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## Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713433350>

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**To cite this Article** Bevelander, Pieter and Groeneveld, Sandra(2006) 'Patterns of Transition: Female Native Dutch and Ethnic Minority Employment Patterns in the Dutch Labour Market, 1991 and 2002', Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 32: 5, 785 – 807

**To link to this Article: DOI:** 10.1080/13691830600704198

**URL:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13691830600704198>

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# Patterns of Transition: Female Native Dutch and Ethnic Minority Employment Patterns in the Dutch Labour Market, 1991 and 2002

Pieter Bevelander and Sandra Groeneveld

*This study analyses female native Dutch and ethnic minority employment patterns in the Dutch labour market. Focusing on life-course employment patterns, it aims to find out if native Dutch and ethnic minority women in the Netherlands have undergone a transition towards more labour market participation between 1991 and 2002. Three patterns of change in employment integration by age can be discerned. First, increasing employment levels for native Dutch women of almost all age groups, but in particular for those age groups that have to combine employment with rearing children. Second, a high employment level for Surinamese and Antillean women, revealing strong employment integration of all age groups, so that combining market work and rearing children does not hamper labour market integration. Third, a more traditional pattern for Turkish and Moroccan women, yet indicating an increased employment rate for almost all age groups, in particular 20–24 years. We find that critical life events such as motherhood have different effects on employment for Mediterranean, Caribbean and native Dutch women. In addition, the analysis shows that the attachment of both native Dutch and ethnic minority women to the labour market becomes stronger, and the influence of motherhood becomes smaller, over time. All in all, Caribbean women are the most attached to the labour market.*

*Keywords: Employment; Immigration; Transition; Ethnic Minority; Women; Life-Course; The Netherlands*

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## Introduction

As a result of the twin processes of modernisation and individualisation, an increasing number of women have a job at the same time as they have children. Ongoing research on female labour-market participation in Europe and North America suggests that women become more and more attached to the labour market. A considerable part of the growth in the female employment rate is due to a rise in part-time employment. The incidence of part-time work is especially high in the Netherlands, the focus of this article. Career breaks or reductions in hours worked are still frequent after childbirth, but not in all countries. Again, data for the Netherlands show an age–employment profile that is skewed to the left, indicating a situation where many women withdraw from the labour market after childbirth. However, this profile is also the result of a cohort effect: women belonging to older cohorts have lower participation rates than women belonging to the younger cohorts. These differences in employment between age cohorts are remarkably large in the Netherlands, indicating rapid changes over time (OECD 2002).

As the migrant population in the Netherlands is relatively large and still growing, the labour market position of ethnic minorities is of special interest. Ethnic minority women in the Netherlands show a participation rate that is, on average, lower than that of native Dutch women, but increasing at a faster pace. Groeneveld *et al.* (2004) argue that, beside the common human capital variables such as educational level, other factors such as language barriers and cultural norms are responsible for differences in the employment rate between native Dutch and ethnic minority women. Moreover, their results show that marriage and motherhood have a different impact on labour market participation for Mediterranean, Caribbean and native Dutch women, suggesting that life-course employment patterns differ. Information on life-course employment patterns for ethnic minority women is, however, sparse (for an exception see Hooghiemstra and Merens 1999).

In this article we investigate the life-course employment patterns of native Dutch and ethnic minority women in the Netherlands. Given that a number of explanations are possible, we focus on the following questions.

- Is there a change in employment integration both by age and during the life course for ethnic minority relative to native Dutch women between 1991 and 2002?
- To what extent is (the difference in) employment integration of ethnic minority and native Dutch women explained by (a) individual characteristics like age, marital status, the presence of children and the educational attainment; and (b) length of exposure to a new society?
- Controlling for individual characteristics, is there a structural change in employment pattern for native Dutch and ethnic minority women in 2002 compared to 1991?

The next section gives some background on the demographic and economic characteristics of the Netherlands. The following section summarises the findings of

earlier research on female labour force participation. We then further elaborate on economic and sociological explanations, both on the macro and the micro level. The succeeding section describes the data, methods and variables used for our analysis. The results are then presented, followed by a concluding discussion.

## Context: The Netherlands

### *Demographic Characteristics: Immigration*

Approximately two-thirds of the migrants and their descendents in the Netherlands are from the Mediterranean (Turkey and Morocco) and the Caribbean (Surinam and Dutch Antilles): in all, more than 1 million persons. The first immigrants from Turkey arrived at the beginning of the 1960s, relieving the unskilled and low-skilled labour shortage in the Netherlands. Immigration of Turkish workers increased rapidly, reaching a peak in the early 1970s. At the end of 1973 labour recruitment came to a halt, and Turks were no longer admitted as labour migrants. However, this had no effect on the immigration flow from Turkey to the Netherlands, due to an increase in family reunification. The increase in migration since the middle of the 1980s is traced to the children of the labour migrants marrying brides and bridegrooms from Turkey. In the year 2002, for example, 70 per cent of the Turkish women who migrated to the Netherlands were brides (Van der Laan Bouma-Doff and Groeneveld 2004). Officially the number of Turks in the Netherlands is 330,700 (2002), of whom 56 per cent were born in Turkey and 48 per cent are women (see Table 1).

From the mid-1960s until the first oil crisis in 1973, primarily lower-educated Moroccan men also came to the Netherlands. They, too, alleviated the growing need for low-skilled workers in Dutch industry. Since 1973, family reunification of women and children became the primary form of immigration. The majority of Moroccan immigrants originated from the countryside (especially the Rif), with low education, traditional views on family life and restricted behaviour for married women. Family reunification migration reached its peak in the first half of the 1980s, when a third kind of migration started, namely marriage migration. In the mid-1980s equal

**Table 1.** Stock of natives and ethnic minorities in the Netherlands, 1991, 1996 and 2002 (thousands)

	1991	1996	2002	Change 1991–2002		Share second generation 2002 (%)	Share women 2002 (%)
				number	%		
Native Dutch	12,844	12,872	13,140	296	2.3	–	51
Turks	219	272	331	112	51.1	43.8	48
Moroccans	177	225	284	107	60.4	43.8	47
Surinamese	243	282	315	72	29.6	40.9	53
Antilleans	81	94	125	44	54.3	34.2	51

Source: Statline, Statistics Netherlands.

numbers of marriage and family reunification migrants were entering the Netherlands. In the year 2002, 72 per cent of female Moroccan immigrants were brides (Van der Laan Bouma-Doff and Groeneveld 2004). Table 1 shows that 284,100 Moroccans lived in the Netherlands, of whom 47 per cent were women and almost 44 per cent were of the so-called 'second generation'.

Consisting of a diverse population and with a long migration tradition based on the link between colony and motherland, until the 1960s the migration from *Suriname* consisted mainly of an elite—the Creole elite and middle class and, to a lesser extent, Chinese and Hindustani who sent their children to the Netherlands to study. It was also during this decade that labour migrants, relatively well-skilled and mainly Creole, started to migrate from Suriname. It was only in the early 1970s that more low-skilled migrants, from various racial and ethnic backgrounds, entered the Netherlands. The mass migration of more than 50,000 took place shortly before the independence of Suriname in 1975; many took the chance of certainty over uncertainty and left for the Netherlands. The second peak took place just before the introduction of visa requirements in the 1980s—a Dutch government measure to curb the free movement of migrants. Even after 1980, migration from Suriname continued, mainly due to family reunification and marriage migration. In the early 1990s the migration increased again, for economic and political reasons. Table 1 indicates that the Surinamese population in the Netherlands grew from 243,000 to 315,000 in the period under study. In 2002, 41 per cent of them belonged to the 'second generation' and 53 per cent were women.

The Dutch Antilles have traditionally relied mainly on the oil sector, the expansion of which came to a halt in the 1950s. Furthermore, the colonial period ended in 1954. It was then that the *Antilleans* first sought opportunities in the Netherlands. Active emigration policies and recruitment by Dutch companies led to a wave of immigration in the mid-1960s. The first to move were mainly the unskilled; over time more and more skilled migration took place. After 1973 the migration of unskilled migrants increased and further intensified after 1985 when the Lago refinery on Aruba closed. Aruban autonomy in 1986 contributed to political uncertainty and unemployment increased dramatically, further increasing the migration of Antilleans to the Netherlands. In 2002 the total population from the Dutch Antilles living in the Netherlands was 124,900—51 per cent women and 34 per cent born in the Netherlands (see Table 1).

### *Demographic Characteristics: Marriage and Children*

Cohabitation is quite common in the Netherlands. For both the native and the Caribbean populations, the percentage of couples who are cohabiting is increasing. Amongst the Mediterranean migrants, however, most couples are married. Most Turkish and Moroccan women are married to a man from the same ethnic group. Surinamese and Antillean women, however, are marrying native Dutch men more often (43 and 61 per cent of the marriages respectively in the period 1997–2001).

Surinamese and Antillean women are also quite often single mothers (Van der Laan Bouma-Doff and Groeneveld 2004).

Fertility rates are rapidly changing in the Netherlands. Over time Dutch women are becoming mothers at a later age and have fewer children than before. On average Dutch women become mothers at the age of 29. Turkish and Moroccan women, however, are having children in their early twenties. Whereas Moroccan, Surinamese and Antillean women from the younger age cohorts become mothers at a later age, young Turkish women are still having children at an early age. In addition, second-generation women become mothers at a later age than first-generation women. Ethnic minority women have more children on average than the native Dutch, with Moroccan women having the most children and Surinamese and Antillean women the fewest. However, this difference is smaller for the younger age cohorts. All in all, fertility patterns of native Dutch and ethnic minority women have converged in the last decade (Van der Laan Bouma-Doff and Groeneveld 2004).

### *Economic Changes and the Labour Market*

The Dutch economy in the 1960s was—like other European economies—booming and experiencing shortages of labour, primarily in the industrial sector, attracting migrant workers, mainly males, to alleviate these shortages (Odé 1996). The most obvious change since then is the structural shift from a primarily industrial to a service economy. At the same time, an increase in the number of native Dutch women looking for employment intensified the competition for available jobs, especially in the service sector. The restructuring and low growth of the Dutch economy in the 1970s and 1980s, followed by a general increase in unemployment, hit both ‘old’ and ‘new’ immigrants—especially those with a relatively low education—very hard (Groeneveld and Veenman 2004).

Since the mid-1990s, the Dutch economy has experienced a remarkable recovery, resulting in a low unemployment rate relative to other West European countries. This is commonly referred to as ‘the Dutch miracle’. During the 1990s the Dutch labour market was continuously upgrading and heading towards a so-called ‘knowledge society’. During the same period, the educational level of the workforce was upgrading itself at an even faster pace. Although having accomplished some upgrading, the relatively lower educational level of the ethnic minorities makes it difficult for them to compete for jobs in the Dutch labour market. The gap is largest for Moroccans and smallest for Antilleans (Batenburg *et al.* 2003; Groeneveld and Weijers-Martens 2003).

### *Female Labour Market Participation*

The position of women on the Dutch labour market has improved significantly. Not only has the female employment rate increased, but their mean job level has too. Moreover, this upgrading is stronger for women than for men, implying that

differences in job levels between men and women have diminished and more and more can be explained by differences in age, education and part-time work. The majority of the (native) Dutch women are working part-time. The 'single-male-breadwinner' model is replaced by the so-called '1.5-breadwinner' model with the man as the primary earner.

### Earlier Research and Theoretical Considerations

In this section earlier research is described, unravelling the most important factors cited in the literature on women's employment over the life-course. Both micro-level supply-side factors and macro-level demand factors are pointed at, as these are closely interrelated. We start our theoretical considerations with an economic interpretation of the employment of women in general. Then studies on the employment of ethnic minority women are briefly discussed, followed by a short overview of findings for the Netherlands. Finally, the theoretical framework of this article is presented.

#### *Employment of Women*

In line with human capital theory, the increasing labour force participation of women in industrial and post-industrial societies is seen as related to demographic factors like lower fertility and the timing of births, as well as a higher educational level among women. From a household point of view, the existence of a gender wage gap could give variation in labour supply and employment of women, depending on the utility function and relative income of men and women in the household. Increased productivity in home management due to the increased use of technical devices has also been put forward as a factor making more time available for market work. Labour shortage and increasing relative wages are also identified as factors explaining increased labour supply by women (see, for example, Borjas 1996).

In addition to this economic kind of reasoning, in sociological studies the change in gender role patterns within the family and on the labour market as a result of modernisation are emphasised (Hofmeister *et al.* 2003). Institutional factors are also pointed up. Separate taxation, the availability of day-care and the possibility of obtaining a part-time job help to explain the transition towards higher labour supply and employment of women. But, until recently, the Netherlands has had joint-taxation rules, so the partner with lower earnings is more or less encouraged to reduce working hours or leave employment. Earlier research suggests that this is a central institutional factor in understanding women's employment patterns in the Netherlands (Dingeldey 2001). Also, day-care and other work-family arrangements have become more common only quite recently, especially compared to the Nordic countries.

### *Employment of Ethnic Minority Women*

Beside the general factors mentioned above, some factors that especially apply to ethnic minority women can be identified. The evidence, however, is rather diverse and applies to different countries. The main factors that are revealed by the handful of studies focusing on the employment of ethnic minority women include the transferability of country-of-origin skills to the new country, family circumstances, generation and 'cultural' factors, plus the common demographic and human capital characteristics cited above.

For example, Reimers (1985) puts forward the assertion that ethnic groups have different views about male and female roles in the family, wives and mothers working outside the home, the value placed on children, family size, household composition and the education of women. These different views are historically shaped by economic as well as other circumstances. This could lead to systematic differences in utility functions and to direct or indirect effects on behaviour in the labour market. Directly, they affect the allocation of time between home and paid work. They also affect the decisions on education and fertility, which in turn influence the possibilities on the labour market and the value of home time, and so indirectly the labour force participation among women of various ethnic groups. MacPherson and Stewart (1989) extend the seminal work of Reimers using the 1980 US census. Their results indicate that the differences in labour force participation of women from various countries are mainly due to differences in transferability of human capital and to cultural differences in tastes for paid work and child-rearing. Further, being married prior to migration is negatively correlated with labour force participation. Finally, Schoeni (1998) analysed the labour market attachment of immigrant women in the US for 1970, 1980 and 1990. Results showed a downward trend in labour market attachment for immigrant women versus native US women between 1970 and 1990.

Turning to Europe, results for Sweden, a country with one of the highest employment rates for women, show an increasing gap in the probabilities of obtaining employment between native Swedish and immigrant women between the census years 1970 and 1990 (Bevelander 2000, 2005; Bevelander and Skyt Nielsen 1999). Decomposition analysis shows that the major part of the increase in this employment gap is explained by a change in coefficients (unobserved characteristics) rather than a change in determinants (observed characteristics).

This result paves the way for several alternative explanations. Bevelander (2000) and 2005) points towards the structural change of the economy. This change from an industrialised to a post-industrialised economy has implied a change in the demand for skills which has favoured native Swedish women entering the labour market. Ethnic or immigrant groups are, to various degrees, affected negatively by this changing demand (Wilson 1987, 1996). This could be also the case for the Netherlands, as we explained above.



*Employment of Native Dutch and Ethnic Minority Women in the Netherlands*

Kalmijn and Luijkx (2003) analysed retrospective life-history data in order to describe changes in women's employment careers in the Netherlands. As the probability of leaving the labour market has continuously declined in the period 1955–2000, their results also show that the probability of re-entering the labour market has continuously increased. Besides, the influence of life-course stages on employment has become smaller over time. Marriage no longer leads to employment exits. Motherhood, however, still does. All in all, the attachment of women to the labour market has become stronger.

Differences in labour supply, labour force participation and employment integration of ethnic minority women, relative to native Dutch women, have to a much lesser degree been subject for empirical research than for males. Earlier studies on the labour market situation of ethnic minority women in the Netherlands show little difference in labour force participation for Surinamese and Antillean women compared to native Dutch women, whereas Turkish and Moroccan women show lower participation rates.

In a multivariate analysis Groeneveld *et al.* (2004) show that having a partner and having children have a negative influence on the probability to be employed for Turkish and Moroccan women, but not for Surinamese and Antillean women. This finding is in line with an earlier study by Hooghiemstra and Merens (1999). Moreover, these authors found that having children also affects the employment rate of native Dutch women. Differences in employment level between native Dutch and ethnic minority women become smaller after marriage and motherhood. The effect of views on gender role patterns on the probability of being employed is also shown to have a significant effect on the chances of being employed for all ethnic minority groups (Groeneveld *et al.* 2004).

The differential effects of partnership and motherhood for native Dutch, Mediterranean and Caribbean women found in previous studies point to differences in life-course employment patterns. As far as we know, studies on life-course employment patterns for ethnic minority women are not yet available.

*Framework*

Without denying the importance of various forms of discrimination, gender role patterns, culture, the relative income of the partner and institutional factors, the framework of this study is based on a situation where ethnic minority women enter the labour market in a similar way to that of native-born women who are new entrants or re-entrants. Because skills and knowledge of the functioning of the labour market are not perfectly transferable between countries, it is expected that immigrant women, during their early years in a new country, are less productive, experience higher labour market turnover and have relatively lower employment rates than one would expect given their level of formal education. The lower levels of country-

specific skills (e.g. language skills, experience of various conditions of the host country) or human capital explain the disadvantages that immigrants experience in economic integration. In time, however, immigrants will adjust to the new labour market and society. This will occur partly through investments that modify skills and partly through acquiring new skills. For the so-called 'second generation'—ethnic minority persons born in the Netherlands with at least one foreign-born parent—we expect a stronger attachment to the labour market, in this case employment levels. This expectation is fuelled by the idea that children of immigrants have their socialisation and education in the receiving society, thereby increasing their country-specific skills such as language ability.

Furthermore, the employment situation of women is expected to be influenced by the educational level of the individual, as well as the presence of children. A higher general educational level implies more opportunities for work as well as an increasing opportunity cost for staying at home. The presence of children is related to a lower employment rate, in line with the traditional model of specialisation of gender roles within the household.

The view that the economic structure and economic structural change have an impact on labour demand, especially for those who are new in the labour market, is also adopted. The study also takes the view that the structural change of the economy, i.e. a decreasing industrial and an increasing service sector, implies increased opportunities for relatively higher educated women to enter the labour market. Since the educational level of women, especially young ones, has increased during the 1990s, the employment situation of women should indicate a transition from a more traditional male breadwinner model towards a model based on a more equal employment basis.

## **Data and Method**

Data for ethnic minority females come from the SPVA, the survey on 'Social Position and Use of Facilities by Immigrants' for the years 1991 and 2002. The surveys have been carried out by the Institute for Sociological and Economic Research (ISEO) of the Erasmus University in Rotterdam.<sup>1</sup> Their aim is to get a picture of the varying socio-economic and socio-cultural positions of the four largest ethnic minority groups in Dutch society, namely Turks, Moroccans, Surinamese and Antilleans/Arubans.<sup>2</sup> As the migrant population is geographically concentrated, the SPVA consists of random samples of the population in 13 cities in the Netherlands, including the four largest. This ensures a representative sample of the total population (Groeneveld and Weijers-Martens 2003; Martens *et al.* 1992). Data for the native Dutch population comes from the 'Enquête Beroepsbevolking' (EBB) or labour force survey, carried out by Statistics Netherlands (CBS) for the years 1991 and 2002.

In our study, weighted sub-samples of SPVA and EBB comprising the female population aged 15 to 64 are pooled. Both the first generation, those who actually

immigrated, and the second generation, those who were born in the Netherlands and have at least one foreign-born parent, are included in our sample. Table 2 gives an overview of the sub-samples by year and ethnic group.

This paper examines the employment integration of the aforementioned ethnic minority females compared to native Dutch females. Individuals are employed when they have specified in the questionnaire that they have employment of 12 hours or more per week. This operationalisation is commonly used in Dutch statistics. Beside age, ethnic origin and employment status, the variables marital status, having children or not, year of arrival and educational level from the two SPVAs and EBBs will be used. The variable age categories will be used to study the employment variation between age groups. Marital status is split between those who are or have been in a partnership (married/cohabiting), and those who are not. The variable having children or not divides those individuals with children from those without.

The immigrant-specific variable, year of entering the Netherlands at a particular time, gives us the possibility to infer something about the different cohorts of the particular ethnic group, as well as giving us the opportunity to study those who are born in the Netherlands and those who are not. We must be aware that the second generation to a large extent contains young women who are observed for only a short period of their working lives.

The key variable in the human capital model, the educational level, is included to study the effect of education on employment integration for the various ethnic groups. Finally, the year of the questionnaire will indicate the effect of temporal context. The statistical analysis will make use of logistic regressions to predict the effect of the various variables on the odds of being employed.

## Results

### *Changes in Employment*

In Table 3 the change in employment rate for native Dutch and ethnic minority women is monitored. For all groups of women the employment rates increased steadily between 1991 and 2002. The highest percentage increase in employment is noted for the Moroccan women, from the very low level of 6.2 to 26.3. Also around

**Table 2.** Number of women in SPVA and EBB by year and ethnic group

	1991	2002	Total
Native Dutch	34,632	33,379	68,011
Turkish	953	1,090	2,043
Moroccan	852	918	1,770
Surinamese	814	965	1,779
Antillean	575	696	1,271
Total	37,826	37,048	74,874

Source: SPVA (ISEO/SCP) and EBB (CBS) (1991 and 2002).

**Table 3.** Employment rate (at least 12 hours per week) of native Dutch and ethnic minority women by generation, 1991, 1994, 1998 and 2002 (all data per cent)

	1991	1994	1998	2002
Native Dutch	39.4	43.0	50.0	56.4
Turkish	15.6	17.3	21.2	26.4
First generation	16.1	15.6	19.7	23.9
Second generation	9.6	23.9	27.2	33.9
Moroccan	6.2	12.4	16.4	26.3
First generation	5.1	10.2	13.7	20.3
Second generation	16.1	22.6	24.9	41.4
Surinamese	34.2	41.5	<b>55.1</b>	56.2
First generation	34.9	43.0	<b>54.3</b>	<b>61.0</b>
Second generation	27.5	37.7	44.5	45.9
Antillean	25.9	39.4	44.0	49.7
First generation	25.3	34.1	42.3	50.5
Second generation	29.0	<b>55.3</b>	<b>51.5</b>	47.3

Note: Bold figures indicate higher than native Dutch levels.

Source: SPVA 1991, 1994, 1998 and 2002 (ISEO/SCP); EBB 1991 and 2002 (CBS); Statline 1994 and 1998 (CBS).

one quarter of Turkish women were employed 12 hours or more in 2002. Together these two groups show repeatedly the lowest employment rates relative to native Dutch and other ethnic minority women. Compared to the development of the native Dutch employment rate, Surinamese and Antillean women show a higher absolute increase in employment levels over time. Together, native Dutch and Surinamese women show the highest employment rate in 2002: over 56 per cent.

When we subdivide the ethnic minorities into first and second generations, we can make a couple of interesting observations. For most of the ethnic minorities, the second generation have higher rates than the first generation. This is in line with the idea that children of immigrants, exposed to the native country institutions from birth, would enjoy greater integration both in general and in the labour market. The exception is the case of Surinamese women: first-generation women have in all years a higher employment rate than the second generation. They also show higher employment rates than native Dutch women in the years 1994, 1998 and 2002. This observation can also be made for the first versus the second generation of Antillean women in 2002. When comparing generations we have to keep in mind, though, that the second generation to a large extent contains younger individuals still participating in education. A more refined analysis will be conducted in the next subsections where we make a comparison between the age-specific employment rates of native Dutch and ethnic minority women, controlling for generation.

All in all, almost half of ethnic minority women are gainfully employed in the Dutch labour market and the employment rate of ethnic minority women is increasing over time. Furthermore, it is increasing at a faster pace than the native Dutch employment rate—an indication of increasing labour market integration, yet with variation.

Due to changing gender role patterns and the structural change of the economy toward a post-industrial state, with a larger labour force working in flexible work relations, research has indicated a correlation between the increase in the employment of women and the increase in part-time jobs in the Dutch labour market (Batenburg *et al.* 2003). In this context it is interesting to show some *quality-related* aspects of those who are employed, and to what extent we can detect dissimilarities between 1991 and 2002 for native Dutch and ethnic minority women. The indicators we demonstrate in the following tables are the share of hours worked of those employed (Table 4), and the share with a permanent contract of those who are employed (Table 5).

Apparent from Table 4 is that all groups show an increase in the shares of part-time employed, and a corresponding decrease in full time employment, between 1991 and 2002. This pattern is in line with earlier studies for native Dutch women and can now be confirmed for ethnic minority women. The table also indicates that, of all women who have some kind of employment, the share of full-time workers among ethnic minority women is larger relative to native Dutch women. One explanation for this situation could be the favourable educational level and the connected payment level for native Dutch women. Another could be the relative income of the ethnic minority husband or partner, or the absence of a partner. In both cases, to compensate and to increase the household income, ethnic minority women have to increase the number of working hours. Another explanation could be found in the degree to which part-time work is allowed or accepted in the segments of the labour market in which native Dutch and ethnic minority women are employed. Historically, ethnic minorities are to a larger extent employed in the industrial sector, where possibilities

**Table 4.** Share of hours worked of all employed by native Dutch and ethnic minority women in 1991 and 2002 (per cent)

	1–11	12–19	20–34	35+
Native Dutch				
1991	19.6	13.3	29.6	37.5
2002	16.1	16.1	40.3	27.6
Turkish				
1991	9.6	6.6	23.4	60.5
2002	13.8	12.6	29.5	44.0
Moroccan				
1991	10.9	12.5	20.3	56.2
2002	15.4	16.2	33.5	34.9
Surinamese				
1991	6.9	8.2	29.2	55.7
2002	7.2	8.4	41.4	43.0
Antillean				
1991	7.8	9.0	27.7	55.4
2002	9.0	10.5	33.7	46.7

Source: SPVA 1991 and 2002 (ISEO/SCP) and EBB 1991 and 2002 (CBS).

**Table 5.** Share employed (of all employed at least 12 hours per week) in permanent contracts, native Dutch and ethnic minority women, 1991 and 2002 (self-employed excluded).

	1991	2002
Native Dutch	90.7	86.4
Turkish	70.4	73.0
Moroccan	73.5	72.8
Surinamese	81.5	87.7
Antillean	84.3	77.9

Source: SPVA 1991 and 2002 (ISEO/SCP) and EBB 1991 and 2002 (CBS).

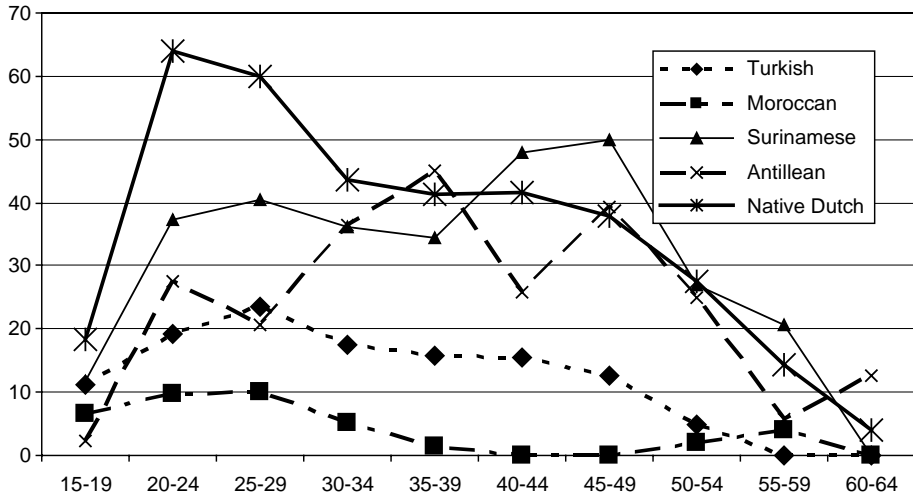
to work part-time are fewer than in other sectors of the labour market (Euwals and Hogerbrugge 2004).

Finally, in Table 5, employment in permanent or temporary jobs, another indicator of the quality of work, is monitored for 1991 and 2002. Both native Dutch and Surinamese women show a relatively high share employed on permanent contracts in 2002. For native Dutch women this level is somewhat lower compared to 1991. For Surinamese women a clear increase can be observed since 1991. Turkish and Moroccan women have the lowest share in permanent contracts in both 1991 and 2002, approximately 15 percentage points below the native Dutch level. Antillean women show a decrease in the share employed on permanent contracts between 1991 and 2002.

Concluding this subsection, ethnic minority women, like native Dutch women, show an increasing employment level between 1991 and 2002. Except for Surinamese, all ethnic minority women from the second generation have relatively higher employment rates than the first generation in 2002. Moreover, the increase in employment has primarily been through an increase in working part-time. Generally, fewer ethnic minority women have part-time jobs compared to native Dutch women. But having a larger share working in full-time jobs does not enhance job stability. Except for Surinamese women, ethnic minority women have a smaller share employed on permanent contracts compared to native Dutch women.

### *Life-Course Employment Patterns*

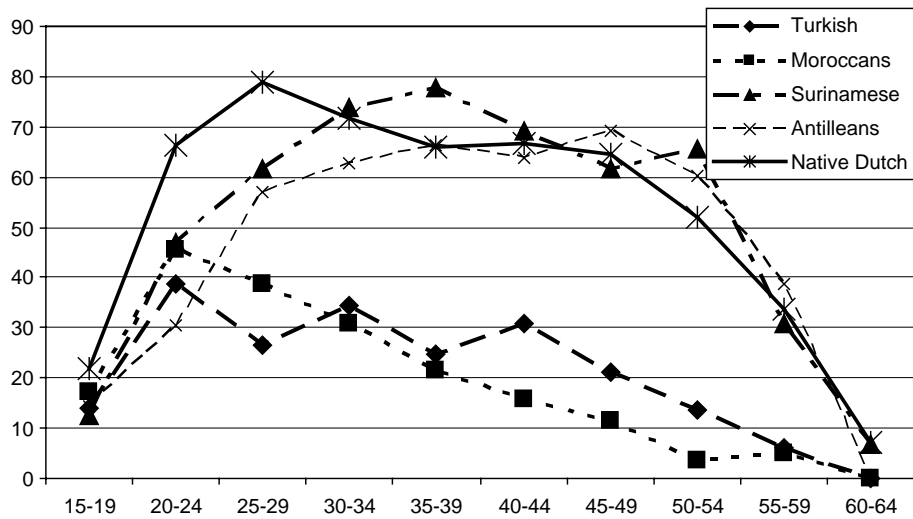
While in the previous subsection we demonstrated changes in employment rates for all groups, in this and the following subsection we want to shed light on the more detailed characteristics of this change. We start with an exploration of age-specific employment rates for the various ethnic groups for the years 1991 and 2002 (see Figures 1 and 2 respectively). Native Dutch women in 1991 show a relatively high employment rate of over 60 per cent in the ages 20–29, when most individuals leave school or higher education and enter the labour market. In the subsequent age cohort, 30–34, we observe a drop in the employment rate of almost 20 percentage points. Up to the age cohort of 45–49 the employment rate is quite stable, but drops



**Figure 1.** Age-specific employment rates (at least 12 hours per week) for native Dutch and ethnic minority women, 1991

again gradually to almost zero in the following ages. The same pattern, but less pronounced and on a far lower level, is also visible for Turkish and Moroccan women. For both Surinamese and Antillean women, with exceptions due to small numbers, the age-specific employment rate follows an inverted U-curve, more like one we normally observe for males, but on a somewhat lower level.

For the year 2002, native Dutch women aged 25–29 show the highest employment level of all age groups. Again in the ages 30–39, we observe a drop in the employment

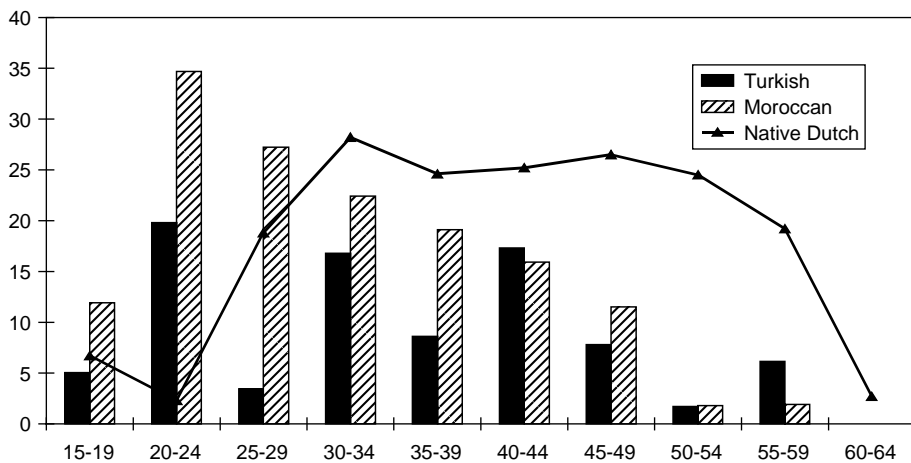


**Figure 2.** Age-specific employment rates (at least 12 hours per week) for native Dutch and ethnic minority women, 2002

level for native Dutch women, but now less pronounced. In the subsequent age groups the employment rate stays stable. In the last three age groups, 50–64, a gradual decrease in employment rates is observable. Turkish and Moroccan women aged 20–24 have the highest employment rate in 2002, but this level drops gradually with subsequent age groups. Finally, Antillean and Surinamese women have an employment profile that closely resembles the profile we normally observe for men, an inverted U-curve.

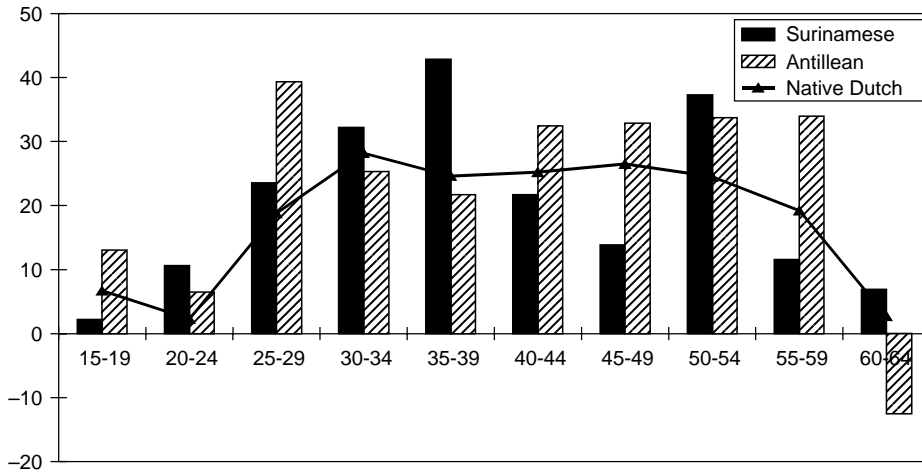
In Figures 3 and 4, the differences between 1991 and 2002 for each age cohort for Mediterranean and Caribbean women respectively are given. These figures give us the opportunity to feature the age cohorts that made an increase or decrease in employment and the relative contribution of each age cohort to the general increase in the employment rate for the various groups between 1991 and 2002. Age-specific differences in employment rates for native Dutch women are shown in both figures as a continuous line.

Except for the age cohort 60–64, all cohorts of all ethnic groups show an increase in employment in 2002 relative to 1991: an indication of a stronger labour market integration of all groups. Differences between groups lie primarily in the fact that native Dutch, Antillean and Surinamese women have a stronger increase in the ages 25–59 relative to ages 15–24. This could indicate, firstly, a development where women, irrespective of whether or not they have children, have obtained work; secondly, a postponement of labour market entrance due to longer educational attainment by women of the younger age groups. A contrast to this situation is found in Figure 3, in which the age-specific employment rates for Turkish and Moroccan women are presented. Here we observe the largest increase in employment for the age group 20–24 and at the same time a relatively smaller increase for the subsequent age groups. In our opinion the general increase in the employment integration for these



**Figure 3.** Age-specific differences in employment rates (at least 12 hours per week) for Mediterranean women, 1991–2002





**Figure 4.** Age-specific differences in employment rates (at least 12 hours per week) for Caribbean women, 1991–2002

groups is dependent on the better economic situation of the late 1990s and the first years of the twenty-first century. Young women in these groups seem to have benefited in particular from this situation. This could be attributed on the one hand to a relatively better educational level compared to older age groups. On the other hand, it could be due to relatively more women of the ‘second generation’ having a higher degree of social and cultural integration (Van Putten 2004). Cultural integration is related to labour market participation, as Groeneveld *et al.* (2004) showed in a multivariate analysis.

Summarising so far, four patterns of change between 1991 and 2002 can be discerned. First, generally increasing employment levels for native Dutch women for almost all age groups, but in particular for those age groups that have to combine this with rearing children. Second, a high employment level of Surinamese and Antillean women, revealing strong employment integration of all age groups and indicating that combining market work and rearing children does not hamper labour market integration. Third, a traditional pattern for Turkish and Moroccan women, which nevertheless shows an increased employment rate between 1991 and 2002 for almost all age groups, and in particular for women aged 20–24. Fourth, women remain in the labour market longer.

### *Multivariate Analysis*

In this subsection we analyse whether age, education and family-related factors such as the presence of children influence the probability to obtain market work for native Dutch and ethnic minority women. Considering the number of observations, Turkish and Moroccan women are grouped together, as are Surinamese and Antillean women. In Table 6 we show the probability of being employed (odds ratio) for native Dutch,

**Table 6.** Odds ratio of obtaining employment (at least 12 hours per week) by ethnic group

	Native Dutch	Mediterranean	Caribbean
<b>Age</b>			
15–24	1	1	1
25–34	1.568***	1.817***	1.533**
35–44	1.711***	1.291	2.193***
45–54	1.009	0.756	1.798**
55–64	0.147***	0.227	0.405**
<b>Presence of children</b>			
No children	1	1	1
One or more children	0.329***	0.553***	0.492***
<b>Marital status</b>			
Is/was in a partnership	1	1	1
Not in a partnership	1.904***	1.163	0.670***
<b>Educational level</b>			
Primary	1	1	1
Lower secondary	1.611***	3.173***	3.074***
Higher secondary	3.046***	4.087***	6.039***
University	4.661***	–	8.439***
<b>Years of residence</b>			
Born in the Netherlands	–	1	1
Entered +10 years ago	–	0.924	1.255
Entered 1–10 years ago	–	0.982	0.938
<b>Year</b>			
1991	1	1	1
2002	0.708	1.784*	1.632
<b>Interactions year*age</b>			
2002*25–34	2.083***	0.712	1.745**
2002*35–44	1.725***	0.845	2.494***
2002*45–54	2.124***	0.851	3.090***
2002*55–64	2.255***	0.859	1.740
<b>Interactions year*children</b>			
2002*one or more children	1.695***	1.336	1.110
<b>Interactions year*marital status</b>			
2002*Not in a partnership	0.776***	0.969	0.934
<b>Interactions year*education</b>			
2002*Lower secondary	1.054	0.963	0.650*
2002*Higher secondary	1.227***	1.081	0.722
2002*University	1.479***	–	1.125
<b>Constant</b>	0.443***	0.129***	0.244***
<b>Number</b>	68,039	3,579	2,602
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	0.297	0.198	0.335

Source: SPVA 1991 and 2002 (ISEO/SCP) and EBB 1991 and 2002 (Statistics Netherlands).

\*\*\*, \*\*, \* indicates significance at 0.01, 0.05 and 0.1 level.

Mediterranean and Caribbean women, in line with the patterns of employment that came to the fore in the earlier sections. Besides controlling for individual characteristics, we also include year of the survey as well as interactions between year and age, presence of children, marital status and education respectively. This

makes it possible to reveal the effects of the period and various individual characteristics on employment.

For native Dutch and Caribbean women the age-specific odds ratios show an inverted U-curve for 1991. For Caribbean women this pattern was also observed in Figure 1. For native Dutch women, this pattern only becomes visible after controlling for individual characteristics. In the period 1991–2002 the probability to be employed increases for various age groups, but with variation, for both native Dutch and Caribbean women, with the exception of the age group 15–24. The insignificant effects for Mediterranean women can possibly be explained by the strong increase in employment level of the reference category (age group 15–24). Mediterranean women in the ages 25–34 have a significantly higher probability to be employed than all other age groups in 1991. For 2002 all age groups have higher odds of being employed; no differences are measured for specific age groups.

To be in a partnership or not in 1991 makes no statistical difference for women from the Mediterranean, but not being in a partnership does increase the odds for 2002. Being in a partnership for women from the Caribbean in 1991 increases the chance of being employed. This situation also prevails in 2002. These findings are in accordance with previous studies of Hooghiemstra and Merens (1999) and Groeneveld *et al.* (2004), which also pointed up the different effects of marital status on employment for Mediterranean and Caribbean women. Being in a partnership decreases the probability to have employment for native Dutch women in 1991. This situation alters somewhat for the year 2002. These results seem to be in contradiction with previous studies showing that it is not partnership but motherhood that results in lower participation rates for women (see for example Blossfeld and Huinink 1991; Kalmijn and Luijkx 2003). As the data did not allow to estimation of a dynamic model, the causal impact of partnership and the presence of children probably cannot be captured properly.

The presence of children has a negative influence on the odds of having market work for all groups in both 1991 and 2002, but its effect is smaller for 2002. This result, indicating that the attachment of women to the labour market becomes stronger over time and the influence of motherhood becomes smaller, is in accordance with previous findings of Kalmijn and Luijkx (2003).

The influence of educational level on the probability of having employment for native Dutch women confirms our expectation: a higher level increases the chances of obtaining market work in 1991 and 2002. The effect of educational level is stronger for the two ethnic groups compared to native Dutch women in 1991, but shows no significant effect in 2002.

The full model presented in Table 6 gives a better fit for native Dutch and Caribbean women than for Mediterranean women. This is possibly due to effects of mastery of the Dutch language and cultural factors that are not adopted in the model but can be expected to be stronger for Mediterranean women (cf. Groeneveld *et al.* 2004).

Table 7 shows the probability of obtaining employment for Mediterranean and Caribbean women by migration history. The reference category is second-generation women observed in 1991. It is obvious that this group, observed in 2002, has a far higher likelihood of being employed. One explanation could be that the relatively young second generation in 1991 was to a large extent still in education and, growing older, entered the labour market in the years that followed. Another explanation could be the economic boom of the late 1990s, which paved the way for an increase in market work.

Relative to those born in the Netherlands, immigrants from the Mediterranean who came to the Netherlands in the 1960s and 1970s have a higher probability of being employed in 1991. Immigrants from this area who came during the 1980s are not significantly different from the reference category. If we assume that newly-entered immigrants are relatively younger than the immigrant population in general, this does eventually explain the lower odds ratio for this group compared to immigrants with more years in the country. In 2002 female migrants from the Mediterranean with longer residence show a lower probability to be employed relative to 1991. As this category includes those who immigrated in the 1980s, the poor economic situation and high unemployment in this decade could be one explanation for observing the decrease.

Another explanation could be the fast change towards a service economy in the 1990s. This would induce an increased demand for language skills, which could have had a negative effect on the employability of individuals with relatively more years of stay, having arrived in an era when basically few language skills were needed to enter low-skilled manual jobs. The high but insignificant effect for women immigrating to the Netherlands in the 1990s seems to indicate a better start in the labour market than those who immigrated in the 1980s and measured ten years earlier.

Turning to the Caribbean women, those who have been fewer than ten years in the country have a lower chance of obtaining employment than those of the second generation and those who have more than ten years of residence in 1991. In 2002 all groups have an increased odds of having market work compared to 1991. Women

**Table 7.** Odds ratio of obtaining employment (at least 12 hours per week) for ethnic groups by migration history, 1991 and 2002 (controlling for age, education, presence of children and marital status)

	Mediterranean		Caribbean	
	1991	2002	1991	2002
Years of residence				
Born in the Netherlands	1	3.402***	1	1.832*
Entered +10 years ago	2.294***	1.584***	1.254	1.564
Entered 0–10 years ago	0.837	4.183	0.538*	2.724***

Source: SPVA 1991 and 2002 (ISEO/SCP) and EBB 1991 and 2002 (Statistics Netherlands).

\*\*\*, \*\*, \* indicates significance at 0.01, 0.05 and 0.1 level.

with fewer than ten years of residence and observed in 2002 have the highest probability to be employed. As for Mediterranean women, we observe a standard pattern for Caribbean women in 1991: the longer the stay, the higher the likelihood of obtaining employment. This situation alters significantly in 2002. Since we observe a similar pattern for two ethnic minority groups with very different characteristics, such as human capital and reasons for migration, it is more likely that we have to do with a period effect and that the stronger demand for labour in the 1990s is the primary reason for a relatively high employment integration of newly-arrived immigrant women.

Replication of the analysis, but with native Dutch women as a reference category, confirms our conclusions. For both the second generation and the native Dutch women, the probability of being employed doubles in the period 1991–2002. Moreover, second-generation Caribbean women show the same employment level as native Dutch women for both years. First-generation Mediterranean women who migrated in the 1980s show a lower probability to be employed, both compared to native Dutch women and relative to 1991. Mediterranean women who came to the Netherlands in the 1990s are better-off: their probability of being employed is much higher. These results also suggest that the demand-side effect, that is, the effect of the economic growth in the 1990s, is stronger than effects of structural changes.

## Discussion

Globalisation and modernisation processes in Western countries are responsible for changes on the labour market and in women's position. Previous research suggests that women more and more become involved in the labour market over time. Furthermore, motherhood still hampers the labour force participation of women, but to a lesser extent than before. Our study focused upon the life-course employment patterns of native Dutch and ethnic minority women in the Netherlands. Using two Dutch surveys for 1991 and 2002, we tried to find out if native Dutch and ethnic minority women have undergone a change towards a 'modern' employment pattern, that is, more labour market participation and less affected by motherhood. Since the educational level of both native Dutch and ethnic minority women, especially young ones, increased during the 1990s, a transition from a more traditional male breadwinner model towards a model based on a more equal employment basis could be expected. In addition, for ethnic minority women we expected a positive relationship between years of residence and labour market integration. Furthermore, we expected an employment pattern by age that resembles more and more the inverted U-curve normally found for men.

Our results show that almost half of ethnic minority women are employed in the Dutch labour market. Furthermore, the employment rate of ethnic minority women was increasing in the period 1991–2002 and at a faster pace than the native employment rate. This is an indication of increasing labour market integration.

Moreover, ethnic minority women have a higher full-time labour market participation rate than native Dutch women.

Looking at employment integration by age, three patterns could be discerned for the period under study. First, increasing employment levels for native Dutch women of almost all age groups, but in particular for those age groups that have to combine this with rearing children. Second, a relatively high employment level of Surinamese and Antillean women, revealing strong employment integration of all age groups, indicating that combining market work and rearing children does not hamper labour market integration. Third, a still-traditional pattern for Turkish and Moroccan women, with an increased employment rate between 1991 and 2002 for almost all age groups, but in particular women aged 20–24.

Critical life events such as motherhood seem to have different effects on employment for Mediterranean, Caribbean and native Dutch women. Being in a partnership generally decreases the likelihood of being employed for Mediterranean and native Dutch women, whereas being in a partnership for women from the Caribbean increases it. This result, however, is probably due to the static nature of our analysis. The presence of children has a negative influence on the probability to be employed for all groups in both 1991 and 2002, but its effect is smaller for 2002. This result indicates that, over time, the attachment of women to the labour market becomes stronger and the influence of motherhood smaller.

Besides increasing labour market integration in accordance with modernisation processes, for Mediterranean women also a period effect was observed. Our results show that the demand for labour in the 1990s is the primary reason for a relatively high employment integration of newly-arrived immigrant women from the Mediterranean. As Mediterranean women generally are less educated than Caribbean women and as a result are working more often at lower job levels and in flexible jobs if they work at all, they are more vulnerable to labour market shocks.

Our analyses have also shed light on life-course employment patterns of native Dutch and ethnic minority women. However, several factors remained unexplored. We suggested the adoption of cultural factors to get a better fit of the model for Mediterranean women. Also to unravel the effects of modernisation and integration from socio-economic changes, the adoption of cultural factors can be illuminating. Another guideline for future research refers to disaggregating the effects of age, cohort and period, a problem that can be tackled by using panel data. And to separate the effects of partnership and motherhood a more dynamic model is needed. A panel data set containing data for ethnic minority women is not available yet, but is strongly recommended. Life-course analysis is gaining importance in labour market research, as European labour markets are developing toward transitional labour markets (Schmid 1998). Our results reinforce the relevance of analysing life-course employment patterns of ethnic minority women. As the labour market integration of ethnic minority women is a policy objective in many Western European countries, such analyses are essential for policy-makers as well.

## Acknowledgements

The authors gratefully acknowledge the generous support provided by the Swedish Foundation for International Cooperation in Research and Higher Education (STINT), the Institute for Sociological and Economic Research (ISEO), Erasmus University and the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) (project number 261-98-904), which allowed us to carry out the research.

## Notes

- [1] The 2002 version was carried out by ISEO together with the Dutch Social and Cultural Planning Office (SCP) and—a particular part of it—the Dutch Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI).
- [2] To be included in the population of one of the ethnic groups, one of the parents of the individual should be born in the country of origin.

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