old age, and the socially accepted rules associated with it, was accepted as beginning at a fixed chronological age: the state pensionable age of sixty/sixty-five" (Harper and Thane 1989 in Bradley 1996). Though Harper and Thane specifically refer to the Twentieth Century, this holds similarly true for the Twentyfirst Century with the exception of this constant change in pensionable age. As the baby-boomers and the low birthrate in the Netherlands is threatening to ruin the pension system, legislation has been implemented that will incrementally increase the pensionable age, with pensionable age being determined based on life expectancy after 2024 (Rijksoverheid 2013). It will be interesting to see whether this will also change conceptions of old age.

At the moment, however, these conceptions remain rather unchanged, and this threatens the economic well-being of women over 65 years of age. Due to the impeccable pension system in the Netherlands, Dutch elderly people are rather well taken care of, and are not a major group among the poor in the Netherlands. Nevertheless, it is single elderly women who are more vulnerable to entering into poverty, predominantly due to their dependence on the state pension over a non-state pension (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau 2012). This access to occupational pensions is limited by, for example, previous domestic labor, inferior labor market positions, and a general lack of time in labor positions comparable to men. Furthermore, considering that women live considerably longer than men on average, the time spent in poverty is also longer, and the chances of getting out of poverty are minimal (Bradley 1996). The economic self-sufficiency of elderly women, through only considering women from age 20 to 65, is effectively not taken up as an issue of concern in this Emancipation Policy.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, these repeat what they are three influential identity markers that are not taken into account in the Emancipation Policy. What this results in is a policy that generalizes and simplifies the issue of women's economic self-sufficiency. This active discourse threatens to push particular groups of women into the margins, disregarding the discrepancies in challenges the women of particular ethnicities, classes and ages face. However, the implications of this discourse run deeper, and can be attributed to the framework the Emancipation Policy. As discussed earlier, the discourse used reflects the political climate, however it is the framework that reflects the implied attitude and perceived relationship that the government has between itself and its citizens. It can be understood that this framework is characteristic of neoliberal trends. This complicates an adequate recognition for the need for a politics and a policy that embraces intersectionality, rather than one that discards discussion of culture as identity politics that is "factionalizing, identitarian, and particularistic" (Butler 1997). In her essay on cultural politics, sexuality and the marginalization of the political Left, Butler responds to this disregard for identity politics by referring to their use in social movements. She admits that though social movement can narrow the political field, "there is no reason to assume that such social movements are reducible to their identitarian formations" (Butler 1997). She continues that a removal or obliteration of this field is no solution either, but rather that "a more sustaining conflict in politically productive ways" will function as a solution, requiring social movements to "articulate their goals under the pressure of each other without therefore exactly becoming each other" (Butler 1997). Butler's proposed solution, though undoubtedly extremely complex, could provide a way out from an essentialist policy.

Nevertheless, the step towards giving a voice to social movements in this policy document requires a new epistemology for policy officials. With the current situation in policy making, the Dutch government is lacking the tools to create a discourse that recognizes cultural difference without falling into the trap of creating a discourse that draws a binarism between "our" women and "their" women. This has, in part, to do with requiring an epistemology that acknowledges the subjectivity of knowledge. We can turn to another prominent scholar of intersectionality for this new epistemology that could produce a more conscientious policy, namely Patricia Hill Collins. Collins claims that hegemonic thought is influenced by notions of gender and race, and proposes black feminist epistemology to counter-act the hegemonic epistemology that she finds overly Eurocentric, masculinist, positivistic and compulsory heterosexual (Collins 2000). Through black feminist epistemology, she outlines four principles on which alternative epistemologies can be based in order to create knowledges that challenge rather than affirm the status quo. These principles primarily challenge the positioning of the researcher and the researched subject. First, it requires basing epistemology on personal lived experiences over objectification of a subject for the purpose of research or study. Second, encouraging an epistemology shaped by dialogue rather than shaped by adversarial debate avoids the creation of dichotomies between the researcher and the subject. Third, implementing an ethics of caring in

which the researchers is not required to be seen as separate from his or her experiences, feelings or thoughts, and thus breaking the binary between emotion and intellect is necessary. Fourth, recognizing personal accountability in knowledge, and thus placing knowledge on the knower rather than considering knowledge and truth as an objective entity that stands separately from the knower. Together, these pillars shape an epistemology that not only provides an epistemology that can avoid essentialism, but that can also provide some answers towards a greater challenge of the feminist imaginary in neoliberal postfeminist times, that of transforming both the political economy and culture.

In Nancy Fraser's article on the path of feminism leading up to neoliberal times, Fraser uses the transition of the First Wave to the Second Wave feminist imaginary to illustrate the current feminist imaginary. What started out as a cry for more economic equality (which she calls Act One, which predominantly took place during the First Wave) turned into an aim for cultural transformation with the coming of identity politics (identified by Fraser as Act Two, which was more present in the Second Wave) (Fraser 2012). According to Fraser, the changes in our times have shown that this cultural transformation and identity politics will no longer suffice for the feminist cause. She says the following about feminism as a social movement:

No serious social movement, least of all feminism, can ignore the evisceration of democracy and assault on social reproduction now being waged by finance capital. Under these conditions, a feminist theory worth its salt must revive the "economic" concerns of Act One – without, however, neglecting the "cultural" insights of Act Two. (Fraser 2012)

It is in this statement that Fraser explains a drastic change that must be made in order to continue feminism as a social movement: one which harnesses the insights on culture of "Act Two", whilst resurrecting the motivation and drive to deal with economic concerns of "Act One".

Personally, it is my conviction that policy makers are finding themselves in a similar struggle that current feminists are facing. Neoliberalism has shaped Dutch society in such a way that ignoring the importance of economic politics is undeniable, and that the power that this brings is a key part of understanding the position of women in society. Nevertheless, cultural differences continue to exist and the history of the feminist movement has displayed the importance of cultural transformation in liberating women as well. Whereas this new feminist theory that Fraser calls for has yet to develop, Dutch policy makers and Minister Bussemaker may not have the time to wait for these theories to arise before a revision of the Emancipation Policy is due.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have attempted to find an answer to the question of how the Dutch Emancipation Policy frames the issue of Dutch women's lack of economic self-sufficiency. As portrayed in Chapter 1, I have chosen to analyze the Dutch Emancipation Policy through the use of conceptual frame analysis, in which I examined issue frames through researching the "relatively coherent reasoning in which issue specific prognostic elements respond to issue-specific diagnostic elements" (QUING 2012). Through discourse analysis, I was able to illustrate how this policy document can be placed in neoliberal postfeminist discourse, portraying the playing field and setting the scene in which this document fits, in Chapter 2. In Chapter 3, I zoomed in the question "whom is this policy document addressing in this issue frame" by reading against the grain, discovering that within the issue frame of women's lack of economic self-sufficiency three axes of identity can be extracted, namely education level, partnership status and motherhood status. These three axes of identity reflect a distributive decision of using rank-based measurements over group-based measurement in issue framing. Lastly, I criticize the lack of acknowledgement for intersectionality in the Dutch Emancipation Policy in Chapter 4, expanding on how the absence of recognition for ethnicity, class and age in the document effectively silences the cultural discourses and issue-specific hardships faced by women, for example, of Moroccan descent or elderly women. Hereby, I have aimed to display how women's lack of economic self-sufficiency is framed by a larger neoliberal postfeminist discourse, through the implicit targeting of lower educated, heterosexual mothers, and through the explicit omission of ethnicity, class and age.

As the Dutch Emancipation Policy reflects throughout the document, its neoliberal postfeminist attitude has provided a great emphasis on the role of economic self-sufficiency to the improvement of women's emancipation. Though I agree for a large extent the economic self-sufficiency is one of the greater challenges that women collectively face, it is questionable whether this should be the primary focus of the women's Emancipation Policy in general. Though the rest of the policy document does list three other policy priorities in relation to women's emancipation, the overtone that women's economic status takes throughout the document overshadows other areas for concern, such as violence against women. With the document's neoliberal postfeminist attitude, women appear to be the emblematic problem of the stagnation of emancipation, as well as the solution. As mentioned earlier, the government provides a Hobson's choice, a take it or leave it approach to better women's emancipation, by demanding that women use the skills they have to change their economic situation, rather than depend on government tools, such as welfare, for their financial stability.

Furthermore, the explicit referencing to the value that women's increased economic self-sufficiency can have on the whole of society makes you question whether the government values women's emancipation for the welfare of women or for the welfare of the state coffers. Though it is not unreasonable to consider that

all of society would benefit from women's emancipation, such statements question how dependent the government's efforts towards women's emancipation are on the economic and financial gains that result from emancipation. This brings us to more radical feminist theorists such as Maria Dalla Costa, who warns for "the myth of liberation through work", a myth that creates the illusion of progress for women through labor and economic advancement. This illusion masks the reality that despite increased participation of women in these spheres, the devaluation of women's work due to this shift does not result in a better position for women. Notable examples are the devaluation of professions dominated by women, such as childcare and nursing¹⁹. Indeed, it is in the healthcare sector that the Dutch government sees ample opportunity for the employment of women with a limited education, a solution that is mentioned explicitly in the Emancipation Policy.

As was mentioned earlier, the Dutch Emancipation Policy does not explicitly show that it uses intersectionality in its policy, however by reading between the lines we can detect political intersectionality in which particular inequalities and their intersections are strategically used for their relevancy to policy work and political strategies. By applying political intersectionality through elaborating on, for example, lower educated women, mothers and divorce, inequalities on the basis of ethnicity, class and age are avoided. In this strategic attempt, legitimate claims of inequality are undermined and made invisible, but this does not mean that they disappear. Where previous emancipation policy documents were criticized as being too focused on the binarism between "our" autochthonous women and "their" allochthonous women, eluding a mention of this in the discourse neither removes the binarism nor the problems surrounding "their" non-Western women in the Netherlands. It is in these specific inequalities, particularly in the inequalities of ethnicity and class, that discussions on power differences are sidestepped.

The framing of the problem definition of women's lack of economic independence reflects a deliberate distributive decision. Rank-based distributive groups have been used in this policy over group-based distributive groups. As rank-based distributive groups are based on merit (performance, achievements), this group is rather more malleable and able to change than group-based distributive groups, which are based on immutable qualities. While it is not possible to request citizens to alter their ethnic background (an immutable quality), it is deemed possible and justified that the government requests citizens to develop and apply their talents and skills. Where there is not a ready solution for a decrease in discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, educating citizens further to give them a better position in the labor market is a viable policy solution. This observations leads to several follow-up questions, such as why the government makes this distributive decision, and what a different policy document that recognizes these inequalities would look like. Furthermore, considering that policy makers will always be faced with the distributive conflict by having to answer "who gets what, where and how", it is questionable whether it is realistic to expect a

¹⁹ For more on the devaluation of women's work, see Reskin 1988.

holistic Emancipation Policy that provides a balanced solution for all women while taking into account identity-specific issues. While this may be too great of a challenge at this time to request from a policy document, I would like to propose that it is not naïve to suggest that this policy could become more inclusive of inequalities on the basis of ethnicity to start. The problems outlined in policy documents from 1995 to 2005, which over-emphasized the need for special attention for the development of allochthonous women, still exist, and not naming them does not do justice to the problems these women still face. The proposed solution is for a rearticulation of these issues that does not highlight the binarism between “our” and “their” women, but one that uses theoretical tools like intersectionality to value and respect cultural difference. An Emancipation Policy that learns from feminists like Nancy Fraser in understanding that the development of women’s emancipation on both economic and cultural fronts requires recognition of the powerful influence of financial capital is necessary to start breaking through this binarism. Creating progress without sacrificing either the recognition of cultural difference or the importance of economic development is a potential path towards an Emancipation Policy in which Dutch women can truly recognize themselves.

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