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Abstract   The recent Dutch homo-emancipation policy has identified religious communities, particularly within migrant populations, as a core target group in which to make homosexuality more 'speakable'. In this article we examine the paradoxical silencing tendencies of this 'speaking out' policy on queer Muslim organisations in the Netherlands. We undertake this analysis as the Dutch government is perhaps unique in developing an explicit 'homo-emancipation' policy and is often looked to as the model for sexuality politics and legal redress in relation to inequalities on the basis of sexual orientation. We highlight how the 'speakability' imperative in the Dutch homo-emancipation policy reproduces a paradigmatic, 'homonormative' model of an 'out' and 'visible' queer sexuality that has also come to be embedded in an anti-immigrant and specifically anti-Muslim discourse in the Netherlands. Drawing on the concept of habitus, particularly in the work of Gloria Wekker, we suggest that rather than relying on a 'speakability' policy model, queer Muslim sexualities need to be understood in a more nuanced and intersecting way that attends to their lived realities.

Keywords   Queer Muslims · Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) · Homonationalism · Equalities · Intersectionality · Multiculturalism · *Habitus* · Dutch homo-emancipation policy

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'It is impossible to be emancipated if you cannot be yourself in public' (OCW 2007:18).

In November 2007 the Dutch Ministry for Education, Culture and Science[1] launched the policy document *Gewoon homo zijn* or *Just being gay*.[2] This document sets out a Dutch 'homo-emancipation' policy for the period 2008–2011 placing two core values on the political and public agenda: the social acceptance of 'homosexuals' and the freedom to be out (2007, p. 5).[3] The policy lists five operational goals, the first—and most dominant—of which is to promote the *bespreekbaarheid*, namely the 'speakability' or 'discussability'[4] of homosexuality within 'various groups of the population' (2007, pp. 13–14).[5] Although not explicitly identified, it is clear from the policy document and the way in which it is responding to the perceived threat to liberal Dutch values from 'Muslim homophobia', that Moroccan and Turkish (Muslim) communities are the core target group where homosexuality is to be made more 'speakable'.

Drawing on interviews and work with Dutch social policy experts as well as our own experiences of working within a UK based queer Muslim group (the *Safra Project*),[6] we examine the paradoxical *silencing* tendencies of a *speaking out* policy on queer Muslims. We undertake this analysis in relation to the Netherlands as the Dutch government has developed an explicit homo-emancipation policy and it is often looked to as the model for sexuality politics and legal redress in relation to inequalities on the basis of sexual orientation.[7] However, we would like to throw caution on any impulses to reify the Dutch model. Indeed, we undertake this analysis with a view to learning lessons for future policy developments in other

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[1] *Ministerie voor Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap* (OCW).

[2] We have translated the Dutch term *gewoon* as 'just', in the sense of simply or ordinary, but the term also refers to being 'normal'. All translations from Dutch have been undertaken by co-author Anisa de Jong.

[3] It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the problematics of some of the terminology used in the policy, such as the notion of emancipation. With regards to the terms homo and homosexuals, the policy explains that these terms are intended to refer to lesbian women, gay men, bisexuals and transgender people (OCW 2007, p. 5). A later progress report (2010, discussed below) introduces the term LHBT (*lesbisch, homo, biseksueel en transgender*) in line with the more common internationally used lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT). Therefore, where appropriate we will translate the term homosexual in the policy document with the term LGBT.

[4] The term *bespreekbaar* literally translates as 'speakable' but is usually translated in English as negotiable, debatable or discussable. The term can be used to refer to a public speaking out, an ability to communicate or engage in dialogue with others *and* a willingness to negotiate or come to an agreement.

[5] The other four operational goals are: to address violence and intimidation; to stimulate national and local alliances; to contribute to a gay-friendly environment at school, in the workplace and in sports, and to play an active international and European role (2007, pp. 13–14).

[6] Both authors were co-founders of the *Safra Project*. From 2001 to 2005 Suhraiya Jivraj was co-ordinator of the organisation and Anisa de Jong was the Asylum co-ordinator. For more information see www.safraproject.org, accessed 10 November 2010. We also wish to thank Tamsila Tauqir, co-founder and current director of the *Safra Project* for her comments on this paper. We would also like to thank the referees and editors for their insightful comments. All errors are our own.

[7] A prime example is Dutch policy allowing same-sex marriage and adoption by same-sex couples.

national contexts such as the UK on issues of sexuality, race and religion.[8] In particular we seek to highlight how the 'speakability' imperative in the homo-emancipation policy reproduces a paradigmatic, homonormative[9] model of an out and visible queer sexuality that has also come to be embedded in an anti-immigrant and specifically anti-Muslim discourse in the Netherlands. This political climate currently prevalent in the Netherlands is indicative of what Puar (2007) has termed homonationalism, which—in the Dutch context—is apparent in the ways the Dutch nation is associated with sexual freedom whilst Muslims are viewed as oppressive and intolerant of (queer) sexualities.[10]

We begin by outlining the political context that forms the background to the homo-emancipation policy, specifically highlighting how Dutch tolerance of homosexuality has come to be part of a nationalist discourse and identity. We then examine how the policy seeks to impact upon queer Muslims focusing on two key problematics. Firstly, we explore the structural or practical issues that affect the capacity-building of queer Muslim grassroots organisations, for example, in relation to the (non-)distribution of funding. We suggest that the funding structure and practice reveals a power dynamic embedded within a nationalist discourse, which effectively seeks to incorporate queer Muslims within a particular homonormative model.

Overlapping with this point is a second and more conceptual problematic, that is the policy's focus on 'speakability' that implies a specific notion of what it means to be gay, namely as something that is outwardly and publicly defined, or 'out and proud'. This is contrasted with sexualities that are experienced differently and/or that are less visible or outspoken. We suggest that a speaking out policy, embedded within homonationalist sentiment as well a homonormative framing of same-sex sexualities, fails to grapple with the complex subjectivities of diasporic queer Muslims. In the final section, we draw on the work of Gloria Wekker who—using Bourdieu's notion of habitus—seeks to understand the diverse ways in which sexualities might be lived or inhabited. Her research highlights how migrant sexualities can be understood through modes of 'doing' rather than modes of 'speaking'. We therefore suggest that Wekker's work provides gender and sexuality studies with a helpful framework, both for how we might better understand queer sexualities outside of homonormative/nationalist dynamics, as well as with a view to formulating policy in ways that can attend to complex queer lived realities more reflexively.

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[8] We recognise there are significant historical, cultural, structural and other differences among Western European countries with regards to their relationships with their Muslim populations, but suggest there are sufficient similarities for the silencing tendencies that we identify to be relevant across national contexts.

[9] For a more detailed account of homonormativity see Duggan's work (2002). See also El Tayeb (2011) on how the homonormative model comes to be part of a neo-liberal economic agenda. Rahman (2010) provides a summary of critiques of homonormativity within queer theory.

[10] Two white gay men are depicted on the front cover of the policy document, presumably indicative of the emancipated gay subject. This can be juxtaposed with other images depicting brown 'ethnic' faces as closeted and un-emancipated, for example on the advertising postcard for the 'speakability' campaign which has a brown face covered by a hand with only the eyes showing. A discussion of the visual representations of gayness in the Dutch context is beyond the scope of this paper.

Dutch Homo-Emancipation, Homonationalism and the Need for a Third Wave

A number of scholars have highlighted the rise of a nationalist discourse around the limits of 'Dutch tolerance' as well as the limits to the capacity of Muslims to respect liberal Dutch secular values, including liberal attitudes to homosexuality (van der Veer 2006; Vasta 2006; Butler 2009; Mepschen et al. 2010). The juxtaposition of a homo-friendly Netherlands and homophobic Muslims resonates with what Puar (2007) has termed 'homonationalism'. She uses this term in her book *Terrorist Assemblages: homonationalism in queer times* to refer to forms of lesbian and gay politics or governmental discourse that invoke a distinction between the 'West' and Islam.[11] This debate is of course not exclusive to the Netherlands, as Puar (2007), Haritaworn (2008) and Kuntsman (2008) have demonstrated in their work on the convergences of sexuality and nationalist discourse around the war on terror.[12] However, as Mepschen et al. argue, the Netherlands can perhaps be understood as distinct from similar trends in other Western European countries in having had a social history in which gay sexuality came to be 'normalised' (2010, p. 964). Indeed, the Dutch so-called first wave of homo-emancipation achieved equalisation of the age of consent in 1971. A second wave pursuing further legal and social equality was considered to have been completed with the introduction of same-sex marriage in 2001 (OCW 2007, p. 11).[13]

In her 2009 George Mosse lecture, Gloria Wekker refers to what she perceives as a widespread 'nostalgia' for these idyllic, uncomplicated good old days, a nostalgia that in 'gay circles' takes on the specific form of a longing for the days 'when there were no Muslims' (2009, p. 1). This time in the Dutch imaginary, she argues is epitomised by a completed women's and gay emancipation, now under threat with the seeming failure of Moroccan and Turkish Muslims to integrate and respect Dutch values. Wekker may perhaps be overstating the existence of homonostalgia within Dutch gay circles, for example, marginalising the important anti-racist work being conducted by lesbian and gay activists.[14] She is nonetheless, pointing to an

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[11] Puar's critique of this distinction goes beyond a critique of orientalist thinking in Said's (1979) work, in that she specifically points out how this discourse circulates in ways that effectively associate the West with sexual freedom, whereas Islam comes to circulate as a culture that is oppressive of sexual freedom. See also Mepschen et al. (2010).

[12] This orientalist and homonationalist discourse has been discussed in relation to a number of other contexts such as gay refugees (Long 2009; de Jong 2008) and gay activism in Germany (Haritaworn et al. 2008, 2011). See also, Asad (2006), Brown (2006), Mahmood (2009) and Razack (2008) for analyses of nationalist and state discourse on Muslims as a threat to modern 'Western' values.

[13] Timeline by the International Homo/Lesbian Information Centre and Archive, available: http://www.ihlia.nl/dutch/algemeen/Tijdbalk accessed 10 November 2010. Although we acknowledge the terminology of 'progress' through 'waves' is problematic, our text reflects its usage in the *Just being gay* policy (OCW 2007, p. 11).

[14] Perhaps another key point that Wekker does not sufficiently address in her lecture is the complexity of the underlying issues, such as reactions against racism, exclusion and violence, material inequality and a widespread anxiety felt and experienced by many different groups within society, as well as the exploitation of these sentiments by right wing politicians such as Fortuyn and Wilders. Thanks to Peter Dankmeijer for this critical observation of the lecture. See for example the work of EduDivers, a Dutch Expertise Centre on Education and Sexual Diversity, http://edudivers.nl/english, accessed 10 November 2010.

important underlying racialising and nationalist discourse against which a third wave of Dutch homo-emancipation policy was developed. Wekker argues that Muslim homophobia has become almost emblematic of the broader socio-political problematic within the Netherlands and suggests that the acceptance of homosexuality has become a 'litmus test' for the immigrant population as to whether they have entered modernity and consequently whether they should be allowed to belong within Dutch society (2009, p. 7).[15]

Within this political context, the *Just being gay* policy can be viewed as instrumental to bringing about a third wave of homo-emancipation. Although the policy target groups are ostensibly worded in generic terms (as 'orthodox religious and belief communities'[16]; 'ethnic minorities and schools') it is apparent that Muslims, especially Muslim youth, are one—if not *the*—core target group where social acceptance of homosexuality is thought to be in need of improvement (OCW 2007, p. 15).[17] The policy clearly reflects this political context for example, with section titles such as 'the idyll has been disturbed' (OCW 2007, pp. 10–11) which is interspersed with statistics showing that hostility is particularly strong amongst Turkish and Moroccan (that is Muslim) youth.[18] Moreover, the term 'disturbance' alongside statistics on the attitudes of ethnic minorities, clearly invokes the nostalgia that Wekker describes, particularly as they imply that it is the arrival of 'others' that has disturbed the supposedly pre-existing 'idyll' of a gay-friendly Netherlands.

As a number of commentators have observed, the disturbance which led policy makers to re-focus attention on lesbian and gay issues were sparked by a series of events but perhaps most ostensibly by controversial statements on homosexuality made by a Muslim religious leader, Imam El Moumni, in 2001.[19] His comments led to a heated media and public debate that also fuelled the wider anti-Muslim discourse following 9/11 that same year, as well as feeding into the broader anti-immigration agenda of the already popular Dutch right wing and gay politician Pim Fortuyn (van der Veer 2006). Although Fortuyn was murdered in 2002 by an environmentalist, his political supporters took his political agenda further into

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[15] For critiques of the Dutch citizenship test (*inburgeringstest*) that requires a particular kind of homo-tolerance to be displayed see Bracke (2011) and Butler (2009, p. 130).

[16] The document uses the term *levensbeschouwelijk,* which literally refers to 'that which concerns a view on life'; in other words, it refers to a positioning with regards to the meaning, value of, and moral guidance in, life. The term includes religious and non-religious views, and is broader than the term philosophy which is mainly grounded in rationality.

[17] The full policy document does cover a broader range of social groups that require attention, such as youth in general, and orthodox streams within all religions. It also mentions the vulnerable position of lesbian women and transgender people. However, our point here is that Muslims are identified through the language and examples used, as a particular social group where promotion of 'speakability' is urgently required.

[18] The impact of the Antillians' attitudes is mitigated by additional statistics showing that they constitute a much smaller ethnic group than people from Turkish and Moroccan descent which form the largest immigrant groups. The other large ethic group are those from Surinam; however, their acceptance level of homosexuality is shown to be close to the acceptance level of Dutch autochthons, therefore causing less concern (OCW 2007: 10).

[19] For a detailed listing (and analysis) of El Moumni's and other Dutch imam's comments, see for example Mepschen et al. (2010).

stronger anti-Muslim, racist and antidemocratic directions.[20] In November 2004 public debate on the 'problematic of Muslim integration' ensued once more when the Dutch film maker Theo Van Gogh was murdered by a Dutch-Moroccan Muslim (Buruma 2006). The specific issue of homosexuality again came to signal the failure of Muslim integration into Dutch society in 2005 after a series of homophobic attacks by Moroccan youth. These events heightened tensions between the Dutch autochthon and Muslim *allochtone*[21] population, and escalated concerns over what became increasingly seen as a failing policy of multiculturalism.[22]

This specific Dutch context enabled a particularly strong and ongoing political capitalisation of sexuality in relation to the perceived multicultural crisis. Indeed, since 2010, one of the parties that positioned itself to inherit much of Fortuyn's constituency forms part of the Dutch coalition government: the *Partij voor de Vrijheid* (PVV) (The Freedom Party) led by far right wing and anti-Muslim politician Geert Wilders.[23] In addition, the Dutch context also facilitated the mainstream LGBT movement's claims for the need to urgently address Muslim attitudes to homosexuality, and placed them in a strong position to lobby for governmental funding. This socio-political backdrop seems to explain the *Just being gay* policy's implicit, yet apparent, focus on the Muslim community as a site for third wave homo-emancipation.

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[20] For a more detailed discussion of Pim Fortuyn's political agenda and anti-immigration, anti-Muslim discourse, as well as the developments after his murder see Van der Veer (2006) and Vasta (2006).

[21] The Dutch term to refer to the white Dutch population is *autochtoon* (autochthon), that is 'originating from, or the earliest known inhabitants of, a particular land' (also aboriginal or indigenous). There is no English word for the opposite Dutch term *allochtoon* which refers to originating from an 'other' land, commonly used to refer to the non-white Dutch population.

[22] In the UK context, Prime Minister David Cameron also addressed this issue, criticising the 'doctrine of state multiculturalism' to encourage 'different cultures to live separate lives', and to tolerate 'these segregated communities behaving in ways that run completely counter to our values'. In particular, he notes how a 'much more active, muscular liberalism' is required that does not stand 'neutral between different values' but actively promotes freedoms 'regardless of race, sex or sexuality' (notably, he does not mention regardless of religion). http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/speeches-and-transcripts/2011/02/pms-speech-at-munich-security-conference-60293 accessed 10 March 2010.

[23] In 2007, Wilders called for the Qur'an to be banned and likened it to Adolf Hitler's Mein Kampf, and in 2008 Wilders also made a film entitled '*Fitna*' which accused the Qur'an of inciting violence, and Islam of being a murderous religion. The film intersperses images of the September 11 attacks with quotations from the Quran. Like van Gogh's 'Submission', Wilders' short film caused controversy and public and political debate ensued on whether the film should be shown, particularly on Dutch state television. A similar debate took place in England in relation to whether Wilders should be allowed to enter the country to show his film. Whilst he was refused entry the first time, he was able to enter and was hosted in Parliament by Lord Pearson of the Independence Party to show his film. See further Butler (2009, 126), Mepschen et al. 2010, and Siddique and Walker (2009). The PVV's role in this coalition is to provide *gedoogsteun* ('tolerance- support'). That is to say, they do not hold ministerial positions but have agreed a 'governance plan' with two other political parties who jointly still only have a minority of votes in Parliament and thus rely on the PVV's support.

The Impact of the Dutch Policy on Queer Muslim Organising

The homo-emancipation policy pursues multiple pathways to bring about a third wave, particularly by making homosexuality discussable amongst groups where this is (still) a taboo subject or 'met with great hostility' (OCW 2007, p. 11). It also encourages individuals to speak out about their own homosexuality. Coming out, visibility, tolerance and social acceptance are repeatedly mentioned as being interdependent with each other as well as with self-emancipation, for example the policy states: '[v]isibility of homosexuals contributes to societal acceptance, tolerance and understanding', and '[a] tolerant climate is an important condition for visibility' (OCW 2007, p. 18).

The document notes how the developments such as a 'woman with the Islamic faith' coming out as being lesbian, something that was previously viewed as 'unthinkable', is seen as the 'next phase' of homo-emancipation (OCW 2007, p. 11). In addition, those undertaking this third wave are identified as 'frontrunners' and will be actively supported, because of their important contribution to the promotion of social acceptance of homosexuality *precisely* amongst the parts of the population where this is 'still very sensitive' (OCW 2007, p. 11). As such, the individual coming out and speaking out about their own homosexuality, that is the *identification* of oneself as LGBT and communicating this identity to others, is seen as an important means by which to achieve not only individual emancipation, but also broader social acceptance of homosexuality.

In addition to encouraging individual emancipation, the policy also seeks to stimulate a process of dialogue and public debate within civil society on both national and local levels. The document mentions in particular an ongoing project called *De Dialoog*[24] (The Dialogue), which is an alliance between the COC, a Humanist, a Christian and a Muslim organisation, mainly seeking to engage religious leaders in a dialogue on homosexuality.[25] The policy also stresses that in order to have an effective dialogue with the broader Muslim community it is crucial that faith/cultural based homo-emancipation groups are strong enough to play a role (2007, p. 23). Financial support is promised to these groups particularly in order to make homosexuality 'discussable' within their broader communities (2007, p. 23).

Given this apparent central role for queer Muslims it is perhaps surprising that the subsequent progress report published in June 2010 barely mentions Muslims, let alone

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[24] Interestingly, the project carries the same name as the first gay magazine published in the Netherlands from 1965: *Dialoog*, subtitled *Tijdschrift voor homofilie en maatschappij* (Magazine for homosexuality and society). www.ihlia.nl/dutch/algemeen/Tijdbalk, accessed 15 December 2010.

[25] The COC (*Centrum voor Ontspanning en Cultuur*: Centre for Recreation and Culture) is the Dutch national LGBT organisation. The Muslim organisation taking part in the Dialogue project was originally the *Yoesuf* Foundation, founded in 1998 working on Islam and sexual diversity. It changed its name reflecting a broader area of work in 2005 to *Educatiecentrum voor de islam en maatschappelijke vraagstukken* (Educational centre on Islam and social issues). It ceased its activities in 2008. See also below on the *Malaika* Foundation that formally succeeded it. The *Just being gay* document also refers to the activities of a trio of organisations working to improve 'discussability' in 'various ethnic-cultural circles': COC, FORUM—the institute for multicultural development, and *Artikel 1*, a relatively new institute taking over the work of the national anti-racism and anti-discrimination bureaus (OCW 2007, p. 15).

queer Muslims (OCW 2010). It notes that financial support allocated for the capacity building of self-organised national LGBT organisations went to six groups, five of which are Christian and only one (*Nafar* Foundation) Muslim/North-African (OCW 2010, p. 9). The examples and statistics in the section on improving 'discussability' also mainly refer to activities by and for Christian communities (OCW 2010, pp. 14–15). This is particularly striking given that the original policy included no concrete examples of Christians as a site for third wave homo-emancipation. We will return below to the implications of the policy apparently having worked better for Christian groups.

The progress report does mention that the dialogue project (*De Dialoog*) will continue (OCW 2010, p. 8), despite the Muslim partner organisation, *Yoesuf* Foundation, in this project having ceased its activities in 2008. The organisation was formally taken over in 2009 as *Malaika* Foundation, housed by the COC and seeks to address 'tensions between sexual, religious and secular citizenship' within bi-cultural societies; it therefore no longer maintains a specifically Muslim identity or a clear independent status to the mainstream Dutch national LGBT organisation.[26]

Given that the policy's third wave imperative mainly sought to facilitate emancipation amongst Muslims, this raises the question: why are queer Muslims barely mentioned in the progress report? Several practical problems with the implementation of the Dutch policy with regards to *allochtone* groups have been identified in particular by MOVISIE, the Netherlands' centre for social development.[27] Government funding to support religious and ethnic grassroots groups was made available through mainstream LGBT organisations, in particular the national COC. Thus, mainstream LGBT organisations became responsible for the allocation of funding and for the setting up of support programmes aimed at strengthening—amongst others—queer Muslim groups.[28] Although of course support from larger LGBT organisations can at times be productive, a structure of forced cooperation with mainstream or umbrella LGBT organisations is problematic. Commenting on the struggles small *allochtone* groups face, Dankmeijer notes how working within the Dutch bureaucratic system causes 'frustrations', as do issues such as supporting organisations seeking to receive credentials for the activities of the grassroots groups (Dankmeijer 2010/1, p. 7).

These observations also reflect the *Safra Project*'s work in the UK context. Although we were extremely successful in securing independent trust funding for the

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[26] Vision statement of the *Malaika* Foundation, available at http://www.malaica.nl/visie.html, accessed 11 December 2010.

[27] MOVISIE's mission is to promote the participation and independence of citizens by supporting and advising professional organizations, volunteer organisations and government institutions (www.movisie.nl/eCache/ENG/1/15/032.html, accessed 10 December 2010). MOVISIE's role in lesbian and homo-emancipation is mainly in advising and supporting municipalities and other local and regional public bodies in improving the situation of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender citizens (www.movisie.nl/115468/def/home/homoemancipatie/ (in Dutch), accessed 10 December 2010).

[28] Interview with Charlot Pierik (Diversity project manager at MOVISIE) and Juul van Hof (MOVISIE Advisor on LGBT policy issues, gender and social development) on 9 April 2010, Amsterdam. They also pointed out that funding of education programmes on diversity issues within the Muslim community at large was distributed via mainstream migrant groups and did not necessarily involve participation of queer Muslims.

first two phases of work, the *Safra Project* was nonetheless under a lot of pressure from larger LGBT organisations seeking to 'take it under its wing'; develop joint projects, or take up the 'queer Muslim cause' independently. As funders require all organisations to demonstrate they are inclusive and diverse, despite some seeking to do so with 'good intentions', an alliance with a queer Muslim group clearly became a sought after 'trophy' and added potential for securing funding.

For any group that is just finding its feet and grappling with a complicated set of issues, it can be very tempting (and in the Dutch case inevitable) to go along with such alliances. However, differences in power and conflicting agendas may in effect undermine capacity building rather than enhance it. In the Dutch context Dankmeijer notes:

> A cooperation whereby the Dutch organisation controls the budget and *allochtone* organisations receive unrequested support, is not always the ideal collaborative relationship. Starting from such a collaborative relationship, it is difficult for *allochtone* LGBT self-organisations to position themselves as equal partners (Dankmeijer 2010/1, p. 7).

Moreover, the prescribed funding and collaboration structure require queer *allochtone* groups to compete with each other in securing funding from the mainstream organisation, which also obstructs the forming of alliances between them. Pierik from MOVISIE recommends collaboration structures that would provide queer *allochtone* groups with more agency and create opportunities for capacity-building, whilst Dankmeijer also calls for alliances between, and a greater independent voice for *allochtone* LGBT groups (Vakwerk 2001/1, p. 7).

These observations highlight the practical obstacles to queer Muslim organising as well as how mainstream LGBT organisations maintain the power to set the agenda for capacity building amongst *allochtone* groups. What is not emphasised and recognised enough, however, is the impact of mainstream LGBT organisations' racialised discourse in relation to migrant or ethnic minority populations. This dynamic arises when, for example, such groups seek governmental funding to combat anti-gay violence attributed to Muslim youth whilst at the same time claiming to protect queer Muslims and enhance what is portrayed as their dire situation.[29] Thus, both the Dutch policy and the surrounding homonationalist discourse to which it responds stifles the development of queer *allochtone* groups themselves and their work, including being able to be critical of the Dutch emancipation model itself, or indeed of racialised politics within the gay movement. In short, the power relations inherent in the funding and collaboration structure, in effect, compounds the complex socio-economic issues already faced by queer Muslims.[30]

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[29] See for example the very successful campaign by (the politically right wing) Frank van Dalen as chair of the COC between April 2005 to June 2008, not only in influencing the Dutch governmental policy, but also in obtaining control over the funding for allochtone 'selforganisations' (Van der Linden (2007); interview with Charlot Pierik and Juul van Hof (see footnote 28); Haritaworn et al. 2008).

[30] See further footnote 39 on the socio-economic issues faced by many queer Muslims.

The Silencing Effects of a Speaking Out and Dialogue Model

A funding and collaboration structure that allows for greater agency and independence might alleviate some of the practical obstacles to queer Muslim organising. However, we argue that there is a deeper level at which the *Just being gay* policy does not, and inherently *cannot*, take account of a diversity of queer Muslim sexualities. Instead, and perhaps ironically, we argue that a focus on speaking out and dialogue can in itself be silencing.

The expectation on the leaders or those seeking to run self-organised queer Muslim groups to be out, can become an alienating rather than emancipating factor, as Chafik Gadir's comment below illustrates. A focus on coming out exacerbates the pressures already felt by queers of colour to choose between their culture and kinship loyalty on the one hand, or the Dutch culture, where taking on a gay identity and openness is seen as a freedom ideal, on the other (Dankmeijer 2010/1, p. 7). Thus, in effect, the requirement to be out can necessitate a choice: either to be gay or to be Muslim.[31] As Chafik Gadir from the organisation Nafar states:

> I was the first Moroccan gay man who was openly 'out'. But no one was thankful. In Moroccan circles they think it is very strange and a bad thing. But also Dutch gays sometimes say to me: you are not a real Moroccan gay, because they are not 'out' about it' (Dankmeijer 2010/1, p. 7).[32]

This denial of authenticity as an out queer Moroccan in Dutch circles illustrates firstly how being Muslim and being gay are assumed to be mutually exclusive spheres: you are either Muslim and therefore not gay (or at least not out), *or* you are gay and therefore out (and thus no longer really Muslim). Secondly, and related to this, the quote illustrates the transformative process, that coming out is supposed to have: namely through a coming out (if done 'properly') a Muslim can perhaps become acknowledged as gay, but not as both gay *and* Muslim (or Moroccan). Those who do seek to find a space 'in between' are in policy terms problematically referred to as *dubbelbinders* (double binders) (Dankmeijer 2010/1, p. 7), referring to their struggle to stay 'bound' to what are almost always perceived to be two incompatible identities or social arenas.[33]

The homo-emancipation policy's notion of self emancipation is one that requires a particular standard of inhabiting one's sexual identity that replicates the dominant recognisable Western model. Those queer Muslims that come out and match this paradigmatic model can be absorbed into 'Dutchness' and indeed be held up as mascots: the 'performative' Muslim gay as an embodiment of emancipated gayness, symbolising modernity, no longer really Muslim.[34] Wekker too refers to this

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[31] Whilst the issue of making a choice between an out gay sexuality and kinship cultural ties is often articulated in relation to queer Muslims or other ethnic and/or religious queers, this phenomenon is of course more widely prevalent albeit rarely remarked upon.

[32] This latter point about the lack of recognition for Muslim/migrant gays within mainstream gay circles is a point also made by respondents in the *Safra Project Report of Initial Findings* (Jivraj et al. 2003).

[33] The problem with this terminology and perception is that it reinforces and perpetuates the social construction of the separateness of such identities and social arenas, as we will elaborate on below.

[34] See also Haritaworn et al. (2008) and Rahman (2010).

phenomenon, stating that Muslim gay men are being portrayed as 'cuddly toys' (2009, p. 8) in the media reports of the *Habibi Ana* café. This café is advertised as 'the only Arab/Moroccan gay bar in the world'.[35] She argues that they are seen as being in need of 'protection from their barbarian male hetero-brothers' (2009, p. 8).[36] When emblematic, out LGBT (ex-)Muslims are held up, alternative queer Muslim movements, along with their potential (anti-racist) critiques, are silenced.[37] Non-emblematic queers of colour become invisible, nonexistent, or perceived of as 'not quite there yet', a kind of 'gay in progress' for whom the closet door still needs to be opened fully.[38]

Moreover, as mentioned above, queer Muslims that are speaking out are not only held up as exemplary of having achieved emancipation but also as frontrunners in opening up 'discussability' within Muslim circles. They find themselves in the role of 'negotiators' (another meaning of the word *bespreekbaar* alongside 'speakable'), and tasked with the role of making homosexuality 'discussable' within their own religious, cultural or ethnic groups. It is no surprise that many leaders of grassroots queer Muslim groups eventually burn out, when seeking to balance the competing demands and pressures from mainstream LGBT organisations, government policies and Muslim communities, whilst simultaneously struggling to meet the complex needs of queer Muslims.[39] Moreover, a dialogue model in itself reinforces the perception of queer Muslims being 'positioned in between' and thus strengthens the dichotomy between the (gay-friendly) West and homophobic Muslims.

Some of the critical observations outlined above are taken up by Dutch sexuality studies scholars such as Mepschen et al. (2010). Indeed they articulate their aim to move away from a 'false dichotomy of defending the religious and cultural rights of minorities versus the sexual rights of women and gays' (2010, p. 972). However, alongside their detailed account of the sexual politics and orientalism in the Netherlands there is no mention of the Dutch homo-emancipation policy and its

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[35] *Habibi Ana* is also described as 'a small bar in Arabian style, with exotic music and exotic guys. And people who admire these guys…' (www.nighttours.com/amsterdam/gayguide/habibi_ana.html, accessed 12 December 2010). Although apparently a bar for 'guys', the home page of its website shows a 'classical orientalist' depiction of a woman in belly dancing dress. www.habibiana.nl, accessed 12 December 2010. Problematically, Mepschen et al. mention this same bar when seeking to list examples of 'new articulations of sexual freedom and expression' that they suppose demonstrates the success of a 'politics of sexual freedom and diversity' (2010, p. 972).

[36] There is of course an interesting gendered dimension here that also circulates in discourse around 'imperilled Muslim women' also viewed as requiring protection from their 'dangerous Muslim men' see Razack (2008).

[37] The silencing effect of holding up emblematic 'liberated' Muslims and ascribing the 'authentic voice' to them has been discussed elsewhere, for example Haritaworn et al. (2008), Ghorashi (2003).

[38] See also Rahman (2010).

[39] Members or beneficiaries of the grassroots groups can be dealing with mental health issues, domestic violence, struggling with their religious or cultural identities, illegality, addiction, prostitution (Dankmeijer 2010/1, p. 7; Jivraj et al. 2003). As a result, the position of leaders of Muslim support organisations can become very strained. Requirements to be out in a particular way, and expected engagement with the mainstream Muslim community may exacerbate this situation.

implications.[40] Rather, drawing from Butler's discussion of the Dutch situation and subsequent call to build alliances across religious and sexuality based groups (2009) they conclude that 'different expressions of cultural and sexual identity, have a place, not just alongside each other, but in dialogue' (2010, p. 973). Drawing on Charles Taylor's notion of multicultural citizenship and Delanty's idea of cultural citizenship, Mepschen et al. argue for 'both sides' to engage in a process of 'learning' which can have a 'developmental and transformative impact on the learning subject' (*ibid*).[41]

This is perhaps an important strategy amongst others, but they make their argument from the perspective that the gay emancipation movement in the Netherlands has already had a transformative impact on inclusive citizenship; which they view as potentially being taken forward towards building a multicultural citizenship. Whilst it is not our aim to engage in any depth with this strategy itself, what is pertinent to our analysis here is, as Haritaworn (2008, 2011) argues, that in calling for dialogue the separation and distinction of the religious from the sexual subject is again re-instated, effectively erasing Muslim and other racialised queers.

Another key point that often goes missed in such calls for dialogue is the power dynamic underpinning how such conversations occur, including a lack of proper engagement with racism and Islamophobia, and with underlying issues of social, economic and political injustice and disadvantage. As numerous conferences have born witness to—most recently the 2011 Sexual Nationalisms conference at the University of Amsterdam—when queer Muslim and other queer of colour scholars do speak out and call for sexuality and gender studies to better address issues of racialised and now homonationalist politics, these latter issues tend to be marginalised.[42] Rather, a reinstatement of a homonationalist framing of (queer) Muslims and their troubling, perceived unwillingness to integrate or move beyond discussions of embedded racialization comes to be positioned as the key problematic.[43]

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[40] This critical absence (with the exception of this paper) was also prevalent at the Sexual Nationalisms conference organised by the sexuality studies department at the University of Amsterdam in January 2011.

[41] For a feminist critique of the way 'citizenship' discourse has been taken particularly in folding migrant citizens into the culture and values of the nation see for example Yuval-Davis (2009).

[42] This problem of marginalisation was especially an issue at the panel 'Homo-nationalism, homo-neoliberalism, homo-neo-colonialism: Crises and travels, Europe and beyond' (with contributions from El-Tayeb, Jivraj, Petzen and Haritaworn and chaired by Duggan), as made explicit by Puar at the closing panel.

[43] For example the Sexual Nationalism's pre-conference debate was *entitled De Nederlandse paradox. Seksueel nationalisme in een multiculturele samenleving* (The Dutch paradox. Sexual nationalism in a multicultural society). The programme is available at: http://www.sexualnationalisms.org/resources/SEXUAL_NATIONALISMS_FINAL_PROGRAM.pdf, accessed 25 March 2011. The theme of the supposed 'paradox' was also taken up in the 'welcome discourses' as well as one of the first plenary speaker's contribution, Eric Fassin, also a co-organiser of the event. See also the Conference organisers' statement with regards to the 'Homo-nationalism, homo-neoliberalism, homo-neo-colonialism: Crises and travels, Europe and beyond' panels' critiques of the conference (http://www.sexualnationalisms.org/statement-february-2nd-2011.php, accessed 15 March 2011). See also the Lesbiennes of Colour statement '*Islamophobie au nom du féminisme, Non!*' ('No! to Islamophobia in the name of feminism') on the difficulties they encountered in talking about racism at a conference organised by two mainstream French LGBTQ organisations on 'Islamophobia and Feminism in France' http://espace-locs.fr/, accessed 27 April 2011.

Habitus & Complex Sexual Subjectivity

The 'speakability' imperative is not unique to the Netherlands: there is a strong homonormative model of sexuality circulating within lesbian and gay politics in the West more generally. Drawing on Foucault, Wekker views the 'speakability' model promulgated by the Dutch homo-emancipation policy as part of a Western history in which sexuality came to be invented through the act of being articulated or spoken about (2009, p. 11). She suggests that the complexity of non-white sexuality—including religious/cultural experience—comes to be marginalised through this homonormative paradigm. What then are the conceptual frames that we might employ towards challenging the homonormative sexuality model that has come to underpin the Dutch homo-emancipation policy as well as other state and LGBT discourses?

Wekker, in calling for a greater awareness of the many variations of sexual cultures in the Netherlands—not all of which are brought into being through articulation, draws on Bourdieu's notion of habitus (2009, p. 12). Habitus in Bourdieu's work can be defined as a system of dispositions constituted by both objective and subjective factors: a dynamic intersection of structure and action, of society and individual. A central aspect of the habitus is its embodiment: the embedding of structures through practice, rather than a functioning at the level of explicit, discursive consciousness. The concept captures the practical mastery people have of their social situation that works in an embodied, deeper and often pre-reflexive, even unconscious, way (Bourdieu 1977, 1990).

Wekker views a Dutch sexual habitus to exist through 'the verbal, the speaking that is considered the true sign of emancipation in Western circles and therefore an expression of modernity' (2009, p. 12). Using examples from her work on Afro-Surinam Mati Work[44] (1994, 2006) in relation to black, migrant and refugee lesbian organising and expressions of sexual subjectivity, she juxtaposes the Dutch habitus of 'speaking' with the Afro-Surinam '*doing*'. (2009, pp. 6, 11–12).[45] In this Afro-Surinam context Wekker argues that speaking is not the way to deal with the 'sexual Self' (2009, p. 11). For Wekker, exploring the complex and diverse ways in which the sexualities of people of colour come into being is essential in a multi-cultural society. She calls for an intersectional approach which places different ways of inhabiting sexuality—understood through the notion of habitus—at the heart of sexuality politics. Wekker views this approach as critical to policy making and therefore recommends further research into migrant sexual cultures (2009, p. 11).[46]

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[44] Gosine summarises 'Mati Work' as 'a surviving historical practice among Afro-Surinamese working-class women who create families from relationships that are not limited to blood ties, or a choice between heterosexuality or homosexuality' (Gosine 2009, p. 1).

[45] '*Zwarte, migranten- en vluchtelingen*' (zmv) (Black, migrant and refugee) is a term used in the Netherlands similar to 'Black, minority, ethnic' (BME) in the UK.

[46] See also Wekker's forthcoming work (2011a, b) and Rahman (2010) who makes a similar point about the need for further research on migrant sexual subjectivities.

It is interesting to note that Mahmood (2005) in her study of religious piety and subjectivity also explores and goes beyond Bourdieu's notion of habitus which she views as coming into being through different reiterative modes of practices or ethics.[47] As Jivraj has discussed elsewhere (2011) this approach challenges the predominantly Christian theological conceptualisation of religion—as belief and ritual practice—or indeed as a cultural or ethnicised phenomenon in relation to non-Christians. Rather, as Mahmood highlights religion as 'bodily behaviour' or embodied practices must also be understood in terms of *how* such practices become meaningful to the self, namely, in particular relational contexts such as within the family, community and society (2005, p. 27). This textured and complex religious subjectivity is important to grasp because, as Mahmood argues, these (religious) behaviours 'endow the self with certain kinds of capacities that provide the substance from which the world is acted upon' (*ibid*). In other words, religious subjectivity or identity once formed may (and will) inform how we might inhabit—or not—other integrated and intersecting parts of our selves. Therefore, the homonormative and paradigmatic model of sexuality as something that must be speakable is not always something that queer Muslims or indeed any queer person 'can act upon' in the world. Wekker and Mahmood's conceptualisation of habitus is therefore an important theoretical starting point from which to develop more nuanced and productive understandings of complex subjectivity.

Concluding Remarks

Viewed through the lens of habitus, it is perhaps not surprising that the *Just being gay* policy appears to have worked best for (orthodox) Christian groups: the emancipation and 'speakability' model clearly maps onto—and indeed derives from—their experiences and cultural archive.[48] In bringing together Wekker and Mahmood's perspectives and approaches to understanding complex subjectivity, it is our aim to highlight how we might understand and further challenge the shrinkage of space resulting from the 'speakability' model for queer Muslims. We suggest that a homonormative model potentially limits individual possibilities to inhabit one's own sexuality in different ways. We therefore argue that there is an inherent paradox within the Dutch policy that seeks to make sexuality 'speakable', yet silences the diversity of queer of colour sexualities, as well as limits their political and social self-organisation.

Rather than being confined to promulgating models or policy paradigms in which individuals may be empowered to inhabit their sexual and gender identities in particular ways, we suggest that both LGBT/queer activists and state policy need to

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[47] Here, she draws on a Foucauldian notion of Ethics where 'the subject is formed within the limits of a historically specific set of formative practices and moral injunctions… what Foucault characterises as 'modes of subjectivation' (Foucault 1990, p. 29 discussed in Mahmood 2005, p. 28).

[48] Mepschen et al. lists the success of these Christian groups too as another example of a 'new articulations of sexual freedom and expression' that supposedly supports their position in favour of a 'politics of sexual freedom and diversity' (2010, p. 972). However, as with the other problematic examples, such as the *Habibi Ana* café (footnote 35) and the disbanded *Yoesuf* Foundation (footnote 25), our analysis suggests these examples are not convincing.

grapple with the inherent complexity of these lived experiences, which includes opening up space for critiques of racialization, orientalism and colonialism. However, at this time of severe government cuts in the public sector, any advances made in equalities policies such as adopting an intersectional approach, now appear to be at risk.[49] It is therefore all the more important for us to protect these gains and build upon them.

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[49] See the announcement that the Equality Act's 'costly dual discrimination rules' are to be discontinued (2011 Budget statement by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Rt Hon George Osborne MP. 23 March 2011. http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/2011budget_speech.htm, accessed 12 April 2011).

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