

# Islamic Immigration, Sex Trafficking, and the Media

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THE IMPLICATIONS OF GENDERED AND RACIALIZED TRAFFICKING  
NARRATIVES IN THE NETHERLANDS

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HONORS THESIS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

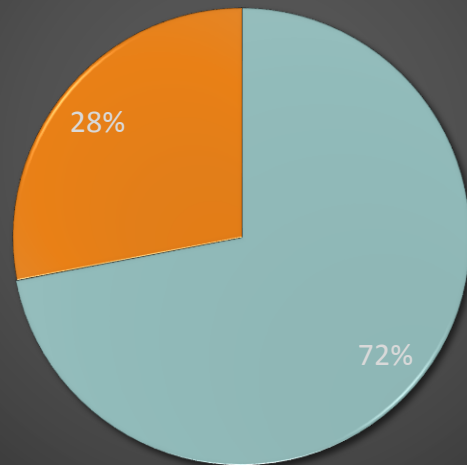
# Outline

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- Context
- Research Puzzle and Question
- Existing Thought
- Thesis
- Research Design
- Findings
- Conclusions
- Implications
- Further Research

# Islam and Immigration in the Netherlands

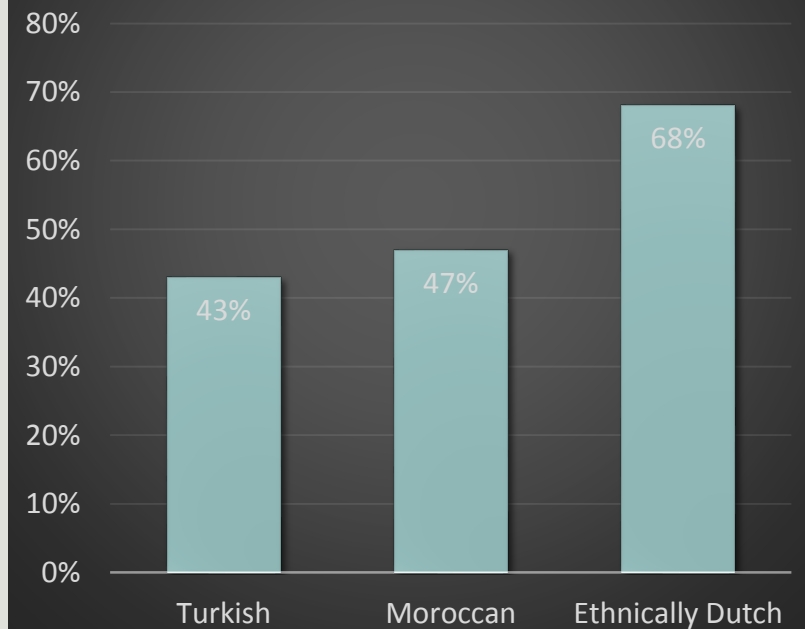
"The Netherlands would be a happier place if there was less immigration"



■ Strongly Agree and Neutral ■ Strongly Disagree

**VS.**

"The Netherlands is hospitable for migrants"



# Islam and Immigration in the Netherlands

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- History of Tolerance
- Rising tension with immigrant population
- Increased Islamophobia after 9/11
- Rise of Islamophobic parties
- Rise of integration policy



# Trafficking Narratives in the Netherlands

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- Human trafficking is another “crisis” for NL
- Anti-trafficking policies
- Loverboys – A connection between Islamophobia and the trafficking frenzy

# The Research Puzzle & Question

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- Historical Tolerance → Uncomfortable Intolerance
- Why has a liberal, Western, tolerant state become increasingly intolerant of Islam and immigrants?
- What role do trafficking narratives play in building this intolerance?

# Existing Thought

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## Argued Against

- Migration Theory
- Tolerance Studies
- "Clash of Civilizations"
- Islam as Misogyny

## Used in Argument

- Reaction to "Clash of Civilization"
- Sexual and Secular Exceptionalism
- Exploitation of Sex Work Panic
- **The Trafficking and Terror Model**



# Existing Thought: “Trafficking and Terror”

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USA in  
1990s

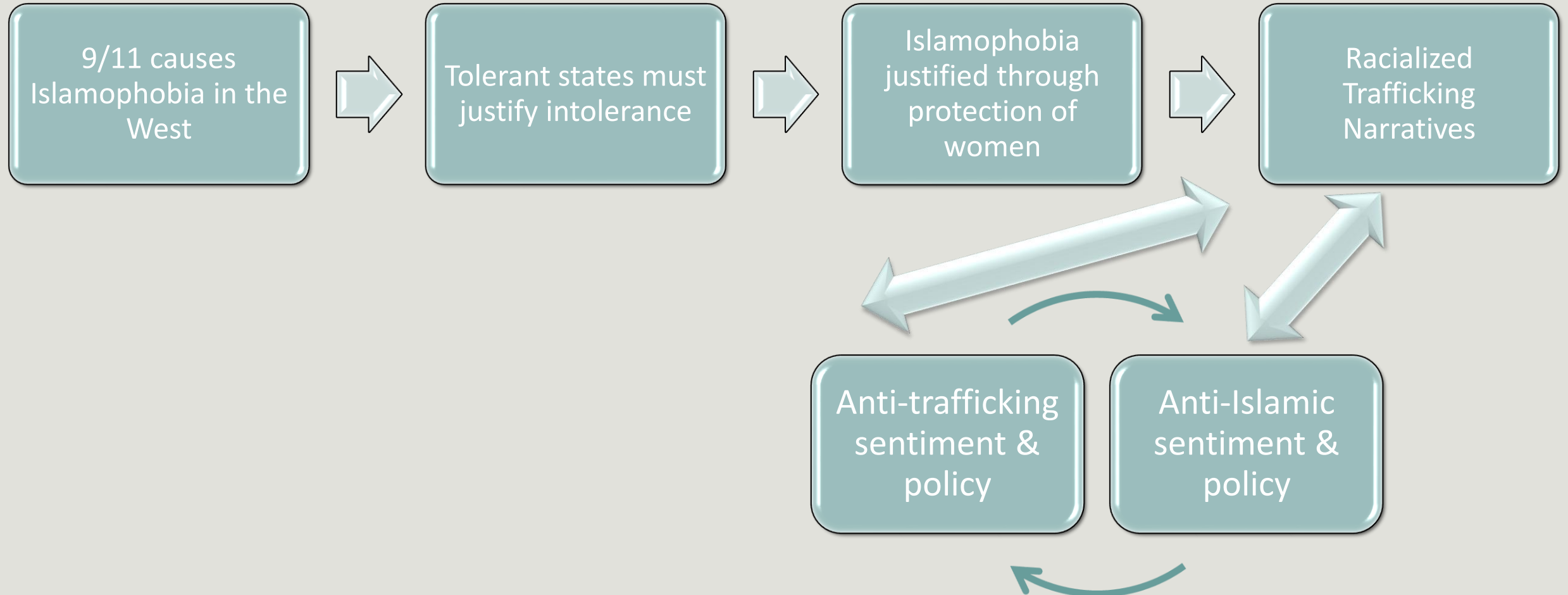
**9/11**

USA in post-  
9/11  
Islamophobia

**Fear of  
Islam  
abroad**

War on  
Terror AND  
War on  
Trafficking

# Thesis

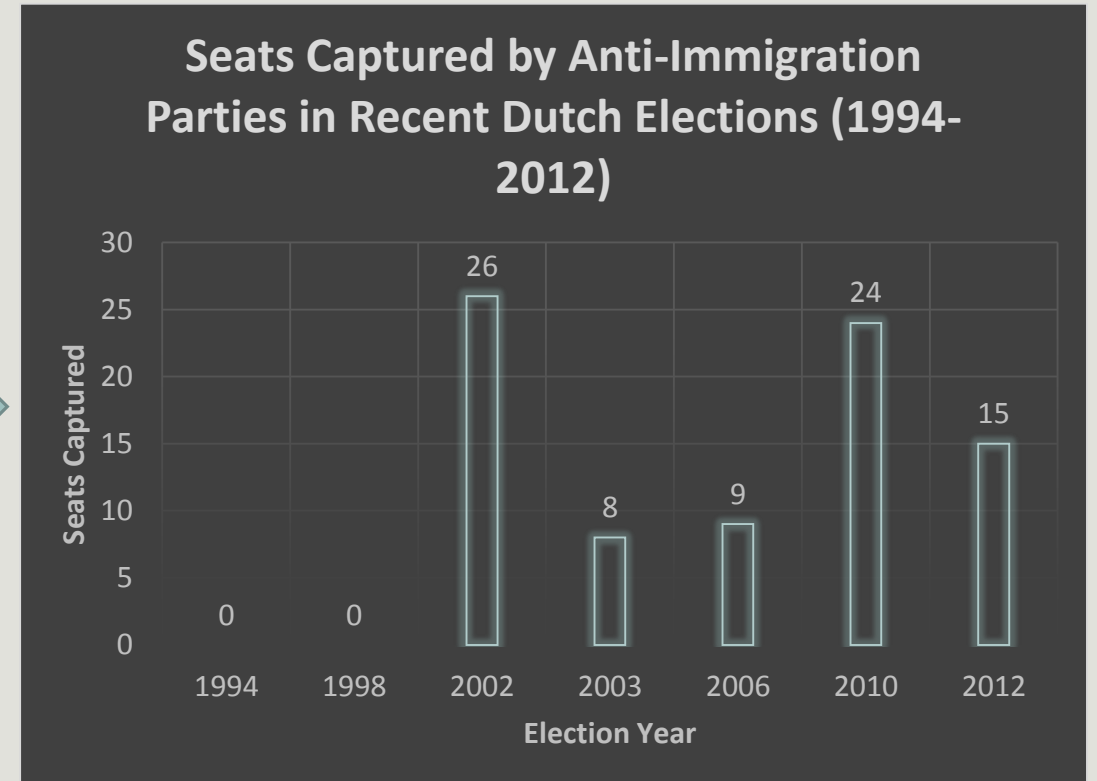
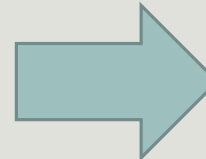
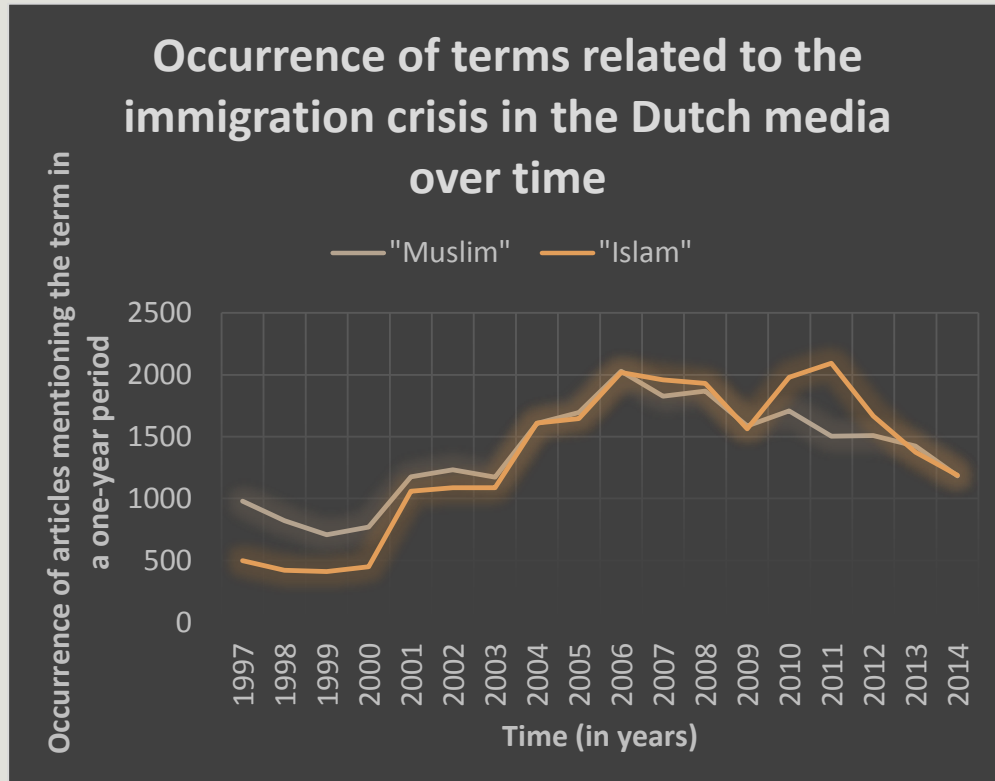


# Research Design

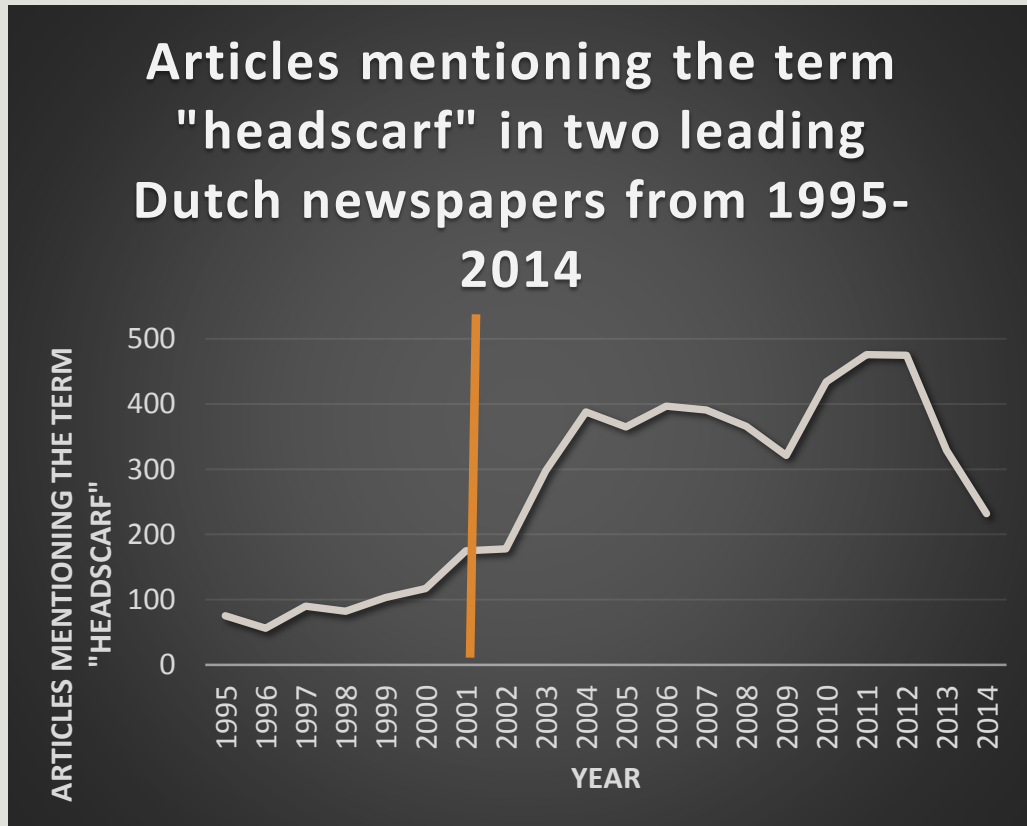
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- Timeframe: 1995-2014 (focusing on 9/11)
- Sources
  - Newspapers
  - Films
  - Books
  - Government data-hubs
- Discourse analysis (qualitative and quantitative)
- Comparative analysis of public opinion over time
- Historical contextualization

# Findings I: 9/11 as a Turning Point

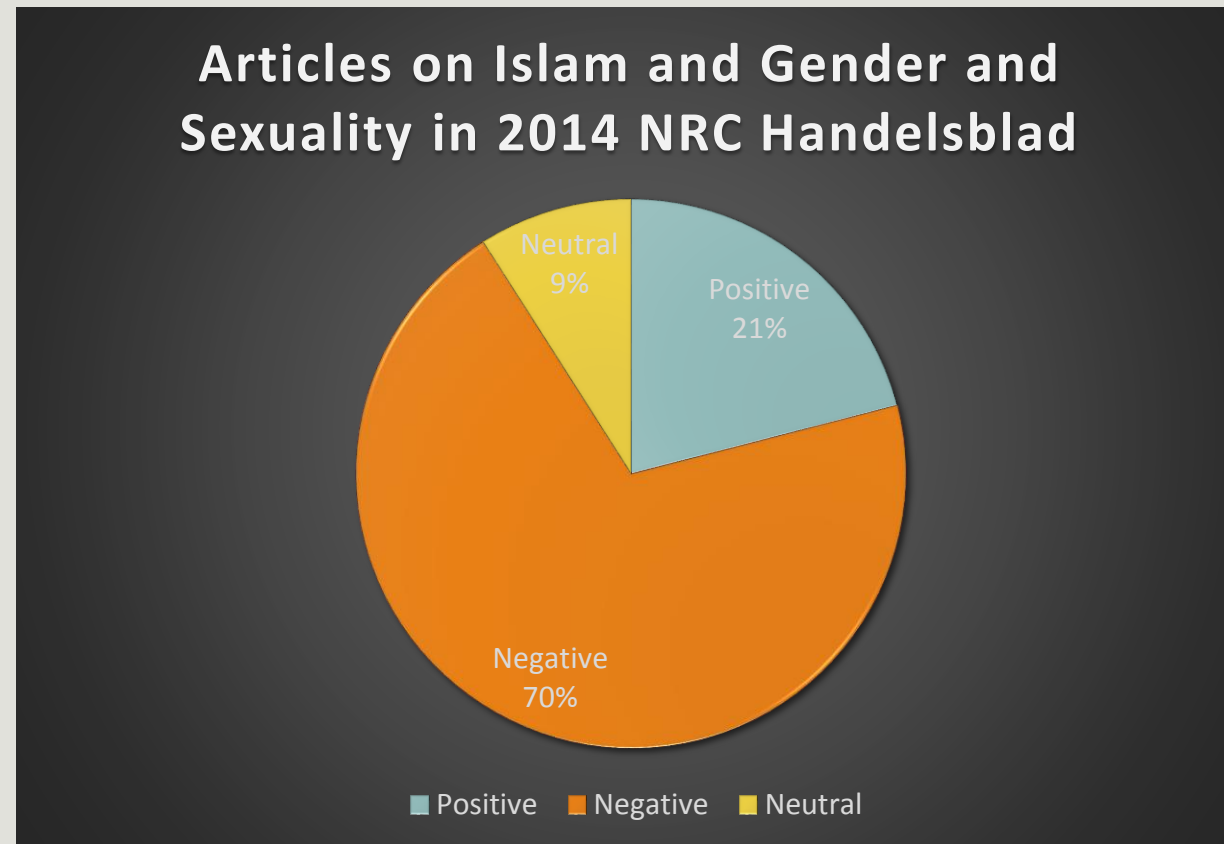


# Findings II: Gender and Sex and the “Clash of Civilization”

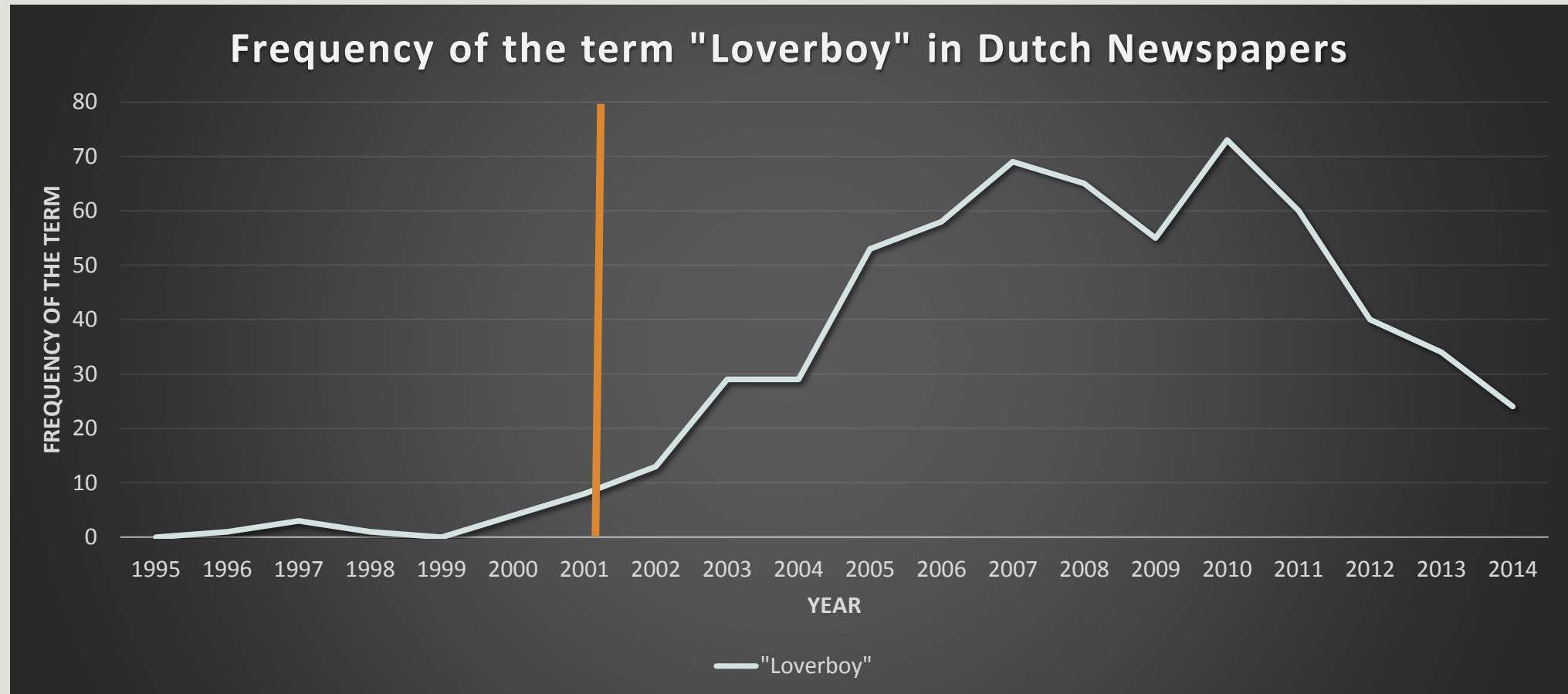


## Findings II: Gender and Sex and the “Clash of Civilization”

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# Findings III: Re-Conceptualizing “Trafficking and Terror”



Angelique was  
forced into  
prostitution by  
a "boyfriend"







# Findings III: Re-Conceptualizing “Trafficking and Terror”

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# Findings III: Re-Conceptualizing “Trafficking and Terror”

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Holland in  
1990s

9/11

Holland with  
post-9/11  
Islamophobia

Fear of  
Islam at  
home

War on  
Immigration  
AND War on  
Trafficking

# Findings III: Re-Conceptualizing “Trafficking and Terror”

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Western  
State in  
1990s

9/11

State with  
post-9/11  
Islamophobia

Localization  
of  
Islamophobia

War on  
Localized  
Policy Issue  
AND War on  
Trafficking

# Conclusions

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- Gender and sexuality → NL “clash of civilizations” **discourse**
- Sex trafficking narratives are used to justify Islamophobic **policies** (immigration in NL, anti-terror in US)
  - The Islam-related policy issue that is important to the country plays out in trafficking discourse
- 9/11 as a turning point
  - Fear of radical Islam feeds fear of Muslims
  - Intolerance is supported by the media

# Implications

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- Immigration Policy/Integration Policy
  - Criminalization of migrants
- Trafficking Policy
  - Sex work – regression of rights
  - Immigration and trafficking
- Potential application of this model elsewhere
  - Shifting the discourse

# Further Research

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- Discourse v Reality
- Application to other cases
- Other trafficking trends in NL
- Policy recommendations for integration, immigration, and trafficking
- Past the point of no return?

Discourses heavily impact lived experience, and by challenging our paradigms, we can have more honest conversations that seek to hold corporations, governments, and even ourselves accountable.

—Pardis Mahdavi, *From Trafficking to Terror*