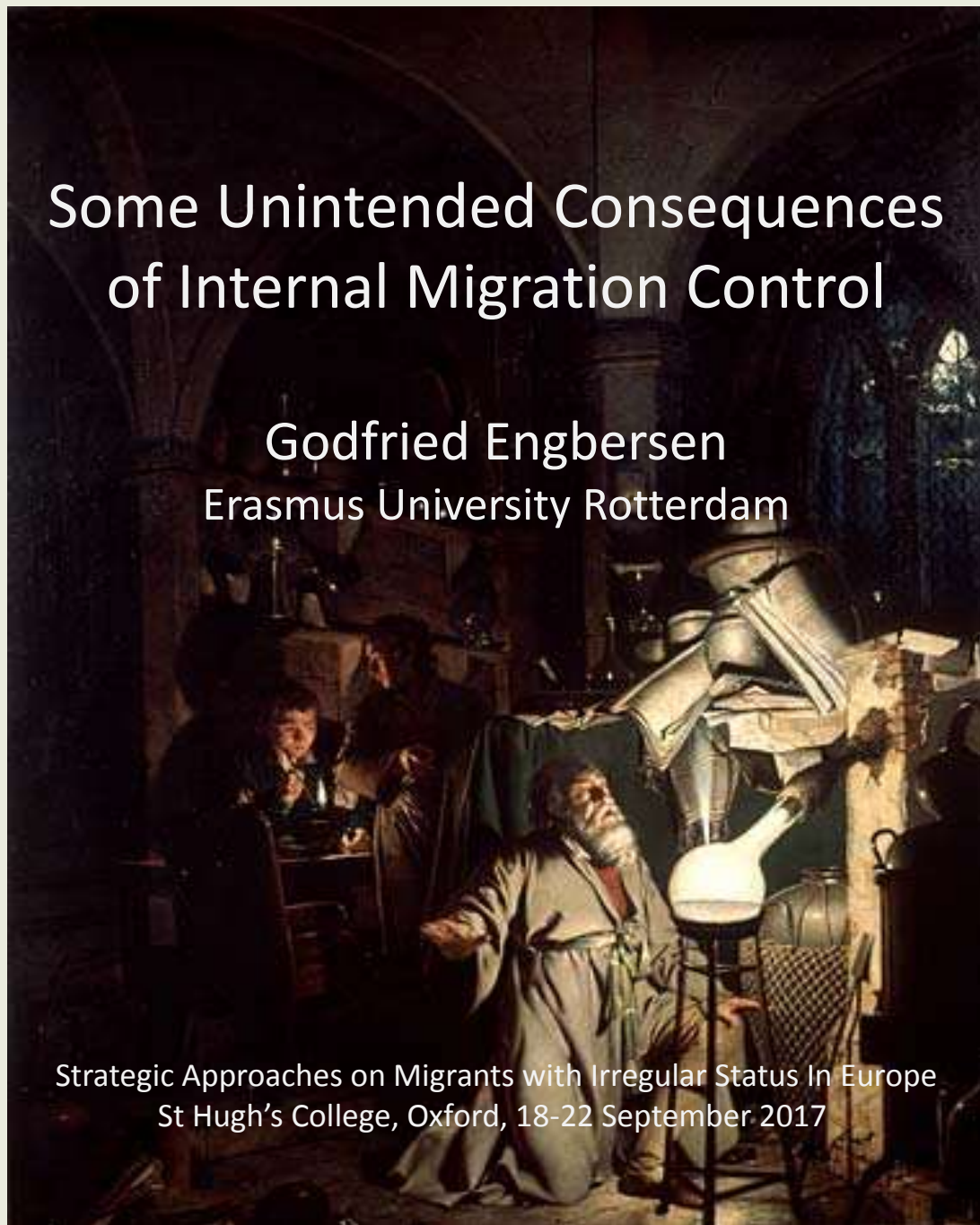




# Some Unintended Consequences of Internal Migration Control

Godfried Engbersen  
Erasmus University Rotterdam

Strategic Approaches on Migrants with Irregular Status In Europe  
St Hugh's College, Oxford, 18-22 September 2017



# Outline

1. Migration & unintended consequences
2. Unintended consequences of external border control
3. Unintended consequences of internal border control
4. Case Study: “A Room with a View”
5. Discussion: limits of internal border control

# Unintended consequences

“Social life creates (...) many *unforeseen reactions* (...) some of them perhaps even *unforeseeable*. To try to analyse these reactions and to foresee them as far as possible is, I believe, the main task of the social sciences. It is the task of analysing *the unintended social repercussions of intentional human actions.*”

Karl Popper, *The Open Society and its Enemies*, 1962

# Migration & unintended consequences

Classical Example:

Past economic, colonial and military interventions by the US and Western European countries created new bridges that enabled mass migration to the US & the EU.

# Unintended consequences of external border control

## Closed borders

1. The making of an undocumented underclass: “The US border control policy has not stopped the migration from Mexico to the US. But It did stop the back and forth migration and created an underground and vulnerable population numbering about twelve million persons.” (Portes 2010:47)
2. Expansion of people-smuggling industry

# Unintended consequences of external border control

Open borders (open door policy: “Wir schaffen das”)

1. Expansion of people-smuggling industry because of massive rise in demand
2. Fatal remedies: increased number of ‘irregular’ migrants dying on their way to Europe
3. People who were not Syrian refugees made strategic use of new asylum opportunities
4. Rise of unaccompanied minors

Cf. Betts & Collier 2017

# Two types of internal border control

## 1. Social exclusion: exclusion of irregular migrants from the regular labour market & public provisions

- Social security number is related to residence permit (1991)
- Linking Act (1998): excluding migrant from public provisions

## 2. Territorial exclusion: tracing, apprehending and expelling irregular migrants

- Since 1990s Police has access to (inter-)national database(s) documenting immigration status
- Aliens Law (2001) 'reasonable presumption' is sufficient for the police to stop and detain persons to examine residence status

# Unintended consequences of internal border control

## 1. Going underground

Shifts in the residence strategies of irregular immigrants:

- from formal to informal work
- from legitimate to criminal behaviour
- from being identifiable to being unidentifiable

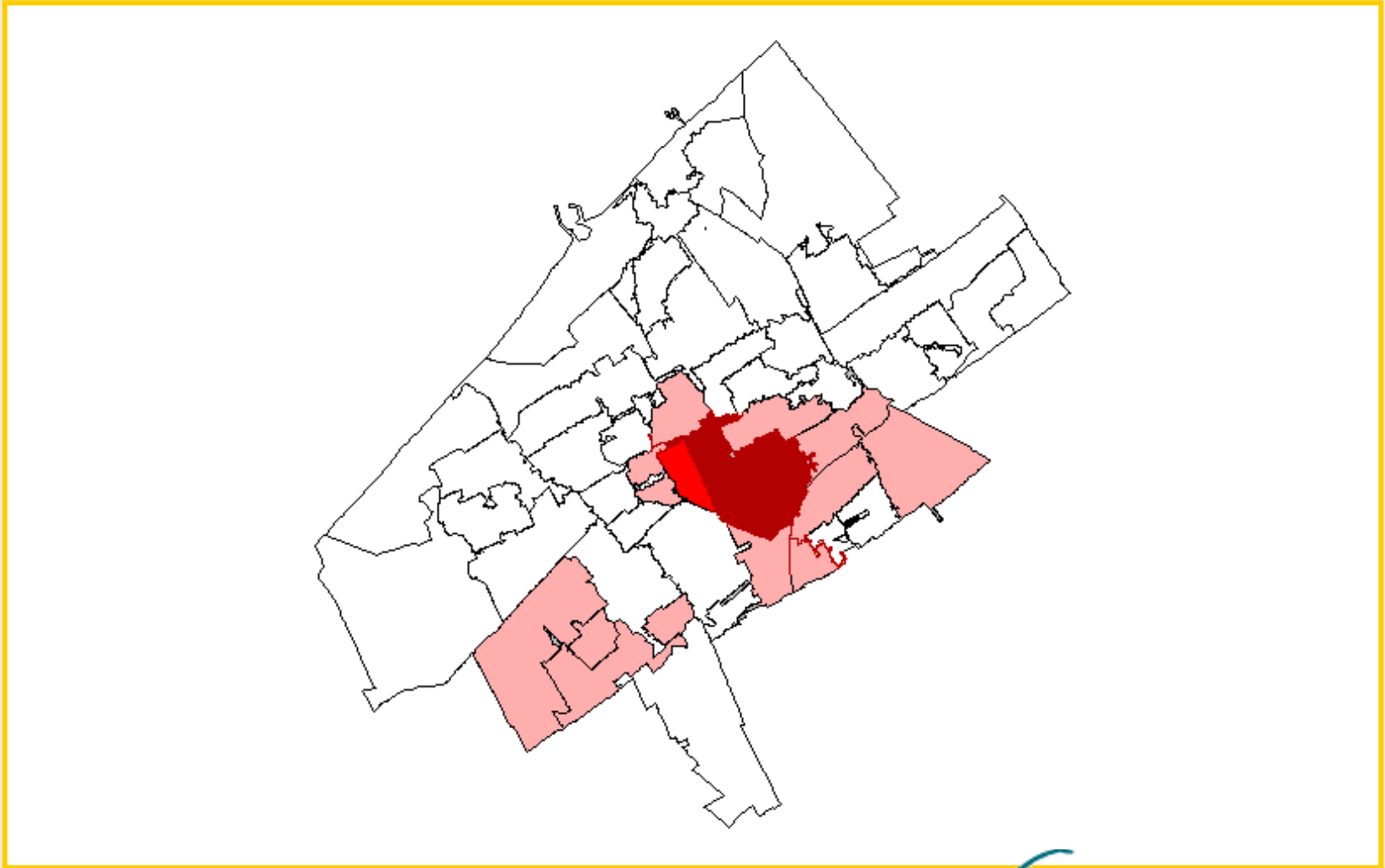
## 2. Contradictions between national & local states



# A Room with a View: Irregular migrants in the legal capital of the world



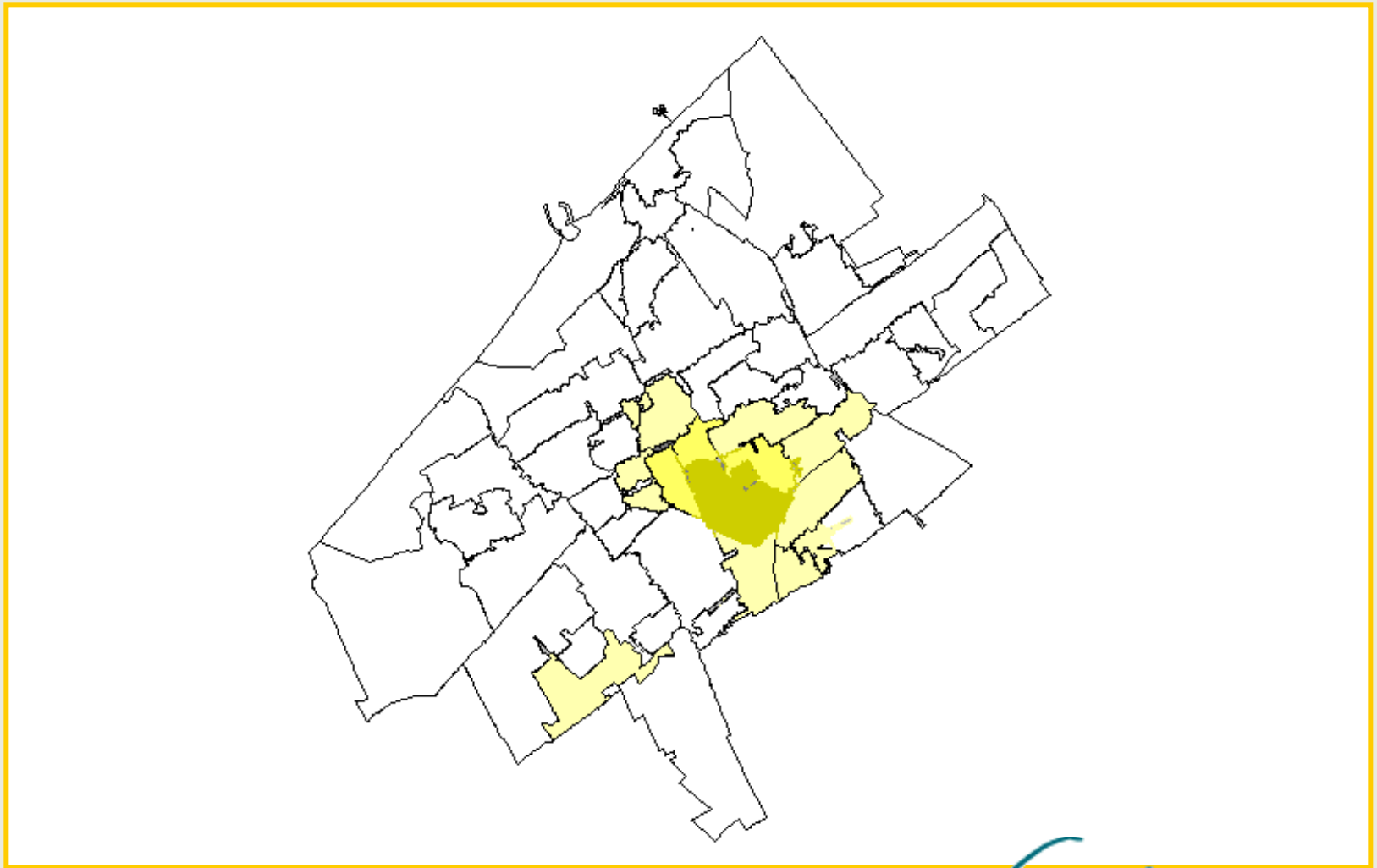
# Spreading of Turks in The Hague



Red: legal Turks

Source: Statistics Netherlands 1999/ 2000, VAS 1997-2003

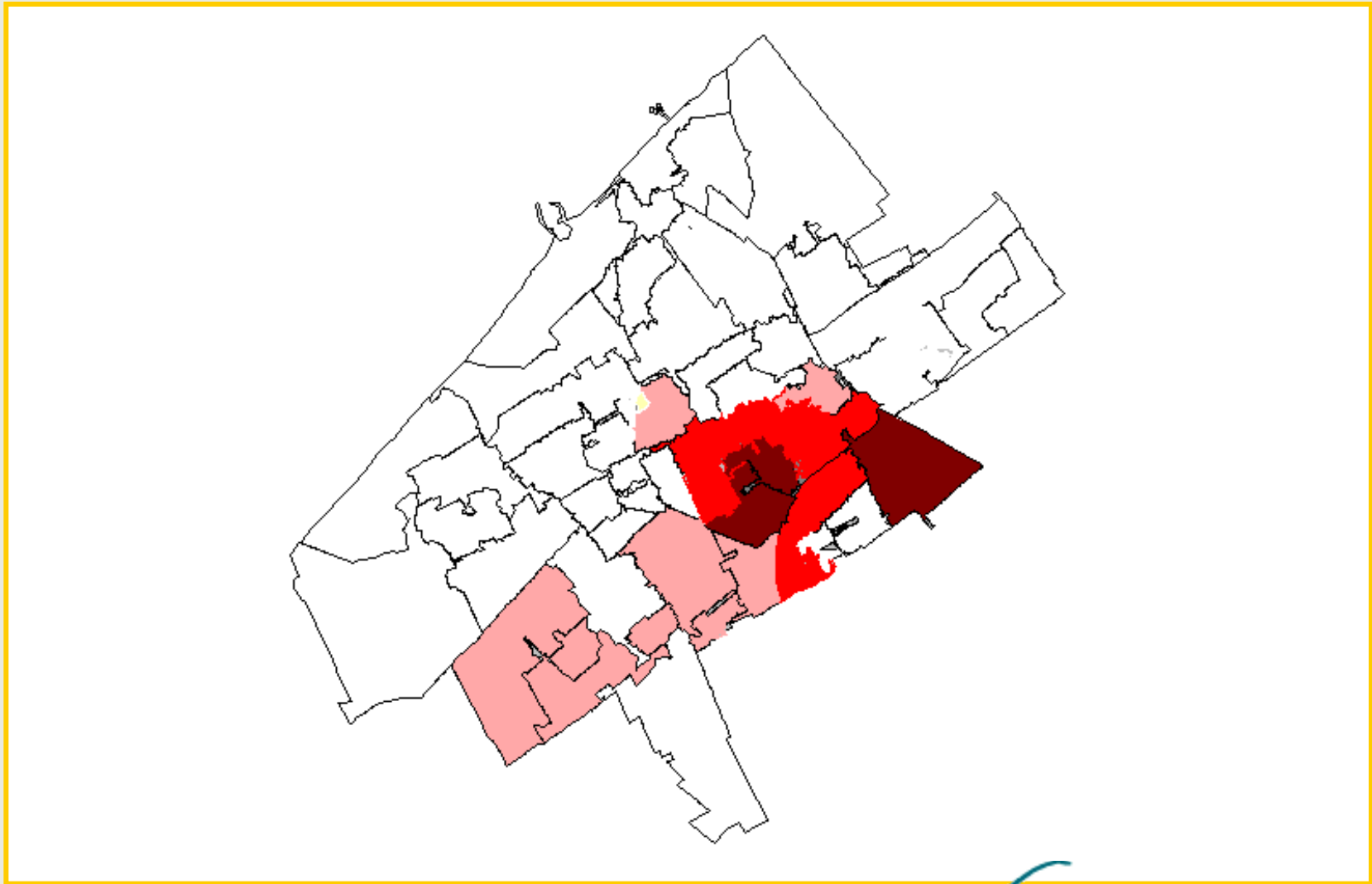
# Spreading of irregular Turks in The Hague



Yellow: illegal Turks

Source: Statistics Netherlands 1999/ 2000, VAS 1997-2003

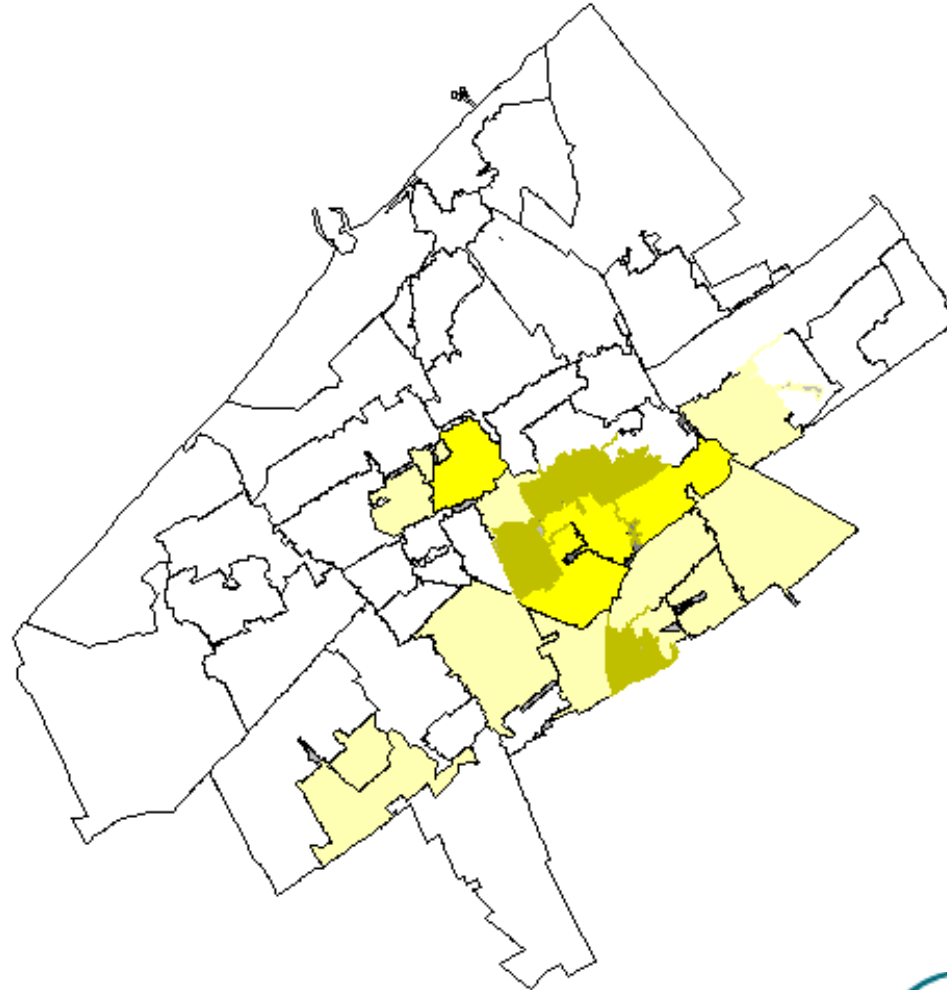
# Spreading of Moroccans in The Hague



Red: legal Maroccans

Source: Statistics Netherlands 1999/ 2000, VAS 1997-2003

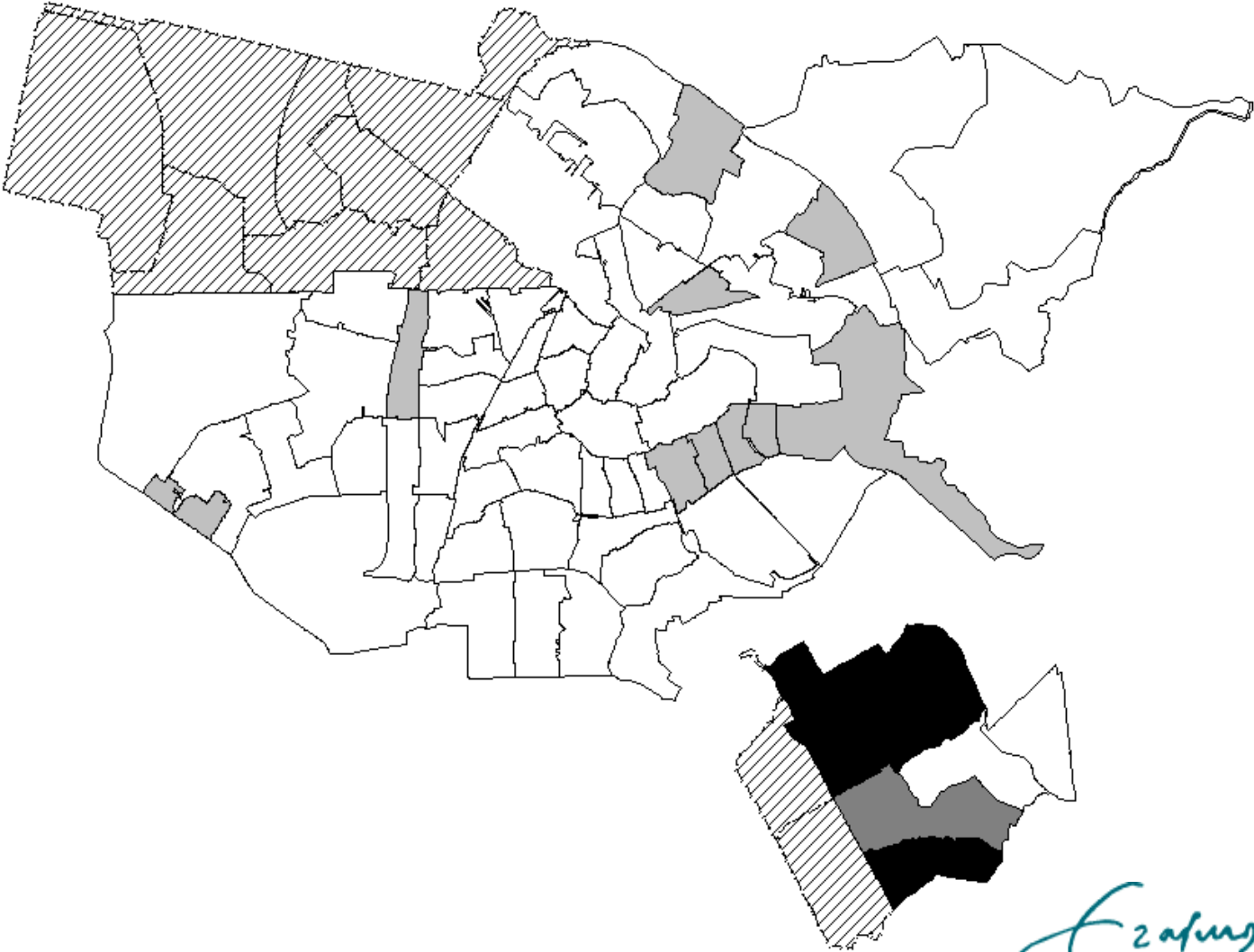
# Spreading of irregular Moroccans in The Hague



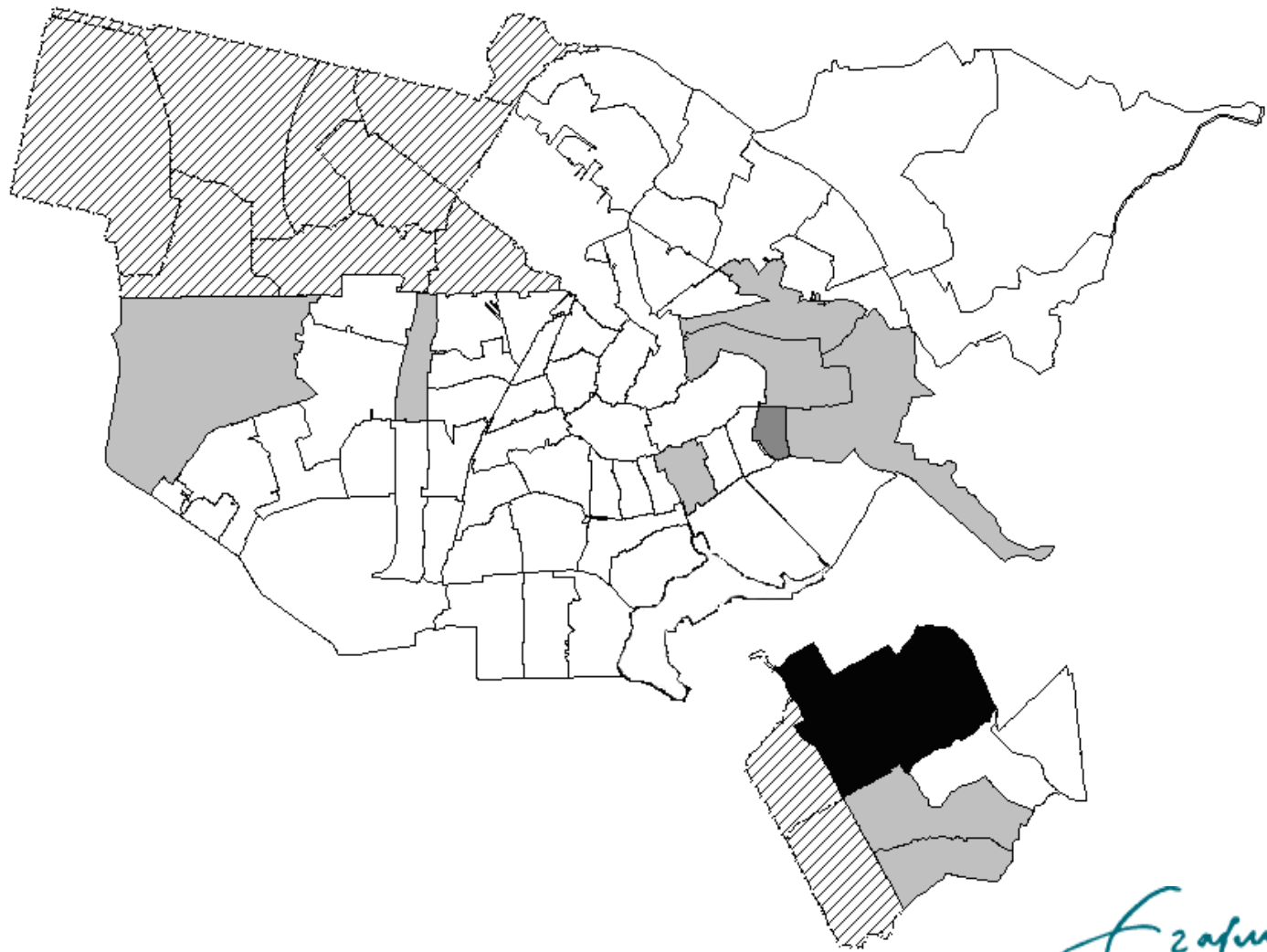
Yellow: illegal Moroccans

Source: Statistics Netherlands 1999/ 2000, VAS 1997-2003

# Spreading of Surinamese in Amsterdam



# Spreading of irregular Surinamese in Amsterdam



# Why are irregular migrants residing in these urban areas?

## Spatial, economic & social opportunity structure

1. Jobs: Concentration of small firms, ethnic economy and other relevant employers (*informal economy*).
2. Cheap housing: the prevalence of private (renting) opportunities (beds, rooms, apartments) (*informal housing market*).
3. Migrant networks: presence of legal co-patriots who are able to provide work, housing, care, health care, information and documents (*social capital*).



# Why do cities tolerate large numbers of irregular migrants?

1. “Principal-Agent problem”: a situation in which a central party, the principal (the national or local government) has to motivate a third party (the agent) to perform certain acts (apprehending irregular migrants) that are useful to him but costly to the third parties.
2. To explain the tolerant enforcement of immigration rules we have to take into account the interests and preferences of three crucial ‘agents’ (local residents, policemen, and city administrations).

# Local residents

1. They don't have negative experiences
2. They profit from irregular migrants (cheap labour force, tenants)
3. Because of strong social ties
4. Against their moral norms: no willingness to report irregular migrants
5. They don't want to endanger neighbourhood relations

# Police

1. Tolerate 'law abiding' irregular migrants (due to professional norms): "It is not exactly a police task in my opinion, they can hire other people to fulfill these tasks."
2. Priority to 'criminal' irregular migrants
3. To maintain good neighbourhood relations: "I am working in a neighborhood with a large number of immigrants, and if I start to take a role as someone who chases illegals, I am screwed."

# City governments

1. Try to prevent irregular migrants to go underground: public order interests (health care & crime)
2. Costs of irregular migrants (education for children, health care) are paid by national governments.
3. Tolerate 'law abiding' irregular migrants (due to limited resources)
4. Priority to 'criminal' irregular migrants

# Discussion: Local limits to internal migration control

1. Contradictions within the state (national versus local). Bourdieu: the 'right hand' versus the 'left hand' of the state.
2. Internal border control (social exclusion): increased criminal involvement
3. Internal border control (territorial exclusion): 'local limits' due to local interests and practical wisdom