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# Amsterdam: An attractive creative knowledge region?

The view of transnational migrants

ACRE report 7.1



Marco Bontje  
Heike Pethe  
Frank Petrasch  
Katrin Tuppinger

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## **The view of transnational migrants**

### **ACRE report 7.1**

Marco Bontje  
Heike Pethe  
Frank Petrasch  
Katrin Tuppinger



Accommodating Creative Knowledge – Competitiveness of European Metropolitan  
Regions within the Enlarged Union

Amsterdam 2009  
AMIDSt, University of Amsterdam



## ACRE

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In our research project ‘Accommodating Creative Knowledge (ACRE), which started in 2006 and will run until 2010, we analyse the spatial, socio-economic and socio-cultural conditions that determine whether a city-region is attractive for workers, investors and companies in the creative and knowledge-intensive economy and whether a city-region is able to compete with other city-regions for those workers, investors and companies. The Amsterdam Metropolitan Area is one of the 13 European city-regions in the ACRE project. After critically assessing the state of the art in academic debates on creative and knowledge-intensive industries, the ‘creative class’ and city-regional competitiveness (work package 1), we have analysed the historical development path and the most recent socio-economic and socio-cultural developments of the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area and made an inventory of relevant national, regional and local policies to increase the city-regional attractiveness and competitiveness for the creative knowledge economy (work package 2). We continued with comparing the historic development paths and current situation of our 13 case study regions, resulting in a typology (work package 3). This comparative step was followed by a series of empirical analyses per city-region, aimed at what we consider the main target groups of local, regional and national policies to stimulate or facilitate the emergence of ‘creative knowledge regions’. Three analyses, each aiming at a different target group (though partly overlapping each other) have been completed: a questionnaire among employees, freelancers and self-employed in a selection of creative and knowledge-intensive industries; interviews with managers of a selection of creative and knowledge-intensive industries; and interviews with transnational highly skilled migrants. In earlier reports we have addressed the creative knowledge workers (Bontje et al., 2008a) and the managers (Bontje et al., 2008b). In this report, we will focus on the transnational highly-skilled migrants.

After an overview of the most relevant academic debates, concepts and approaches of transnational migration in general and transnational highly-skilled migration in particular (Chapter 2), our analysis starts with an account of the Dutch national context. Chapter 3 briefly outlines the recent dynamics and current situation of the Dutch economy, focusing mostly on its highly open and internationalised character. The Netherlands has a small internal market, a strong export orientation, and is meanwhile home to an impressive amount of global and European headquarters and branch offices of leading multinational companies (considering the country’s modest size). While the current deep crisis will no doubt have serious impacts on the Dutch economy, including mass layoffs (especially in the financial sector) and possible closure or departure of several multinational headquarters, the long-term expectation is that the number of multinational headquarters and branch offices will grow further. This will probably go along with a further growth of the number and share of transnational highly-skilled migrants, of which a significant share works at those offices. However, as already discussed in Chapter 2, transnational highly-skilled migrants also enter the Netherlands at their own initiative instead of being seconded by multinationals. This includes for example highly skilled migrants with knowledge or skills that are in short supply

at the Dutch labour market, and people who initially migrated for other reasons like study or a relationship.

Chapter 4 discusses recent trends in transnational highly-skilled migration in the Netherlands in an internationally comparative perspective. We have used OECD data on highly-skilled migration into and out of the OECD member countries. These data demonstrate that the Netherlands indeed has received a significant flow of transnational highly-skilled migrants, but it only occupies a rather modest position in the ranking of OECD countries in this respect. There is also a significant outflow of Dutch highly-skilled abroad, but this outflow is largely compensated by the inflow of transnational highly-skilled migrants from across the globe. Next to predictable countries of origin like the EU countries, the US, Japan and increasingly also India and China, large groups of highly-skilled also migrate from the former Dutch colonies Suriname and Indonesia. At the start of the chapter, recent trends and current situation of Dutch migration and integration policies are outlined. This policy review reveals amongst others that the focus of migration and integration policies over the last decades has shifted back and forth between more liberal and more limiting policies, and that specific attention to highly-skilled migrants has only emerged very recently.

Chapter 5 focuses on the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area, our case study region. Within the Netherlands, the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area is the most international labour market area and therewith one of the main attractors of multinational companies and transnational highly skilled migrants. Within the region, the strongest concentrations of highly-skilled migrants are found in the core city Amsterdam and its neighbouring suburban municipalities. We should specifically mention the city of Amstelveen, directly south of Amsterdam, which has the highest share of migrants from advanced capitalist countries (18%), many of which are transnational highly-skilled migrants. This city is home to several large Japanese companies and a large part of their personnel (often from Japan) lives close to their companies in the same city. This has meanwhile also contributed to a 'Japanese infrastructure' including schools, shops and personal services. While Amsterdam, Amstelveen and their surroundings are generally considered quite attractive places to live and work for transnational highly-skilled migrants, the housing market can be problematic for them, especially for those who are not seconded but come to the region at their own initiative. Local and regional policies for transnational highly-skilled migrants have recently gained a higher priority. However, the focus of those policies so far seems to be exclusively on the 'expats', those migrants seconded by their companies, and largely ignore the other groups of transnational migrants that are at least as important for the city-regional economy.

Chapter 7 reports on the main results of our interviews with transnational migrants. Next to these 27 semi-structured interviews (more details on our research methods in Chapter 6), we also interviewed 6 experts involved in recruiting and/or facilitating transnational highly-skilled migrants in the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area. The transnational highly-skilled migrants we interviewed came from Europe (15 respondents), Asia (7, from Japan, China and India), Latin America (4) and the US (1). One-third of the respondents were seconded by their company, two-thirds came on their own initiative. Within the latter group, we can make a further division: it includes a group that came to the city-region looking for job opportunities, but also a group that initially came to the city-region for other reasons. Most of them either came for study and found a job afterwards, or because of a relationship or friends in the city-

region. Even within the category of seconded persons, not all of them meet the classical expat image. While this group does include those who ‘came because they had to’ or because they saw a foreign secondment as a good career opportunity, we also spoke a migrant who was asked to set up a new branch office from scratch, and a migrant who initially was seconded but decided to switch to a self-employed career soon afterwards. Once more, just like in our earlier analyses of workers and managers in creative knowledge industries, we were struck by the diversity of individual, personal stories of our respondents. While we could roughly group them in the three categories just mentioned, we should acknowledge that to a large extent the story of each respondent represents a personal trajectory in its own right. Once more we noticed that life and career trajectories can only be explained systematically to a limited extent; we should not underestimate the role of coincidental meetings, ad-hoc decisions, personal relationships and unexpected life events.

Settling in the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area was not always easy for our respondents. Not surprisingly, housing was often mentioned as a problem. Seconded migrants of course were often accommodated by their employers, but that did not mean they were always satisfied about their housing. For those that came on their own initiative, already knowing people in the region often made finding accommodation, if only for limited time and maybe sometimes sub-standard, a lot easier. Another common settling obstacle is Dutch bureaucracy, especially for those from outside the EU. Visa, work permits, municipal administrations, getting bank accounts etc. were more difficult than hoped or expected for several respondents, even for some of the seconded migrants. The recent opening of the Expat Center in Amsterdam was probably an important step forward, but there is still room for improvement on this dimension of welcoming highly-skilled migrants.

Most respondents considered the city-region a good setting for their work, though most limited their comments mainly to the city where they worked (most often Amsterdam or Amstelveen) and less to the region as a whole. Especially those working for larger multinational companies appreciated the nearness and connectivity of Schiphol Airport. Differences of course appeared depending on the size of the company, ranging from thousands of employees to free-lance or self-employed, and work features related to the type of work and the economic branch the respondents worked in. While for the creatives, mostly working either in small companies or on their own, networks with (potential) clients or business partners and with creative colleagues in city and city-region were often essential, this was much less true for migrants working in large knowledge-intensive companies. For them, networking and collaboration most often took place either in their own office or between offices across the globe, as well as with clients that were most often outside the Netherlands. Positive features mentioned by some respondents were the reputation and public awareness of Dutch architecture and design; the level of internationalisation of the Dutch economy and society; and the way business is being done. Complaints were less frequent, but especially the Latin American migrants apparently were less satisfied about their salary compared to their home countries.

The Amsterdam Metropolitan Area is generally also considered an attractive living environment, but again, most of the ‘living experience’ refers only to small parts of the region: mainly Amsterdam and Amstelveen, and maybe even only small sub-areas within

those cities. Our respondents were less positive about the (man-made) nature surrounding the cities. Socially, quite some respondents mentioned problems in getting in touch with the Dutch because of differences in culture, norms, values or habits. The reputation of Amsterdam as a supposedly tolerant city was also frequently questioned. However, most respondents did not feel excluded from the host society, since they did have many social contacts at work and/or with other transnational highly-skilled migrants. Positive features of living in or close to Amsterdam were the short distances between home, work, leisure and amenities; the prominent role of the bicycle in local and regional traffic; and the combination of 'small city charm' with 'global city features'. Only some respondents were negative about Amsterdam's amenities, missing the real top department stores or luxury services for example. Some others considered the city and the region relatively expensive when they looked at price-quality relations in for example housing size or costs of daily expenses.

It is hard to arrive at general policy recommendations for such a diverse group as transnational highly-skilled migrants. Actually, the main recommendation probably lies in acknowledging this diversity: expats are only a small sub-category and as mentioned before, not all transnational highly-skilled migrants come to the city-region with job or career opportunities in mind. Our small respondent sample already points at this diversity; it might even be a more varied group than we could capture in our interviews. Looking at our respondent's opinions, the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area is an attractive location to live and work for transnational highly-skilled migrants. Policy attention for them is clearly on the rise and much is already being done to make the city-region even more attractive for them. Still, there is sufficient room for improvement in basic 'welcoming infrastructure' like information provision and lowering bureaucratic thresholds. If the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area is planning to develop an integral transnational highly-skilled migrant strategy, it should not only focus on the expats but also on those that are maybe not yet transnational highly-skilled migrants but have the potential to become so in the next years: international students and those with promising skills that came to the region for personal, not career reasons.

## 1.1 Introduction to the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area

The Amsterdam Metropolitan Area is the largest metropolitan area of the Netherlands with about 2 million inhabitants and about 1 million jobs. As earlier reports in the ACRE project have demonstrated (Bontje and Sleutjes, 2007; Bontje et al. 2008a; Bontje et al., 2008b), the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area is the leading concentration of creative and knowledge-intensive industries in the Netherlands and generally considered as an attractive place to live and work for workers, managers and entrepreneurs in the creative knowledge economy. Its main strengths lie in international connectivity, a broad and diversified economic base, the presence of several higher education and other advanced knowledge institutions of national and partly also international reputation, and the name ‘Amsterdam’ which is known worldwide. Its main shortcomings are those that may apply to any economically successful region in the advanced capitalist economy: traffic congestion, lack of space for new and expanding companies, and a problematic housing market. It is hard to find an affordable home in and close to Amsterdam: the social housing sector is hard to get access to and the private rental and owner-occupied sectors are small and expensive compared to other European cities.

Amsterdam and its metropolitan area have a long tradition of international trade and migration. Especially the core city Amsterdam has already attracted international migrants and companies for centuries. In addition, many native Dutch, Amsterdam-based companies and entrepreneurs have also already had an international orientation for centuries. However, the presence and importance of international migrants and multinational companies has probably never been as crucial as in the most recent decades. Despite the serious setback of the current worldwide crisis, affecting Amsterdam’s strength in the creative knowledge economy in general and the financial sector in particular, the importance of these international migrants and multinational companies for the economic fortune of the region is likely to grow further in the next decades. International migrants come to Amsterdam for various reasons and with various skills and human capital. In this report, we focus mostly on a category of international migrants that is expected to be very important for the regional economy: highly skilled migrants.

In the global economic competition between metropolitan regions, the attractiveness of these regions as places to live and work becomes increasingly important as a report by the Boston Consulting Group (2008) pointed out last year. The availability of employees developed as the most pivotal point for the companies, when they decide to allocate branches abroad. If employees conceive the living environment as difficult, companies face the loss of personnel. Companies in Hong Kong, for example, experience a loss of their educated work force due to environmental problems. a survey in the Netherlands, which showed that immigration related paper work, the quality of the health system, availability and quality of kindergartens and

international schools as well as the difficult search for accommodation are seen as major obstacles in the Amsterdam region.

In an earlier ACRE report, Bontje and Sleutjes (2007) reported on earlier surveys, in which the most negative aspects of Amsterdam turned out to be the high personnel costs and the high costs of housing. In general, Amsterdam is known as an expensive city: in 2005, the city even ranked 24<sup>th</sup> on the list of most expensive cities of the world. In 2006, Amsterdam had fallen back to place 41, however, mainly because of the increasing costs of life in cities in Eastern Asia. Meanwhile, increasing traffic problems (jams) had caused the city to fall back one place in the ranking of most liveable cities in the world to number 13 in 2006 (<http://www.os.amsterdam.nl>; Cushman and Wakefield, 2006; KPMG, 2006). The position of Amsterdam seems to have deteriorated since then. In a study about the attractiveness of the Netherlands for headquarters, the Boston Consulting Group explains: *“In particular the factors accessibility, (traffic jams), crime and air pollution have worsened in the last years. Interestingly enough these are factors which do not influence the management of companies directly, but which are important for the attractiveness of Amsterdam for employees“* .

The events of ‘9-11’ and the rapidly increasing popularity emergence of populist politicians immediately afterwards have increased the tensions between ethnic groups, especially between the native Dutch and the Moroccan community. The murder of Pim Fortuyn, the most influential of these populist politicians, in 2002, and the murder of the controversial movie director Theo van Gogh in 2004 have only added to these tensions. The tougher immigration and integration regime resulting in this climate of decreasing tolerance made the Netherlands much less popular among foreign migrants, including higher educated expatriates, for some years. Meanwhile, however, the Dutch government has returned to more migrant-friendly policies in general, and for highly skilled migrants in particular. We will discuss these policies in Chapter 4.

How do high-skilled migrants in creative and knowledge-intensive industries experience the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area? Do they feel comfortable with their living and working circumstances? For which reasons did they select Amsterdam or the city-region as their destination? How long are they planning to stay, and which factors are influencing the decision to stay or to go? These questions will be answered in this report, based on secondary statistical material as well as on the results of 27 interviews with high-skilled migrants in a selection of creative and knowledge-intensive industries.

## **1.2 Structure of the report**

This report will start with an overview of recent theoretical debates concerning highly-skilled migrants in general and the importance of this migrant category for the creative knowledge economy in particular (Chapter 2). We will discuss Florida’s conception of the creative class as a highly mobile class, not only easily moving within countries but also across international borders and even continental borders. We will connect this debate to the classic notions of ‘brain drain’ and ‘brain gain’ and the emergence of a new paradigm of transnational migration of the highly-skilled. We will then move to the analytical part of the report, starting with quantitative data on the recent dynamics of the economy of the Netherlands as a whole and



our case study area, the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area, in particular (Chapter 3). In this brief economic development review, the focus is on the internationalisation of the Dutch and the Amsterdam city-regional economy and on the growing importance of transnational highly-skilled migration for national and regional economic development. Chapter 4 then presents facts and figures on transnational highly-skilled migration to the Netherlands. The Dutch situation is discussed from an international comparative perspective, making use of recent OECD data. Next to this, the recent developments in Dutch migration and integration policies are critically discussed. In Chapter 5, the available data on transnational migrants in general and highly-skilled migrants in particular are discussed for the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area. We also pay attention to policies for highly-skilled migrants and the housing situation of these migrants. In Chapter 6, we introduce the qualitative part of our analysis and explain how we selected our respondents and how we set up our interviews. Chapter 7 presents the main results from our 27 interviews with highly-skilled migrants working in a selection of creative and knowledge-intensive industries. We asked about their motivation(s) to move to the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area; the extent to which they are satisfied about their current working and living circumstances; their future plans and to what extent this would imply a longer stay in the region; and recommendations they might have to local, regional or national policy-makers to improve the attractiveness of the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area for transnational highly-skilled migrants. We complete this report with the overall conclusions and policy recommendations in Chapter 8.



## 2 THEORIES OF MIGRATION: THE CASE OF HIGHLY SKILLED MIGRANTS<sup>1</sup>

For a better understanding of transnational migration in creative and knowledge intensive industries in the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area it is important to have a look on recent international migration research and its theories. Migration to Europe in the past 20 to 25 years differs in form and consequences from earlier population movements across national borders. New types of migration and new forms of transnational migration can be observed in most countries in the EU, including the Netherlands. Older approaches of migration research do not seem to describe current migration processes properly. Especially the migration of highly skilled workers shows specific characteristics which require new descriptions.

There is no consistent theory of migration; on the contrary, migration research is characterised by a wide range of theories. Classical approaches basically deal with economic factors to explain migration processes on the macro-level or decisions to migrate on the micro-level. But the changes of migration processes since the 1990s cannot be described appropriately by classical theories. Hence new approaches try to explain contemporary migration structures. They point out the embeddedness of migrants in social networks and try to focus on the meso-level of migration in form of exchange processes between social spaces. In this chapter classical approaches of migration research and new theories will be described which focus on labour migration in general. Afterwards there will be a description of approaches which deal with migration of highly skilled in particular. This also includes Florida's account of the 'creative class'. His perception of this 'class' as being 'hyper-mobile' is one of the most contested elements of his creative class thesis. Finally it will be discussed which approaches are appropriate to describe the movement of highly skilled migrants to the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area.

### 2.1 Classical theories of labour migration

Classical theories of migration interpret migration processes which are seen as unidirectional with definite countries of origin and destination areas. Migration processes are explained as a consequence of economic disparities and adverse conditions on which individuals react and decide to migrate.

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<sup>1</sup> This section has been written by the ACRE Leipzig team (Bastian Lange, Juliane Schröder and Kornelia Ehrlich, Leibniz Institute of Regional Geography) and Amsterdam team (Marco Bontje and Heike Pethe, University of Amsterdam). The section is common to all ACRE reports within Work Package 7.

### 2.1.1 *Push-pull-model*

The emergence of international migration can be explained by correlations between countries of origin and host societies. Everett (see Lee, 1972), worked out a push-pull-model which states that there are push-factors in the regions of origin and pull-factors in the destination area, which encourage migration. There are also intervening factors like spatial distance or migration laws and personal facts which influence decisions to migrate. This approach considers not only economic factors like economic disparities but also social factors like conflicts or the attempt to escape from danger (Bürkner and Heller, 2008, p. 38; Haug, 2000, p. 8; Kneer, 1996).

### 2.1.2 *Neoclassical theories*

Neoclassical theories are based on the push-pull-model. Macro-economic approaches focus on economic factors like economic growth (see Lewis, 1954, see Todaro, 1976). It is assumed that disparities between places of production and labour markets – namely disparities of wage level as well as labour supply and demand for labour – lead to migration. Migration is seen as the attempt to reach a macro-economic equilibrium. Countries with work intensive sectors are characterised by low wages and countries with capital intensive sectors by high wages. These wage differentials cause migration to the areas where the income level is higher. Thus the labour supply lowers and wages increase in ‘poorer’ countries while labour supply increases and therefore wages lower in ‘richer’ countries. At the same time economic and human capital flows towards the ‘poorer’ regions, which are beginning to develop capital intensive sectors. Migration abates when economic disparities vanish. This disregards that there are other factors like the establishment of migrant communities in host societies which may encourage further migration (Haug, 2000, p. 2f, 11f; Bürkner and Heller, 2008, p. 38f).

Macro-economic theory has its counterpart in micro-economic approaches. Here the focus is on the individual migrant. As individuals they opt for migration by rational cost-benefit calculations. Migration is interpreted as investment in order to maximise economic utilities. Individual features, social conditions or technologies which lower the costs of migration enhance the probability of migration. The amount of the expected benefits determines the extent of migration flows. The higher the income level in the destination area in comparison to the earning in the home region, the lower the costs of migration, and/or the longer the remaining years in professional life, the higher the probability of migration. It is assumed that - in comparison to highly skilled - there is a higher incentive to migrate for workers with less human capital even if the expected income level in the destination area is low irrespective to the human capital. With this strategy the non-highly skilled migrants hope to boost their human capital and to improve their chances to find jobs in the future where the expected income level is higher. In contrast, highly skilled workers rather tend to stay in their home countries if the expected income level in the destination area is low. They can take advantage of their human capital in their home country. They are rather encouraged to migrate if the expected income is high (see Massey et al., 1993, p. 456, see Haug, 2000, p. 5, 13).

But neoclassical theory disregards international political and economic contexts and decisions as well as social boundaries. Furthermore the implicated assumption of homogeneous

professional abilities in countries of origin and destination areas as well as the assumed trend to global macro-economic equation are controversial.

### *2.1.3 New migration economy*

The new migration economy approach also focuses on an economic factor: the income. But it also considers the social embeddedness of individuals in households. Individuals are interpreted as acting collectively. Hence the approach focuses on families and households. According to this approach households try to maximise the expected income and to minimise risks for their economic wealth. The job migration of a household member is a form of reassurance because the migrant is independent of local economic conditions of the household. Furthermore international migration and the associated money transfer from abroad can be used as capital for an increase in productivity of the household. Usually it is a matter of temporary migration. It is claimed that adjustment of wages does not stop international migration. Even if there is no strong incentive, households try to diversify their economic risk by migration of family members. Migration is seen as a risk lowering strategy (Haug, 2000, p. 7f).

### *2.1.4 Dual labour market theory*

Neoclassical migration theory as well as new migration economy assume that migration is a result of rational decisions of individuals or families. In contrast the Dual labour market theory suggests that migration is an effect of political and socioeconomic constellations. The reasons for labour migration are not seen in a trend to a labour market equation but in the segmentation of the labour market. Advanced industrial societies develop a dual economy with a capital-intensive primary segment and a labour-intensive secondary segment. The latter is characterised by insecurity and low wages. Native workers usually do not have any motivation to accept these jobs, which also mean less prestige and low promotion prospects (Lebhart, 2002, p. 13 f). Hence advanced economies demand foreign workers for the secondary segment. This causes migration (Haug, 2000, p. 3f; Lebhart, 2002, p. 13ff).

### *2.1.5 World system theory*

This migration approach deals with the idea of the clash between capitalistic industrial- and developing nations. It is assumed that the origin of migration lies in institutional and sectoral disparities which are evoked by the integration of nations into the worldwide capitalist system. This approach divides the world into three zones: core, semi-periphery and periphery. To explain the patterns of migration the reciprocal dependency of these zones as well as direction and constitution of flows of capital and goods are analysed. It is presumed that international labour migration follows the international flows of capital and goods in the opposite direction. This intends that first of all migration is detectable in Global Cities, which attract migrants from the periphery and not industrialised societies.

Therefore migration is seen as a logic consequence of the globalisation of the economy which causes the emergence of the capitalistic market in developing countries. This implicates that international migration primarily appears between former colonial powers and its colonies because of already existing relations in economy, transport, administration, culture and language (Lebhart, 2002, p. 16ff; Haug, 2000, p. 4f; Bürkner and Heller, 2008, p. 40f).

## **2.2 New theories of labour migration**

The 1990s confronted the migration research with new migration forms which cannot be described as unidirectional processes with definite countries of origin and definite destination areas. The classical micro- and macro-analytic migration theories failed to apply to these forms. There was a missing link: the connection between individuals and society. New approaches in migration research pointing out the importance of social networks as the missing link were required.

### *2.2.1 Theory of migration systems*

The theory of migration systems assumes that the intensive exchange of information, goods, services, capital, ideas and persons between specific countries causes a stable system. Migration is one of these exchange processes. Thereby several countries of emigration can be connected with one region of immigration, just like one emigration country can be characterised by migration flows to several destination areas (multi-polarity). Migration systems are variable social arrangements (formal and informal) including individuals and institutions of both countries. The participation of social ethnic networks, multinational firms, educational institutions or other corporations - as mediations between macrostructures and individuals as well as between the different countries - in shaping the migration system plays a crucial role. Therefore this approach concentrates on macro-, meso- and micro-structures. It considers the economic, political, social, demographical and historical context of migration systems and focuses on both ends of the migration flow, on disparities and interdependencies. But it does not say much about the genesis of migration systems.

In contrast to other theories the relevance of spatial proximity is denied. Instead it points out the influence of political and economic relations on migration systems. As political, economic and communication relations are adjusted by feedback and modulation mechanisms, migration systems, although stable, are not static but dynamic. The processes in and between countries change. New migration systems emerge, countries drop out or join a system, interdependencies transform and migration flows alter in shape (Haug, 2000, p. 17ff; Bürkner and Heller, 2008, p. 44f; Lebhart, 2002, p. 29 ff; Fawcett, 1989, p. 671ff).

### *2.2.2 Theory of migrant networks*

As seen the migration system approach points out the very relevance of ethnic networks built by migrants and their family and friends. In contrast to old micro- and macro-analytic approaches, new migration theories focus on the meso-level of migration. The social network

approach also stresses the influence of social networks on migration. Migration networks shape social and spatial paths of migration provide new migrants with information and resources<sup>2</sup> and therefore facilitate their migration. In short, they lower the costs and risks of migration. On the other hand they smooth the process of keeping in touch with the home region and influence the integration process of the new migrants into the host societies.

Therefore it is assumed that personal relationships which connect migrants, former migrants and non-migrants in the home countries and host societies increase the probability of international migration and can lead to chain migration and sustained migration flows. That means there is no strong correlation between migration flows and wage and employment disparities because of the positive effects of migrant networks. These networks develop an own dynamic which can hardly be regulated.

The effects of social networks on migration are not clear yet. Surely, social relationships influence the decision to migrate by providing information and support or the opposite. Strong social ties in the home countries can inhibit migration. Less social ties can promote the movement. Migrant networks can produce security but also dependency, liability, little integration in the host society and therefore less freedom. This could frighten people. Thus respective contexts have to be considered in order to correctly interpret the relationships between social networks and migration (Haug, 2000, p. 20ff; Lebhart, 2002, p. 20ff; Bürkner and Heller, 2008, p. 42ff).

### *2.2.3 Theory of social capital*

The network perspective can be specified by the term social capital. As already mentioned, personal contacts to friends, relatives and compatriots facilitate migrants to find jobs and housing and can offer financial support. The motives for providing resources might vary. While some act simply by ethical reasons (value orientated) or feel a group identity and therefore act by solidarity (bounded solidarity); others act strategically (reciprocal transfer) or in awareness of their position in the group (status orientated) (Haug, 2000, p. 22ff; Bürkner and Heller, 2008, p. 45f). That means that besides the benefits of social capital there are also restrictions like conformity pressure, obligation to share and limitation of contact with other persons which do not belong to the social network. Making contacts outside of the community could be seen as an assault to the group identity and cause punishment. So individual getting ahead could be inhibited. In consequence it depends on the community in which the migrant is situated and its openness if social capital is next to economic capital a beneficial element in the migration process.

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<sup>2</sup> For example supporting finding a residence and a job or providing financial security.

#### 2.2.4 Transnational migration

Migration systems and processes have changed since the 1980s. They can be described as circular movements with specific social structures and mobile lifestyles. This new patterns are called transnational migration as a special form of international migration. New forms of communities emerge, producing specific social spaces by the socio-cultural practice of transnational migrants. These spaces are neither bounded in the home country of the migrants nor in the host society but between and therefore are interpreted as being transnational social spaces.

*“[...] transnational social spaces are pluri-local frames of reference which structure everyday practices, social positions, employment trajectories and biographies, and human identities, and simultaneously exist above and beyond the social contexts of national societies” (Pries, 2001, p. 65).*

Transnational migration is characterised by spatial movements that can be nomadic and pluri-local, but these movements are not de-territorialised. This leads to hybrid identities and practices. Transnational migrants can benefit from opportunities of their home countries as well as of their current domicile. They are able to create flexible strategies of sojourn. The possibility of gaining power in their country of origin by i.e. transferring economic capital to their country of origin and simultaneously gaining more power in the host society as political actors, as “voices for the minorities”, is a specific feature of transnational migrants (Bürkner, 2000, p. 302).<sup>3</sup>

Transnationalism is explained by the process of globalisation and its linked modern communication, transport and labour forms. But as Bürkner points out, there were migration forms in history which showed transnational characteristics before globalisation began.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore economic and socio-cultural processes of globalisation as well as processes of transformation on a national level appear to be not more than framing conditions for a collectivisation around an individual or a little group. The relevance of economy for the emergence of transnational spaces is disregarded (Bürkner and Heller, 2008, p. 46f; Bürkner, 2005, p. 113-122; Haug, 2000, p. 16ff; Pries, 2007, p. 20-22).

### 2.3 Theories of highly skilled migration

Besides old and new migration theories which try to explain labour migration in general (see 2.1. and 2.2.) there are new approaches which focus on migration of highly skilled workers in particular. Besides the concept of Brain Drain where movement of highly skilled is interpreted as unidirectional, other theories think this migration form as circular and oscillating and connect them with the new shaping of capitalism.

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<sup>3</sup> Glick Schiller et al. (1992) showed the phenomena of transnationalism in the case of the migration of workers from Central America to the US.

<sup>4</sup> Bürkner refers to the early shaping of migration paths by ethnic communities in the USA at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Bürkner 2000, p. 302).



### 2.3.1 *Brain drain*

The brain drain approach normally is applied on migration of highly skilled workers between different countries. Country of origin and destination area are seen as clearly defined containers with separated social systems.<sup>5</sup> The embeddedness of migration processes into flows of capital, goods, communication and information is only of marginal interest.

The concept of brain drain assumes a unidirectional and permanent migration between ‘more’ and ‘less’ developed countries. Again economic factors like the higher income level in the destination area are claimed to be the main reason for migration. Seen from the perspective of dependency theory<sup>6</sup> developing regions are characterised by a loss of human capital while highly industrialised societies benefit. In consequence it is said that the emigration of highly skilled obstructs the economic progress in developing regions and as a result keeps them in economic dependence (Meusbürger, 2008, p. 31; Meusbürger, 2008, p. 51f, Pethe, 2006, p. 5f). But this approach does not consider that emigrated highly skilled workers might return to their home countries. This would be brain gain since highly skilled workers improved their qualifications abroad and therefore could push the development in their home countries. Instead of speaking about brain drain, it is more likely that there is brain circulation (Pethe, 2006, p. 9). We will now discuss the gradual shift in migration literature from ‘brain drain’ to ‘brain circulation’ and the possible negative and positive impacts on the countries of origin in some more detail.

In the social science literature, three approaches are prominent which discuss the mobility of the highly skilled professionals. In the 1960s, the issue of brain drain discussed the negative outcomes of the emigration of talent of third world countries to industrialised countries. Often graduates originating from developing countries took advantage from the large income differences and better working conditions in Western states (Schipulle 1973; Adams 1968). Although many European countries refused to give labour permits to third world graduates, the US became the favourite destination for this group of mobile highly skilled migrants. As a result, more than 40 % of the highly skilled persons in all OECD countries who are resident outside their home country lives in the US. Although the brain drain perspective is still present in the political arena, it lost its prominence. Firstly, the geographical pattern of mobility changed in the 1980s due the increasing transnationalisation of the companies and the economy (Findlay, 1988; Salt, 1988; Findlay and Gould, 1989; Beaverstock, 1990; Findlay and Garrick, 1990). Secondly, researchers like Annalee Saxenian pointed out that the emigration of highly skilled can lead to a return migration of highly skilled after several decades, which has a positive impact on the economies of the developing countries. In her book ‘Silicon Valley’s new immigrant entrepreneurs’ (1999), she explained how India, Taiwan and China profited from the economic activities of their ‘diaspora’. In her latest book ‘The New Argonauts’ (2006) she describes also the positive effects of international mobility

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<sup>5</sup> It is also possible to use this concept for different regions in one country. This is the case when migration processes between the old West German and the newly-formed German states are focused. There are not two separated social systems but yet the different history causes different economic and social conditions.

<sup>6</sup> Dependency Theory assumes a stratification of countries in an international system and resulting power and dependency relations between dominant societies and countries in a lower position. Here migration is seen as a specific form of interaction between states, which is caused by structural disparities in dependent societies and provides a benefit to dominant countries (Bürkner and Heller 2008, p. 39).

of highly skilled migrants for the regional development. She has observed the impact of foreign talent and entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley in the last decades also points out the openness to foreign creative talent is also one of the key factors for the success of Silicon Valley and in the home countries of the migrants. Saxenian proposes that the successful development of the ICT industry in Israel, Taiwan and to a lesser extent in China and India is caused by the mobile talent who stimulates innovation, investment and trade between the countries. The exchange of knowledge, she concludes is that the foreign experts 'welcome the openness, diversity and initiative that have built Silicon Valley'. The connection which is constructed by the mobile ICT engineers is the basis of the economic success of these industries in their home and host countries.

Thirdly, country and regions in industrialised countries have become aware that highly skilled home nationals are also increasingly mobile and migrate to foreign destinations. Some of the earlier mentioned studies, like the work of Beaverstock, address expatriate communities from advanced capitalist countries to other advanced capitalist countries or to rapidly developing countries, like the British communities in New York City and Singapore. In our own empirical analysis we will also demonstrate that a significant part of the highly skilled migrants coming to European city-regions are coming from other European city-regions, and that they are often either on the move to yet another European city-region or plan to return to their city-region of origin. This is again an example of 'brain circulation', a form of circular migration we will discuss in more detail now.

### 2.3.2 *'Brain circulation': Circular migration*

Since the 1980s labour migration changed. As empirical studies showed (i.e. Wolter, 1997) an increasing movement of highly skilled workers has emerged. Often this migration is temporary and can be described as circulation<sup>7</sup> between industrialised societies as well as a migration from 'more' to 'less' developed countries. Circular migration implicates the return of the migrants to their home regions after one or more migration steps and is linked to transnationalism (Vertovec, 2007, p. 3f).<sup>8</sup> Even though the region of origin firstly suffers a brain drain by losing highly skilled workers there is also a brain gain by foreign highly skilled or a brain re-gain by returning highly skilled, who might have improved their qualities. So it we could speak of brain exchange between the different regions (Schultz, 2008, p. 52f; Pethe, 2006, p. 7ff).

This new form of migration of highly skilled is attributed to internationalisation and economic interdependences. Therefore the perspective of research focuses primarily on the meso-level like firms and institutions. In the 1980s, the international financial market was deregulated and many industrial producers moved their production units outside their home markets. The world economy began to internationalise. Many transnational production and service

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<sup>7</sup> It has to be pointed out that circular migration is not only a phenomenon which describes the movements of highly skilled. It also applies to less or unskilled workers (Smith and Guarnizo 1998, p. 18).

<sup>8</sup> As Fassmann points out that the distinction between circular and transnational migration is problematic, if migrants keep up their social and functional relations to their home society on a large scale (Fassmann 2008, p. 23).

companies developed which lead to the 'brain exchange' of highly skilled professionals within these large international organisations. The expertise of the highly skilled employees was needed to control and supervise the new sales offices, production units and bank branches abroad (Boyle et al. 1994, Findlay 1995). These so called expats were typically seconded to a foreign branch for two to five years. Although they were privileged compared to those professionals who came from third world countries a decade earlier, and they were compensated for their international assignment with relocation service and a salary above the home level, the seconded professionals had little choice to select their country of destination. They were part of the international stream of investments and trade which was allocated due to the outcomes of international investment opportunities. I.e. the expats accompanied the foreign international direct investments streams and, in the case of newly erected production units, the trade of foreign goods and services. Wolter (1997) showed the interrelation between investment and international migration for the case of the European Union in the 1980s.

Beaverstock, who investigated the mobility of these professionals in the financial service sectors over two decades, points out that the geography of their mobility is often related to the geography of the global cities (Beaverstock 1994, 1996, 2002). Global cities are metropolitan regions with a large concentration of high range services and international headquarters which command and control international investment streams (cf. Friedman 1986; Sassen 1996). The Globalization and World Cities Research Network in Loughborough mapped out the position of cities in this international urban system by looking at the connectivity of the international organisation in the urban regions ([www.lboro.ac.uk/gawc](http://www.lboro.ac.uk/gawc)). In addition to the circular movement within the industrialised countries, Beaverstock and others also describe a movement from the North to the South. Compared to the previous mobility which was described as brain drain, the brain exchange connected industrialised countries more strongly or describes mobility from industrialised countries to less industrialised countries. Due to its strong economic embeddedness, the brain exchange is influenced by economic circles with a large increase of international mobility in the period of economic upturn and a decrease of international migration in the period of the economic downturn.

The brain exchange perspective was criticised recently for approaching the international migration of the highly skilled mainly from an economic perspective and neglecting the agency of the individuals (Scott 2006). Before the role of the individual migrants will be discussed below, it should be mentioned that the economy has also changed in the last decade, and the organisation has also influence on intra-company mobility of employees. Large vertically integrated companies were typical for the Fordist age. These differentiated units did not only comprise various production and administrative units, they also began to allocate each function at the most suitable location. Due to the internationalisation of their organisations, highly skilled migrants were seconded between the different parts of the companies. Typically they were sent from the head quarter to peripheral locations. Due to the reorganisation of transnational companies in post-fordism (Cormode, 1994; Koser and Salt, 1997; Wolter, 1999), hierarchies were reduced and activities were outsourced. Not only is the size of the companies reduced, but also the expensive international career opportunities for employees. The companies in the creative knowledge industries tend to be very small. A large share has less than 5 employees. On the one hand, this particular structure of the sector makes it less likely that intra-company mobility is a common feature in the creative knowledge

sectors. On the other hand, the technological progress enabled small actors to be mobile internationally, because the international communication and transport become cheaper and easily available. Instead of being seconded within a large company, it appears to be more likely that highly skilled individual change between small and medium companies now on their own steam.

## **2.4 Florida's conception of the international mobile creative class**

“Regional economic growth is powered by creative people, who prefer places that are diverse, tolerant and open to new ideas”, writes Richard Florida in his book ‘The rise of the creative class’ (Florida 2002, p. 249) . The attractiveness of cities, its quality of life and its diversity of cities are pivotal for the future development of cities. A good people climate will draw new creative people to those places and will lever the economic success of regions. Using this imagination Florida describes conditions which are strongly related to the inward mobility of creative talent as a precondition and an effect for regional economic success of metropolitan regions. Diversity which is described as heterogeneity in terms of ethnicity, sexuality and lifestyles is seen as a precondition for the inflow of new talent. People from various backgrounds will be attracted to these spaces which will again lead to an even larger diversity of people. In the first texts, Florida does not distinguish between national or international migrants, but his later book ‘The flight of the creative class’ uses examples which indicate that he does not only have national migration, but also international migration in mind.

Florida mainly focuses on the ability of places to attract foreign creative, when he writes: “Today, the terms of competition revolve around a central axis: a nation’s ability to mobilise, attract, and retain human creative talent” (Florida 2007, p. 3-4) . The attractiveness of regions is important, because the economic success will increase with the inflow of talent. This is the most important formula which Florida uses. A detailed description in which ways foreign migrants contribute to the host economy is difficult to decipher in his work. Several hints can be found: foreign creatives “help build our scientific enterprises” (Florida 2007, p. 95), account for “a disproportionate share of most influential scientists” (ibid., p. 101), relieve the “looming talent shortage” (ibid., p. 103), “take American ideas and American relationships back home” (p. 110) and contribute to the entertainment industry (ibid., p. 125).

Florida has a very broad conception of the creative class which comprises 30 % of the American work force. Again it is unclear in which aspects the mobility of the creative class is different from other highly skilled persons. But not only Florida lacks a clear definition of what is meant by the mobility of the highly skilled. Scholars who want to investigate the international mobility of the highly skilled see themselves facing a jungle of definitions. The definition of their qualification and their migrant status can vary enormously. For instance, the term ‘highly skilled’ can indicate a formal educational credential, but ‘skill’ can also be defined as the ability to solve certain task whether those ability was acquired with a ‘learning by doing’-approach or a formal education. The status as migrant can be related to certain forms of work permits for foreign employees, the status as a seconded employee within an international companies or simply mean non-national. In addition to that, Florida gives an account about the creative class which does not necessarily mean that other occupations such as doctors or are not internationally mobile (cf. OECD, 2002), whereas other creative

knowledge workers are certainly limited to perform their activity in different countries. One prominent example are lawyers whose main professional reference are national laws. International law firms have only developed recently and mostly they are limited to certain field like international mergers and acquisitions. Although differences between the creative knowledge occupations seem to exist, their scope is still unclear and also how do they contribute to the different national economies?

Florida's ideas might be one of the most prominent accounts of social scientists which emphasise the importance of the international migration for regional economies. In the political arena, the issue has been more strongly articulated since the labour shortages in several sectors appeared in industrialised countries (OECD). Since the creation of a common market, the individual member of the countries of the European Union received the right to move freely within the common space even earlier. At the time, the creation of a common space was not so much motivated by the attraction of foreign talent, but by the reduction of economic disparities between the various regions of the member states. Although several limitations exist, for examples for citizens of the new European member states, the member states and the European commission try to reduce the barriers, introduce a common migration policy and even support the mobility of certain groups actively. The Lisbon agenda, the agreement of a common migration policy in Tampere and the establishment of the student exchange programmes such as Socrates and Erasmus are examples which aim to promote the international mobility within Europe. The goal is to increase the competitiveness of the member states of the European Union by stimulating their ability for innovation and knowledge transfer. In other political arenas, other motivations to support the international mobility of highly skilled professionals are articulated. For example, on a global level, governments find mechanism to deregulate short term international mobility which is related to the international trade of goods and services (OECD, WTO). Apart from the attraction of talent, the reduction of disparities, the decrease of labour shortage, the stimulation of innovativeness and the lubrication of economic globalisation, various national statistical offices in central and eastern Europe point at the continuous decrease of their work force in the coming five decades. The political initiatives in Europe and the US are increasingly perceived as an international 'war for talent'. Florida addresses in his recent book the increasing danger that the US American cities loose this ability to attract and to retain foreign talent. European countries are becoming increasingly successful competitors for creative talent, in his view .

All accounts use imaginations of international migrations which expect positive outcomes. This is a recent development. Since the oil crisis in the early 1970s, immigration was stopped in most European states, because the incoming labour was seen as a competitor for the home nationals. In many countries only transferees of transnational companies were successfully able to apply for a labour permit. Although those negative threats are less articulated in the public now, the mechanism of the international migration of highly skilled are not fully analysed. Who is internationally mobile? Why are transnational migrations engaged in certain industries? How long do they typically stay? What effects does their presence have on the region, in particular on the economy and the housing market? Which cities and regions are attractive and what are the drivers behind their success?

## 2.5 The upcoming paradigm

The firm related perspective has been central in the study of international migration of the highly skilled, because many researchers assumed that this migration flow was largely demand driven. Apart from labour migration, other motives exist. Personal motives like family unification and marriage are the most prominent. Another important factor is education. But asylum seekers and refugees start a new life in other countries, too. In addition to that, an increasing number of cases are reported, when highly skilled migrants decide to live in a country because of the interesting cultural environment and the offered amenities as it was described by Florida too. Then, immigrants settle in the country first, and look for work later. In other words, the variety of reasons to settle in a certain country might be larger than the reasons which are found in the immigration legacy of the country in question.

In the Netherlands, for example, about one third of the immigrants entered the country due to employment related reasons, another third because of family related reasons and one sixth started with their studies in the Netherlands. Of course, these numbers needed to be treated with caution, because they are strongly related to the immigration categories which exist in the Dutch law. Firstly, immigrants use and tend to be classified in categories which gives them the best access to the host country. Research (Kanjapan 1995) shows that immigrants tend to switch between the categories to a large extent. Secondly, important motives such as large differences in the house prices in border regions which are not relevant in the legal framework are not mentioned in the legal framework.

The heterogeneity of transnational highly skilled migrants increases. Apart from the seconded transferees who work in large companies, an increasing share comes on their own steam. Due to the removal of immigration barriers for labour migration within the EU and the stronger support of student mobility in the EU, but also internationally, the socio-economic background and the motives of transnational highly-skilled migrants diversify (Conradson and Latham, 2005; Scott, 2006a; Scott, 2006b). Young professionals who come in their early career or stay on as graduates, international Bohemians who enjoy the cultural amenities and assimilation-settlers who marry a partner in the host country are new groups that have not gained enough attention. An overview of the nationality of foreign highly skilled immigrants in the Netherlands shows that the immigration of highly skilled persons cannot always be related to economic linkages between the countries. Nearly 50 % of the highly skilled foreign nationals who lived in the Netherlands in 2000 came from countries which either had strong colonial ties to the Netherlands such as Indonesia or Suriname, or were the recruiting countries of the former guest workers such as Turkey and Morocco or where the home countries of a larger highly skilled refugee population such as Iraq, Iran or Afghanistan. Less than one third of the foreign highly skilled in the Netherlands, however, derive from Western OECD countries. Using the nationality as an indicator of the migration motivation is, of course, problematic too. Firstly, this approach assumes that persons with a similar nationality share the same motive. Secondly, these immigrants are formally highly educated, but it is unclear, if they can use their educational credentials in their job. In addition to that, many foreign nationals are born in the Netherlands, although they hold a foreign passport. They cannot be considered as migrants.

The new heterogeneity of the skilled migrants leads also to a larger diversity of residential choice between the foreign highly skilled. The former orientation on the higher segments of the housing market in the suburban areas fades in favour of the increasingly popular and therewith more expensive inner city on the one hand, and lower priced flats on the other. Due to the strong urban orientation of creative workers, the overall preference for inner city location might also be emphasised by foreign creative workers. Furthermore, the duration of the stay appears to change to. Expats which typically live between two to five years abroad are accompanied by transnational migrants who settle for a longer time frame or even permanent in the foreign country. In addition to that, the possibilities to access the labour market of creative knowledge workers might also vary with their demographic background. Kibbelaar (2007) points out that foreign migrants who are not part of the classic expat population in the Netherlands often struggle to find positions in the creative knowledge industries on the one hand. On the other hand, they are less likely to choose a creative knowledge profession, because they consider those occupations as less prestigious and economically less rewarding .

Therefore, an analysis which identifies how many persons work in the creative knowledge economy and are of foreign descent might give a more accurate number about the real inflow foreign creative knowledge workers than an approach which only identifies the formal education of immigrants. A comparison between the results of both approaches identifies the scope of the brain waste of immigrant human capital, because it will identify the scope of access of foreign highly qualified workers to these industries.

## **2.6 Settling and staying: Highly skilled migrants in the host society**

While the transnational mobility of highly skilled migrants receives increasing interest and attention from academic researchers and policy-makers, much less attention has been given so far to their experiences after their move and their preferences in terms of residence, amenities and relations with the host society. Integration in the host society, for example, is generally hardly considered a problem since most highly skilled migrants are expected to stay a few years at most and since they are expected to have a well-paid job. Another generalising assumption often made is that highly skilled migrants most often come from societies that are very close to the host society in terms of norms, values and behaviour, so they would hardly have adaptation problems. These assumptions might apply to most expatriates, but as we have seen in the sections above and will see again in our empirical analysis, this group is actually only a small part of the highly skilled migrants coming to and travelling within Europe. Highly skilled migrants quite often stay for more than a few years, they do not always come with the guarantee of a job, their job is not always well-paid, and they also come from non-Western developing countries. While this heterogeneity in the broad category of highly skilled migrants is gradually acknowledged, we hardly find evidence of this in the international academic debate so far. As far as matters of settling and staying of highly skilled migrants are discussed, mostly the focus is strongly on the sub-category of expatriates, and most attention is given to the housing and real estate market.

Expatriates are often merely seen as affluent corporate movers that can rely on relocation services. Because of this view, they are often discussed in terms of dualisation of world cities.

Several studies (Freund, 1998; Glebe, 1986; White, 1998; White and Hurdley, 2003) show that immigrants from OECD countries differ in their housing preferences strongly from other, often lower skilled migrant population. The residential pattern is often very similar to home nationals with the same socio-economic status. “[T]he settlement of migrants from North America, Australasia and other parts of Europe has tended to occur most strongly in those parts of London with the highest occupational status”, observes White. This pattern varies between different OECD nationals. Japanese corporate transferees and their families show the strongest segregation of all national groups in London, in Düsseldorf and Frankfurt/Main. They live more often in suburban locations, and share less often similar housing patterns with similar status groups. The high concentration is often ascribed to the activities of relocation services and Japanese real estate agencies, the importance of public transport access to work, security of the residential environment, quality of the dwelling (cleanliness of kitchen) and proximity to school and other community institutions (Glebe, 1986; Glebe, 1997; White, 1998; White and Hurdley, 2003). In particular the proximity to schools is often stated as a pivotal point for all OECD nationals too, although this view is also contested. Generally, expatriates rent more often than home nationals due to their temporary status, although the rental sector is with some 10 % of the dwellings relatively small in some of the investigated cities such as London. Rarely the flats of the transferees are owned by their companies. Instead White and Hurdley observe that other ethnic entrepreneurs who hold these flats as property investment let these high-priced dwellings to Japanese in London. This untypical demand in the rented sector leads to a rise of rent prices in those residential neighbourhoods. A similar connection between the rise of housing prices and immigration is described for Vancouver. This is properly the most prominent and extreme example which illustrates how activities of affluent immigrants lead to a significant increase of housing prices (Brosseau et al., 1996; Hiebert, 2000, 31ff; Ley and Tutchener, 2001; Olds, 1998; Olds and Yeung, 1999). Because of the transfer of Hong Kong to the People’s Republic China, wealthy Chinese immigrants and entrepreneurs fled to Canada. They acquired the Canadian citizenship by doing large investments. Often they spent large amounts of money in the regional housing market and transformed the suburban residential landscape, because they constructed houses which were conceived as monster-houses by the older population of English descent. Due to their acquisition of large suburban properties the prices in the higher housing market segment rose. In addition, entrepreneurs built malls and developed larger inner city housing projects (Ley and Tutchener, 2001; Olds, 1998; Olds, 2001).

The examples from London and Vancouver, however, show how the effects are firstly related to global flows which are linked to each city. Secondly, they show that the aims of the incoming educated population from the industrialised countries and the effects of their inflow can vary considerably. Recently, Scott underlined that an increasing heterogeneity of highly skilled immigrants stream into European cities. Apart from the typical expatriate population, overstaying students, family migrants and international bohemians live in the metropolitan regions. Also Conradson and Latham point at the ‘middling transnationalism’ in large European cities such as London which comprises an increasing number of mobile middle class individuals. Compared with the typical expat population, the residential preferences differ. They are more oriented towards inner city neighbourhoods. Due to their lower income, they are not able to afford a rented dwelling in the upper housing segments. Since they travel more often individually, they can also not rely on relocation services to find accommodation.



On contrary, they are more likely to compete with the local middle class. In other words, the chances of transnational migrants and expats to access the labour market and the effects of their presence are as much related to their socio-demographic background as to the local and national regulations.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

In this chapter we have discussed the evolution of international migration theories in a nutshell, with a specific focus on transnational migration of highly skilled. Though the classical migration theories still have their value, the more recent theories of labour migration are better able to explain the recent dynamics of transnational highly skilled migration to European metropolitan regions such as the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area. As we will see in the next chapters, the Netherlands have an open and extremely international economy. The country is both a receiver and a sender of significant numbers of highly skilled migrants. As we will discuss in Chapter 4, a situation of ‘brain drain’ does not apply to the Netherlands: the country does lose very talented natives, but is able to compensate for this by attracting foreign talent, while the Dutch highly skilled that leave the country quite often return in the shorter or longer term. The concept of ‘brain circulation’ is therefore more applicable to the Dutch situation. Within the Netherlands, the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area is the major destination for transnational highly skilled migrants working in creative and knowledge-intensive sectors. We have seen in this chapter that theoretical debates and empirical studies so far are mostly focused on expats: highly skilled migrants seconded by their companies. We have also seen that this is actually only a modest sub-category of transnational highly skilled migrants. Many higher skilled move across national borders on their own initiative and quite often, job opportunities or career perspectives are not their primary motive. We have found evidence for this in statistics on the Netherlands and in our own findings for the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area, as will appear from the next chapters. A final conclusion of the theory overview is that already much is known about migration patterns and motives of transnational highly skilled, but much less about how they manage to settle in the receiving city and society. The extent to which transnational highly skilled migrants find their place on the housing market and their way towards adequate amenities should not be underestimated in explanations of the degree of attractiveness of city-regions for this group. We will pay ample attention to this in our empirical case study of the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area.



## **3 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE NETHERLANDS AND AMSTERDAM**

### **3.1 Internationalisation of the economy in the Netherlands and Amsterdam**

In the Netherlands the first wave of globalisation led to internationalisation of the Dutch economy, when first American and later Japanese multinationals settled in the country. As Smidt pointed out, the foreign branches in the Netherlands were often oriented towards sales and distribution activities, whereas Germany and the UK were used as production sites due to the cheaper or more specialised work force in those countries (Smidt 1985). The inflow of highly skilled professionals was strongly tied to foreign direct investment of transnational companies and trade pre-dominantly in the first (oil production) and secondary sector (cars, machine tools) (see Smidt 1986). Foreign managers were initially sent to open a sales office abroad, and then marketing departments happened next. Finally, the establishment of a production plant followed.

Foreign companies are a vital part of the Dutch economy now. In 2006, 86 new foreign companies settled in the Amsterdam region and this number has been increasing for some years (73 companies in 2005 and 63 companies in 2004). Most new foreign companies settled in Amsterdam (59), but Schiphol (13), Almere (7), Hoofddorp/ Nieuw Vennep (5) and Amstelveen (2) were also chosen as settlement locations. Within Amsterdam, the city centre, South Axis, Teleport Sloterdijk and Southeast were the most popular locations. In total, these foreign companies provide 892 new jobs. The main region of origin in 2006 was Asia (35%), with North America and EMEA (Europe, Middle East, Africa) both following with 32.5%. Japan was the most important country of origin with 12 companies, but also 7 new Korean companies settled in the region. Japan and Korea are currently the most important business partners, but Amsterdam is also increasingly attracting Indian (ICT) and Chinese (airline) companies.

Gostelie et al (2008) underline the importance of foreign headquarters in the Netherlands. According to their study, the thirty European headquarters in the Netherlands employ 30 thousand persons and create an additional 150 thousand indirect jobs. In terms of the direct economic impact, Gostelie et al. admit the presence of headquarters is not important. The indirect impact, however, is considerable, for example because the employees bring in additional consumption power and because of 'trickle down' effects through networks of local suppliers, customers and business partners.

### **3.2 Economic development of the creative knowledge economy in the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area and the importance of transnational highly skilled migrants**

Transnational migrants in the creative knowledge industry gain increasing importance. The creative knowledge economy in the Netherlands grows faster than the overall economy. In the decade between 1996 and 2007, the creative economy<sup>1</sup> grew by 3.8 % in the Netherlands and 4 % in the North Wing of the Randstad, whereas the overall economy in the Netherlands increased by 1.9% and in the North Wing of the Randstad by 2.5% (O+S 2008). The importance of the creative economy<sup>2</sup> is higher than in any other EU country (Eurostat 2007, 55)<sup>3</sup>. Given this background, the inflow of new talent into the creative work force is of pivotal interest for the Dutch economy. The demographic development of the labour force in most of the EU states is characterised by a decline of the population in the age cohort between 25 and 64 years. Although this age group is still larger in the Netherlands than in most of the EU-countries (55.5 % in the NL compared to 54.6 % average EU-27 countries), this share will shrink 2.9 % until 2020 (Eurostat 2007, 19, own calculations). Even at the moment, labour shortages are reported in some sectors of which the ICT sector might be the most prominent. Labour shortages can reduce the national economic performance, because companies in a given country are forced to outsource their projects to companies abroad or companies are forced to turn down prospective orders due to missing personnel (Zimmermann et al., 2002). In addition to that, the inflow of students into culture related disciplines is lower in the Netherlands than in the EU-average. Whereas humanities is chosen by 8.5% of the EU students, arts by 3.9 %, journalism by 1.7 % and architecture by 3.8 %, in the Netherlands only 3.5% inscribe to a course in humanities, 4.4% to arts, 1.0 % to journalism and 3.1 % to architecture (Eurostat 2007, 24).

Two labour sources are named to reduce the effects of the declining working population: higher integration of women into the labour market and immigration. The share of women who work in the cultural industries is still comparatively low in the Netherlands (43 % in the cultural industries compared to 44 % in the total labour force, Eurostat 2007, 57). In Amsterdam only 39 % of the creative workers are women and 48 % of the knowledge workers . In addition to that, the share of women who work part-time is the highest in the Netherlands of all OECD countries (54.3 % in 1999, , 67). 59 % of the employment in the cultural industries in the Netherlands is processed by part time workers. This is the highest share in the EU. On average only 25 % of the employees in the cultural industries work part time (Eurostat 2007, 63). The gender gap is still pronounced in the Netherlands, but there is some evidence that it is closing. The education of women is in younger age groups is even

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<sup>1</sup> Definition creative economy: art (performing art, museum and galleries), media and entertainment, creative producer services such as advertising, design and fashion (, 7).

<sup>2</sup> Definition cultural economy: Publishing, retail newspapers,, architectural activities, media production, museum and galleries and libraries, journalism (Eurostat 2007, 171).

<sup>3</sup> According to Eurostat, the cultural economy comprises 3.8 % of the overall employment in the Netherlands. This is the highest share (with Iceland) in all European countries (Eurostat 2007: Cultural employment in total employment, 2005. [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/PGP\\_DS\\_CULTURE/PGE\\_DS\\_CULTURE/TAB67971260/CULTURAL%20EMPLOYMENT%20IN%20TOTAL%20EMPLOYMENT\\_0.PDF](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/PGP_DS_CULTURE/PGE_DS_CULTURE/TAB67971260/CULTURAL%20EMPLOYMENT%20IN%20TOTAL%20EMPLOYMENT_0.PDF) accessed 30<sup>th</sup> June 2008.

higher than for men. Whereas women in the older age group between 40-64 years rarely finished tertiary level education (only little more than one fifth of the work force), women of the younger age group between 25-39 years are even better educated than men now (35 % with tertiary education compared to 33 % men, Eurostat 2007, 22).

The immigration of highly skilled creative knowledge workers appears as a second source. Compared to the neighbouring countries such as the UK, Belgium and Germany, the share of foreign nationals in the population is low in the Netherlands<sup>4</sup>. Eurostat data (2007, 20) shows that only 4.2 % of the population in the Netherlands has a foreign passport compared to 5.7 % as EU-average. This gap is even more pronounced in the working population. Only 3.2 % of workforce is non-nationals in the Netherlands compared to 5.8 % as EU-average (Eurostat 2007, 70). Foreign nationals tend to work more often in cultural occupations as Eurostat data can prove (2007, 70). 4.3 % of the employees in the cultural sector have a foreign passport, but on EU-average the share accounts for 5.5 % (ibid.). Although the Netherlands can attract more than the average share of foreign professionals to the cultural industries, neighbouring countries such as Belgium, the UK, and Germany tend to be more successful to draw in foreign talent<sup>5</sup>. A fast increase of talent might be difficult as data from previous ACRE-reports underline. On the basis of the ACRE questionnaire among creative knowledge workers, Bontje et al. (2008, 27) demonstrated that creative knowledge workers in the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area tend to be a stable work force. From our sample of 235 creative knowledge workers, 63% had lived longer than 5 years in the Amsterdam metropolitan region. 50 % of the creative knowledge workers had already graduated in the city and 30 % were even born in the region. In our sample, the share of foreign born creative knowledge workers is higher than the Eurostat data on the cultural industries illustrated. The ACRE survey demonstrated that about 10 % of the creative knowledge workers possessed a foreign passport.

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<sup>4</sup> Non-nationals in the work force in Belgium 7.9%, in Germany 8.7 %, and in the UK 5.4 % (Eurostat 2007, 70).

<sup>5</sup> Non-nationals in the cultural industries in Belgium 8.6 %, in Germany 7.7 % and in the UK 6.0% (Eurostat 2007, 70).



## 4 TRANSNATIONAL HIGHLY-SKILLED MIGRATION TO THE NETHERLANDS

### 4.1 Dutch migration policies: current situation and recent changes

After being an emigration country for a while in the aftermath of World War II, the Netherlands has already become an immigration country in the early 1960s. It has remained an immigration country ever since, with only an interruption of a few years in the early 2000s when there were slightly more emigrants than immigrants. It took several decades, however, before this fact was finally politically accepted, and even in recent years, we have seen a rising popularity of parties with immigrant-hostile political agendas. This slow acceptance of large-scale immigration, but even more of immigrant groups forming a significant and structural part of Dutch society, is related to the political and societal perception of the largest part of those immigration flows between the 1960s and 1990s. Most immigrants that the Netherlands received since the early 1960s were long seen as temporary migrants that would only stay for a few years, a perception which strangely lasted even when the immigrants were already there for decades. Therefore, it took a long time before substantial immigration and integration policies were established.

Like in several other Northwest-European countries, the early 1960s were a time of severe labour shortage in the Netherlands, especially in lower skilled jobs in manufacturing. Labour migrants were attracted from Southern Europe at first (especially from Spain, Greece and former Yugoslavia), and from Morocco and Turkey some years later. These flows of so called ‘guest workers’ were recruited on the basis of bilateral contracts with the countries of origin. Later, in the 1970s and 1980s, when a large share of the ‘guest workers’ appeared to stay, a policy for family reunification and family formation was added. Meanwhile, two other types of migrant flows increased in significance: migrants from the former Dutch colonies Suriname (becoming independent in 1975) and the Dutch Antilles (becoming a semi-autonomous part of the Netherlands in the 1950s) on the one hand, and refugees and asylum seekers on the other. As far as we could speak of immigration and integration policies in the 1970s and 1980s, these were rather ‘ad hoc’ and mainly organised per country of origin and/or migration motive. Entzinger (2003) stresses that in the Dutch ‘ethnic minority policy’ of the 1980s, migrants were mainly approached as members of an ethnic and cultural group and much less as individuals. Interestingly, the targeted groups were Surinamese, Antilleans, Turks and Moroccans only, to which refugees and asylum seekers were added later. Other significant ethnic minority groups like people from the former Dutch Indies (now Indonesia), the Chinese, and migrants from advanced capitalist countries were not considered since they were believed to be sufficiently integrated. The main policy target of the ethnic minority policy was ‘integration with retention of identity’.

In the early 1990s, this paradigm shifted towards promoting integration of individual migrants in Dutch society. Influential politicians like Frits Bolkestein questioned the extent to which ethnic groups should be allowed to retain their own cultural norms and values. The ethnic minority policies appeared not to have improved the situation of the targeted groups much. In reaction to this, the Dutch national policy shifted from a multiculturalist 'ethnic minority policy' towards an 'integration policy', in which the focus was increasingly on maximising migrant participation in the labour market and improving the educational achievements of migrant children (Entzinger, 2003).

Around 2000 the Dutch political and societal debate about immigration and integration became more radical. Paul Scheffer published his essay 'The multicultural drama' in the newspaper NRC. It rapidly became one of the most influential and most debated newspaper publications in recent Dutch history. In his essay, Scheffer attacked the culture of tolerance in Dutch national and local policies towards migration and integration. In his view, tolerance was only increasing the distance between ethnic minority groups and the native Dutch; it would worsen problems of socio-economic and cultural integration rather than solve them (Scheffer, 2000). This point of view led to intense debates between opponents and defenders of the multicultural society ideal. The aftermath of '9-11' and the extremely fast upsurge of local and national populist parties added to the paradigm shift. Populist politicians like Pim Fortuyn actually had a much broader political agenda of civic protest against the ruling elite, but Fortuyn's criticism of Islam was one of the main reasons his party became the second largest in the 2002 national elections. Fortuyn was murdered shortly before those elections, but his party joined the governing coalition. The influence of this party would diminish as rapidly as it had grown, but the populist movement remained influential through other parties and through adoption of part of its agenda by the established parties. Especially minister of justice Verdonk changed the immigration policy towards a harsh 'rule is rule' programme. The right-wing coalitions of the early 2000s have meanwhile been succeeded by a more centrist government with a more moderate stance towards immigration and integration, but still, the days of multiculturalism and tolerance for cultural diversity in the Netherlands are history. In 2007, Scheffer looked back at this turbulent period in the Dutch migration and integration debate and the role he played in it. His view on migration and integration has meanwhile become more nuanced, but he is still struck by the deeply-rooted tendency of 'avoidance' in the Dutch policies (Scheffer, 2007). Integration problems are discussed much more openly nowadays, but it remains a very sensitive topic in Dutch policy and society.

Actually the move towards a more restrictive migration policy already started before Fortuyn and Verdonk. The 'Alien Act' of 2000 already signalled that it would become harder for immigrants to enter the Netherlands. The act makes a distinction in two categories of procedures: the 'regular' procedure and the asylum procedure. The 'regular' immigration procedure starts when the immigrant requests an 'authorisation of temporary stay' in his or her country of origin. General conditions for acceptance are that the immigrants should prove he or she has sufficient means of existence; valid identity documents; and no criminal record. Added to this, specific conditions can apply depending on the country of origin and the migration motive. The Dutch Immigration and Naturalisation Department (IND) decides within 6 months, In case the application is approved, the applicant receives a visa for temporary stay. Next steps when the migrant intends to stay longer can be a yearly



prolongation of the visa, and eventually a permanent residence permit. In 2006, minister Verdonk added a selection criterion to this procedure: the ‘civic integration exam’ (*inburgeringsexamen*). This exam, which is probably unique worldwide, should be passed by the migrant before entering the Netherlands. It is offered by Dutch embassies and consulates in the country of origin. The exam includes basic knowledge of the Dutch language and Dutch society. If the migrant passes the exam, he or she is also required to take additional steps (courses or individual counselling for example) enhancing ‘civic integration’ in the Netherlands. In principle, this exam is required for all immigrants between 16 and 65 years old. However, there are several exemptions: the exam is not required for migrants from the countries of the European Economic Area, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the US and Japan; short-term migrants like students; and people with labour permit, entrepreneurs and high-skilled migrants.

How do these recent trends in Dutch migration and integration policy affect the specific migrant category we are studying, high-skilled migrants? The effects are probably rather indirectly than directly. As mentioned, the high-skilled migrants are generally exempted from the requirement to take a civic integration exam. Moreover, most high-skilled migrants come from parts of the world that have always had relatively easy access to the Netherlands: the EU, North America and Japan. In practice, however, frequently examples of high-skilled migrants appear from media attention or research making clear that they also face numerous obstacles before becoming accepted as temporary or permanent migrants. This applies in particular to high-skilled migrants from rapidly developing economies like India. Employers of high-skilled migrants have often voiced their complaints about how tough it still is to pass the bureaucratic hurdles of Dutch migration agencies, particularly the IND, when they want to attract highly-skilled workers. The less migrant-friendly attitude of Dutch authorities and society, which mainly seems to be directed towards lower-skilled migrants and/or migrants of non-western origin, has affected the high-skilled migrants as well, although probably rather unintended than intended. This has increasingly become recognised, though, and in most recent years significant improvements were made in migration procedures for high-skilled migrants. The events and discussions of the early 2000s changed the situation for many high-skilled migrants from advanced capitalist countries and it will probably even have contributed to a decrease of attractiveness of the Netherlands as a destination for this migrant category.

As mentioned before, high-skilled migrants had been invisible in the Netherlands for a long time, although economic policy supported the attraction of foreign companies and employees for several decades. In the migration policy, especially those coming from advanced capitalist countries, were for a long time not seen as a priority category in Dutch migration and integration policy. A specific policy to attract and accommodate high-skilled migrants is a very recent phenomenon. The current governing coalition, which took power in 2007, prioritised increasing the attractiveness of the Netherlands for high-skilled migrants. This happened in the context of a greying population and a growing labour shortage in some high-skilled segments of the labour market, and was encouraged by discussion and initiatives of the Dutch Innovation Platform and the European ‘Lisbon Agenda’. The growing political attention for high-skilled migrants is part of an effort to redefine Dutch migration policy (Ministry of Justice, 2006). At the moment of writing this report, the Dutch policy for high-skilled migrants is still ‘work in progress’. A ‘high skilled migrants arrangement’ has been

introduced in 2004, involving an effort to facilitate fast access of high-skilled migrants in the Netherlands. Initially, the main selection criteria for this arrangement were salary level and the presence of a formal labour contract. This arrangement has been revised in 2006 to involve broader categories of high-skilled migrants, including also migrants not meeting the salary threshold. This was mainly in response to the need of universities (to facilitate the attraction of PhDs and post-docs) and hospitals (medical specialists in early career stages). The current salary threshold criteria are:

- 47.565 Euro a year (gross) for high-skilled migrants over 30 years old;
- 34,881 Euro a year (gross) for high-skilled migrants until 30 years old;
- 25.000 Euro a year (gross) for those high-skilled migrants graduated at a Dutch higher education institute;
- For scientists, the income has to be higher than the Dutch minimum wage.

There are several on-going projects like a ‘chain approach for high-skilled migrants’ (trying to integrate migration and integration programmes), the ‘taskforce technology, education and labour market’ and ‘Netherlands entrepreneurial innovation country’ that will probably contribute to making the Netherlands a more attractive place for high-skilled migrants. The ministry of Justice, still the main responsible ministry in the Netherlands for migration policy, is increasingly co-operating with the Ministry of Economic Affairs to develop an integral policy agenda to attract and accommodate high-skilled migrants. However, the results we can expect from those projects are still unclear. In the Amsterdam city-region, a concrete example of efforts to attract and accommodate high-skilled migrants is the Expat Center, which is described in more detail elsewhere in the report. In this centre, the municipalities of Amsterdam and Amstelveen and the IND work together creating a ‘one-stop shop’ for expats working in Amsterdam and Amstelveen. The Expat Center contributes significantly to making immigration procedures faster and easier for expats.

## **4.2 Highly skilled migration to the Netherlands**

In section 3.2 we have already discussed the growing importance of transnational migrants for the Dutch economy in general, and the growing importance of transnational highly skilled migrants for the creative knowledge industry in particular. As mentioned before, in the Netherlands the first wave of globalisation led to internationalisation of the Dutch economy, when first American and later Japanese multinationals settled in the country in the 1970s and early 1980s. This internationalisation started with foreign direct investment in sales offices and was later expanded with marketing departments and production plants (Smidt, 1986) This evolution cycle of foreign companies was also confirmed for other European countries by Wolter (1997) who also used the concept of Perlmutter (1969) on the changing organisational structure of internationalising companies. The international secondment of highly skilled employees and intra-company exchange accompany those processes.

Due to the introduction of new technology in the ICT-sector in the middle of the 1990s, a similar labour shortage appeared in many OECD countries. Their governments passed new work permits which aimed to attract foreign specialists for a limited period of time. Recently, the OECD and the EU introduced initiatives to reduce the barriers for both forms of

international labour mobility. For example, the OECD, the IOM and the World Bank discussed proposal how intra-company exchange can be simplified in the framework of the GATS negotiations (IOM 2003). Within the EU framework, new initiatives also address highly skilled temporary labour migration. After the member countries agreed to develop a common framework to manage migration in Tampere 1999 for the first time, the EU commission produced several documents which tackle this issue. The Hague Programme of November 2004 in which the EU commission addresses a common migration policy recognises that "legal migration will play an important role in enhancing the knowledge-based economy in Europe, in advancing economic development". In autumn 2007, the EU commission published a proposal to introduce a European 'Blue Card' which would enable highly skilled labour migrants from outside the EU to work and settle in different EU countries on a temporary basis.

In other words, the importance of highly skilled labour migrants is increasingly recognised by international institutions which reduce the barriers for intra-company transferees and highly skilled labour migrants. International migration which is related to international trade flows and foreign investments flows or which aims to reduce labour shortages in selected sectors receives increasingly attention by policy makers.

Are those measures still sufficient in a creative knowledge society? Services and goods which are offered by creative knowledge companies are often characterised by different features. They are less storable (services). Often they are related to cultural national practices (e.g. music with lyrics in local languages). Still, the import and export of services accounts only for one fifth of the Dutch international trade with goods (data source: CBS 2007, 20f). Considering the mobility of artists, other forms of international mobility come to one's mind such as short-term stay of less than 6 months which is less related to international companies, investment flows and trade. In addition, foreign direct investment increasingly addresses service companies. Between 2004 and 2006 foreign direct investment in the Dutch industry decreased by 6.3 % to 28.7 %, whereas the foreign investment flow to financial and other service companies grew by 6.1 % to 48.5% (data source: CBS 2007, 38). Are the mobility patterns similar to industrial companies or do they display different needs and features? The answer of these questions is of increasing importance, since the share of companies which are owned by Dutch investors is particularly small in the producer service sector with only 27 % compared to an overall 33 % in the Dutch economy in 2005 (CBS 2007, 44).

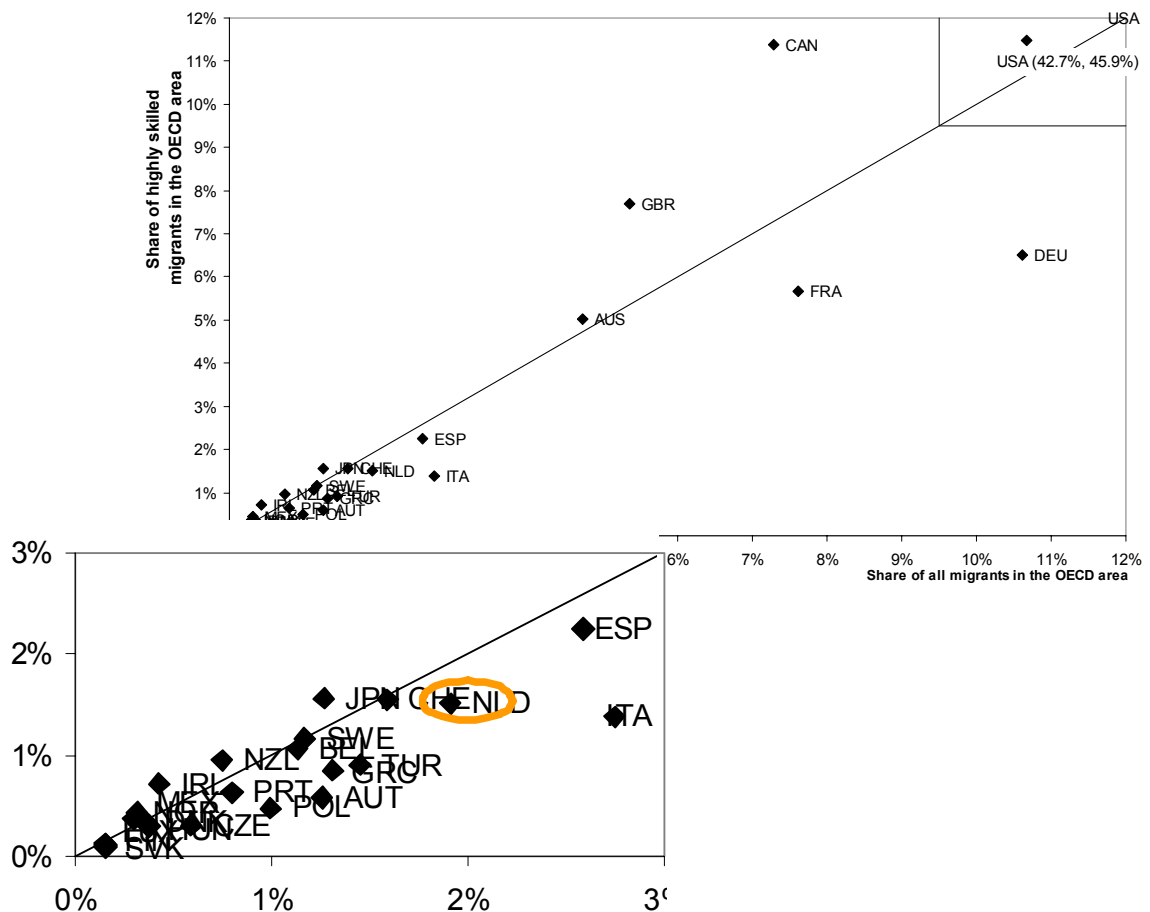
Before the question will be answered in the ACRE project, we want to give a short overview on the highly skilled migration to and from the Netherlands. How can highly skilled migration be described? How successful are the Netherlands with the attraction of foreign talent? What are the most important source countries for the Netherlands?

### 4.3 Transnational highly skilled migrants: the Netherlands in a comparative perspective

#### 4.3.1 Highly skilled transnational migration

How can highly skilled migration to the Netherlands be positioned in comparison with other OECE countries? This question will be answered by using the ‘data base on immigrants and expats’ which was compiled by the OECD<sup>1</sup>. The use of the database has the advantage that it shows international comparable data by educational attainment which gives detailed information on the foreign-born population over 15 years of age for almost all member countries of the OECD. Most of the data is based on national (micro-census) for the year 2000. For some countries such as Ireland a distinction between foreign or home born foreign nationals can be made. This distinction, however, can not be drawn for the Dutch data due to the lack of information.

Figure 1: Migration by education level in OECD countries



Source: OECD

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.oecd.org/document/51/0,2340,en\\_2825\\_494553\\_34063091\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/51/0,2340,en_2825_494553_34063091_1_1_1_1,00.html)

The Dutch data are not based on census data. The OECD explains: “In the case of the Netherlands, the data on education are not available from the population register and it was thus necessary to use the labour force survey averaged over several years (2000-2002), in order to estimate the foreign-born by level of education and country of birth (for those countries of birth for which there were samples large enough to support reliable estimates)” (OECD website). Given this data structure following limitations appear. Firstly, due to missing information on age the data might also comprise age cohorts that are older than 65 years and it might also be influenced by retirement migration. Secondly, the data does not provide any information about brain waste. Since the data derives from population register and census data, it is insecure if highly skilled foreign national work in a position which meets their qualification. Thirdly, the Dutch data does not distinguish between foreign or Dutch born foreign nationals. The Irish example shows that about one third of the highly skilled population is home-born. In this case, foreign highly skilled have not migrated to the current country of residence.

Figure 1 compares the share of highly skilled immigrants to the overall immigration inflow. Highly skilled international migration in the OECD countries is focused on the North American continent. More than half of all highly skilled migrants who live in OECD countries settle in either USA or Canada. Both countries attracted a higher share of highly skilled immigrant than immigrants of other qualification levels. The case of Canada illustrates this pattern excellently. Although 8 % of Canada’s population is foreign born, the share of the highly skilled foreign population accounts for 11 % of the highly skilled population.

This ratio is not so favourable for the Netherlands, since the country attracted a higher share of low skilled migrants (see Figure 1).

#### *4.3.2 Emigration and immigration to and from the Netherlands*

##### Dutch Brain Drain

The migration balance of the Netherlands is positive. The country gained 8898 persons in 2005. This moderate positive migration balance is created by a large inflow of foreign immigrants and a large outflow of Dutch citizens. Whereas –30,533 Dutch persons left the country, 39,431 foreign citizen joined the population in the Netherlands (data source: CBS), although the available data sources do not specify the age of the immigrants. Since only 2,844 persons who are older than 65 years leave the country (data source: CBS), retirement migration can be excluded as a reasons for emigration.

The situation in the Amsterdam region is similar to the Netherlands (Figure 2). The region gains 5,341 persons in 2005. This positive balance is also caused by foreign immigration, whereas the more Dutch persons leave the region than come from abroad (- 4,395). The immigration inflow is mainly channelled to the Amsterdam core city and the sub-centres in the region, but the smaller communities including Hilversum tend to loose population to foreign countries.

OECD data also confirms that a large group of Dutch citizens live in other OECD countries. Of the 616,909 Dutch persons who live in other OECD countries, 36.1 % possess a tertiary education (OECD 2005, 125).

Figure 3 shows that the share of highly skilled Dutch expats is higher than the overall of Dutch expat population. This means that highly skilled emigrants are overrepresented in the Dutch emigration outflow. Compared to other European countries such as the UK or Ireland, the share of highly skilled Dutch expats is not alarming. In spite of that the negative migration balance of Dutch persons causes a brain drain. Given this situation, the immigration of highly skilled professionals to the Netherlands is even of higher importance for a sustainable development of the labour force. Can the Netherlands attract highly skilled labour from abroad to substitute the outflow of talent?

Figure 2: Immigration and Emigration to and from the Amsterdam metropolitan region

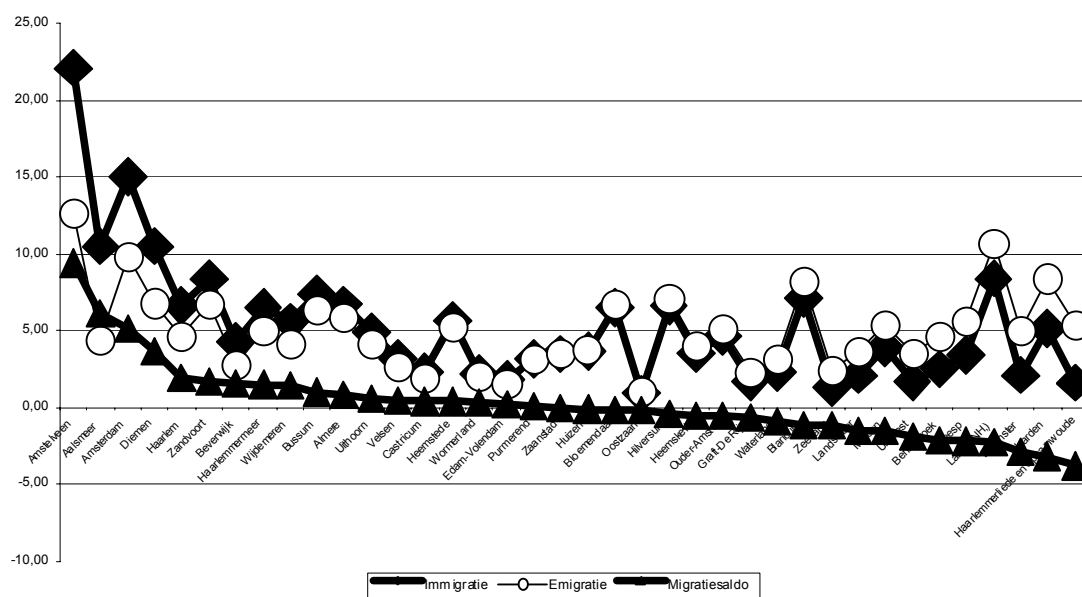
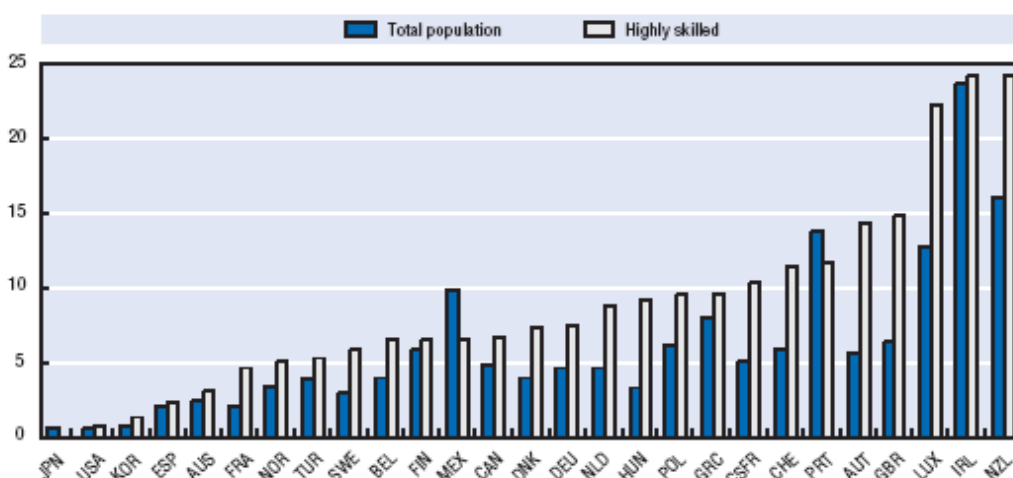


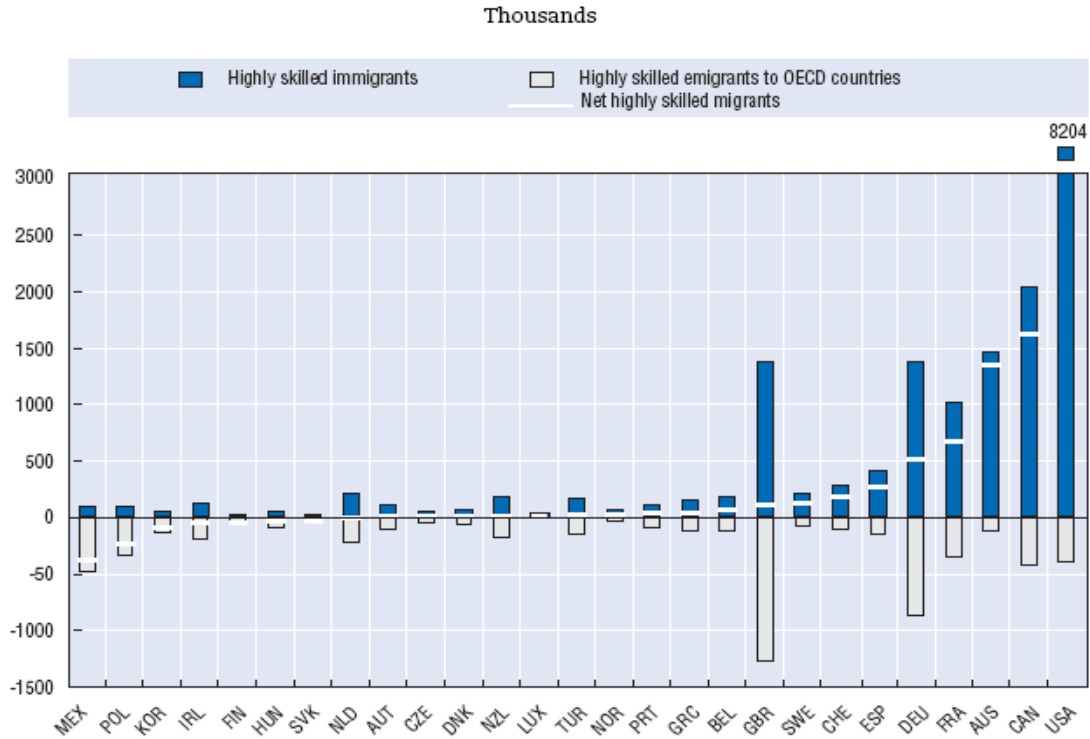
Figure 3: Share of highly skilled expats compared to total expat population



Source: OECD (2005, 124)

Figure 4 shows that the emigration and immigration of highly skilled persons to the Netherlands is balanced, because the Netherlands are able to substitute the outflow of talent by an inflow of foreign professionals who mainly come from non-OECD countries.

**Figure 4: Migration balance of highly skilled migrants to OECD countries**



Source: OECD (2005, 126)

What are the main source countries of highly skilled immigrants to the Netherlands?

Nearly 9 % of the highly skilled work force in the Netherlands does not have a Dutch nationality. The share is lower than in Great Britain (16%), Germany (17%) and Ireland (18.2%). Given the fact that a substantial share of those foreign persons in Germany and Ireland are born in those countries, the difference to the Netherlands is smaller, but still visible. Other countries such as Spain (6.5%) or Poland (0.3%) have a much smaller share of foreign highly skilled in their educated workforce (data source: OECD database).

Table 1 shows that the majority of the foreign highly skilled comes from non-European countries (5.2 % of the highly skilled work force in the Netherlands). Only 26 % of the foreign highly skilled in the Netherlands originate in western industrialised countries<sup>2</sup>. Another 5 % are highly skilled Belgians who might be better considered as small distance commuters than foreign expatriates. The bulk of the foreign highly skilled, however, originate from countries which have been former colonies of the Netherlands (31 %; Indonesia or Suriname). Source countries of former labour migration such as Turkey and Morocco are prominent (8%) as well as countries which have been hit by major conflicts and from which

<sup>2</sup> Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, UK, USA.

many highly skilled refugees flew to Western Europe (8 %, Iran, Iraq, Post-Yugoslavia, Somalia). Table 1 also shows that the quantitative importance of foreign highly skilled professionals is small. The largest single nationality are 31 thousand Indonesians. The largest European nation which sends their highly skilled nationals to the Netherlands is neighbouring Germany.

**Table 1: Highly skilled transnational migrants in the Netherlands 2005**

<b>Netherlands</b>	Highly skilled professionals	in percent of total
AFG	4.469	0,19
CHN	2.861	0,12
<b>IDN</b>	<b>31.429</b>	<b>1,32</b>
IRN	4.626	0,19
IRQ	7.303	0,31
TUR	8.701	0,37
ASIA	6.833	0,29
<b>Asia total</b>	<b>66.222</b>	<b>2,78</b>
MAR	8.077	0,34
SOM	700	0,03
AFRI	5.309	0,22
<b>Africa total</b>	<b>14.086</b>	<b>0,59</b>
CAN	1.454	0,06
USA	7.272	0,31
ANT	8.279	0,35
<b>SUR</b>	<b>25.057</b>	<b>1,05</b>
SCAC	241	0,01
<b>America total</b>	<b>42.303</b>	<b>1,78</b>
POL	4.078	0,17
ITA	2.388	0,10
<b>DEU</b>	<b>20.003</b>	<b>0,84</b>
ESP	3.398	0,14
BEL	11.104	0,47
FRA	5.258	0,22
FYUG-BIH	1.468	0,06
FYUG-YUG	2.848	0,12
GBR	14.491	0,61
EURO	21.216	0,89
<b>Europe total</b>	<b>86.252</b>	<b>3,63</b>
<b>Foreigners total</b>	<b>208.863</b>	<b>8,78</b>
<b>Dutch professionals</b>	<b>2.169.015</b>	<b>91,22</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.377.878</b>	<b>100,00</b>

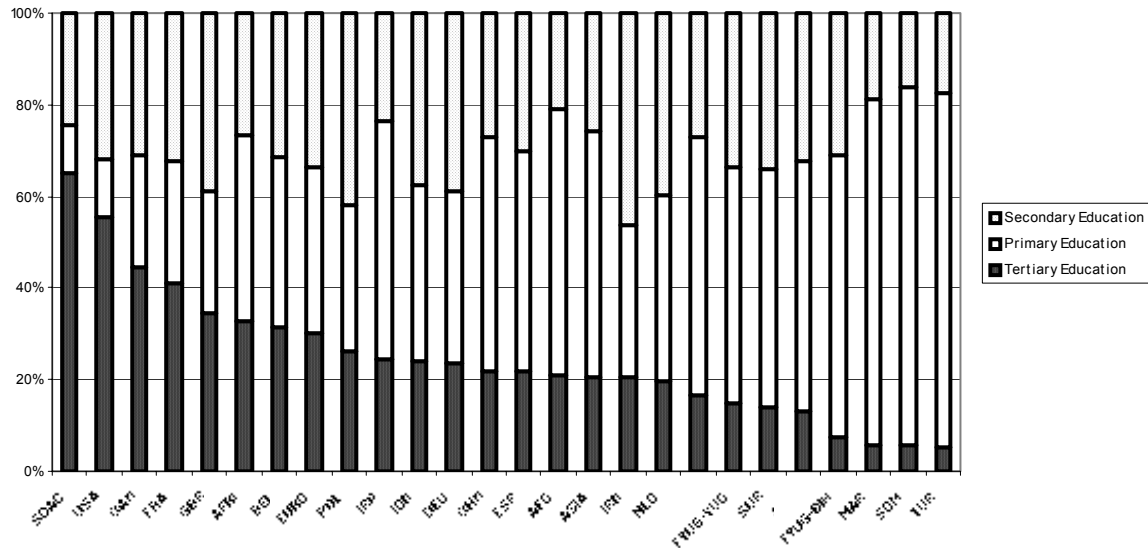
*Data source: OECD Database on immigrants and expatriates, own calculations*

The share of highly skilled differs between the nations of origin. Most of the incoming migrants are better educated than the Dutch population. This is not true for the largest groups of immigrants, however. The Surinamese, Moroccan, and Turkish population is less educated than the Dutch inhabitants (Figure 5). Not surprisingly, more than 50 % of the incoming Americans have tertiary education. This high share, however, drops for most of the neighbouring countries, but it is still high with around 30 %. It declines further for the immigrants who come from Germany and the more remote European countries such as Spain



or Italy or Poland. Overall, the share of highly educated Western immigrants in the Netherlands is 28 %<sup>3</sup>.

**Figure 5: Education level in per cent by incoming nationalities**



Data source: OECD Database on immigrants and expatriates, own calculations

Given those differences between the source countries, one might question the statement that highly skilled immigration to the Netherlands is related to the activities of transnational companies and international trade. The inward foreign direct investment has stagnated since 2002. If this also leads to a slow down of migration, is still in question. The relationship between trade, foreign investment and migration will be investigated in the following part.

### 4.3.3 International trade and highly skilled migration

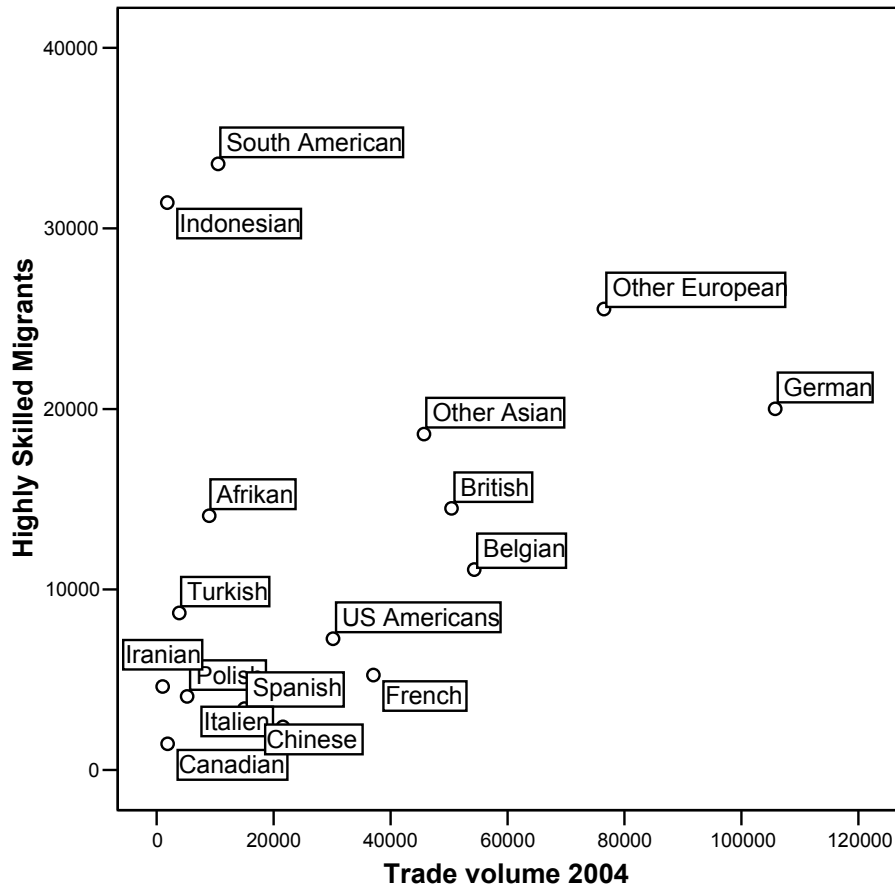
In 2004 goods of the value of 365881 m. € were im- and exported in the Netherlands, whereas only a volume of 132,359 m. € in services were transferred over the borders of the Netherlands (data source: CBS 2007, own calculations). The trade with services accounts only for 27 % of the total trade volume. The main categories of service trade refer to logistics and travel. Only 1,325 m. € are traded with personal, cultural and recreational services (CBS 2007, 21).

How are international trade and highly skilled immigration interrelated in the Netherlands? For the analysis of this question the source countries in the OECD database on immigrants and expats are compared with the countries with which the Netherlands have the most intensive trading relations with. Since data on the trade volume of Surinam was not available, this category is joined with the other South American immigrants or trade volume.

<sup>3</sup> Due to the restriction of the OECD data base, this figure should be interpreted with caution, since the number of Japanese and Korean migrants is not available. Since the share of all Asian immigrants is with 20 % comparatively low in comparison to the European migrants, the bias cannot be very strong.

Figure 6 shows that the number of highly skilled migrants from a source country tends to increase, if the trade volume with the Netherlands grows. Two exceptions are visible: the case of Indonesia, and 'South America' which comprises also Suriname. Trade between the Netherlands and the former colonies is negligible. In those cases, the interrelation between trade and highly skilled migration appears to be less relevant.

**Figure 6: Trade volume and highly skilled migration by countries of origin**

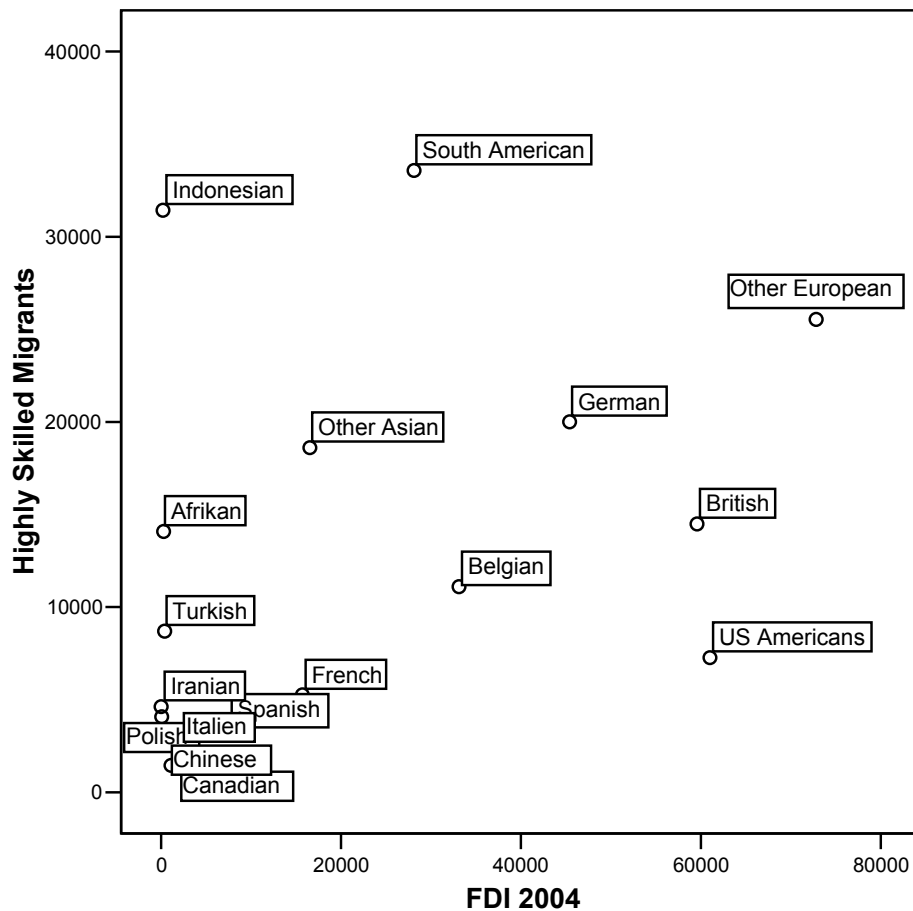


*Data source: OECD database and CBS (2007), own calculations.*

#### 4.3.4 Direct foreign investment

The Netherlands is one of the important locations for transnational companies in Europe. Its importance to attract investment inflows (7<sup>th</sup> rank of all OECD countries) is lower than its contribution as an investor to foreign economies (6<sup>th</sup> rank of all OECD countries). Whereas the amount of Dutch capital in foreign countries has increased the last years (2003 to 2006), the sum of foreign investments in the Netherlands has remained stable.

Wolter (1997) documented a moderately positive relationship between the stock of foreign investment flows and the migration of highly skilled persons for the 1980s and 1990 of the former EU-9/15. Can this relation be confirmed for the Netherlands in the new millennium, too?

**Figure 7: Foreign Direct Investments and Highly Skilled Migrants in the Netherlands**

Source: CBS (2007), OECD database on immigrants and expats, own calculations.

Figure 7 shows that the main investors in the Netherlands originate from Western Europe and the United States. Again the Indonesian and the South American case produce an outlier. The Figure shows that a positive relationship between foreign direct investment and highly skilled migrations appears to exist for some western European economies, but an overall relation between investment and highly skilled migration does not appear to be existent for all countries of origin.

A correlation with 17 countries and regions shows in Table 2 that there is a significant correlation between foreign direct investment and trade in the Dutch case. Highly skilled migration, however, does not display any significant relationship with the other variables. The reasons might be found in the large stock of the Suriname and Indonesian highly skilled migrants.

**Table 2: Correlation of highly skilled migration, FDI and trade volume**

		FDI 2004	Trade volume 2004	Highly Skilled Migrants
FDI 2004	Pearson Correlation	1	,747**	,384
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,001	,128
	N	17	17	17
Trade volume 2004	Pearson Correlation	,747**	1	,293
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,001		,254
	N	17	17	17
Highly Skilled Migrants	Pearson Correlation	,384	,293	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,128	,254	
	N	17	17	17

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*Data source: OECD data base and CBS (2007).*

In addition to economic variables such as international trade and foreign direct investment, other factors appear to be important in the Dutch case. Firstly, the immigration of a highly skilled work force from former colonies, secondly second generation immigrants who appear to have acquired a tertiary education and thirdly, the inflow of highly skilled humanitarian migrants from Iran, Iraq, Bosnia and Somalia. The duration of the stay, the motivations and the integration of those groups into the Dutch labour market might differ from labour migrants who originate from Western industrialised countries and travel with their companies to the Netherlands. Highly skilled migrants of those groups might have a longer term stay in the Netherlands in mind than most highly skilled migrants from Western industrialised countries.

#### 4.4 Conclusions

The Dutch labour market will depend on new labour resources due to the large economic growth and a shrinking work force. The creative knowledge economy is challenged by those developments in particular, because in opposition to popular clichés creative knowledge workers maintain their place of residence during their career. In addition, there is a reluctance of Dutch students to select cultural related disciplines, so that the inflow of graduates into the work force might not substitute the outflow.

Highly skilled migration is often conceived as a flow connected to the internationalisation of companies. International trade relations and investment is often related to highly skilled migration. An American manager who is sent on a three year contract abroad appears as the epitome of this migration flow. Most of the knowledge derives from the observations of industrial companies, but some indications exist that it cannot be transferred without change to the creative knowledge economy. The short duration of residence which is more common for artists and the low level of exportability of services are two examples which contest a blind transfer of existing concepts. In addition to that, Florida emphasised the importance of the social and cultural environment for the creative class which seems to differ enormously from the secondment praxis of international manufacturers. If highly persons are less often seconded, but travel on their own steam, they might also select other destinations.

First results on the situation of foreign highly skilled migration to the Netherlands reveal that the Netherlands is not only a host country, but that large numbers of highly skilled Dutch persons leave the country too. This brain drain is substituted by an equally large inflow of highly skilled that tend to come from non-OECD countries. Only a minority of the foreign highly skilled workforce originates from other western industrialised countries. Larger shares of highly skilled either emigrated from former colonies or belong to former guest worker countries or originate in countries of conflict.

Since it can be assumed that the length of stay, the motivation to immigrate and the chances of a successful labour integration differ between all groups, the different situation of these groups of migrants should be taken into account and addressed. It provides challenges and changes for the creative knowledge economy.



## **5 TRANSNATIONAL HIGHLY-SKILLED MIGRATION TO THE AMSTERDAM METROPOLITAN AREA**

### **5.1 Migrants from Western industrialised countries**

Within the Netherlands, the metropolitan areas of Amsterdam and The Hague are the main attractors of migrants from Western industrialised countries in general, and highly-skilled migrants in particular. The Hague and its suburbs attract mainly diplomats working for embassies and consulates, as a logical consequence of the status of The Hague as the Dutch national political capital. In recent years, a markedly grown second category of highly-skilled migrants to The Hague consists of people working in international legal institutions. This is connected to the growing status of The Hague as one of the world's 'legal capitals', with institutions like the International Court of Justice and the Tribunal for ex-Yugoslavia. The Amsterdam Metropolitan Area generally attracts other categories of highly-skilled migrants: students in higher education, academic researchers, managers of multinational companies, and people working in advanced producer services like the creative and knowledge-intensive industries we are analysing in the ACRE project.

Highly-skilled migrants reach the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area from all corners of the globe, not only from Western industrialised countries. At the Dutch national level, this was already demonstrated in chapter 4; it is not less true for the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area, as some of our interviews with highly-skilled migrants will also demonstrate. On the other hand, it is also clear that not all migrants from Western industrialised countries are highly-skilled migrants. However, while data on highly-skilled migrants as a separate category were not available to us at the city-regional level, we had to settle for the share of migrants from Western industrialised countries as the closest proxy to the presence and distribution of highly-skilled migrants in the city-region.

Within the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area, at the municipal level, Amstelveen had the highest share of Western migrants (18%) on 1 January 2007. Within the West of the Netherlands, where the four largest metropolitan areas (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht) are located, Amstelveen had the second largest share of Western migrants on that date, after Wassenaar, a suburb of The Hague where 22% of the inhabitants belonged to this category. Elsewhere in the Netherlands, only municipalities directly adjacent to the Belgian or German border score higher. In the city of Amsterdam, the share of Western migrants was 14%, while in most suburbs around Amsterdam the share was around 10%. At the sub-municipal level, the highest concentrations were found in the boroughs Centrum, Oud-Zuid and Zuideramstel in Amsterdam, and in two neighbourhoods in Amstelveen (Mensinga and Deurloo, 2008). An obvious reason for this concentration in the Amsterdam city centre, the south of the city and parts of adjacent Amstelveen is the concentrations of creative and knowledge-intensive industries also found in or close to these areas. These are the industries where most of the

migrants from Western industrialised countries work. Another reason is probably that the city centre of Amsterdam and the areas south of it, including most of Amstelveen, have developed as the highest status residential areas of the city-region ever since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

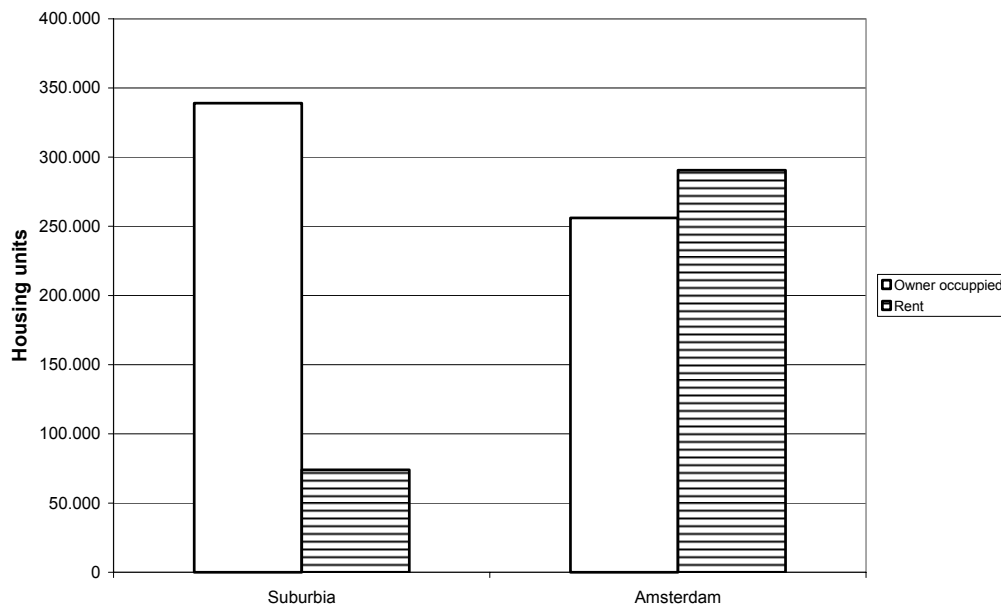
The specific housing demands of most Western migrants, especially the highly skilled migrants, influence their distribution across the city-region as well. Within the city of Amsterdam, they generally prefer to rent dwellings from small private landlords rather than from large housing corporations, because large housing associations are reluctant to let furnished flats (see also section 5.2). This also means that, despite the earlier mentioned relative concentrations, Western migrants are quite spread out across Amsterdam, Amstelveen, the suburbs around Amsterdam, and to a lesser extent the rest of the metropolitan area. An exception to this rule are the Japanese, especially those with young children. Almost the entire Japanese community in the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area lives in the southernmost borough of Amsterdam (Buitenveldert) and in and around the city centre of Amstelveen. This is related to their demands concerning flat size on the one hand and environmental demands on the other. The Japanese families generally prefer a quiet, spacious and green living environment, and prefer to live close to other Japanese and to Japanese facilities like shops, personal services, and Japanese schools (Mensinga and Deurloo, 2008; interview Christa de Klein, September 2008). Other large migrant communities like the British and US-Americans, on the other hand, live relatively spread out across Amsterdam and adjacent municipalities, generally quite mixed with the native Dutch population. Other factors determining the migrants' distribution are of course their income level and occupational status. Next to the category of expats that generally earns a high income in a high-status job, significant parts of the Western migrant flow to the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area are entrepreneurs, sometimes starting or in the initial phase of building up their business, and students. These two categories quite often have much lower incomes, which might imply they have to find accommodation in other, less attractive parts of the city-regional housing stock.

## **5.2 Housing market situation in the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area**

In international rankings on the attractiveness of cities in terms of quality of life and costs of living, the scores of Amsterdam are good. It ranks 13<sup>th</sup> in terms of quality of life after Austrian, Swiss and German capitals, but ahead of other European cities. In relation to the level of living costs, the international comparison places Amsterdam on the 25<sup>th</sup> position. As negative aspects in those surveys, the high housing costs are brought up.

The access of migrants to the housing market is difficult. The housing stock is strongly segmented in the region (see Figure 8). In the suburban part of the AMA, the dwellings are more typically owner occupied (44%) and single-family units (80%). The situation in the core city is different. Amsterdam has properly one of the largest share of rental dwellings internationally (76.1% in 2006, CBS 2008). Although the size of the flats are relatively small – only 33 % of the dwellings have more than three rooms – , parts of the housing stock are very popular. About 50 % of the buildings in Amsterdam were built before World War II. In particular, the canal belt with the historical of the Golden 17<sup>th</sup> century is one of the most demanded living spaces. In the last decades, several units were privatised and they are owner occupied now (ibid.).



**Figure 8: Housing stock in Amsterdam (core city) and suburban area by ownership**

*Data Source: CBS 2008.*

Although a large rental housing stock is generally favourable for migrants, two serious barriers reduce the numbers of available flats for newcomers in Amsterdam enormously. Firstly, 52% of the housing stock belongs to the social housing stock. This oriented to low income households and is strongly regulated. The average waiting time for these units is seven years. In addition to that, the average income of creative knowledge workers is above the limit, so that this housing stock is not accessible for the researched group. Secondly, the city of Amsterdam banned the temporary rental. Temporary rental (one week to six month) is conceived as ‘unfair competition’ by the hotel sector which underlines special tourist taxes and special regulations. In addition to that, inner city boroughs support the ban of temporary rent contracts, because they fear the competition between the better paying, foreign expat population and local inhabitants which might lead to rising rent prices and lead to the displacement of local population (Interview Dienst Wonen<sup>1</sup>). The local newspaper ‘Het Parool’ documented the disclosure of temporary rental agencies which offered temporary accommodation on internet sites (Het Parool, 2007a; 2007b; 2007c; 2008a; 2008b; 2008c). Due to the Topstad agenda, however, the local council strives for a deregulation. The lack of temporary accommodation for incoming migrants and expats will be absorbed by the so called short stay policy. In the current development plans, a small share of the existing housing stock will be opened to temporary accommodation from March 2009 onwards. In the liberalised housing segment, landlords can apply to get a ‘short stay’-permission for a quota of 1350 housing units. Those dwellings can comprise newly build accommodation near the main office centre, but also flats in obsolete housing stock and houseboats. So the supplied ‘short stay’-dwelling will vary in terms of quality and outlook. The planned quota is not able to supply the incoming highly skilled workers with accommodation. In addition to that, the hotel sector reported a shortage too and plans to double its capacity in the coming decade. The

<sup>1</sup> E-mail and interview with Chris van Groenigen, Dienst Wonen, 9 and 11 September.2008.

situation in Amsterdam is not without challenges at the moment. If the immigrants cannot access a flat with a longer rent contract, the supply of short stay accommodation will still be problematic in Amsterdam. The situation of immigrants who live in the city longer than six months is seen as less problematic. The department of housing summarised the situation in a policy document : *“In relation to the expats who live here longer and who earn more than 33,000, there are clearly hardly any problems”*. In comparison to Amsterdam, other communities do not implement similar strict regulations which make them more attractive for expat and transnational migrants which we will see in the following section.

The market in Amstelveen is dominated by single private landlords, because the housing co-operations which are more dominant in the Netherland actually, hesitate to let furnished apartments . Due to their higher income, Western immigrants are often able to pay higher rents. Commonly, 1500 € are asked for apartments for singles and the rent for houses start with 2000 – 2500€ in this suburban community (expert interview Christa de Kemp, September 2007). The community is in particular popular with Japanese; the number of Japanese inhabitants even outnumber the number in Amsterdam (CBS, 2008). After the establishment of the European headquarters of Canon in the 1980s, Amstelveen became one of the main destinations in the Netherlands. In the view of the foreign investment agent of the community, Japanese families are attracted by high level of security, the green environment and the offered amenities such as a Japanese kindergarten, food shops and restaurants, bookshop, community centre and an international school (expert interview Christa de Kemp, September 2008). Figures 9-13 on page 49 show some examples of facilities with which the city of Amstelveen is meeting the demands of its internationalising population, with a specific focus on the Japanese community. While some of these facilities were municipal initiatives, most have actually sprung up from initiatives of the migrant communities themselves or in a joint-venture between municipality and migrant communities.

### **5.3 Local and regional policies for transnational highly-skilled migrants**

Until recently, transnational highly skilled migrants did not receive much specific attention in the local policies of the municipalities within the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area. Partly this can be explained by the fact that most matters related to immigration are arranged at the national policy level. Added to this, transnational highly skilled migrants were until recently generally seen as an unproblematic migrant category that did not need much policy attention. As mentioned before, highly-skilled migrants are often generalised as expats and as a consequence of this, most local policy-makers expect them to possess of a high income and generous practical support of their employers. It is true that many expats are indeed facilitated by their employers who offer them accommodation and negotiate facilities like schools or childcare for their children and sometimes also jobs for their partners. However, not all expats are facilitated by their employers this generously, and more importantly, expats are only a small part of the flow of transnational highly skilled migrants entering the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area. This is increasingly realised by local policy-makers; in recent years we have seen a range of initiatives and programmes about how to make the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area, and in particular its largest ‘magnets’ of highly skilled migrants (Amsterdam, Amstelveen and their immediate surroundings), a more attractive living and working environment for transnational highly skilled migrants.

Figures 9-13 Facilities for the Japanese community in Amstelveen (above left: bookshop, above right: hairdresser, centre: kindergarten); and the International School in Amstelveen (below), aiming at children of highly skilled migrants in the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area.  
Pictures: Marco Bontje



Recently a range of meetings, policy advices, media discussions etc. have addressed issues like the difficult access of highly skilled migrants to the housing market (see also section 5.2), the degree to which Amsterdam still has a positive image of diversity and tolerance, and how to increase the international orientation of education in and around Amsterdam. The latter point includes primary and high school education for migrant children on the one hand, and expanding and improving the English-language offer of universities and professional post-graduate programmes on the other. Examples of new internationally oriented higher education initiatives are the University College, a joint initiative of University of Amsterdam and Free University, and the Duisenberg School of Finance, a joint venture of four universities, several finance and insurance companies, the city of Amsterdam and the Dutch government. Housing is the other top priority on the policy agenda, with discussions and initiatives currently mostly focusing on increasing the offer of short-stay apartments: apartments for migrants only planning to stay in the region for 6 months or less.

Though there is increased awareness of the varied background of transnational highly skilled migrants, still most attention in local policies goes to expats on the one hand, and students on the other. For expats in the city-region, life may have become considerably easier since the opening of the Expat Center Amsterdam Area at the South Axis of Amsterdam in 2008. This centre should function as a 'one stop shop' for expats in the entire city-region. It started as a pilot project of the cities of Amsterdam and Amstelveen in partnership with the Dutch Immigration and Naturalisation Office (IND). The Expat Center is mainly aiming at international highly skilled migrants shortly before and after arrival in the city-region, as well as at expats living in the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area. Its main aims are to facilitate the bureaucratic process of obtaining residence and work permits for the newcomers and to act as the prime information source for expats during their stay. The information and support tasks address practical issues like insurance, taxes, legal services, relocation services and international schools.

It was already mentioned that the regional higher education institutes are increasingly active at the global student market to attract students from across the globe. These efforts of course do not remain limited to only starting a yearly increasing amount of English-language programmes. Universities are also actively trying to make international student life easier and more attractive. Specialised university branches like the International School of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Amsterdam offer student housing in cooperation with housing corporations and organise several social events. Increasingly also, new master and postgraduate programmes are developed together with partners from local or national government, semi-public institutes and/or business. Local policy programmes like 'Amsterdam Topstad' stress higher education as an important tool for increasing international competitiveness and attractiveness. Policy-makers become increasingly aware that the international students of today could very well be the talented managers and employees of the creative and knowledge-intensive industries of tomorrow.

## 6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In the chapters 3, 4 and 5 we have discussed the quantitative data available for the Netherlands and (parts of) the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area on the presence and importance of highly skilled migrants. For our own data gathering, we have chosen to use qualitative data. We chose to have semi-structured interviews. In this type of interviews, a topic guide rather than a fixed set of questions is used. This allowed the interviewers to address all topics we considered necessary to answer our research questions, but still left sufficient room for follow-up questions and addressing unforeseen topics during the interviews.

The 27 interviews for the research were conducted between September and December 2008. Some of the interviewees were personally approached through the platform of the 2008 PICNIC conference. This yearly conference attracts thousands of creative professionals to Amsterdam; participants come from across the globe, but also many Amsterdam-based creatives take part. Another strategy to approach transnational migrants was a flyer which was distributed in the Dutch language school of the University of Amsterdam. Many Asian participants were contacted through the foreign chambers of commerce or member companies of the Amsterdam *Kenniskring* association. This association is a joint initiative of the City of Amsterdam, the Amsterdam Chamber of Commerce, and the Amsterdam higher education institutions. Some participants were also approached via private networks of researchers of the Department of Geography, Planning and International Development Studies of the University of Amsterdam. The interviews were often held in public spaces, e.g. the restaurant of the public library in Amsterdam, or at the office of the interviewees. Rarely the interview was held at home of the participant. The interviews took from 20 minutes up to three hours. Most interviews were held in English, while the interviews with German-speaking respondents were held in German.

The aim of the selection of the interviewees was to present different groups of expats and transnational migrants. The situation of expats is often discussed in the media in Amsterdam, for example in the series of articles in the local daily newspaper *Het Parool* mentioned before, and in municipal, city-district and regional government offices in the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area, but the situation of other groups of highly skilled migrants is less researched. A recent study by Paula Kibbelaar (Kibbelaar, 2007) was able to enlighten the situation of the second generation of immigrants. Still less visible are the large number of European migrants. Contrary to for example Asian migrants that are often sent by their company, European high skilled migrants often come on their own steam to the Netherlands. Therefore, we chose to look especially for European highly skilled migrants. While Europeans form the largest share of respondents, our sample also includes 7 Asian migrants (reflecting the significant and growing presence of especially Japanese, Chinese and Indian highly skilled migrants in the city-region), as well as 1 US-American and 4 Latin American migrants.

The common interview guideline for the ACRE-project was used which can be found in appendix 1. Some of the topics are related to issues which highly skilled persons might feel the urge to confirm to a socially accepted answer. Moving to another city might be seen as much more socially acceptable, if highly skilled persons can claim career prospects instead of non-career-related reasons. Soft factors and also failure and discomfort with the migration might be underrated due to this. Another hesitation is related to the disclosure of personal relations. Sexuality is still a sensitive topic. Heterosexual and homosexual persons who are addressed as professionals in a professional environment might be reluctant to talk about their sexuality and disclose partner related reasons for the international move. Many interviewed women, but also men, downplayed partner-related issues in the interviews, for example. In addition to that, homosexuality is still contested, and it is still conceived as a sensitive issue. So it cannot be assumed that interviewees disclose same sex partnerships. Florida underlines that gay people are of major importance to measure tolerance and openness of a place. In an interview situation, however, gay and also straight persons might feel some resistance to talk with unknown persons about this very personal part of their lives. Given those constraints, the evaluation of Florida's approach is a challenge, because not all relevant information might be accessible for researchers. The used methodology has some limitations in this respect.

The interviews were transcribed and analysed with the Atlas.ti software. This programme enabled us to code and analyse the interview transcriptions using key words and phrases.

**Table 3: Overview of interviewed persons**

Nr.	Gender	Nationality	Sector	Occupation	Age	Family Status
1	Female	British	Creative industries	Designer	25-29	living together
2	Female	Turkish	Knowledge industries	Banker	30-34	married
3	Female	American	Knowledge industries	Management consultant	45-49	single
4	Male	Italian	Creative industries	ICT consultant	35-39	single
5	Female	Slovenian	Creative industries	Designer	30-34	living together
6	Male	German	Creative industries	Architect	40-44	single
7	Male	Czech	Creative industries	Architect	25-29	single
8	Female	Japanese	Creative industries	Media	30-34	single
9	Female	Chinese	Knowledge industries	Lawyer	30-34	living together
10	Male	Japanese	Knowledge industries	accountant	35-39	married
11	Male	French	Creative industries	Artist, performer	35-39	living together
12	Male	Indian	Creative industries	Head of business division	35-39	married
13	Male	Indian	Knowledge industries	researcher	30-35	married
14	Male	Indian	Knowledge industries	HR	25-29	single
15	Male	German	Creative industries	Designer	30-34	single
16	Male	German	Creative industries	Designer	30-34	living together
17	Female	Irish	Knowledge industries	Researcher	30-34	single
18	Male	Italian	Knowledge industries	Researcher	30-39	single
19	Male	Spanish	Knowledge industries	ICT-manager	30-39	living together
20	Female	Italian	Creative industries	Product manager	30-39	married
21	Female	Italian	Knowledge industries	External relations coordinator	20-29	living together
22	Male	Slovenian	Knowledge industries	Researcher	20-29	single
23	Female	Turkish	Knowledge industries	Banker		living together
24	Male	Colombian	Knowledge industries	Researcher	30-39	married
25	Male	Peruvian	Knowledge industries	Manager	20-29	single
26	Female	Argentinean	Creative industries	Software developer	30-39	living together
27	Male	Mexican	Knowledge industries	consultant	30-39	single

*Source: Own data*

Finally, we should stress that our interviews have taken place at a time when the deep impact of the credit crisis and the economic recession resulting from it were still largely unknown. During the interview phase of our analysis, the unprecedented dimensions of this crisis (often compared, though probably a bit exaggerated, to the 1930s or early 1980s) only gradually became apparent. In the interviews the crisis was mentioned occasionally but not discussed in depth, also because the thematic focus of our study was on other topics. Still, we are aware of the possible impacts of the crisis on the attractiveness of the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area for highly skilled migrants, particularly those in creative and knowledge-intensive industries. Our findings should be understood as reflecting a time in which international economic perspectives were rapidly worsening, but did not look dramatic yet. Moreover, most of our respondents came to the Netherlands months or even years before we interviewed them, in a time in which the international economy and certainly also the Dutch economy was still expecting a bright future.





## 7 THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE AMSTERDAM REGION FOR TRANSNATIONAL MIGRANTS AND EXPATS

### 7.1 Motivation to come to the Amsterdam region

The motivation to come to the AMA is firstly related to the status of the foreign professionals. Highly skilled persons who are seconded by their company have less influence on the destination than professionals who travel on their own steam or follow their partner to the Netherlands. Therefore, in the first part the motivations of the self-motivated migrants will be represented and then the situation of the seconded persons will be described.

#### 7.1.1 Migrants coming to Amsterdam on their own initiative

Among the self-motivated migrants we interviewed, three reasons are prominent. These respondents indicated that they came to the AMA to follow their partner, to work or study, or to live in an international environment. In our interviews, personal relationships were articulated strongly as a motivation to move to the Amsterdam region. Often they were combined with work related reasons. The favourable situation of the labour market in the Amsterdam city-region enables international couples to organise their life in the region easily.

*“And we [my husband and I] were just talking: ‘what if you work here’, you know, because working conditions were better than in Turkey at that time.... I was on a holiday as a tourist and I heard that they [Turkish banks] were looking for someone to hire and I had an interview. I think after one month, they made an offer to me and I accepted it.”*

(Turkish female banker)

*“It was also a bit of coincidence because it was one of the places that we were considering. Amsterdam is a very nice city. The coincidence was my husband sent one CV and he found a really, really good job here (...)”*

(Italian female manager)

Some respondents also moved to the Netherlands to study without initially planning to stay longer and start a career in this country. Amsterdam in those cases was not always the initial place of entry to the Netherlands. A Slovenian designer we interviewed, for example, came to the Netherlands for a postgraduate design programme in Eindhoven. She indicated that Dutch design studies have increasingly managed to attract foreign students recently, which might be related to the growing reputation of ‘Dutch Design’ abroad. A love affair then brought her to Amsterdam. Something similar might be true for architecture: a German respondent indicates that part of his motivation to move to the Netherlands was the fame and good reputation of Dutch architects in the 1990s: *“(...) actually I was already quite late, but about 3, 4 years before me, in Germany it was like, when you would like to mean something as an architect,*

*you should at least have been in Holland for a year, either having studied or having worked there.*" (German architect) Two German designers studied in Utrecht and Nijmegen before they moved to Amsterdam. One of them came to Utrecht as an Erasmus exchange student and was offered the chance to finish his studies in Utrecht. The other decided to continue his study career in the Netherlands, because the Dutch study scholarship system offers the chance to finance a second study while the German system does not. Two other respondents deliberately chose Amsterdam because it offered the most interesting master programmes compared to other cities respectively universities. In those cases, it was rather a choice of study than a choice of city. The decision to stay and start their working career only followed on a later stage:

*"I applied to more universities but then I chose Amsterdam because the interdisciplinary programme in logic encompasses logic, language, mathematics and philosophy, so a lot of different fields, I am really interested in those things (...)"*

(Colombian male researcher)

*"Well, I was looking for something to study and I just wanted to study the most interesting or to find the most interesting programme and didn't really matter where it was (...)"*

(Mexican male consultant)

Considering the work motivated migration to the region of Amsterdam, the decision to relocate was first and foremost determined by the most interesting job offer. However, this does not mean that other factors, like so-called soft location factors or social contacts were not taken into consideration at all. In several cases either the already existing social network in the city or Amsterdam's reputation of being an open-minded city influenced the decision as well. Nevertheless, these factors were clearly subordinated to the job offer. For some, it was also not really a decision for Amsterdam or its city-region, but rather for the Netherlands or the West of the Netherlands. The Slovenian designer we interviewed, for example, indicated that for her work it did not matter much if she would be in Amsterdam or Rotterdam. In our interviews we did not find convincing evidence that Amsterdam is particularly attractive to highly skilled migrants compared to the Netherlands as a whole, though Amsterdam is clearly the most internationally oriented city of the country and the best known city abroad.

Socio-economic networks like friends or business related contacts generally played a subordinate role in the decision to relocate, even though a certain influence cannot be denied. Furthermore, these networks were helpful in the settling process after moving to Amsterdam, especially in terms of finding accommodation. Again it has to be distinguished between singles and interviewees that were in a relationship. The ones that followed or the partner did not experience any problems in finding accommodation because they just moved in the partner's flat or house. The others, if not provided from the university, often found their place of living through personal networks (friends or working colleagues). Just in a few cases interviewees took advantage of so-called relocation services provided by the company respectively a commercial real estate service. While several respondents mentioned the shortage of affordable housing in the region of Amsterdam, nobody experienced severe problems themselves.

The influence of so-called hard and soft factors on the personal decision to migrate to Amsterdam is rather difficult to filter out. In the course of the research it became obvious that soft and not work related hard factors played an increasing role *after* the high skilled migrants moved to the city of Amsterdam. This can be explained by the fact that a lot of those factors were unknown to the interviewees when they decided to migrate.

In regard to hard factors, nothing played an important role in the decision process that was not related to work or studies. Even though some interviewees are profiting from the 30% tax reduction, this was not considered as a relevant incentive to come to Amsterdam. Similar, most of them appreciate the connectivity of Amsterdam in terms of infrastructure but none of the participants considered this factor as relevant for the decision to move.

In the context of soft location factors, it is worth mentioning that many respondents had visited Amsterdam before as a tourist. The city was generally considered as beautiful, lively, tolerant, open and hence a nice place to live in. These factors seem to play an important role in the decision where to settle. However, they are not considered as being unique to Amsterdam. Specific place related advantages in terms of soft factors rather come to the fore at a later stage, when people have lived a couple of months in Amsterdam and gained more knowledge about the city.

In fact, it seems like that certain soft and hard factors are essential pre-conditions for location choices. This means that just cities with a particular size and reputation (like Paris, London, Barcelona, etc.) were taken into consideration by the highly skilled migrants. Those interviewees that did not come to Amsterdam because of their partner were freer in their choice and they had a certain selection of European cities in their mind where they could imagine living. The decisive factor in the end was the master programme or the job offer that was considered as most interesting. The prevalence of English as a language was considered as a big advantage, but not a determining factor.

*“In this sense I said well, I mean the reputation is good, the quality of life is good but could have been easily another town. If they would have offered for example Berlin, I would have gone to Berlin. But now after 3 years I realise that this town has certain advantages that other European towns might not have.”*

(Italian male researcher)

Neither paper work nor legal considerations were regarded relevant to the decision to move. While, of course, paper work was a bigger issue for migrants coming from outside the EU none of them has taken this into account beforehand. However, some migrants from South America and India complained about legal procedures to work within the EU or Dutch or European bureaucracy in general. An Indian respondent stated that the Netherlands could learn a lot from their western neighbours in that respect:

*“It took me almost a month to complete all the legal formalities (...). I think the visa processing system that the UK and US follow are much simpler than what the Dutch government follows. (...) I really think that the Dutch government should have a look at what the counterparts across the Channel do.”*

Finally, it should be kept in mind that not just individual pull factors were responsible for the decision to migrate to Amsterdam. So-called push factors played an important role as well to make the high skilled workers leave their home country respectively hometown. The main reason in this respect was first and foremost the individuals' desire to leave their home country in order to gain new experience, work wise and cultural wise. Considering the interviews with the Italian participants the political situation in Italy was declared as a reason to emigrate as well, while some of the German respondents pointed at the problematic labour market in their home country when they moved in the early 2000s. In their branches (architecture and design), there were more and better job opportunities in the Netherlands than in Germany.

In some cases a mix of work-related, personal and lifestyle-related reasons encouraged our respondents to move to Amsterdam. One of our respondents grew up in New Zealand, moved to London for her study and to start her career, and then moved on to Amsterdam with her Dutch boyfriend. It is hard to distinguish the most important reason for their move to Amsterdam from this mix of factors:

*"I've visited the Netherlands a number of times. I knew pretty much Amsterdam and what it was like here. (...) And the Dutch public have a (...) better understanding of design, without any formal education. Which is also quite nice. (...) Well, actually I had a boyfriend, he was Dutch. And he was living in London with me. And I just, well we decided that Holland is a more interesting change and a bit of a challenge. (...) Yeah, it's more of a (...) lifestyle decision rather than a career decision."*

(British female designer)

The overall impression of our respondents that came to the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area as self-motivated migrants is that their decision to relocate was determined by very personal, individualistic factors. The most striking reason to migrate to Amsterdam was following, or moving together with, the boy- or girlfriend. Others moved to the region of Amsterdam due to a job offer or a specific master programme offered by the university. Other factors were subordinated and served rather as general conditions respectively requirement for the decision to migrate. In each case these factors were interwoven with the interviewees' individual trajectories and gained a more important role while living in the region of Amsterdam.

### *7.1.2 Migrants seconded by a company*

The motivation of highly skilled migrants that were seconded by their company to Amsterdam was of course different. Our sample included Indian, Japanese, Chinese and American respondents that had been seconded by their companies, either directly to Amsterdam, or to another European destination at first. The degrees of freedom their companies left them varied. An American respondent simply said: *"I came because I was told I had to."* Interestingly, she left her company and started an independent career as a self-employed management consultant. A Japanese media manager was also asked to represent his company in Amsterdam, but for more positive reasons. He saw it as a chance to gain international experience in a company and a branch that generally does not offer many such opportunities:

*“(...) then one day my boss called me into his office. And he asked. You know, basically my name had come up on a list of candidates for going to Europe, and whether I was interested. (...) I was already working on organising arts exhibitions, theatrical events, concerts and so in that sense, it was the same kind of work, but in a different position. So I thought that would be interesting, as you gain a wider perspective. (...) we are kind of a domestic company, so there are very few chances to go to a company outside of Japan. (...) apparently from what I hear now, I was kind of, you know, very few top candidates (...).”*

(Japanese media manager)

*Another Japanese respondent was eager to go abroad so “I just started raising my hand and offer my bosses: I like to go abroad.” He did not deliberately choose Amsterdam, though: “Especially in Japan, [in a] tax firm, we don’t have any choice, just, how shall I say, just go there, something like that.”*

(Japanese accountant)

An Indian manager (head of business division) was offered an opportunity he could hardly refuse:

*“I was offered this position. Shirish, can you go there and build this business for PC’s. So I found it very challenging, because we were not doing, almost doing nothing in this phase in development business in Europe. So I thought I’d go and build this business from the ground up. (...) I thought I’ll give it, I try it for a year and then let’s see how it goes on. But it was so interesting that it’s almost three and a half years now.”*

Next to the challenging assignment, he mentions the incentive of experiencing a new part of the world. His experience with colleagues from his company and other Indians is that most come to Amsterdam for similarly challenging assignments and experiences, and not with the intention to stay permanently.

While the group of seconded migrants in our interview sample is much smaller than that of the self-motivated migrants, we still noticed significant differences in the personal migration stories within that small group. Being seconded by a company clearly does not happen in a general standardised way. The answers of our respondents indicate differences between countries and national business cultures, which might be accompanied by differences between sectors or even business cultures of individual companies. One conclusion could be that being seconded by a company is not always simply an assignment an employee can not refuse if he or she wants to build up a career; some of our respondents appeared to have quite some influence on this secondment decision themselves, and saw it as a challenge and an adventure rather than an obligation. From our small group of respondents in this category, however, it is hard to make generalisations for seconded highly-skilled migrants.

## 7.2 Accommodating in the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area: settling and evaluation of the current situation

### 7.2.1 *Settling in the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area*

Many respondents stated that they needed at least some months to accommodate to the new environment. Interviewees who followed or moved together with the partner, however, experienced less struggles to adjust to the new situation whereas people who came just by themselves needed more time in general. This was either due to the fact that the partner had already lived in the region of Amsterdam before and therefore had enough experience in how to manage daily routines or the partners encouraged each other to solve everyday problems. An existing local network of family, friends, colleagues or acquaintances in the beginning was helpful to manage everyday situations more easily. Housing, for example, probably the most difficult obstacle to tackle when settling in Amsterdam, can be arranged more easily once you meet the right people. Several respondents, especially of course the self-motivated migrants, have found their first room(s) or dwelling(s) through informal contacts at work or study or with the help of friends. The experience of an Italian ICT consultant is illustrative for several respondents:

*“I didn’t have a real place in the beginning (...). I spent my first months in De Key<sup>1</sup>, in the residence of the university because they had a spare room (...). So I was there and I met a lot of people, people studying for PhD and so on, and then after I found another place to stay (...) and I found really good friends and also from the Netherlands (...).”*

He adds, though, that finding such local contacts is not always easy for migrants and that his open personality might have helped to get in touch with not only other migrants, but also native Dutch. A rather contrasting case among our respondents was an Indian researcher, who generally liked the city once he had managed to enter the country and find a place to live. However, getting into the country and finding a decent residence was problematic, so maybe if he would have to choose now he would not come to Amsterdam: *“(...) if somebody asked me again, I would say: ‘don’t come. (...) it’s a nice city, but it’s too painful to get in here. It’s just too painful.’”*

Cultural adaptation and establishing contacts were considered as the main problems in the first couple of months. Often this could be traced back to language problems, either with Dutch or with English. Again existing family or relationship ties were useful to overcome these problems more easily. In this respect it has to be mentioned that just a minority of participants is currently able to speak Dutch respectively is in the process of learning the language. Again this seems to be connected with the fact that the partner is living in the region of Amsterdam for at least a couple of years and therefore is speaking Dutch. Just in one case the existing family network constrained the satisfaction respectively the self-actualisation namely in terms of the place of residence. The interviewee complained about

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<sup>1</sup> De Key is a housing corporation in Amsterdam. The University of Amsterdam has an agreement with De Key guaranteeing yearly quota of rooms and dwellings for foreign students and staff. In this case however, apparently a room was still available, even though our respondent did not study or work at UvA.

living in Haarlem while preferring to live in Amsterdam. This, however, was not possible because the partner bought property in Haarlem. In several cases, however, problems of cultural adaptation and getting in touch with local people were rather related to characteristics of Dutch society like a relative closedness of people and the rather formalised meeting routines, planning even informal meetings well ahead. We will get back to the difficulties that several respondents faced with integrating in Dutch society and getting used to Dutch norms and values in section 7.2.3.

Some respondents have found another way to quickly getting used to the new living and working environment: they found a job in a branch office of a company originating in their own home country, or in a company founded in Amsterdam by someone from their home country. Examples are found both among seconded migrants and self-motivated migrants:

*“(..) I have a odd situation in that sense, because somehow, my boss is German. He moved from Germany to Holland and has founded his company here. So I am in a kind of semi-German structure all day, where people still say, well, that’s German isn’t it, the way things happen here, and partly that’s true.”*

(German male architect)

*“It’s nearly the same because (...) it’s a Dutch bank owned by a Turkish man and 80, 85% of the people are Turkish. So when you get into the building, it’s a Turkish bank. It’s like Turkey, you know?”*

(Turkish female banker)

### 7.2.2 Working environment

Most respondents were quite satisfied about their working environment. In this context it is worth mentioning that even those interviewees whose move to Amsterdam was not career path motivated, soon found a decent job. Just a few people changed their job after they have settled down in the region of Amsterdam and none of the participants was unemployed for a longer period. Just in one case an interviewee accepted a temporary low wage job in order to finance long-term travels. In another case a respondent was initially seconded by an American company, but after a while decided to leave the company and become self-employed. When asked about the appreciation of their current job, most respondents gave positive or even very positive answers. Apparently they have managed to find a job which fits their skills and expectations very well:

*“It’s challenging. It’s exactly the thing that I want to do.”*

(Turkish female banker)

*“(..) there are many projects going on at the moment and because I’m a very multidisciplinary designer, for me this is really perfect.”*

(Slovenian female designer)

Considering the working conditions in terms of working facilities and technical infrastructure the interviewees’ appreciation was generally positive. In some cases flexible and stimulating working practices were explicitly highlighted positively and contributed to the self-

actualisation at the workplace. Whether asked by the interviewer or spontaneously, many respondents compared their current working circumstances like working hours, social atmosphere at the office, working with clients and other companies, etc. with their experience in other countries, either their country of origin or another foreign country.

*“In Buenos Aires we have to do this project, this application for this costumer and it has to work like this and like that (...). Here if you have ideas maybe it also good because of this company. (...) Here if you have ideas or something they listen and it might happen, it might be that the ideas [are going to be realised].”*

(Argentinean female software developer)

*“I am satisfied with the infrastructure that is there, like you get all the systems, you have like a computer, good library, you have, you know, these adviser researchers that help you (...)”*

(Slovenian male researcher)

*“(...) I think it’s the polder model that helps, rather than, rather than hierarchy. Yeah, yeah, I like the idea, the way business is being done here.”*

(British female designer)

An important characteristic of the Dutch economy that is often mentioned as an asset in policy documents and consultancy reports is its international character and its high level of integration in the global economy. Several respondents confirmed this and some of them considered the Amsterdam region, or the Netherlands in general, a better place to work and do business than other parts of (continental) Europe. The most outspoken praise came from an Indian manager, who called the Netherlands *“the easiest to do business in mainland Europe”*, amongst others because of the widespread use of English. Comparing with Nordic countries, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece and Austria, he thinks these countries *“have not reached that level of internationalisation that I think the Dutch have reached”*.

The reactions of our respondents to the Netherlands as a working environment were clearly influenced by their experiences in their home country and/or earlier foreign workplaces. Our Japanese respondents, for example, were positive about the extent to which Dutch society and business is ‘organised’ compared to apparently more chaotic, messy or hectic other European countries. Respondents from other countries, on the other hand, appreciate the rather flexible and non-hierarchic ways of working within companies and doing business with other companies and clients.

In some cases, positive or negative opinions about Amsterdam, the city-region or the Netherlands as a working environment were also branch-related. The good international reputation of Dutch architecture and Dutch design has been mentioned before in section 7.1 as part of the motivation to move to the Netherlands for the designers and architects we interviewed. A Slovenian designer adds that she also appreciates the awareness of the growing importance of creative industries in general for the Amsterdam economy. A German architect nuances his praise for Dutch architecture later in the interview, explaining that *“The Dutch are better in establishing a really good concept. (...) German are different (...) Thoroughness, yes, everything that is screwed down with one screw here, is screwed down*



*with three screws in Germany. (...) The Dutch are satisfied sooner.*” So maybe in his branch, Dutch and Germans together would offer the best of both worlds.

Just a few respondents criticised their current working duties, for example because more diverse working tasks were expected. For others, working in the Netherlands appears to be more difficult than in their home country because of different national traditions in their field of work. A French artist, for example, is specialised in street theatre which is less common in the Netherlands than in France. However, the Netherlands also has positive features for his work: in France, he would only be able to work with a state permit and subsidy, while in the Netherlands he can work free-lance. A remarkable complaint from our respondents from South America was that apparently the incomes they received in the Netherlands were much lower than in their home country, either in relative or in absolute measures, part of the reasons being that Dutch prices and living expenses as well as taxes are much higher:

*“In terms of prices [the income] is much less so it would be a little bit more than half of my salary in Bogotá so I had to restrain myself here in many things.”*

(Colombian male researcher)

*“I don’t know how people can [afford to live here] because after taxes I was getting less money than what I would get in Mexico and here, prices are 40% higher or maybe 30% percent higher.”*

(Mexican male consultant)

*“Compared really, in my profession you can earn more in Argentina, proportionally you can be richer (...)”*

(Argentinean female software developer)

Some respondents were asked about their experience with the creative incubation spaces that the city of Amsterdam is fostering with its *broedplaatsen* policy. Two German designers compared their workspace, which was located in a more commercial and formalised complex, with the former building of the daily newspaper *Volkskrant*. They considered themselves lucky to have found an affordable place to work in the city centre of Amsterdam, thanks to a tip of a former design academy teacher. The building they are in is mainly filled with commercially-oriented creative industries. They appreciate the open working atmosphere. Still, it is clearly a business space, while in complexes like the former *Volkskrant* building the atmosphere is more chaotic and informal:

*“But Volkskrant in that sense, it’s all a bit messier (...) maybe less efficient is the wrong phrase (...) it’s maybe more a incubation space than this here. Here it is rather more creative industries (...). So not the artists, the crazy artists that have their space and pass by once a week, it is more disciplined I would say.”*

(German male designer)

A French artist we interviewed was based at the former shipyard of NDSM, which has developed into a ‘creative hotspot’ in the past decade. This development has meanwhile passed several stages moving from informal to formal and from non-commercial to commercial. According to this respondent the new offices of MTV and other media

companies right next to the *broedplaats* with mainly non-commercial artists has changed the atmosphere at NDSM and sometimes leads to ‘culture clashes’:

*“So the people of MTV they come here (...) but we actually have no contact with them. (...) So like sometimes they come inside of course to shoot some stuff for MTV, they’re always welcome but that is it, you know. (...) You have the poor and the rich and yes the bobo’s coming in and they do what they want (...) they should actually respect us because in a way we are much longer here than them.”*

(French male artist)

Recently also responsibility for the *broedplaats* has been taken over by the municipality from the foundation that started the artist community in the former shipyard. This might mean, in the opinion of our respondent, that NDSM will get more formalised and maybe less attractive for artists like him.

### 7.2.3 *Social networks and Dutch society*

Considering the predominantly positive experiences in terms of working it is of particular interest how other spheres of living in the region of Amsterdam are judged by the participants. Positive or negative experiences outside the working environment with the host society, the offer of amenities or in the personal life sphere can affect the satisfaction about the working circumstances, irrespective of how the work and the working environment itself is judged. This might influence the migrants’ perspective and decisions about whether or not to stay in the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area.

It was already mentioned that in the first couple of months networks of family or friends were helpful to settle in an entire new environment. For those that came to the region without such networks, the employer or local institutions are often relevant for successful first steps into Dutch society. Several respondents, for example, initially did not come to the Netherlands for a job, but for a study. For them, universities were an important contact for finding accommodation, but also to quickly get to know people. Initial social contacts with primarily international students were established through events organised by the university where the respondents studied. Others tried to establish social contacts with colleagues at their workplace. Remarkably, however, in general social contacts with Dutch people remained an exception. The vast majority stated that it is extremely difficult to get in contact with the local population. Therefore the participants’ social networks compass was rather directed towards other international people. This fact was mainly explained by the Dutch social ‘coldness’ and their un-spontaneity. Obviously, the interviewees’ different cultural and regional background interfered with the Dutch way of living in this respect.

*“No, it’s not easy to get into a Dutch context, but it’s because you never get into a Dutch context, unless you have a Dutch partner and a Dutch background (...)”*

(Italian female manager)

*“Yeah, the people are really different. [...] making contacts with Dutch people is different because, I don't know. They are colder, they don't show so much (...)”*

(Argentinean female software developer)

Next to such ‘culture clashes’, some respondents also admitted they did not take much initiative to contact the Dutch themselves. An important reason for this was that these respondents worked for companies with mainly or exclusively foreign employees, either of the own migrant community or a mix of foreign communities. Often friendship or acquaintance networks were easily built at the workplace with those people in comparable situations and with a comparable migration background. Considering the scarcity of contacts with native Dutch, it is also not surprising that none of the participants was engaged in any civil society organisations. Some respondents indicated, though, that their partners were active in such organisations, but these were mostly organisations aimed at the own migrant community or at highly skilled migrant communities in general. Especially the Japanese community, as mentioned before (section 5.2), has a tightly knit network of organisations, facilities and amenities that are almost exclusively aimed at their own community.

The lack of social contact to the Dutch population was generally not seen as a severe disadvantage and did not impact negatively on the participants’ quality of life in the region of Amsterdam. As mentioned above, social networks were nevertheless existent, mainly with other migrants in a comparable situation, within the company or with through business contacts. Still, especially the migrant networks had their limitations as these respondents make clear:

*“I am finding myself in the classic expat sort of dilemma that all my friends are work related, many of them are expats themselves and some of them have started to move on, you know, which then leaves holes in your life. You then feel, you start to feel should I move or I need to plug that hole with something else (...). And I found because of the nature of what I do, I travel around quite a bit, that building relationships that are more personal tends to be a little difficult (...)”*

(American female management consultant)

*“(...) when you come to a school you necessarily meet a lot of people and everybody is new so everybody makes friends with everybody. (...) the (...) problem was after I finished with school and moved to Amsterdam then suddenly all my friends went back home wherever that was, around the world. And then you have to build up your social web, network, from scratch (...)”*

(Slovenian female designer; she studied in Eindhoven and then moved to Amsterdam)

*“You can't just walk up to people and say: ‘Do you like design? Shall we go for a coffee?’ But that's how difficult it is. To find people who have, you have something in common with. (...) Would I socialise with somebody here, that I wouldn't socialise with at home? Just because we're from England?”*

(British female designer)

#### 7.2.4 *Daily life in the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area: amenities, built environment and social atmosphere*

After moving to the city nearly every participant expressed itself positively about Amsterdam's accessibility. Two extremes of the transport continuum were frequently stressed: the international accessibility via Schiphol Airport, located very close to Amsterdam and quite centrally in the city-region; and the perfect conditions for bike transport throughout the city and partly also outside the city. Biking was considered by many respondents as one of the main advantages of Amsterdam and clearly improved the quality of life. Especially the interviewees from South America expressed their enthusiasm about the biking. Most probably this is due to the poor biking conditions in Buenos Aires, Mexico City, Bogota and Lima. But the Europeans were enthusiastic as well:

*"The bicycles. I love it. That is something that I really, really love about Amsterdam, that you can get anywhere with your bike and you don't need to go in a taxi or you don't need to own a car. I am addicted to my bicycle. That is the thing I'm gonna miss the most I think, the bicycle. Really, really, so much liberty and no traffic. It is really cool, I mean for me is really good."*

(Peruvian male manager)

The majority of the participants valued the city landscape as beautiful. Just a few interviewees disliked the architecture in the inner city or preferred the sub cultural scene of squatted places, which are less and less found in the historic inner city and more in the 19<sup>th</sup> - and early 20<sup>th</sup> - century extension areas. The statement of the Slovenian designer we interviewed represents a more general appreciation of especially the historic inner city: *"I think everyone who lives in Amsterdam now and then feels like: wow, I'm in like a postcard."* The same respondent, however, adds that she would appreciate the addition of more good contemporary architecture, while she dislikes 'horrible 1980s housing'. Some other respondents pointed at the positive experience of a well-maintained city on the one hand (though one respondent was struck by the trash in the Amsterdam canals), and the negative experience of the inner city as a non-stop construction site because of the new North-South metro line on the other. There seems to be a marked difference between the appreciation of the (inner) city landscape and the surrounding natural landscape, though in the Netherlands it is of course hard to speak of a truly natural landscape. A Turkish female banker, for example, thinks the Dutch landscape is 'really boring': *"You know, the grass, the grass and the grass"*. An American respondent added that she missed a chance to escape from 'manmade environment': *"You never have that feeling in Holland that you're miles away from anywhere, or it's quiet. Yeah, the escape, there is nowhere really to escape."* Again, the reference of the home city or the city people lived in before influences this appreciation of built environment and natural environment a lot. A Japanese respondent, for example, was positive about the green environment of Amsterdam because it has much more green space and nature than Tokyo; a German architect missed the mountains; an American respondent appreciated the historical architecture (not only in Amsterdam, but also in Paris and London) because most US-American cities hardly have historical buildings, etc.

The available cultural and leisure activities in the city were judged with little exceptions as positive. The general impression of our respondents was that the level is high and the offer surprisingly broad and varied for such a small city:

*“So I would rate it [Amsterdam] pretty high, in fact, I would even rate it even higher than London, because I think it has all the charms of a big city but still is not as hectic as a big city.”*

(Indian male researcher)

*“(...) say if I want to go to a cinema to a theatre, whatever I want to do, I’ll have it, but it’s very easy to reach. You don’t have to travel hours in the metro and everything is very handy (...)”*

(Italian female external relations coordinator)

*“(...) it’s a capital, so there is everything you can find in a capital, every kind of sport you want to do, every kind of concert, everything that is happening in Europe is passing by Amsterdam. On the other side, it is not like Milan or Rome or Berlin, that is a huge city when you have to move from one side to the other (...)”*

(Italian female manager)

On the other hand the service and quality in restaurants or coiffeurs was criticised by some female interviewees because the standard of those facilities in their home country used to be much better. Next to price-quality issues, opening hours were also subject of disapproval by some (mainly female) respondents, as well as the behaviour of Dutch shop and service personnel that a Japanese respondent described as *“a bit invasive, rude”*.

*“To be honest, I don’t like Amsterdam. At first, one year, I cried. Each and every day. Each and every day. Because for example, there’s no hairdresser here. (...) I miss shopping, I miss the hairdressers, I miss the nice and, uh, not dark restaurants.”*

(Turkish female banker)

*“But in terms of quality of life (...) I can’t find clothes, because of the size (...) you know when you go out to eat something can be, it’s really expensive at times where in Japan, you know, you can eat the same quality for much cheaper (...) Tokyo is better.”*

(Japanese female media manager)

The most ambiguous statements were made about the Dutch attitude towards tolerance, diversity and open-mindedness. In general, it was considered positive that 50 % of all inhabitants in the city have a foreign background. In this context it was often mentioned that the communication in English serves as a great advantage and Amsterdam’s character as a cosmopolitan city with a low degree of xenophobia improves the quality of life for some of the interviewees. One respondent added that she liked ‘European life’ better than ‘US life’, amongst others because people in Amsterdam and Geneva (where she was before) seemed much better informed about ‘what is going on in the world’. However, the question remains unclear whether Amsterdam is considered being tolerant because of the high proportion of foreigners or the Dutch attitude towards them. Some interviewees noted that the Dutch society is indeed tolerant in terms of the use of drugs or prostitution, but the Dutch lack open-

mindedness in terms of social contacts (as mentioned above), while also the general organisation of society is perceived as too strict.

*“I have the feeling that they [the Dutch] are not so open, I mean they are tolerant or so in culture in which they tolerate lots of things, but they are not so open when meeting new people.”*

(Argentinean female software developer)

*“(...) you can really be yourself, express yourself in what you want to do, what you want to say, what you want to behave. But there are strict rules [...]. From one side it's very tolerant when you want to express yourself but it's very intolerant because [...] they are quite forcing you to respect [the rules] (...)”*

(Italian female manager)

The main disadvantage of Amsterdam according to the interviewees is the price-performance ratio in terms of costs of living. This applies especially to the costs of housing. Almost every participant complained about the high prices they have to pay for their accommodation and the size of the flats. Only the house owners did not complain about the high prices. They are a small minority among our interviewees; most are at the private rental market, while some also sublet or have subletted social rental dwellings.

*“I just think I am paying too much [...] it is crazy here, the prices anyway. In relation to what you earn in money, I think you spend too much in food and living and everything (...)”*

(Mexican male consultant)

*“(...) housing is a disaster. I hate the housing. That is fucking disgusting. It is really small, you don't get a comfortable house. Housing is much better in Latin America.”*

(Peruvian male manager)

*“(...) it was difficult to find an apartment in Amsterdam. (...) I'm sure you know this mess with the social housing and people sub renting the social apartments. And then all the people who own the apartment (...) don't let you stay too long because they don't want you to stay. Because you build up many rights. (...) That's kind of really annoying. (...) It's tough to find good housing.”*

(Slovenian female designer)

Just in a few cases interviewees were able to take advantage of social housing because of the partner or through the university offer of student or employee rooms.

### 7.3 Future plans: Staying in the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area?

Despite the more or less positive experiences in the region of Amsterdam most of the participants are not seeing their long-term future in the capital of the Netherlands. Several factors seem to be responsible for that attitude. In the first place all the interviewees are displeased with the humid and, in the participants' point of view, cold climate in the region of Amsterdam. In the short-term this is an annoying but acceptable condition. In the long run, however, the interviewees are not willing to spend their whole life in such a climate. Even though feeling attached to the city itself the poor climate conditions have a lasting negative effect on the quality of life. Also important were the existing family ties in the home country. In this context, some participants emphasised that once they have children they are planning to go back to their home country in order to be closer to their parents and friends. Career path motivated considerations were mentioned as reasons to leave Amsterdam as well. A few interviewees noted leaving Amsterdam would be at least an option if the current working tasks are not changing for the better. Enhancing the career is for some participants more important than the quality of life they have in Amsterdam.

*“I plan to stay here but then I don't know whether in the longer future I am planning to move to another place. So it depends very much on the job [...] I have to say that Amsterdam is really fitting in my expectations so it would be a bit pain in the ass leaving this town. I will do it but with some pain. So I became attached to it.”*

(Italian male researcher)

*“(...) that's the plan but I would have to see, if it is possible to do like my own company and work freelance and so on. If it is not possible, if I would have to stick working for a company what I do now, I think I wouldn't stay for more than one year because it would be very restricting in my life, my career. So I think it makes no sense (...)”*

(Mexican male consultant)

The availability of affordable housing was considered as a problem by all of the participants but in the end not deemed as such a severe obstacle to leave the region of Amsterdam. However, for some this could be subject to change if the participants were facing income reduction or the abolition of the 30 % tax reduction.

*“(...) when I started working, in the beginning I didn't have this 30 % rule so I had to pay 52 % of taxes so I had nothing and I was really like fighting for the 30% rule to stay in this country [otherwise] I would have left(...)”*

(Mexican male consultant)





## 8 CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Netherlands has a small internal market, combined with a strong export orientation, and is home to several global and European headquarters and branch offices of leading multinational companies. Within the Netherlands, the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area is the leading concentration of multinational headquarters and therewith also one of the major attractors of transnational highly skilled migrants. While the current deep crisis will no doubt have serious impacts on the Dutch economy, including mass layoffs (especially in the financial sector) and possible closure or departure of several multinational headquarters, the long-term expectation is that the number of multinational headquarters and branch offices will grow further. This will probably go along with a further growth of the number and share of transnational highly-skilled migrants, of which a significant share works at those offices. However, transnational highly-skilled migrants also enter the Netherlands at their own initiative instead of being seconded by multinationals. This includes for example highly skilled migrants with knowledge or skills that are in short supply at the Dutch labour market, and people who initially migrated for other reasons like study or a relationship.

In this report we have studied the attractiveness of the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area for transnational highly skilled migrants, starting with quantitative data on the region and its national (Dutch) context and several expert interviews with respondents working on policies, strategies and facilities for transnational highly skilled migrants in the region. Chapter 4 discussed recent trends in transnational highly-skilled migration in the Netherlands in an internationally comparative perspective. The OECD data used in this chapter demonstrate that the Netherlands indeed has received a significant flow of transnational highly-skilled migrants, but it only occupies a rather modest position in the ranking of OECD countries in this respect. There is also a significant outflow of Dutch highly-skilled abroad, but this outflow is largely compensated by the inflow of transnational highly-skilled migrants from across the globe. Next to up- and downturns in the global economy, the development of the in-flow of transnational highly skilled migrants has probably also been influenced by changes in Dutch migration and integration policies. Especially for those outside of the EU, but also for migrants from the most recent EU accession countries, migration policies have become more restrictive at first. However, most recently we have seen several policy initiatives that try to make entry to the Netherlands easier for the specific category of transnational highly skilled migrants.

Within the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area, the strongest concentrations of highly-skilled migrants are found in the core city Amsterdam, the adjacent city of Amstelveen, and neighbouring suburban municipalities. While Amsterdam, Amstelveen and their surroundings are generally considered quite attractive places to live and work for transnational highly-skilled migrants, the housing market can be problematic for them, especially for those who are not seconded but come to the region at their own initiative. Local and regional policies for transnational highly-skilled migrants have recently gained a higher priority. However, the

focus of those policies so far seems to be exclusively on the ‘expats’, those migrants seconded by their companies, and largely ignore the other groups of transnational migrants that are at least as important for the city-regional economy.

The second part of our analysis a qualitative analysis of reasons to move to the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area and opinions about the region’s attractiveness as a living and working environment. We interviewed 27 transnational highly skilled migrants for this purpose. Our respondents were generally quite positive about their working and living conditions in the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area. Our respondents came from very different origins across the globe and also with very different motivations, which influenced the way they judged their current situation and their future perspectives in the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area. Some explicitly came with the intention to only stay a few years, seeing it as a relevant and interesting experience contributing to their career perspectives; others came to study or because they already knew people in the region, often without any time planning or career goals in mind. The city of Amsterdam was generally judged as a very international city where highly skilled migrants do not face many problems to function professionally. The ease with which English can be used in business contacts was mentioned as an asset, as well as a curious combination of transport: planes and bikes. The nearness and worldwide connectivity of Schiphol Airport was appreciated as much as the possibility to reach anything by bike within reasonable time. Amstelveen was also generally appreciated by those respondents we interviewed there, mainly from Asian origin (Japan, India). The appreciation of Amsterdam and its city-region as a place to live were more mixed. The compact size of city and region, the historical architecture and the offer of cultural and nightlife amenities were mentioned most often as positive sides of living in or close to Amsterdam. Less positive reactions were given about shopping, personal services and eating out: apparently Amsterdam restaurants are relatively expensive and the price-quality balance is not always as it should be, while the personnel in shops does not have a good reputation with our respondents either. There were also complaints about the Dutch immigration policy and bureaucracy, especially among non-European respondents. By far the most negative experience of our respondents, however, is with getting access to housing. Depending on the situation of each individual respondent, their demands were mainly for affordable housing, for more living space or for more ‘value for money’. Amsterdam’s fame as a haven of tolerance and diversity, meanwhile, was neither confirmed nor discarded by our respondents: some indeed stressed the extent to which people from different backgrounds can freely express themselves; others mainly saw restrictions for migrants and societal and political incentives to adapt and integrate.

Not surprisingly, the shortage of affordable housing was mentioned by the majority as a severe obstacle to settle in the region of Amsterdam. Therefore, it was mentioned that for instance the availability of social housing should be extended to foreign professionals respectively the waiting period to qualify for social housing should be reduced. Another issue frequently mentioned by the foreign professionals is the availability of free Dutch courses. The vast majority was not aware of the fact that such offers are already existent. In this regard it seems to be likely that there is too little information about these opportunities. Therefore, the municipality should enhance the access to information concerning free language courses. Since the participants’ Dutch skills remain rather poor, there is the often expressed desire for more bureaucratic advice. This applies mainly to requested support concerning tax

declarations and banking issues. Official forms by banks or the municipality should be available in English as well. Non-EU citizens furthermore expressed their dissatisfaction in regard to the paperwork and the attendant processing time. A reduction respectively a more appropriate procedure was recommended. In addition, one interviewee complained about the difficulties he faces to work as a freelancer because his legal status as a knowledge immigrant is linked to companies which is a serious competition disadvantage for him and hence a main career obstacle. Regarding the competitiveness of Amsterdam as a creative city, an interviewee recommended the creation of a creative center for further education and networking purpose; another respondent made a similar remark about the option to offer such education and networking opportunities through Creative Cities Amsterdam Area (CCAA).

A growing range of policies are aiming to address the needs and preferences of the international employees of transnational companies in the Netherlands. The report shows that there are different groups of highly skilled employees in the creative knowledge sectors. Instead of trying to develop a 'one size fits all' policy for highly skilled migrants, presupposing that they all want and need more or less the same things, policies should identify the needs of all groups and address their needs individually. While 'classic' expats are probably the most used reference group for highly skilled migrants in Dutch society, they are only a segment of a much broader category of highly skilled migrants. Highly skilled migrants come to the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area for different reasons, and very often, they come at their own initiative instead of being seconded by a company. While it is probably harder to develop policies for this broader category of highly skilled migrants, regional and national policy-makers should be aware that different kinds of highly skilled migrants may have different needs and requests for information, and support when they arrive and during their stay. Our limited sample of 27 respondents already revealed three types of highly skilled migrants who came to the Netherlands following quite different trajectories: the 'classical' category of expats, or migrants seconded by their company; those who migrated on their own initiative looking for job opportunities; and those who initially moved to the Netherlands for other reasons (most often a study or a relationship) and entered the Dutch labour market later. Next to these three types, there might even be more types of highly skilled migrants that we were not able to cover in our qualitative study.



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## **APPENDIX: TOPIC GUIDE INTERVIEWS HIGHLY-SKILLED MIGRANTS**

### ***Start of the interview:***

- Short introduction of ACRE
- Permission to record the interview

### ***First question:***

How did you come to live in the in xy region now?

- Did you study here?
- Are you here with your family?
- Where do you live? (city / region)
- For how long?
- Where did you live before?
- How much did you know about xy before you came here for your present stay?

### ***Education:***

Could you please tell me something about your education?

- Where (else) did you go to school / university?
- What did you study?
- From where did you obtain your degree?

### ***Professional experience / Career:***

Could you please tell me something about the main steps in your career after finishing study?

### ***How did you find your first job in xy?***

- Own search//I was offered the job
- Own internet search
- Sent by the company
- Advertisement (newspaper / internet)
- Open application
- Family/Friends
- Other, what?

Where do you work? Could you please describe your actual working situations?

- Position, job
- What do you like about your job situation / what do you not like?
- How satisfied are you with your situation?
- Would you like to change something?

***Motivation to come to xy:***

What was your main motivation to come to xy? (pull and push-factors)

- Role of hard factors:
  - study
  - job offer, career opportunities now and later in your home country, interesting work task, higher income, better working conditions (working hours, permanent and temporary contract, executive level, routine –project activities),
  - good international accessibility of the xy region, transport infrastructure and public transport facilities,
  - public social infrastructure (availability of kindergartens, (international) schools, higher education),
  - technical infrastructure,
  - price of housing
  - price of living
  - availability of subsidies (e.g. for artists),
  - tax incentives, other?
  
- Role of soft factors
  - followed partner
  - came here with my parents
  - tolerance, acceptance of diversity, equality, openness or too strong social cohesion, civil society
  - quality of life (spare time activities, subcultural scene
  - quality of the environment (landscape, culture and tourism sights etc.)
  - attractive residential environment, attractive architecture, housing conditions

***Social networks***

- What is your family background?
- What role have other family members played in the decision process? (wife / husband)
- How many people did you know in xy before?

***Actual living and working situation:***

Could you please describe your actual living situation?

- What do you like about xy / what do you not like about xy? (quality of life, housing situation, tolerance, diversity, spare time activities, landscape etc. )
- What problems and chances do you experience at the moment in xy region?
- How satisfied are you with your living situation?

***Past:***

When you think back to your first months in xy, how did you experience the first time after you came from abroad?

- Did you get support? (E.g. by your company, the city, friends in xy...)
- How did you find your accommodation (relocation service, own search,..)?
- How was the paper work?
- How much did you pay yourself for the international move?
- Did you miss a certain type of support?

***Future:***

What are your future plans?

***End of the interview:***

- How satisfied are you altogether with your situation in xy?
- What do you think can be done to improve the situation of highly skilled migrants in the creative knowledge industry in xy?
- Would you like to add something?

***Personal background (following information should be obtained; see also short questionnaire)***

- male/female
- age
- family situation
- nationality/ies
- country living before coming to this country
- duration of stay in xy region (month/year)
- income
- highest educational degree/country obtained