

Gendered Perspectives on Integration Discourses and Measures

Eleonore Kofman*, Sawitri Saharso** and Elena Vacchelli*

ABSTRACT

This article focuses on gendered discourses in integration policy and the problems immigrants pose in the reproduction of inequalities in a number of European countries. There has been little consideration of how gender categories operate in relation to broader political discourses around the construction of 'us' and 'them' and the constitution of national social and political communities and identities. Yet gender issues have become significant in the backlash against multiculturalism and gender and sexual relations have moved to the centre of debates about the necessity to enforce integration, if not assimilation. The first section outlines recent developments in the immigration-integration nexus in different European states. The second section draws out some of the reasons for the focus on family migration and spouses who are seen as the main importers of the 'backward' practices and with 'doubtful' parenting practices for future generations of citizens. The third section tackles the shift of current debates about integration of migrant women from the periphery, where they were largely invisible or mere appendages of men, to the centre, where they have acquired in the process a heightened, though not necessarily positive, visibility. Too often, representations of migrant women are based on a homogenised image of uneducated and backward migrants as victims of patriarchal cultures, legitimizing in this way the use of immigration controls to reduce the numbers entering and to tackle broader social issues, as has clearly been the case with forced marriages. Furthermore, the more discourses focus on Muslim women and Islam as inimical to European societies, the more the debate becomes culturalised and marginalises the socio-economic dimension of integration and the structural inequalities migrants face. Thus pre-entry tests may have less to do with integration than with a desire to reduce the flow of marriage migrants or to raise their human capital.

INTRODUCTION

Family migrants in Europe are disproportionately female and often, implicitly and explicitly, associated with unskilled migrants from rural areas and/or Muslim countries. Policies of integration at the border (where integration criteria are applied to admissions policies), target women migrants as family migrants.¹ Thus integration criteria are moved closer to the point of entry. Amongst others, Scholten et al. (2012) highlight the significance of gender considerations, especially concerning migrant women, as a major catalyst of measures relating to integration at the border. Ruffer (2011) suggests that the "third country" national family in the Europe Union is seen as being out of control, and at odds with the pillars of secularism and gender equality, upon which a liberal society defines itself, and is therefore in need of intervention and resocialization. In Scandinavian states,

* Middlesex University, London.

** VU University and University of Twente, the Netherlands.

the immigrant family has become the site of contestation in debates about integration and multiculturalism (Fog Olwig, 2011) and its problematization has brought together more closely the internal (integration) and external (entry) aspects of immigration policies (Hagelund, 2008: 72). The introduction of pre-admission tests for family migrants in a number of EU states (Scholten et al., 2012), as in the Netherlands (2006), Germany (2007), the UK (2010) and Austria (2011), demonstrates the ever closer relationship of integration with admissions policies in Europe.

In this article we seek to explain why migrant women have moved from the periphery and invisibility to the centre of debates and policies on immigration and integration. We first outline the background to the growing concern, since the late 1990s, about migrant women's problematic integration as well as concern about gender inequality in migrant communities and the need to protect women as a vulnerable group. Secondly, we examine the different explanations that subsequently gave rise to the need by policymakers and politicians to address, or at least be seen to do so, such perceived problems through integration measures at the border. In doing this, we look at how the need for civic integration and pre-admission tests was argued in public debates on immigration and integration, and, more generally, what changes in admission policies convey about underlying intentions. In the last section we show how these representations of failed integration amongst vulnerable populations and the calls for intervention into family migration translate into concrete admissions policies.

Our analysis is primarily based on the PROSINT project (Promoting Sustainable Policies for Integration) which examined the relationship between admissions and subsequent integration policies for permanent residence and citizenship.² In particular we drew upon a detailed study of four countries (Austria, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK) represented in the larger PROSINT project. These countries had implemented pre-entry tests by 2011 and we examined key official documents, parliamentary debates, judicial pronouncements and media coverage about issues concerning the introduction of pre-entry tests, changes to the minimum age of marriage for those marrying a partner from abroad, and sponsorship criteria, from the late 1990s onwards. For the Netherlands and Germany, which had several years of admissions tests, we also evaluated some of the outcomes, such as the socio-economic composition of entrants. Several other European states, such as Denmark, France and Norway, have also introduced or debated admissions measures and we have included these in our analysis of the role of gender concerns in shaping admissions policies. It is not, however, possible to trace the full debate in each country, but only to highlight some of the salient themes.

Before turning to these themes, we should note that gender is not always explicitly invoked; in some instances it may be implicit given the assumption that the overwhelming majority of family migrants targeted by pre-entry conditions are female. At the same time, the centrality of the argument in most of the countries that stricter family migration regulations helps to prevent forced marriages is striking. It should also be noted that although much of the prevailing literature on gender issues in this field refers to migrant women, gender covers women and femininity, males and masculinity, and the relationship between them. Indeed men are very much in sight in post-entry integration policies where urban riots and terrorist attacks call into question young men's degree of belonging to the nation (Alexander, 2004; Dwyer, 2008). Muslim men, in particular, are seen as being responsible for women's isolation and submissiveness and are accused of behaving badly in the private sphere and in public spaces ie. their masculinity is stigmatized (Pratt Ewing, 2008 on Germany; Razack, 2004 on Norway; Scheibelhofer 2012 on Austria).³

MIGRANT WOMEN, INTEGRATION AND GENDER EQUALITY

The role being played by gender equality and sexuality in contemporary discourses and practices around cultural differences between majority and minority populations has increasingly come to the

fore. Until recently, explicit enunciations of sexual differences and the divide between migrants and non-migrants were espoused primarily by Far Right movements, such as the National Front in France. For Le Pen, immigrant men undermined the virility of French men and threatened French women. Women as guardians of the family and the nation had to be protected against rape by immigrant men. This changed after the headscarf affair in 1989 when migrant, mainly Muslim women, served as evidence of the cultural gap between 'misogynist Islamic attitudes and liberated western values' (Kofman, 1998: 101). Despite these highly ethnicized and sexualized categories, the debate about multiculturalism in the media and in academia has been gender blind. As Phillips and Saharso (2008) noted, gender relations and inequality have largely gone unnoticed in academic commentary in relation to the crisis of multiculturalism. Twenty years ago such issues were rarely mentioned in critiques of multicultural policies except by feminist analyses of multiculturalism's threats and risks to women and its utilization by male-dominated organizations (see Bottomley et al., 1991; Moller Okin, 1999; Saghal and Yuval-Davis, 1992). Feminist scholars raised issues concerning the control of community organizations by male leaders, the promotion of conservative practices, and the idea of women as biological, cultural and social reproducers of the ethnic community.

In the past decade, in particular in the Netherlands, migrant women have moved from the invisible periphery to the all too visible core in what Prins and Saharso (2008: 365) term the new realism approach to the social question of the twentyfirst century, that is the integration of ethnic minorities into Dutch society. By new realism they mean "the need to listen to ordinary people who are closer to everyday life and should be represented and their complaints taken seriously". The new realism approach, however, reflects populist concerns framed to sound inclusive and representative of the will of the people; this dangerous strategy uses everyday life and the fears experienced by ordinary people to legitimize increasing xenophobia/Islamophobia and the current backlash against multiculturalism. Gloria Wekker addresses these concerns and comments that

[E]lsewhere in the world, too, Islam often is the scapegoat, but in the Netherlands a special characteristic is that gender and sexuality have become the litmus test for who can belong and who cannot: 'We' are tolerant, in favour of women's emancipation and gay rights and who cannot underwrite that program, does not belong to 'us'.⁴

As the quote above highlights, in the context of rising Islamophobia in Europe, gay and women's sexual rights are at the centre of current controversies and debates on multiculturalism (Holmes, 2000; Joppke, 2004). The Netherlands exemplifies the entanglement of gay rights discourses with anti-Muslim politics and representations (Mepschen et al., 2010) or culturalization of citizenship, whereby Western European societies place increasing importance on secular liberal values of gender equality and (sexual) freedom in shaping citizenship.

One of the most outspoken representatives of the new realism was the charismatic person of Ayaan Hirsi Ali, of Somali origin and a politician and member of the 2nd Chamber in the Dutch Parliament. It was her women-oriented political entrepreneurship that managed to make an effective connection between the Dutch populist discontent and the difficult situation of migrant women. Without a doubt it is because of her unremitting castigation of Islam in relation to practices such as Female Genital Mutilation, forced marriage and honour related violence that Muslim women became the focus of debate in the Netherlands from 2003 and major policy programmes to combat these practices were developed in the Netherlands (Prins and Saharso, 2008; Kirk, 2010).

In Germany immigrant gender relations entered the debate on integration through the publication of Necla Kelek's book 'Die fremde Braut' (*The alien bride*) (2005) shortly after an 'honour' killing of a young woman from a Kurdish family in Germany had taken place. According to Rostock and Berghahn (2008: 355–356), in the media debate that followed, Kelek and some other Turkish-German advocates of women's rights were readily accepted as the true voices speaking for the

oppressed Muslim woman. The Kelek debate accomplished what (immigrant) women's rights organizations had long asked for but never achieved: the German government took action against forced marriage and honour related violence. In Scandinavia too, specific accounts were publicized by academic, activist and political women, for example Wikkan 2002, with regards to individual women's suffering around issues such as forced marriages, honour killings, abductions back to the country of origin, transnational marriages often with cousins. These sought to demonstrate the problems for minority women's human rights, on the one hand, and how these practices endanger their welfare societies, on the other (Razack, 2004)). There is widespread agreement in the field that the culprit behind these problems is a lax family reunification policy and high levels of transnational marriages (Schmidt, 2011) which the state is called upon to regulate (Hagelund, 2008).

In the UK, Ann Cryer, a former Labour Member of Parliament for Keighly in West Yorkshire (a constituency with a large Muslim Asian population), launched a debate in the House of Commons in 1999 in which she appealed to the Muslim community 'to encourage their people to put their daughters' happiness, welfare and human rights first' (Wilson, 2007: 31). She repeatedly highlighted the problem of domestic violence and the so-called 'honour' killings of young Asian women in Britain by their families and saw an English language requirement as overcoming ghettoization and under-achievement (Kofman and Vacchelli, 2011). Her pronouncements had already generated controversy in raising this issue after the Bradford riots in the summer of 2001 when she made a direct connection between arranged marriages, difficulties in learning English and the success of different ethnic communities in the UK (MP calls for English tests for immigrants, BBC News Online 13 July 2001 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/1436867.stm>)

Gendered discourses and practices around cultural differences between majority and minority populations can be summarized in three themes to be found in the literature. Although often interrelated and difficult to separate, these themes provide a rationale for government intervention in family migration policies and integration.

1. There is the argument that integration has failed because of the socio-economic marginalization of immigrant communities and the formation of an ethnic underclass. Poorly educated spouses become mothers who raise the next generation but do not have the skills to educate their children to succeed in society. Thus they contribute to the continuing reproduction of socio-economic inequalities (Joppke, 2007). To curb this trend, admission policies are required that select immigrants with the right background characteristics. In this discourse, transnational marriages are considered as undesirable if the spouse is poorly educated and less likely to be able to participate in the labour market.
2. Others, particularly critical voices, argue that the resurgence of national identities in European nations have placed migrant women at the centre of debate. Gender issues have become significant in the backlash against multiculturalism and, in many Western European countries, gender and sexual relations have moved to the centre in debates about the necessity to enforce integration, if not assimilation. Foreigners, especially from Muslim countries, whose practices and demands are deemed incompatible with liberal ways of life (Adamson et al., 2011; Stolcke, 1999) are targeted. Western 'liberal' and 'open' societies have to be protected from certain patriarchal and traditional gender roles and traditions (Hollomey, 2011). The submissive body of the female Muslim migrant may serve to demarcate the boundary between the civilized Westerner and the uncivilized and illiberal outsider (Kirk, 2006; Razack, 2004) while the representation of gay emancipation is mobilized to frame Muslims as non-modern subjects (Mepschen et al., 2010). In response to such concerns, family migration and practices become the terrain for the control of cultural differences at the various stages from admission, to permanent residence and citizenship.⁵ In particular breaking the transmission of traditional practices requires surveillance and intervention into transnational marriages, especially those that are forced, and in some cases even those which are arranged.

3. Governments claim that civic integration tests and pre-entry tests are motivated by genuine concern for the welfare of migrant women (Scholten et al., 2012). A less benevolent reading is that the focus on gender inequalities within immigrant communities may stem from an Islamophobic anti-immigrant agenda. Governments cannot make gender equality a marker of modern liberal European society and claim they are concerned about migrant women's welfare without also taking some action. This is especially true if there is a strong minorities' or women's grass roots movement or a strong focal person asking for public action (for this line of argument see Phillips and Saharso, 2008).

Of course in the various states, the emphases of discourses and justifications for intervention in family and marriage migration and introduction of integration measures differ and often evolve over time to reflect broader societal shifts. In many countries, there has been a shift in policy focus from an earlier concern about labour market participation and structural inequalities to a focus on cultural barriers which enable migrant women to be like the majority of the population (Roggeband and Verloo, 2007).⁶ As these issues shift towards cultural concerns, structural difficulties in participating in integration courses, and access to flexible and affordable childcare, are not taken into account (Kirk, 2010). In Scandinavian countries, the emphasis on emancipation and independence, which is to be achieved through the labour market, remains strong (Eggbø, 2010). In others, the desirability of labour market participation has become less about reducing structural inequalities than that of reliance on public services, for example in the UK. In the next section we follow through how these themes on gender and integration have figured in debates on immigration and integration.

GENDER AND CIVIC INTEGRATION IN THE DEBATES ON IMMIGRATION

Introducing integration tests at different stages (pre-admission and permanent residence) has been the trend in Europe in the last decade. According to Strik et al. (2010), who undertook a comparative analysis of nine European countries' civic integration and pre-admission tests, two main concerns were voiced in the debates in most countries to explain the need for these tests. These were to make permanent immigrants economically self-supporting, and to inculcate in them the values and principles of liberal democracy. However, they write:

in many cases there were other, more latent aims and concerns as well, such as the desire to limit access to permanent residence status to 'deserving' immigrants or – in countries where populist anti-immigrant parties achieved electoral successes – to assure the native population that the government or the mainstream political parties were managing the crisis effectively (Strik et al., 2010: 72–73).

Although they did not mention gender considerations, we would argue that gender aspects come to the fore very strongly at the pre-entry stage (Perching, 2012: 88; Scholten et al., 2012). A number of emotive issues concerning gender relations played a prominent part in highlighting traditional practices deemed to be problematic and contrary to national values and warranting interventions outlined in the previous section.

The Netherlands exemplifies very clearly the first theme of migrant women, not as citizens themselves, but as mothers of future citizens requiring a better start (Kirk, 2010). The plenary debate in the second Chamber the Christian Democrats explained:

The idea behind this law was that we are facing major problems in the Netherlands. These problems had to do with marriage migration and with women coming to the Netherlands....This law is a first step to ensure that these women in particular will have a better starting position in the Netherlands (TK2004-2005, 29700, cited in Bonjour and de Hart, 2012, forthcoming)

Women are represented as (inadequately prepared) mothers:

Why is it important to introduce the Law (on Civic Integration Abroad)...Women of Turkish and Moroccan origin come to the Netherlands, are not prepared for Dutch society, do not speak the language, do not know how we behave towards one another in the Netherlands, and know nothing about the Dutch values. However, they are the mothers of children (TK2004-2005, 29700).

Concern too was expressed in debates for failing parents, continuing immigration and the reproduction of marginalization:

Continuous immigration combined with failing integration may produce processes which in time result in the marginalization of specific population groups...Because many newcomers have child nurturing tasks and in due course can also request the admission of a foreign family member, while the child will also form a family in time, this process can be passed on from generation to generation (TK 2003-2004, 2900, nr. 3:4)

Women are reproducers of the next generation; but most significant in this instance is that the next generation will have to possess the cultural capital required to become a good (self sufficient) citizen. The motto 'if you educate a woman, you educate a family', which was used by the PavEM Commission, expressed the general feeling among political parties in the Netherlands, from liberals to left-wing parties (Prins and Saharso, 2008). The Commission's report met with agreement from the 2nd Chamber.

According to our second theme of family practices incompatible with liberal societies, the formation of couples within transnational marriages has also been a major preoccupation in a number of countries. This was closely associated with arranged and forced marriages amongst the targeted groups. In order to disrupt this 'uncivilized' practice (the policies do not always differentiate between arranged and forced marriage) considered destructive for individual freedom, national identity and social cohesion, Denmark was the first country to impose restrictions as from the late 1990s and to include an "attachment requirement" measured by links with another country (Schmidt, 2011). In the UK, David Blunkett, a former Home Office Secretary for State, had also problematized marriages of settled migrant communities with partners from abroad in the White Paper *Secure Borders Safe Haven* (Home Office, 2001). Yet he accepted arranged marriages within the UK as genuine marriages (Dustin and Phillips, 2004; Gedalof, 2007). Ann Cryer (2001) who, as we saw, spearheaded the fight against forced marriages, stated that:

What I am saying is that if Asian parents who arrange marriages for their kids were to look around the Asian Muslim community here then they would do better for their children, their family and their community (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/1436867.stm>).

It was argued that those caught in forced marriages were prevented from leading an independent social life because of poor language proficiency. Maria Böhmer (CDU), the Federal Government Commissioner for Migration, Refugees, and Integration, stated during a visit to Turkey in November 2007, that the aim of the provision would be 'to allow women who join their spouses a self-determined life and opportunities to really participate in social life' (efms Migration Report November 2007 http://www.efms.uni-bamberg.de/dnov07_e.htm).

In Germany, the news magazine *Der Spiegel* reported in the context of changes to the Residence Act in 2005 that in future the Federal Government wanted to prevent Turks who live in Germany and hold traditional conceptions bringing young wives who are unaffected by Western influences from Turkey to Germany (Scholten et al., 2011). In Austria the obligation to learn German before immigration, which would enable participation in the labour market and in social life (Darabos, Fekter in *Der Standard*, 23.3.2011), was put forward with regard to female family migrants coming

from rural regions (mostly from Muslim countries). Women especially would benefit from such emancipation, as it would allow them access to education for the first time in their lives. Paradoxically, inspired by the obligation to learn German before immigration, women would come to know 'what human rights and human dignity mean after all', the Minister of Interior said in an interview (Fekter in *Der Standard*, 11.08.2010). In the next section we address how these gender considerations and issues were translated into admission policies and, where the evidence exists, what outcomes they produced.

GENDER AND ADMISSIONS POLICIES

There are three major policy changes that have been implemented as a response to the socio-economic, cultural and welfare concerns in the discourses/themes we outlined in the second section. They are (1) pre-entry tests (language and knowledge of society), (2) minimum age of marriage and (3) sponsorship criteria, especially income. In terms of outcome, these policies may reduce the overall number of spouses,⁷ change the composition of those entering (gender, age), increase their human capital (primarily level of education), and restrict the sponsorship of family migrants to those with greater socio-economic resources. Even if the quantitative changes are not all that significant in the long term, the wider intention may be to influence transnational marriage strategies. In the first part of this section, we briefly outline the various policies in the different countries and in the second examine the little evidence we have on the effects.

With regard to pre-entry tests, the first intervention always includes a language examination, usually taken abroad, although in Denmark taken on arrival. In some cases a knowledge of society test is also part of the pre entry requirements (Bonjour, 2012; Scholten et al., 2011). Contrary to expectations, the tests in Austria and Germany, countries renowned for having an ethno-cultural conception of the nation, refrain from asking about sociocultural norms (Michalowski, 2011). The Netherlands is the only case in which immigrants are expected to know and accept certain socio-cultural norms.

The second intervention with gender implications in the context of admission policies consists of raising the minimum age of marriage, which may be more significant than a pre-entry test in responding to the problem of forced marriages. This is a recognized thread running through proposals, especially at the initial stage, for the regulation of family migration. In the Netherlands, this solution is said to enable women to make a more independent choice of marriage partners and possible prevention of forced marriages (Scholten, 2011) and in Germany is understood as an opportunity to better resist the influence of parental authority and other familial traditions (Lechner, 2011). In Norway family migration and forced marriages received almost more attention than any other debate (Eggbø, 2010), but raising the minimum age was sufficiently contested and therefore not passed. In Denmark, politicians conceived forced marriages as primitive and un-Danish and associated with practices going back to the Middle Ages with no right of place in the country (Schmidt, 2011: 362–363). Thus intervention in the private sphere is seen as appropriate to ensure conformity to social norms (Fog Olwig, 2011). Combating both arranged and forced marriages was thus a main motivation in the Amendment to the Aliens Act in 2003 in Denmark (Hagelund, 2008: 82). In the UK, as previously noted, the issue of forced marriages had been raised in 2001 and became the dominant rationale for increasing the minimum age of marriage of partners in 2008, even though a report (Chantler et al., 2009), initially commissioned by the Home Office but then rejected by it, argued that this would not be effective. In 2005, the Forced Marriage Unit dealt with 300 largely female cases of which 12 per cent of those entering for marriage were under 21 years but by 2009 (the FMU) gave advice or support⁸ to 1682 cases. 86 per cent of these cases involved females and 14 per cent involved males. With men, the FMU stated that it was primarily concerned with gay men (<http://www.respect.uk.net/pages/male-victims-of-forced-marriage.html>). It is only very recently that the fact that men too may be facing problems of forced marriage has emerged (Samad, 2010).

The targeted political subject is usually the Muslim woman, though in order to avoid accusations of discrimination, the regulations are applied in a blanket fashion. Increasing the minimum age at marriage, unlike pre-entry tests, does not exempt anyone, including those without any migration background seeking to marry a partner from abroad below the age stipulated in legislation. As a result of the focus on forced marriages, the minimum age of marriage for those contracting them with a partner abroad has been raised in a number of countries (Table 1).

The third gender specific measure to affect admission policies is that of sponsorship criteria which have also been tightened. In Austria, immigrants were required to have a monthly net income of several hundred euros more than before, which meant that a person has to have a steady income and a full-time job throughout the year. It is likely that those working part-time as well as the self-employed would find it more difficult to fulfil the income requirements. This adds a gendered dimension to the income condition, as women earn disproportionately less than men (Hollomey, 2011). In the UK, following the steep increase of the minimum level of income for sponsors to £18,600 per annum in July 2012, it has been estimated that of British citizens in employment, 61 per cent of women and 32 per cent of men would be unable to meet the conditions to sponsor a spouse (Migration Observatory 2012).

In terms of outcomes, the initial effect of the above measures was to reduce the number of spouses successfully gaining entry. In the Netherlands, imposing pre-entry tests as from 2006 has diminished the percentage of family migrants from about 66 per cent in 2005 to about 51 per cent of the overall number of immigrants in 2007. Here, there was a sharp decline in visas for Turkey, Morocco, Brazil and Indonesia, although numbers began to slowly increase in 2008 and 2009 (Scholten 2011). In Germany, spousal visas dropped substantially in the fourth quarter of 2007, especially for Turkish women (74%) and men (57%), who were by far the largest nationality. Even though it increased in 2008 and 2009, Turkish visas in 2009 still remained lower than the number issued in 2007. In Denmark, the first country to impose restrictions⁹ on arranged and forced marriages, the number of individuals acquiring residence rights through family reunification dropped from 2,552 in 2001 to 1369 in 2006 (Schmidt, 2011: 265). In its announcement on the introduction of its policy of pre-entry tests in November 2010, the UK Border Agency estimated that it would probably reduce the number of family migrants from the Indian sub-continent (the largest single regional group entering through the family route) by about 10 per cent.

The aim has not just been to reduce numbers but also to change the socio-economic characteristics of family migrants. Tests have had the effect of upgrading the human capital of those entering through their (self) selectivity. So whilst in the Netherlands, the pass rate was over 90 per cent (at – A1), there is a clear change in the educational level of those entering. Prior to the tests, 34 per cent had a low level of education, 46 per cent average and 20 per cent high (Scholten, 2011). After the implementation of the test, the figures were 28 per cent, 39 per cent and 33 per cent respectively.

TABLE 1
YEAR OF RAISING OF MINIMUM AGE OF MARRIAGE⁺

Country	Raised age	Year
Austria	21	2009
Denmark	24	2003
Netherlands	21	2006
UK	21*	2008–2012

⁺Though raising the minimum age to 21 years was discussed as part of the New Immigration Act in 2005, it remained at 18 years for both spouses in Germany.

*The age was raised in November 2008 but then restored to 18 years in January 2012 due to court judgement.

In gender terms, although more women are now entering – 62 per cent previously rising to 67 per cent post test – in the light of higher levels of education and younger age, it has been concluded that self-selection is likely to have been at play (Scholten et al., 2011). The Begeleidingscommissie (2009:11) concluded that “the Integration Abroad Act does influence the choice of partner by the partner in the Netherlands... who is more inclined to choose a more highly educated partner with a greater chance of passing the exam”.

Thus, the detailed analysis of Dutch admissions policies would seem to suggest that new measures have improved the human capital of family migrants, possibly due to self selection as much as the effect of the tests in themselves. It is therefore likely that the greatest impact is achieved in relation to the first set of arguments we outlined, that is altering the composition of entrants in an endeavour to raise their propensity to participate in the labour market and provide more educated mothers for future citizens.

The other key objective has been to prevent forced marriages. Whilst this was enunciated most forcefully in initial discourses proposing new entry criteria, this argument became attenuated once the policies were justified as necessary for addressing failed integration more generally. However the discourse on forced marriages and the need to protect the vulnerable have remained very much to the fore in policies raising the minimum age of marriage. Have these been successful? Whilst preventing young people marrying those from abroad, as in the reduction of transnational marriages in Denmark, we cannot say that forced marriages have decreased in general but that they may rather be happening within the country. In the British case, the disproportionate nature of the measure led to it being successfully challenged and restored to the previous minimum age of 18 years.

There are, however, some changes in immigration policies that express a concern for women's rights, as suggested in the third theme. Since 2003, abused women with a dependent residence permit can get an independent permit in the Netherlands, and since 2004 women and girls who face honour-related violence can seek refuge on this ground in Germany (Kvinnforum, 2005). Moreover, girls who face Female Genital Mutilation can seek refuge on that ground in Austria, Germany, France and the Netherlands.

CONCLUSION

As the imposition of integration criteria has moved closer to the point of entry, the centrality of gender relations, the transmission of cultural practices in the family and the role of migrant women as a major preoccupation of integration, have become more evident. Too often, representations of migrant women are based on a homogenized image of uneducated and backward migrants as victims of patriarchal cultures, especially those from Muslim countries. Such images are promulgated not just by political parties but also by some feminists eager to save and protect white, emancipated woman from ‘other’ women depicted as bearers of a backwards and illiberal culture. In the Dutch parliamentary debates it was only the Greens who bothered to refer to the actual educational levels of migrant women. Interestingly European and international organizations, such as the Council of Europe, the European Commission, IOM and the OECD, are paying increasing attention to the deskilling of an increasing proportion of educated and skilled women, both family and labour migrants (Kofman et al, 2012).

The integration of migrant women in particular is seen as both the problem and the solution for migrant incorporation into society. They are portrayed both as victims as well as the key to solving problems. The trope of women being vulnerable and in need of protection is common. Policies are slotted into this prism as in the Home Office *Securing Borders* (2007) paper, which highlights sex trafficking and forced marriages faced by vulnerable women in need of protection. In addition, the more discourses focus on Muslim women and Islam as inimical to European societies, the more the debate becomes culturalized and marginalizes the socio-economic dimension of integration and

the structural inequalities migrants face. Integration discourses and measures have undergone significant change in the last decade and have assumed cultural and gender specific overtones in the countries which have implemented or considered implementing new admissions criteria.

Pre-entry tests are not the only measures deployed to control migration at the border; new regulations also include raising the minimum age of marriage and tighter sponsorship conditions. These measures have been effective in reducing the inflow of family migrants and changing the socio-economic characteristics of family migrants who now appear, where there is evidence, to be more educated. In producing greater (self) selectivity, these policies seem to correspond to the first group of discourses of increasing the human capital of female migrants, and ensuring they demonstrate motivation and perseverance (Bonjour and de Hart 2012) and that they therefore deserve their place in European societies. On the other hand, the changes to familial cultural and social practices are not clear. Impeding transnational marriages does not ensure the disappearance of forced marriages. Yet we should perhaps interpret the attempt to restrict transnational practices as a measure with the broader objective of seeking to reshape marriage strategies (by reducing the percentage of minority ethnic populations contracting marriages with a partner from abroad) and an intervention in migrant families, their cultural practices and gender relations. This seems to be most evident in countries, such as Denmark and the Netherlands, which have implemented the most restrictive policies. Current research does not yet enable us to understand how the set of policy measures directed towards family immigration and integration have affected migrants in their ability to live transnationally in terms of everyday practices and longer term strategies.

NOTES

1. Labour migrants, especially the more skilled, are often either exempt from pre-entry linguistic competence or dealt with separately through labour migration legislation, as in the UK.
2. The project was funded by the European Integration Fund and research was conducted from 2010 to mid 2011. For reports published from the project see <http://research.icmpd.org/1429.html>
3. More recently, men, especially gay men, have been recognized as victims of forced marriage (Samad, 2010).
4. Cited by Heather Collette-Vanderaa in announcing Gloria Wekker's conference on Exploring Dutch Diaspora Space at UCLA, California on 6 January 2010. One might argue that this situation is also prevalent in other European states (Andreassen and Lettinga, 2011).
5. Unacceptable cultural differences are particularly likely to be salient at later stages where acquiring a status is dependent on an interview, as was the case of the Algerian born man refused French citizenship because of his degrading and unacceptable attitude to women, which was considered to be incommensurate with Republican values (Willsher, 2011).
6. As they point out, the labour force participation may have been vaunted as integral to egalitarian gender relations, even though the actual rates of participation amongst Dutch women were relatively low, with two-thirds of working women only doing so part-time.
7. In some countries, reducing the number of migrants has been explicitly stated (Denmark, Netherlands, UK), in others it has not been the major preoccupation and has even been denied (Germany).
8. It works with embassy staff to rescue victims who may have been held captive, raped, forced into a marriage or into having an abortion.
9. The language requirement, though proposed in 2007, was not implemented until 2010 (Bonjour and de Hart, 2012).

REFERENCES

- Adamson, F., T. Triadafilopoulos, and A. Zolberg
 2011 "The limits of the liberal state: migration, identity and belonging in Europe", *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 37(6): 843–859.

- Alexander, C.
2004 "Re-Imagining the Asian Gang: ethnicity, masculinity and youth after 'the riots'", *Critical Social Policy*, 24(4): 526–549.
- Andreassen, R., and D. Lettinga
2012 "Veiled debates: gender and gender equality in European national identities", In S. Rosenberger and B. Sauer (Eds.), *Politics, Religion and Gender. Framing and Regulating the Veil*. Routledge, London.
- BBC
2010 Specialist unit reports more male forced marriage <http://www.respect.uk.net/pages/male-victims-of-forced-marriage.html> (accessed 15 Apr 2013)
- Bonjour, S.
2012 *The transfer of pre-departure integration requirements for family migrants among Member States of the European Union*, International Conference on Social Protection and Migration Access Denied. Working on a new paradigm, 13-14 March, Amsterdam.
- Bonjour, S., and B. de Hart
2012 "A proper wife, a proper marriage. Constructions of 'us' and 'them' in Dutch family migration policy", *European Journal of Women's Studies*, forthcoming
- Bottomley, G., M. de Lepervanche, and J. Martin
1991 *Intersexions: Gender, Class, Culture, Ethnicity*. Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, Australia.
- Chantler, K., G. Gangoli, and M. Hester
2009 "Forced Marriage in the UK: religious, cultural, economic or state violence?" *Critical Social Policy*, 29(4): 587–612.
- Eggbo, H.
2010 "The problem of dependency: immigration, gender and the welfare state", *Social Politics*, 17(3): 295–322.
- Fog Olwig, K.
2011 "'Integration': migrants and refugees between Scandinavian welfare societies and family relations", *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 37(2): 179–196.
- Hagelund, A.
2008 "'For women and children' The family and immigration policies in Scandinavia", In *The family in question. Immigrant and ethnic minorities in multicultural Europe*, R. Grillo, ed. Amsterdam University Press (IMISCOE Research Series), Amsterdam
- Hollomey, C.
2011 *Perception and impact of pre-entry tests for TCN's: Austrian Report*. ICMPD, Vienna.
- Holmes, D.
2000 *Integral Europe: Fast capitalism, multiculturalism, neofascism*, Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ.
- Home Office
2007 *Securing the UK Border; our vision and strategy for the future*, Home Office, London.
- Joppke, C.
2004 "The retreat of multiculturalism in the liberal state: theory and policy", *British Journal of Sociology*, 55: 237–257.
2007 "Beyond national models: Civic integration policies for immigrants in Western Europe", *West European Politics*, 30(1): 1–22.
- Kirk, K.
2006 Embodied Enlightenment. The Submissive Islamic female Body in the contemporary Dutch Enlightenment Project <http://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/QUEST/JournalIssues/Issue3ProceedingsoftheGRF> (accessed 15 Apr 2013)
2010 *A gendered story of citizenship. A narrative analysis of Dutch Civic Integration Policies*, PhD Thesis Queens University, Belfast.
- Kloer, A.
2010 Forced marriage to 'correct' gay men increase. <http://news.change.org/stories/forced-marriage-to-correct-gay-men-increases> (accessed 15 Apr 2013)
- Kofman, E.
1998 "When society was simple: gender and ethnic divisions and the Far and New Right in France" in N. Charles and H. Hintjens (Eds.) *Gender, Ethnicity and Political Ideologies*, Routledge, London: 91–106.

- Kofman, E., and E. Vacchelli
2011 *Perception and impact of pre-entry tests for TCN's; PROSINT UK Country Report*. SPRC, Middlesex University.
- Kofman, E. N. Kaye., and S. Caliskan (Eds)
2012 *"Equal Rights, Equal Voices" Migrant Women's Integration in the Labour Market in Six European Cities: A comparative approach*. European Network of Migrant Women and European Women's Lobby.
- Kofman, E., S. Lukes, A. D'Angelo, and N. Montagna
2009 *Equality Implications of Being a Migrant*, Research Report 19, EHRC, UK.
- Lechner, C.
2011 *Perception and impact of pre-entry tests for TCN's; PROSINT German Country Report*. EFMS, Bamberg.
- Mepschen, P., J.W. Duyvendak, and E.H. Tonkens
2010 "Sexual politics, Orientalism and Multicultural Citizenship in the Netherlands", *Sociology*, 44: 962–979.
- Michalowski, I.
2011 "Required to assimilate? The content of citizenship tests in five countries", *Citizenship Studies*, 15 (6–7): 749–768.
- Migration Observatory, Oxford University
2012 "Women, young people and non-Londoners are most affected by changes to family migration policy' 12 June", <http://www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/press-releases/women-young-people-and-non-londoners-are-most-affected-changes-family-migration-polic> (accessed 15 Apr 2013)
- Okin, S.M.
1999 "Is multiculturalism bad for women?", In J. Cohen, M. Howard and M. Nussbaum (Eds) *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?* Princeton University Press, Princeton: 9–24.
- Perching, B., et al.
2012 *The National Policy Frames for the Integration of Newcomers*. PROSINT Comparative Reports WP2, ICMPD, Vienna.
- Phillips, A., and M. Dustin.
2004 "UK Initiatives on Forced Marriage: Regulation, Dialogue and Exit", *Political Studies*, 52(3): 531–551.
- Phillips, A., and S. Saharso.
2008 "The rights of women and the crisis of multiculturalism", *Ethnicities*, 8(3): 291–301.
- Pratt Ewing, K.
2008 *Stolen Honor. Stigmatizing Muslim Men in Berlin*. Stanford University Press, Stanford CA.
- Prins, W., and S. Saharso
2008 "In the spotlight: a blessing and curse for immigrant women in the Netherlands", *Ethnicities*, 8(3): 365–384.
- Razack, S.
2004 "Imperilled Muslim women, dangerous Muslim men and civilised Europeans: legal and social responses to forced marriages", *Feminist Legal Studies*, 12: 129–174.
- Roggeband, C., and M. Verloo
2007 "Dutch women are liberated, migrant women are a problem. Evolution of policy frames on gender and migration in the Netherlands", *Social Policy and Administration*, 41(3): 271–288.
- Rostock, P., and Bergahn, S.
2008 "The ambivalent role of gender in redefining the German nation", *Ethnicities*, 8(3): 345–364.
- Ruffer, G.
2011 "Pushed beyond recognition? The liberality of family reunification policies in the EU", *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 37(6): 935–951.
- Saghal, G., and N. Yuval-Davis (Eds.)
1992 *Refusing Holy Orders: Women and fundamentalism in Britain*. Virago, London:
- Samad, Y.
2010 "Forced marriage among men: an unrecognized problem", *Critical Social Policy*, 30(2): 189–207.
- Scheibelhofer, P.
2012 "From health check to Muslim test: The shifting politics of governing migrant masculinity", *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 33(3): 319–332.

- Schmidt, G.
2011 "Law and identity: transnational arranged marriages and the boundaries of Danishness", *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 37(2): 257–275.
- Scholten, P.
2011 *Perception and impact of pre-entry tests for TCN's; Dutch Country Report*. Erasmus University Rotterdam.
- Scholten, P., C. Holloney, E. Kofman, and C. Lechner
2012 *Integration from abroad? Perception and impacts of pre-entry tests for third country nationals*. PROSINT Comparative Reports WP4: ICMPD, Vienna.
- Stolcke, V.
1999 "New rhetorics of exclusion in Europe", *International Social Science Journal*, 51(159): 25–35.
- Strik, T., A. Böcker, M. Luiten, and M. Van Oers.
2010 *The INTEC Project: Draft Synthesis Report. Integration and Naturalization tests: the new way to European Citizenship. A comparative study in nine Member States on the national policies concerning integration and naturalization tests and their effects on integration*. Nijmegen: Centre for Migration and Law, Radboud University Nijmegen (internal publication).
- Wikkan, U.
2002 *Generous Betrayal. Politics of culture in the new Europe*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Wilson, A.
2007 "The forced marriage debate and the British state", *Race and Class*, 49(1): 25–38.