

Summary

Labour Migration to the Netherlands

The influence of gender and family

Objective and research questions

The policy document 'Towards a Modern Migration Policy' (2006) of the Balkenende II Cabinet initiated a review of the policy on regular migration. The most important amendments proposed in this policy document primarily related to the basic principles of Dutch immigration policy and not so much on the admission grounds for regular migrants. One of the proposals, for instance, concerned a more appealing policy with respect to highly skilled labour migrants in addition to the restrictive policy for low-skilled labour migrants. Since 2005, however, the admission of highly skilled labour migrants has taken place on the basis of the Highly Skilled Migrants Scheme, which provides for an accelerated admission procedure.

In the Parliamentary discussion of the policy document the question was raised whether the review of the policy had disregarded the possible existence of a *gender bias* in the policy, and the relationship between labour migration and family-related migration. In order to contribute to this discussion, this study focused on the following research questions:

- 1 What reasons can be given for the fact that the number of male labour migrants coming to the Netherlands is larger than the number of female labour migrants?
- 2 To what extent has recent labour migration resulted in family-related migration, and to what extent has family-related migration contributed to the fact that recent labour migrants have resided in the Netherlands for a longer period of time?
- 3 What can be said about the level of economic integration of recent labour migrants and their family members?

Sources of data

Various sources of data were used to answer the above-mentioned questions. In the first place, we gathered information about the influx of labour migrants on the basis of migration data of Statistics Netherlands (CBS) on the period 2000-2007. In order to examine to what extent labour migrants from third countries applied for admission on the basis of either the Highly Skilled Migrants Scheme or the Work Permit procedure, we used data from the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) and *UWV Werkbedrijf* (the work placement branch of the Employee Insurance Agency). It concerned the number of work permits granted to highly skilled migrants, and the number of work permits granted with a validity of at least 24 weeks. Finally, using data from the Social Statistical Database of Statistics Netherlands on the period 2000-2006, we gathered information about family-related migration subsequent to the admission of recent

labour migrants. This database was also used to examine the labour market participation of recent labour migrants and their family members.

Gender-specific influx of labour migrants in the Netherlands

In this study, we compared the influx of female labour migrants to that of male labour migrants. The migration data from Statistics Netherlands revealed that in the period 2000-2007 the number of female labour migrants coming to the Netherlands was *smaller* than the number of male labour migrants irrespective of the country of origin. On average, one third of all labour immigrants was women. With respect to female labour migrants originating from the European Union (EU) and the countries of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), where nearly three quarters of the labour migrants came from in 2007, the proportion of women was larger than that among labour migrants from third countries, i.e. 36% compared to 26%.

A comparison of these influx data with those of several other Western countries showed that, on the whole, the proportion of female labour migrants coming to the Netherlands in the period 2000-2007 was somewhat larger than in Canada, Denmark, and Sweden, although several comments must be made in this context. The influx data of Denmark and Sweden did not include labour migrants from the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden), whereas a relatively substantial number of these migrants would probably be women. As a result, the average proportion of female labour migrants migrating to these countries is probably the same or slightly larger than in the Netherlands. Furthermore, the influx data of Canada included 'live-in care-givers'. This ground for admission on the basis of which predominantly female labour migrants are admitted to Canada does not exist in the Netherlands. The influx data of Canada is therefore not fully comparable to those of the Netherlands. However, in contrast to the influx of female labour migrants into the Netherlands, the average proportion of female labour migrants migrating to Canada has shown a consistent upward trend since 2002. This is probably a result of the fact that the Canadian government has since then given attention to the recognition of gender-specific aspects in its immigration policy.

Possible reasons for the proportion of women among labour migrants

From literature on possible causes for differences in the social positions and migration behaviour of men and women, we derived the following factors that could explain why fewer female than male labour migrants migrated to the Netherlands:

- 1 The gender pattern in either the Dutch labour market or the labour markets in the countries of origin; and
- 2 The rights of the family members of labour migrants (in particular the right to work in the Netherlands).

Gender patterns

On the basis of data from the Social Statistical Database, we analysed in which sectors of the Dutch labour market the labour migrants were employed who had migrated to the Netherlands in the period 2000-2005. The analysis concerned a total of 70,464 labour migrants, of which 31% were women. Compared to the proportion of male labour migrants, the proportion of female labour migrants was largest in the 'Public Administration, Education, Healthcare, and Welfare' sector (46%) and smallest in the 'Minerals, Industry, Energy, and Building' sector (18%). In the 'Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing', 'Professional Services and IT', and 'Other' sectors, the proportion of female labour migrants was close to the average of 31%.

The proportion of male/female labour migrants in the above-mentioned labour market sectors was subsequently compared to the proportion of male/female employees. This comparison showed that, to a certain degree, the proportion of female employees in the labour market sectors functioned as a criterion for the maximum proportion of female labour migrants, for in none of the sectors, the average proportion of female labour migrants was larger than the proportion of female employees. The proportion of female labour migrants in the labour market sectors differed, however, by region and country of origin. In all sectors, the proportion of female labour migrants from EU and EFTA countries was larger than the average proportion of female labour migrants, whereas among labour migrants from third countries, the proportion of women was far below the average. Therefore, besides the gender pattern in the Dutch labour market, other factors probably also play a role in the migration of female labour migrants. One of the other factors is the gender pattern in the labour market in the countries of origin.

This report describes the gender pattern in the labour markets in the following eight countries of origin: Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Poland, the United States, Japan, China, and India. It follows that in the Asian countries (Japan, China, and India) women usually perform low-skilled labour, whereas men have higher and better paid positions. In those countries, it is considered unconventional that women educate themselves and pursue a career; they are primarily expected to do the housekeeping and to raise the children. It is therefore not surprising that the proportion of female labour migrants from, for instance, India and Japan appeared to be relatively small. To be admitted as a labour migrant to the Netherlands, persons from third countries must either fulfil the condition of earning a specific income or being employed in science (Highly Skilled Migrants Scheme), or meet a labour demand for which there is no labour supply available from EU countries (Work Permit procedure). Given the social position of women in the above-mentioned Asian countries, the women will be less likely to fulfil one of these conditions than men from the relevant country of origin. In Western coun-

tries, on the other hand, the labour market position of women is largely similar with that in the Netherlands. Women in, for instance, Germany, France and the United States enjoy – often high levels of – education to a comparable extent. In these countries, labour participation of women is even higher than in the Netherlands. Female labour migrants from these countries are therefore more likely to meet the qualifications required for admission to the Netherlands than women originating from the above mentioned Asian countries. In all sectors, however, the proportion of female labour migrants from the United States was smaller than the proportion from Germany and France. This makes it likely that the influx of female labour migrants is also influenced by the rights that family members of labour migrants enjoy, in particular the right to work in the Netherlands (see below).

The rights of family members of labour migrants

A factor that could also have influence on the influx of female labour migrants is labour migration policy. More specifically, we focused on the right of the partner of a labour migrant to perform work in the Netherlands. On the one hand, labour migrants from EU and EFTA countries as well as their partners are free to work in the Netherlands. For labour migrants from the Central and East European countries which joined the EU in 2004 (CEE countries), the EU rules on the free movement of workers came into effect par may 2007. Labour migrants from third countries on the other hand have to apply for a residence and work permit. If a labour migrant got admission to the Netherlands on the basis of the Work Permit procedure and his or her partner wants to work in the Netherlands too, the employer must have a work permit issued by *UWV Werkbedrijf*. This condition could prevent particularly potential female labour migrants from third countries (or rather their partners) from migration, as women – more frequently than men – have partners who consider the restriction of not being allowed to perform work in the country of destination a major obstacle for migration. The proportion of women among labour migrants whose partner is free to work in the Netherlands could therefore be larger than among labour migrants whose partner is obliged to have a work permit. In the period 2000-2005, female labour migrants from third countries and CEE countries would therefore migrate less often with their family members than female labour migrants from EU-16 and EFTA countries.

In order to test this assumption, the labour migrants who entered the Netherlands in the period 2000-2005 were classified by region of origin on the basis of their nationality: EU-16 and EFTA countries, CEE countries, and third countries. As mentioned above, in the period 2000-2005, the partners of the labour migrants from these regions were subject to different rules regarding the right to work. The investigation revealed that among labour migrants from EU-16 and EFTA countries not only

the proportion of women was larger than among labour migrants from third countries, the proportion of female labour migrants from EU-16 and EFTA countries that migrated to the Netherlands with their families also appeared to be larger than that among labour migrants from third countries. The condition attached by the Dutch government to the employment of the partner of labour migrants consequently appeared to limit the influx of particularly female labour migrants from third countries. With respect to labour migrants from CEE countries who in the period 2000-2005 also entered the Netherlands on the basis of a Work Permit procedure, however, the relevant restriction for the labour migrant's partner turned out to have less impact on the influx of female labour migrants. Probably, the affirmative action policy that applied to labour migrants from CEE countries in that period contributed to the fact that a relatively large proportion of female labour migrants migrated to the Netherlands with their partners despite the fact that both were obliged to have a work permit.

In addition, we assumed that due to the restriction to perform work experienced by the partner of a labour migrant who got admission to the Netherlands on the basis of the Work Permit procedure, female labour migrants in comparison to male labour migrants would use the Highly Skilled Migrants Scheme more often (than the Work Permit procedure) because, in that case, the labour migrant's partner is free to work in the Netherlands. However, statistics from the IND and *UWV Werkbedrijf* revealed that in the period 2005-2008, female labour migrants from third countries made equal use of the Highly Skilled Migrants Scheme as male labour migrants.

Labour migration and family-related migration

The study not only paid attention to the role of family-related migration in connection with the entry of female labour migrants, it also examined to what extent recent labour migration resulted in family-related migration, and to what extent this family-related migration contributed to the fact that labour migrants stayed longer in the Netherlands. With respect to labour migrants who entered the Netherlands in 2000 and 2001 ($n = 31,202$), it was examined how many family migrants had joined them in the period 2000-2006. In general, the degree of family-related migration subsequent to the entry of the group of labour migrants examined was limited, although it must be noted that the number of *registered* family migrants of labour migrants from EU-16 and EFTA countries appeared to be unrealistically small.

The majority of the family migrants joined the labour migrant within two years. They arrived in the same year as the labour migrant or one year later. The average number of family migrants that joined a labour migrant with the nationality of a CEE country was relatively low in those years (0.45) and smaller than the average number of family migrants of labour

migrants from third countries (0.75). However, the average number of family members that joined Polish labour migrants was 0.66. As a result, the family-related migration subsequent to the entry of Polish labour migrants was larger than the family-related migration subsequent to the entry of labour migrants with Chinese (0.65) and Indian (0.55) nationalities. Only with respect to Japanese labour migrants, the average number of family migrants that joined them within five years after entry was more than one family migrant.

In order to find out whether the entry of family members influenced the term of residence of labour migrants, the group of labour migrants that entered the Netherlands in 2000 was followed in time (until 2007). From this it emerged that labour migrants who stayed in the Netherlands on their own were relatively more likely to leave the Netherlands again than labour migrants who lived in the Netherlands with their families. The chance of emigration was highest among labour migrants from EU-16 and EFTA countries who resided in the Netherlands without their families. Among labour migrants without families from countries whose citizens are obliged to have a work permit – which included the CEE countries in the relevant period – the chance of emigration was slightly smaller, but considerably higher than among labour migrants who resided in the Netherlands with their families. With respect to the latter group, it was found that approximately half the number of labour migrants from EU-16 and EFTA countries who had come to the Netherlands with their families, still resided in the Netherlands six years after their entry. The same applied to labour migrants with nationalities of third countries. With respect to labour migrants from CEE countries who resided in the Netherlands with their families, the chance of emigration was smallest. After six years, almost 70% of them still resided in the Netherlands.

Economic integration of recent labour migrants

In order to analyse the labour market participation of recent labour migrants and their family members, we followed an immigration cohort in time. The cohort followed consisted of non-Dutch labour migrants and their family members who had migrated to the Netherlands in 2000 and who had resided in the Netherlands at least until 2007. The cohort contained a total of 3,801 persons. As expected, labour participation by labour migrants was relatively high in the years subsequent to their immigration. It was, however, less high than one would have expected. After five years, one out of five labour migrants no longer had paid employment. Labour participation of the family members of the labour migrants was, as expected, lower than that of the labour migrants themselves. The percentage of family migrants that performed paid employment – irrespective of the nationalities of the family migrants – did not approach the percentage of employed persons in the total population between 30 and 60 years of age residing in the Netherlands.

By means of a multivariate analysis, the determinants of the chance for recent labour migrants and their family members residing in the Netherlands of having paid employment were identified. For this purpose the immigration cohorts 2000-2004 were followed in the period 2000-2006, with immigrants who emigrated again, or who dropped out of the panel for other reasons, being included for the years that they resided in the Netherlands. Because in the descriptive analysis hardly any differences had been found between the respective groups of nationalities (EU-16 and EFTA nationals, persons with nationalities of CEE countries, and third country nationals), the specific nationalities of the immigrants were included as independent variable in the analysis model for the multivariate analysis.

The multivariate analysis revealed that – with respect to the male migrants – out of the respective nationalities (Germans, French, British, Poles, Americans, Japanese, Chinese, and Indians) the American male migrants had work least often. Japanese male migrants, on the other hand, were relatively often employed. The odds ratio of them being employed to not being employed was as much as 3.8 times higher than compared to American male migrants. The other respective nationalities also remained far behind this ratio. With an odds ratio of 1.9, the male migrants with German nationality approached their Japanese counterparts of the same sex most.

The results of the multivariate analysis with respect to female migrants who had come to the Netherlands as labour migrants or family members of labour migrants provided an entirely different picture. Where Japanese male migrants had by far most frequently paid employment, their fellow-countrywomen had paid employment least frequently. Their relative odds ratio for having a job was even less than half the ratio for American (and Indian) female migrants, whose labour participation stayed far behind the odds ratio of the other nationalities. Polish female migrants were relatively most frequently employed, followed by the female migrants with German nationality.

Future developments in labour migration to the Netherlands

As predicting future numbers of migrants is very difficult and the uncertainty margins are consequently very large, we limited ourselves to a descriptive analysis of future developments in labour migration to the Netherlands. In our description of future developments, we made a distinction between the labour migration – and family-related migration – of highly and low-skilled persons. In sum, we think that the immigration of highly skilled persons to the Netherlands will slightly increase in the short term (until 2020). This increase will not be very substantial, and could in the long term even turn into a small decrease. Family-related migration subsequent to the labour migration of highly skilled persons will probably

not have a large influence (in numbers) on the Dutch population dynamics.

The past few years, migration of low-skilled persons to the Netherlands has primarily been an intra-EU matter with the CEE countries being the most important countries of origin. The strong demographic ageing in Central and Eastern Europe and the converging welfare levels between Eastern and Western Europe will result in a decreasing number of Central and East European employees who are willing to work in labour-intensive sectors. As a result, labour migration from Central and East European countries to the Netherlands will in the future not take on much larger proportions than the current level. Therefore, the influx of low-skilled labour migrants from (non-Western) third countries will probably increase.