

Justitiële verkenningen

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Immigration: between policy and reality

Summaries

Migration policies in a historical perspective

L. Lucassen

In the era before state restriction and regulation (before 1914), migration was mainly determined by the demand for labour. This mechanism was disturbed by increasing welfare arrangements from the 1960 s onwards. From then on states increasingly tried to keep out poor migrants whom they feared would overburden their welfare systems. States may have been more or less indifferent to migration before the Great War, this was not the case for authorities on a local level. Especially in the early modern era, aliens policies were formulated and put into practice by cities. Although many migrants were welcomed, local authorities tried to keep out destitute migrants. The most important mechanism was allowing newcomers only very gradually into the local welfare system. Those who stayed and who, after a number of years, had earned their own money, could be granted citizenship. Those who failed, were expelled or had left the city already on their own initiative. Although too crude and harsh to replicate in the present on a national scale, states might try to think of more flexible systems of in- and exclusion.

Migration as a global affair

H.W. Overbeek

In this article the author argues that discussions about recent international migration issues must be seen against the backdrop of a general understanding of the nature of the globalisation process. The essence of globalization, it is argued, is a qualitative process of deepening commodification, obstructed and sometimes reversed by the very contradictions it generates. One of its key dimensions is the tendential emergence of a single world labour market. It is pointed out that there is no such thing as a comprehensive institutional framework for the governance of this world labour market, as there are frameworks for the governance of the trading and financial worlds. The regime governing international movements of people to be constructed, it is argued, should preferably be placed under the auspices of the United Nations System in order to safeguard a minimum of transparent and democratic governance.

The myth of restrictive immigration policy

J. Doornik

Since the end of the Second World War, Western Europe in general and The Netherlands in particular have attracted numerous immigrants. In most instances their arrival was not the result of active immigration policies but the by-product of economic and political developments. Subsequent waves of immigration time and again were perceived as unwelcome anomalies requiring short-term, restrictive, policy responses. As a consequence, realities have remained obscured for a prolonged period of time: Western European countries form a de facto region of immigration but generally failed to devise adequate policy responses. Instead focus almost completely lay on preventing the arrival of unsolicited immigrants leaving an application for asylum as virtually the only option to gain legal entry into those countries. This article argues that such a one-sided and restrictive policy response by receiving states (as shown by the Dutch case) by now has come near to bankruptcy. In addition, developments in neighbouring countries and at the level of the European Union will make a revision of Dutch immigration policies unavoidable. The likely alternative is to be found in a more liberal immigration regime, which can do justice to the growing mobility in the present-day world and leaves behind the assumption that immigration is an aberration merely requiring stricter rules for it to go away.

Labour immigration; winners, losers and unpaid bills

H. Roodenburg

Should the Netherlands encourage labour migration in order to deal with shortages on the labour market and the cost of population ageing? The evidence on the economic impact of immigration is

however not conclusive. A positive outcome for the national economy is far from certain and moreover there appear to be winners and losers. The previous wave of labour migration in the sixties and early seventies of the twentieth century has left the taxpayer with a number of unpaid bills. Labour migration seems to be more suitable to countries with a frugal welfare state and a low population density. A recent assessment of the cost of ageing in the Netherlands has shown that immigration is not necessary to solve the problem. To conclude: a cautious policy with respect to labour migration seems to be a wise attitude.

Labour immigration; good for us?

J. van Ours

The Netherlands faces current problems in terms of labor shortages and future problems because of an aging population. A general increase of the inflow of migrant workers is no solution to these problems. However, a selective immigration policy as a solution to hard-to-fill vacancies may be worthwhile pursuing.

Failing return policy; the problem of rejected asylum seekers

T. Wijn-Maatman

Rejected asylum seekers must leave the Netherlands to return to their countries of origin. In reality however, most rejected asylum seekers leave their reception facilities with an unknown destination. The return policy still lacks terms to make return a real perspective for rejected asylum seekers. It takes little notice of the problems their return presents in the countries of origin and it neglects the expectations of asylum seekers. For instance, many rejected asylum seekers confronted with return, have been in the Netherlands for many years. For local communities, the number of asylum seekers leaving the reception facilities and choosing for an illegality, is causing problems. But even if the terms would be better, many rejected asylum seekers would prefer illegality over return.

Discourse on immigration and asylum; the French and Dutch parliamentary debates

I. van der Valk

Using a discourse analytical approach, this article investigates Dutch and French parliamentary debates on ethnic issues (1996-1997) for properties that typically occur in discourse oriented towards the manifestations of ethnic dominance and/or exclusion. The findings of this study show great differences between the examined countries. Structures, strategies and semantic properties that refer to ethnic dominance and/or exclusion occur much more in French parliamentary discourse than in the Dutch debates. While Dutch parliamentary discourse is more oriented towards consensus, French discourse is characterized by Left-Right polarization. The systematic efforts of the French Right to delegitimize the Left ultimately lead to overemphasizing anti-immigration stances. While the Dutch debates are more technical, the French are more ideological. More common for both countries is a strategy of positive self-presentation. Local and global strategies of negative other-presentation however, mainly occur in the discourse of the French Right which is characterized by a perspective of fraud and abuse while the discourse of the French Left is characterized by a perspective of human rights and anti-racism. Exactly these subjects, fraud and abuse and the one hand and human rights and anti-racism on the other, are more or less absent in the Dutch data.