



COUNTRY CASE STUDY ON THE IMPACTS OF RESTRICTIONS AND ENTITLEMENTS ON THE INTEGRATION OF FAMILY MIGRANTS: QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

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DR CAROLINA IVANESCU & DR SEMIN SUVARIEROL
Erasmus University Rotterdam



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Dr Carolina Ivanescu: ivanescu@fsw.eur.nl

Dr Semin Suvarierol: suvarierol@fsw.eur.nl

Erasmus University Rotterdam

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Table of Contents

Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
2. Context: restrictions and entitlements for the participation of TCN family migrants	3
2.1 Conditions of entry and residence	3
2.2 Entitlements and restrictions for participation.....	6
3. National and local integration policies and rationales.....	10
3.1 Family migrants and national integration policy.....	10
3.2 Local integration and participation policies and programs	13
4. Impacts on the integration of TCN family migrants	17
4.1 Obstacles to integration and participation.....	17
4.1.1 Labour market participation, self-employment and care-work.....	18
4.1.2 Education	22
4.1.3 Language	23
4.1.4 Civic and political participation	26
4.1.5 Discrimination	29
4.2 Advantages and disadvantages for family migrants.....	33
4.3 The local context of integration.....	34
5. Conclusion	37
Appendix A: List of respondents	41
National:.....	41
Rotterdam:.....	41
Leeuwarden:.....	41
6. References.....	43

1. Introduction

This report follows Work Package 3, which mapped the restrictions and entitlements family migrants face before and after their entry to the Netherlands, focusing on exploring how these restrictions and entitlements are implemented in practice and their impacts on the integration of family migrants. The report summarizes the fieldwork findings derived from interviews with policy-makers, social workers, members of civil society and migrant organizations at the national level and in two Dutch municipalities, Rotterdam and Leeuwarden.

The report is structured as follows. Before we present our findings, we give an account of our research methodology and the resulting data. We first begin with the rationales of the current patterns of restrictions and entitlements. We continue with an explanation of the national and local integration policy contexts, including the generic economic and social developments affecting the current state of affairs. Then, we move on to the local integration policies and programmes and explore the experienced and perceived impacts of restrictions and entitlements for family migrants in each policy domain. We conclude with an overview of the most important results.

The research is of a qualitative nature and aims to reveal policy rationales, practices and processes from the point of view of national and local policy actors. Whereas the national interviews aimed to explore the rationales behind the current policies towards family migrants, the local interviews focused on discovering the impacts of these policies in practice, i.e. the factors influencing the integration of family migrants. The report also relies on policy documents and secondary sources where relevant.

We have chosen two Dutch cities for our local case studies. In the Netherlands local governments are led by coalitions of several parties – As such, it is interesting to look for contrasts in local contexts so as to gain as many insight as possible. We opted for Rotterdam and Leeuwarden, a large and a medium-sized city respectively, with migrant populations that are substantially different in size, composition and how integration policies are implemented.

For the national and local interviews, we have identified key policy actors in each context, from relevant policy documents and institutional websites. In the case of the two cities, we

have also used snowball sampling to reach more relevant interviewees. In total we held 30 interviews, 8 at the national level, 12 in Rotterdam and 10 in Leeuwarden. We also conducted informal interviews in Leeuwarden with volunteers and family migrants whom we encountered at a language class. We started each local fieldwork period by participating in the local Day of Dialogue (*Dag van de Dialoog*)¹ events in November 2012 with the aim of discovering the local debates and meeting relevant respondents. Subsequently, we conducted the interviews under the conditions of confidentiality and anonymity (see appendix A for a list of respondents). We worked according to an interview guideline including questions on the following topics:

- What is the **rationale** of the restrictions/entitlements as encountered by family migrants?
- Which **actors** define the restrictions/entitlements encountered by TCN family-migrants on the national level? How are the **responsibilities** for the enactment of the formal restrictions/entitlements **distributed** among national, regional, local governments and non-state actors?
- How and to what extent are formal and informal restrictions manifested in policy practices at the **local level**?
- What are the perceived impacts of local policies on the **integration** of family migrants?

The interviews had the character of in-depth open interviews, which meant that the sub-questions deriving from these topics were adjusted to the respondents and their area of expertise. The interviews took one to two hours and were recorded where possible, e.g. as long as the respondents authorized recording and the location of the interview allowed recording. The recorded interviews have been partially transcribed, and there are digital notes of all interviews. The resulting data has been analyzed guided by the interview topic guideline. Furthermore, we presented the draft version of our reports to a selection of our respondents in Rotterdam and Leeuwarden in the framework of two local workshops. These workshops enabled us to validate and complement our analyses. Throughout our analysis, we also refer to policy documents and secondary literature where relevant.

¹ <http://www.nederlandindialoog.nl/nederlandindialoog/> (accessed on 28 May 2013)

2. Context: restrictions and entitlements for the participation of TCN family migrants

This section provides a summary and overview of the entitlements and restrictions that TCN family migrants encounter after they have come to the Netherlands, as identified in Work Package 3. Because there are certain links between these and the conditions of entry family migrants face before they actually move to the Netherlands, we will also pay some attention to those.

2.1 Conditions of entry and residence

The aims of the new Dutch government restrictions on family migration have been summarized by Ruffer (2011: 936) as (i) combatting fraudulent marriages and adoptions, (ii) curbing the application of eligible family members by making a closer link through sponsorship, (iii) increasing the applicants' own financial responsibility, (iv) reducing the age at which children may apply, and (v) regaining control over immigrant communities. To achieve this, four new measures have been introduced: establishing family connections, increased income and age requirements for the sponsoring migrant, and integration tests in the country of origin.

- **Establishing family connections.** The family relationship must be proven by original notarized documents.
- **Age limit.** For family formation and family reunification, both the sponsor and the partner have to be at least 21 years old. The current cabinet wishes to raise the age limit to 24, as this would make the migrant even more independent from the sponsor. The age limit is also considered important as a safeguard against forced marriages, one of the policy priorities of the Dutch government.
- **Income requirements.** The sponsor of a new family migrant has to prove a “reliable, sustainable and independent” income which is at least as high as the statutory minimum income, which currently amounts to €1562.33 per month including vacation bonus. The income requirement ensures the financial responsibility of the sponsor for the family member in question so as to warrant that migrants will not become a burden to the state. During the first

five years a family migrant is not entitled to receiving public assistance (*bijstandsuitkering*) and the same holds for the sponsor (WODC 2009: 8).

- **Pre-entry tests.** Another requirement for family migrants wishing to settle in the Netherlands has been the introduction of a pre-entry test for spouses and other family members from most countries outside the EU/EEA. According to the Civic Integration Abroad Act (*Wet inburgering in het buitenland*),² only candidates who pass this test on basic knowledge of the Dutch language (A1 level) and society are allowed to obtain an entry visa (MVV) to the Netherlands. The test includes comprehension, speaking, listening and reading components that require all applicants to be literate in Dutch.

The *pre-entry conditions* serve integration goals in the Netherlands.³ Pre-entry and post-entry conditions are intertwined. The most important distinction in terms of *integration conditions* is the intended length of residence of the migrant. Family migrants mostly intend to stay permanently, while highly skilled ‘knowledge migrants’ (*kennismigranten*) and their families are assumed to be staying temporarily. If and when, however, their stay proves permanent, they also need to fulfil integration conditions. The Dutch government has argued that this preliminary selection is conducive to integration or to an “effective participation in society, for example, by active participation in employment, education and voluntary work”.⁴

The same logic cannot be applied to EU citizens, as EU legislation forbids imposing any conditions on them that relate to their integration: they must be treated the same as Dutch citizens. In terms of pre-entry conditions for TCN family migrants EU law is less restrictive than Dutch national law. This is why family migrants sometimes prefer the ‘European route’. For example, for family migrants falling under the EU Free Movement Directive (2004/38/EC), there is no mandatory integration exam. This issue is currently being discussed at the European level. The Netherlands would like to see integration conditions imposed for all permanent migrants, including EU citizens. In the end, if one decides to stay, one needs to learn the language.

² <http://maxius.nl/wet-inburgering-in-het-buitenland>.

³ The following two paragraphs are based two interviews: Interview at Unit ‘Integration and the Rule of Law’, Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, The Hague, 12 December 2012; Interview at Directorate Migration Policy, Ministry of Security and Justice, The Hague, 3 April 2012.

⁴ TK 2003–2004, 29 700, nr. 3, p. 6.

During the first five years the rights of residence of a TCN family migrant depend on the sponsor.⁵ This means that family migrants are subject to certain restrictions, such as the situation of the sponsor, which may affect the renewal of the temporary residence permit.⁶ The renewal of the temporary residence permit can be refused:

- if the migrant or the sponsor does not have sufficient and lasting means of subsistence;⁷
- if the migrant is not willing to cooperate with medical research to protect public health:⁸ TCN migrants who require an MVV need to undergo a tuberculosis (TBC) examination shortly after arrival to the Netherlands and, if they test positively, tuberculosis treatment;⁹
- if the migrant fails to comply with the Foreign Nationals Employment Act¹⁰ and with the restrictions stemming from the residence permit;¹¹
- if the migrant has not proven a basic knowledge of the Dutch language and society.¹²

When the sponsor of a family migrant no longer meets the conditions required for obtaining a residence permit – whether temporary or permanent – the dependent family migrant can also lose his or her residence status. The dependent status of family migrants can also end with a change in the family relationship on the basis of which the residence permit was given. Generally, a sponsorship lasts for a period of five years. After that period an independent individual permit can be granted to the family migrant. After five years of residence as a family migrant, provided the family's ties have been kept intact and the person in question has had his/her domicile in the Netherlands, the family migrant may also apply for a regular permanent residence permit. TCNs who apply for a permanent residence permit have to meet the following conditions:

- five years of legal residence;

⁵ TK 2008–2009, 32 052, nr. 3, p. 32

⁶ Vreemdelingenwet 2000, Article 14.

⁷ Vreemdelingenwet 2000, Article 16.1c.

⁸ Vreemdelingenwet 2000, Article 16.1e.

⁹ http://www.indklantdienstwijzer.nl/KnowledgeRoot.aspx?knowledge_id=SubintentiesHuwelijkEnGezin (accessed on 7 February 2012).

¹⁰ Vreemdelingenwet 2000, Article 16.1f.

¹¹ Vreemdelingenwet 2000, Article 16.1g.

¹² Vreemdelingenwet 2000, Article 16.1h.

- financial independence based on own income or lasting and sufficient means of subsistence provided by the sponsoring family member;¹³
- adequate health insurance coverage;¹⁴
- pass the integration exam.¹⁵

If a family migrant's stay is of a permanent nature, that person can also apply for naturalization after five years of uninterrupted legal residence. The current Dutch government wishes to extend this period to a minimum of seven years.

2.2 Entitlements and restrictions for participation

TCN family migrants are faced with a considerable number of restrictions not only before they are allowed to enter the country, but also during the first five years in the country. The Dutch government justifies the former restrictions with an appeal to the migrants' integration potential: only those family migrants are allowed in who it can be assumed will integrate successfully into Dutch society. The latter restrictions, however, are meant to limit the risk that family migrants have to make recourse to the provisions of the welfare state during their first years of residence. During that period, the sponsor has to take full responsibility for the dependent family migrant's subsistence. Actually, all TCN migrants – with the exception of refugees – have limited or no access to public social security during the first five years in the country, so there is no real difference here between family and other TCN migrants.

The same is the case in virtually all other areas of interest to the IMPACIM project. Once a TCN family migrant has been admitted to the country he or she has the same entitlements and meets the same restrictions as any TCN migrant. The only additional constraint for the family migrant is that his or her residence permit is dependent on that of the sponsor. If the sponsor leaves the country, whether voluntarily or not, the family migrant must do the same. This, of course, may create strong dependency relations within migrant families, to which we will come back later.

¹³ Vreemdelingenwet 2000, Article 20.d.

¹⁴ Vreemdelingenwet 2000, Article 20.g.

¹⁵ Vreemdelingenwet 2000, Article 20.k.

The Dutch government expects family migrants to work on their integration into Dutch society from the day of arrival, and it strongly believes that labour participation is one of the best facilitators of integration. It argues that the impossibility of family migrants falling back on social assistance during the first years of their residence serves as an additional incentive to them to enter the labour market quickly. Formally, they are allowed to do so, like any other TCN migrant with a residence permit, though priority has to be given to non-TCN workers. Until recently family migrants wishing to take up employment were faced with a maximum waiting period of six months, due to the fact that they first had to wait for their residence permit. This only remaining form of differential treatment between family and other TCN migrants came to an end with the recent introduction of the Modern Migration Policy Law on June 1st, 2013.

Otherwise, TCN migrants once admitted to the country are not faced with any formal labour market restrictions. For a limited number of positions in the public service (e.g. armed forces, police, government, legal professions) Dutch citizenship is required, which means that these positions are closed not only to TCN, but also to nationals of other EU countries. No specific restrictions exist for TCN migrants wishing to become self-employed: the conditions are the same as for anyone else in the Netherlands. Problems do arise when it comes to recognizing foreign diplomas, but this issue is certainly not exclusive for TCN migrants, and we will come back to it later.

All TCN migrants who become unemployed after a period of work are entitled to unemployment benefits on the same conditions as any employee in the Netherlands who loses his or her job. The duration of the entitlement is linked to the length of the employment period (Careja and Emmenegger 2012). In the case of recently arrived migrants this can be fairly brief. When the migrant is no longer eligible for employment benefits he or she would have to fall back on public assistance (*bijstand*). However, as stated before, TCN migrants with a residence record of less than five years do not have access to this and they have to leave the country when their temporary residence permit expires. This applies not only to family migrants, but also to their sponsors in situations where the sponsor also has a temporary permit. A sponsor who has been in the country for more than five years is entitled to a permanent residence permit and, if needed, also to public assistance. If, under such circumstances, the sponsor claims public assistance this will not affect the dependent family migrant as long as he or she does not claim anything in his or her own capacity.

However, if a dependent family migrant does claim public assistance within the first five years, the temporary permit may not be renewed and the family migrant will have to leave the country. In practice, however, this rarely happens.

All legal residents of the Netherlands who qualify for the conditions have access to *social housing* and other forms of social benefits and allowances supplied by the government, except for public assistance, as we have just seen. This is irrespective of their nationality or the nature of their permit. As noted above, access to employment-based benefits depends on the duration of paid employment history (Gran and Clifford 2000: 424). The public and private pension schemes are open to all legal residents; benefits of the public pension scheme (AOW) are related to the number of years of residence in the Netherlands. Health care of family migrants is covered through family insurance, supplemented by the state for the lower income groups. Family allowance programs on the other hand are based on a universal or means- or income-tested approach (Gran and Clifford 2000: 424). The requirement for citizens and non-citizens is that they should be acting as a child's primary care taker (ibid: 425).

The Linkage Act (*Koppelingswet*) of 1998 has made all social benefits dependent on the immigrant's legal status, and this also applies to the right to education (except for those of mandatory schooling age, who always have access to schooling), housing, rental subsidies, disability benefits, and healthcare. As the state has retreated from providing provisions to undocumented migrants, other institutions, such as local governments, churches, social work agencies and private individuals have come forward to guarantee certain services that are no longer covered by the state (Bruquetas-Callejo et al. 2007: 7).

As soon as TCN migrants become permanent residents, the legal restrictions to certain entitlements cease to exist. From that moment on, their rights are equal to those of citizens, except in the domain of political participation. (The elections for the regional water regulatory authority (*waterschap*) is an exception here as every legal resident who is 18 years or older may vote in these elections.¹⁶) Every Dutch citizen who is 18 years or older has the right to vote in all elections. All other legal residents who have lived in the Netherlands for at least five years in a row may vote in local elections. The current Coalition Agreement has announced plans to increase the residence requirement for voting rights for foreign

¹⁶ This is a separate administrative layer in the Netherlands.

residents in municipal elections from five to seven years.¹⁷ EU residents have the right to vote in European elections for Dutch European Parliamentarians immediately. Whereas the Netherlands allows all migrants access to the local elections after five years of residence, TCN migrants can only take part in national and European elections after they have become Dutch citizens. A similar logic applies to being elected for office in the respective political levels.

In many respects TCN migrants in the Netherlands have the same rights and entitlements as any other person residing in the country. However, especially those TCN migrants who have a temporary residence permit also encounter certain restrictions, particularly in their entitlements to social benefits and in the field of political participation. These restrictions apply to all TCN migrants, irrespective of their reason for coming. Family migrants face additional restrictions as long as their residence status depends on that of the sponsor. It is not so easy to assess the impact of the restrictions on the migrants' integration. Integration is a long-term process, the results of which do not crystallize immediately. Our statistical and fieldwork findings thus only approximate the impacts of recent policies on the basis of the quantitative and qualitative data, which both have their limitations.

¹⁷ *Bruggen Slaan. Regeerakkoord VVD-PvdA, 29 October 2012, p. 31.*

3. National and local integration policies and rationales

After having revisited the main restrictions and entitlements that TCN family migrants face in their integration process, this section focuses in more detail on the national and local integration policies. What are these policies' rationales, what measures have been adopted and how do these policies relate to the TCN family migrants as a migrant category in particular?

3.1 Family migrants and national integration policy

The specific situation of family migrants received lots of political attention during the previous Dutch cabinet, but much less so under the current cabinet.¹⁸ The emphasis of the previous cabinet was on limiting immigration, an explicit demand from Geert Wilders' Freedom Party, which was willing to ensure a parliamentary majority for that cabinet, but only under certain conditions, of which pursuing a strict immigration policy was a major one. Four measures were on the political agenda, all meant to curb TCN migration in general, but family migration in particular:

- *Policy on partners:* It was proposed that unmarried partners should not be allowed to join as family migrants. This policy was never introduced and is off the agenda for the present cabinet.
- *Uninterrupted residence requirement:* The requirement of uninterrupted residence in order to qualify for public assistance (*bijstand*) was raised from three to five years. The aim of this was to prevent bogus marriages and to raise the incentive to work.
- *Waiting period of one year before filing an application for family migration:* This measure has been introduced.
- *No family reunification for extended family and adult children:* This policy has been enforced since October 2012.

These measures affect all TCN migrants (except 'knowledge workers' and students), and not just family migrants. They relate to immigration rather than to integration, but they certainly

¹⁸ This paragraph is based on an interview at Directorate Migration Policy, Ministry of Security and Justice, The Hague, 3 April 2013.

do have an impact on the integration process of individual migrants as well. As before, once family migrants have entered the Netherlands, policy-makers no longer regard them as a separate category neither at the national nor at the local level, except that for the first five years their residential status depends on their sponsor's readiness to support them. This fact, as we have seen in the previous section, affects their integration potential, sometimes positively, but sometimes also in a negative manner.

Formally, in the Netherlands, family migrants are not regarded as an official category by policy-makers at the national (nor the local) level in the context of integration policies. In this context, the rationale for the national integration policy approach can be summarized as follows:

“We do not see [family migrants] as a separate category. We do not monitor them.... You have requirements before you come to the Netherlands; you have integration abroad. Then you must integrate in the Netherlands, and then we look at ‘Can everyone participate? Are certain groups disadvantaged? What should we do in the generic policy so that any shortcomings can be overcome?’ We thus try not to approach the issue in terms of different types of migrants anymore.”¹⁹

Consequently, in our research we found that policy-makers and practitioners at the national and local level had difficulties in referring to the specific case of family migrants. Policy-makers relied on their knowledge of migrants (and offspring) in general, whereas practitioners spoke about migrants with families (“If you are talking about family migrants, you are just talking about families.”²⁰), whose legal status they were not always sure about. They argued that regardless of migration status, migrants tend to face similar problems.²¹ Furthermore, various respondents referred to the diversity of family migrants as a category, with migrants coming from very different countries with very different socio-cultural but also socio-economic characteristics.²²

¹⁹ Interview at Unit Integration and the Rule of Law, Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 12 December 2012.

²⁰ Interview at the Municipality of Leeuwarden, Leeuwarden, 5 November 2012.

²¹ Informal interviews with family migrants at *Taalpunt*, Leeuwarden, 13-14 November 2012; interview at Partoer, Leeuwarden, 13 November 2012.

²² Interview at Directorate Migration Policy, Ministry of Security and Justice, The Hague, 3 April 2013.

In the words of the current government, “Integration means being ready to release people and to let them find their own way. This is necessary to become part of this society.”²³ The new integration approach emphasizes the migrants’ own responsibilities, their duty “to participate and to share the basic principles of society”²⁴ and to contribute to society by being self-reliant. Knowledge of the Dutch language is essential for this and “newcomers are expected to embrace and internalize the values and rules that apply in the Netherlands.”²⁵ Pre-entry requirements have an important role in preparing a successful integration process: “We must prevent the intake of low-skilled migrants who are inadequately prepared for a successful future in the Netherlands. This applies to all migrants, whether it concerns marriage and family migrants subject to compulsory integration or migrants from the European Union (who are exempt from compulsory integration).”²⁶ The reasoning behind these measures is to “avoid that the integration process starts all over again with parents passing on their disadvantages to their children”.²⁷ “The pre-entry conditions that are currently in force for family migrants function as problem filters.”²⁸ “Due to the financial criteria that the sponsor has to meet to qualify for family migration as well as to the subsequent financial dependence of family migrants on their sponsor in the first five years of their stay in the Netherlands, family migrants do not pose problems that require public assistance.”²⁹ In this respect, “they have become invisible”³⁰ to policy makers and practitioners.

The new national integration policy began to take shape in 2002/03, a turbulent period in Dutch politics that followed the killing of Pim Fortuyn and the rise of his anti-immigrant party. Rita Verdonk, Minister for Immigration and Integration from 2003 to 2007, rejected specific policies for migrants.³¹ “The current government also wants to work within generic policies (e.g. employment, education, etc.), but still asks the question: Do generic policies

²³ <http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten-en-publicaties/kamerstukken/2013/02/19/kamerbrief-agenda-integratie.html> (accessed on 10 June 2013)

²⁴ <http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten-en-publicaties/kamerstukken/2013/02/19/kamerbrief-agenda-integratie.html> (accessed on 10 June 2013)

²⁵ <http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten-en-publicaties/kamerstukken/2013/02/19/kamerbrief-agenda-integratie.html> (accessed on 10 June 2013)

²⁶ <http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten-en-publicaties/kamerstukken/2013/02/19/kamerbrief-agenda-integratie.html> (accessed on 10 June 2013)

²⁷ <http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten-en-publicaties/kamerstukken/2013/02/19/kamerbrief-agenda-integratie.html> (accessed on 10 June 2013)

²⁸ Interview at Rotterdam Knowledge Centre on Diversity, Rotterdam, 10 December 2012.

²⁹ Interview at the Municipality of Rotterdam, Rotterdam, 10 December 2012.

³⁰ Interview at the Municipality of Rotterdam, Rotterdam, 22 November 2012.

³¹ The following three paragraphs are based on an interview at Unit Integration and the Rule of Law, Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 12 December 2012.

work for specific groups? In this respect it is an advantage that integration is now part of the Ministry of Social Affairs, as labour and participation get extra attention. The national and local governments interpret participation broadly. It includes not only participation in the labour market, but also the involvement of parents at the school of their children, as one of the major problems is that migrant parents are too little involved with the upbringing and education of their children. This current cabinet is pragmatic. The focus is on ensuring economic self-reliance and on reducing reliance on public benefits.”

So, government policies but also concrete projects of the Ministry do not differentiate any longer between specific migrant groups or categories. “Family migrants are not monitored as a separate group. The statistics reveal that there are obstacles to integration, but it is still a puzzle why and how to tackle these without making group-specific policies. Furthermore, family migrants are a very diverse group of migrants.”³² “It is difficult to develop policies that fit the whole group so as to stimulate participation and prevent exclusion for everyone.”³³ It is complicated if not impossible to have a discussion in terms of family migrants that addresses the characteristics and needs of families of refugees as well as those of highly skilled migrants at the same time. On the five major themes – employment, education, child welfare, health matters and crime – national integration officials connect with the responsible ministries and units to ensure that the generic policy also works for migrants, given their disadvantages. As such, integration is currently a policy aspect that should be incorporated into all social policy domains, rather than an all-encompassing independent policy domain at the national level.”³⁴

3.2 Local integration and participation policies and programs

In line with the national trend, most municipalities currently work by pursuing generic policies as opposed to the earlier group-focused policies. However, local policies still need to make sure that all groups and all problems receive the attention they need. At the local level, specific projects have been set up to promote integration.

Rotterdam currently works with migrants in four policy domains: integration, emancipation, diversity/anti-discrimination and participation. Participation policies focus on

³² Interview at Directorate Migration Policy, Ministry of Security and Justice, The Hague, 3 April 2013.

³³ Interview at Directorate Migration Policy, Ministry of Security and Justice, The Hague, 3 April 2013.

³⁴ Interview at ACVZ, Den Haag, 25 February 2013.

language and integration. Whereas the ultimate goal of participation in society is to work, participation in volunteer work is seen as a first step towards social and economic independence. Economic participation is now the most important aspect, in contrast to the earlier focus on cultural and civic participation. The current policy strategy of Rotterdam is to invest in the talents of individuals. As such, there is no specific attention for families.

Until recently, integration policies in Rotterdam had been focused on disadvantaged groups. For example, migrants needed to be assisted through civic integration courses. This approach had been pursued for quite some time, yet it “has been observed that things have not improved and real integration has not taken place. However, it is possible that the organizations and institutions that took part in this process have a different opinion and that they believe that they have promoted integration. Now the idea is that migrants have to be treated similarly to other people in Rotterdam and migrants have the responsibility to become integrated into Dutch society and Rotterdam.”³⁵

The greatest change in Rotterdam integration policies has been the decreasing budget available for these issues, a direct consequence of the financial crisis. The municipality needs to focus on its statutory tasks and has decided to take away resources also from its integration programme. Up until this year, the municipality provided substantial subsidies to institutions and organizations that work in the domain of integration, many of them migrant organizations. As a result, many different projects could be set up – neighbourhood projects, buddy projects and projects for newcomers. Even though there is still a demand for this sort of activity, the subsidies available for these projects have by now all been reduced.³⁶

Earlier political discussions in Rotterdam about family migrants had focused on values and norms of behaviour, but this has now become an obsolete theme. The real question now is whether migrant families are able to be self-reliant and independent in the face of a shrinking welfare state. If we look at migrants and their families in Rotterdam, we can make the following distinction:

“On the one hand, there are families that are doing well and thus are invisible to officials as they do not constitute a problem. On the other hand, families who have problems mostly have an accumulation of problems and for them it is very

³⁵ Interview at the Municipality of Rotterdam, Rotterdam, 10 December 2012.

³⁶ This paragraph and the next are based on an interview at the Municipality of Rotterdam, Rotterdam, 10 December 2012.

difficult to find their way through the different provisions that are available. For example, family coaches were introduced under earlier security-focused policies. These coaches now report back that general policies do not provide enough support for families with problems. This is exactly the problem the municipality is struggling with now in a time of economic retrenchment: What can one do to reach those families who need help and support if one only has a generic policy? Both the complexity of the issues and the ways politicians face them change regularly. Consequently, people do not really know where they have to go with their problems. When they are in need they do not like to be blamed for not being self-reliant, but they would rather get help.”³⁷

In contrast to Rotterdam, the city of **Leeuwarden** has officially formulated an integration and participation policy that deals with the problems migrants face. The current policy has been set out in the Memorandum ‘Colouring outside the Lines’ (*Buiten de lijntjes kleuren*) (Gemeente Leeuwarden 2008). The Memorandum reflects the transition from a specific integration policy to one better integrated with other policy fields. The policy official in charge of this transition explains its rationale as follows: “I saw that a lot of the policies on migrants were being formulated from a perspective of disadvantage or problems. In this Memorandum we stated that migrants are also citizens of Leeuwarden. So from the perspective of equality and diversity policy, you should move towards an integrated policy. At some point, you need to stop making a separate integration policy, and make sure that policies are the same for all Leeuwarden citizens.”³⁸ Leeuwarden is currently in the concluding phase of this transition period. Local policy observers point out that it is an advantage to have integration as a part of integrated policy, but one should keep investing in it: “If it only remains on paper, and no one is actually working on it, the current expertise on integration might soon be lost.”³⁹

In most of the Netherlands migrant integration is now predominantly addressed under the much broader label of ‘participation policies’, both at the national and the local levels. “Participation policies bring together the budgets of employment, migrant integration, civic integration and education under one umbrella.”⁴⁰ The underlying idea is to promote self-reliance of individuals, first socially and then economically, which actually constitutes the

³⁷ Interview at the Municipality of Rotterdam, Rotterdam, 22 November 2012.

³⁸ Interview at the Municipality of Leeuwarden, Leeuwarden, 5 November 2012.

³⁹ Interview at Partoer, Leeuwarden, 13 November 2012.

⁴⁰ Interview at the Municipality of Rotterdam, Rotterdam, 22 November 2012.

ultimate participation goal. The instrument used to guide and measure the impact of participation policies and tools is the so-called participation ladder (*participatieladder*) (Van Gent et al. 2008).

The participation ladder has been developed for and by municipalities with the aim of helping them to implement participation policies.⁴¹ The participation ladder in its current form is a joint product of the research institute Regioplan, the Association of Dutch Municipalities (*Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten* (VNG)) and twelve local authorities: Alkmaar, Almelo, Amsterdam, Deventer, Eindhoven, Rotterdam, Schiedam, Sneek, The Hague, Utrecht, Venlo and Zwolle. The ladder does not make municipalities accountable to the national government; it is rather a streamlining tool allowing different municipalities to learn from each other in the domain of participation. As such, the participation ladder also has a benchmarking function whereby municipalities can be compared with each other with regard to the results they have achieved (Gemeente Leeuwarden 2009: 4). Its different levels correspond to the goal that needs to be attained at every step of the ladder and they allow for a broad focus on different groups in need. The participation ladder works with a broad definition of participation that ranges from social participation as an antidote to isolation at the initial stage, to economic participation in the labour market as its most desirable goal. This instrument is developed as a general and elastic tool for measuring “effective participation”⁴² and it targets different segments of the population and diverse forms of social participation. This also means that municipalities have a certain freedom about what types of social problems and which target groups they include under this policy.

⁴¹ This paragraph is based on <http://www.participatieladder.nl/faqs.html> (accessed on 18 April 2013)

⁴² <http://www.participatieladder.nl/faqs.html> (accessed on 18 April 2013)

4. Impacts on the integration of TCN family migrants

In previous sections, we identified the entitlements and restrictions that TCN family migrants face not only before they are allowed to enter the country, but also during the first five years in the country. In this section, we focus on the impact of these restrictions and entitlements on their participation and integration in society. We discuss the effects in various sectors (labour, housing, benefits, politics, etc.) as well as discuss specific issues that TCN family migrants face as a category, above all in a local setting.

4.1 Obstacles to integration and participation

As we have seen in chapters 2 and 3, TCN family migrants are faced with a considerable number of restrictions. How do these affect the integration and participation of TCN migrants? We will focus in particular on labour market participation, education, civic and political participation and discrimination. Dutch policy making and the relevant literature often pay separate attention to discrimination, while in many other countries this is seen as an aspect of a particular policy area, e.g. employment or housing. In line with this approach we will discuss discrimination in a separate section.

For many years, research has indicated that the quality of housing for migrants in the Netherlands does not differ significantly from that of non-migrants in a similar socio-economic situation, particularly if one also accounts for the fact that migrants are concentrated in major cities, where the average quality of housing is less good than elsewhere.⁴³ This is why we have not given specific attention to housing as a possible obstacle to integration. Likewise, little attention has been given here to welfare benefits: the formal rules for entitlement to such benefits were discussed extensively in Ivanescu and Suvarierol (2013), while in most cases the role of local authorities in their attribution is very limited. This is not the case for public assistance (*bijstand*), which has been a local responsibility for a number of years. However, family migrants are not entitled to these benefits during the first five years of their residence.

⁴³ e.g. M. Gijsberts, W. Huijink, J. Dagevos (2012) Jaarrapport Integratie 2011; Den Haag: Sociaal en Cultureel planbureau., Ch 8.

4.1.1 Labour market participation, self-employment and care-work

As shown in chapter 2, the Dutch government puts particular emphasis on labour market participation. Various respondents show that in this sector family migrants do experience obstacles. In general, migrants have difficulties finding a job, keeping a job and getting further than low-skilled jobs or low-rank positions in companies. In particular, getting permanent jobs and jobs at higher levels is difficult for most migrants.⁴⁴ When one has a part-time job or a job that does not pay well, it is difficult to overcome poverty.⁴⁵ This is a problem which is not specific to migrants but is common to all people who find themselves in a precarious position.⁴⁶ Long-term unemployment also makes it difficult to get access to the labour market.⁴⁷

An important obstacle in this respect is the lack of a sufficient “starting qualification” (*startkwalificatie*).⁴⁸ Migrants have problems with the recognition of their diplomas and skills, thus mostly they are “not working at the same level as before they migrated”.⁴⁹ A strategy used by migrants to overcome this discrepancy is “to educate [themselves] further either in their own profession or in a profession in which there is demand”⁵⁰ and then to try to find work.

Furthermore, employers are afraid of employing migrants because they fear that migrants are “not familiar with the Dutch working ethos”.⁵¹ The expectations of the employers do not match the behaviour of migrant employees.⁵² Dutch employment is a “highly regulated area and migrants often fail to see their duties and responsibilities”.⁵³ Sometimes migrants lack knowledge of the local cultural codes,⁵⁴ causing tension between employers and employees. Thus many migrants prefer to acquire work through informal networks, as we found out from our respondents in Rotterdam: “African women find their own ways through nationality groups and also through the church. For them language is really a problem in

⁴⁴ Interview at Partoer, Leeuwarden, 13 November 2012.

⁴⁵ Interview at Partoer, Leeuwarden, 13 November 2012.

⁴⁶ Interview at Partoer, Leeuwarden, 13 November 2012.

⁴⁷ IMPACIM Local Workshop, Leeuwarden, 14 June 2013.

⁴⁸ IMPACIM Local Workshop, Leeuwarden, 14 June 2013.

⁴⁹ Interview at Dona Daria, Rotterdam, 27 November 2012.

⁵⁰ Interview at SKIN, Rotterdam, 9 January 2013.

⁵¹ Interview at Dona Daria, Rotterdam, 27 November 2012.

⁵² IMPACIM Local Workshop, Leeuwarden, 14 June 2013.

⁵³ Interview at Dona Daria, Rotterdam, 27 November 2012.

⁵⁴ IMPACIM Local Workshop, Leeuwarden, 14 June 2013.

getting a job outside of the informal circuit. There are women who really want to work, but find it very difficult to actually find work.”⁵⁵

In Rotterdam, migrants have a wider choice of labour market possibilities, as the city offers job opportunities both for low and highly educated employees. However, in general, the labour market in Rotterdam has become worse due to the crisis, with little work, less turnover and higher competition, which makes it even more difficult for migrants to find a job right now. As a result, “highly educated migrants now face the same employment problems as other migrants: discrimination in the labour market, lack of recognition of diplomas and problems with the knowledge of language.”⁵⁶

Whereas those with a migrant origin make up 10% of the population in Leeuwarden, they make up one third of registered unemployment⁵⁷ and 30% of the subsistence benefit receivers in Leeuwarden.⁵⁸ The labour market in Leeuwarden is bad in general and it is even worse for migrants.⁵⁹ In general, fewer vacancies exist and there is less turnover than in other parts of the Netherlands.⁶⁰ Due to the current economic crisis, it is even more difficult to succeed in the labour market.⁶¹ and to avoid unemployment, many people are taking jobs under their education level, which makes it even harder for the lower educated.⁶² Many migrants also leave for the Randstad or for cities where it is easier to get a job, adding to the problem of decreasing population in Friesland. The municipality of Leeuwarden also subsidizes return-to-work trajectories including group courses for six months and individual sectoral coaching.⁶³ There are now fewer return-to-work trajectories due to austerity policies. Those who have very little chance of finding a job get a welfare benefit as long as they do not cause nuisance. In Leeuwarden, 1400-1500 people have been “written off (*afgeschreven*), and there is no investment in these people anymore. Choices are now made

⁵⁵ Interview at Dona Daria, Rotterdam, 27 November 2012.

⁵⁶ Interview at SKIN, Rotterdam, 9 January 2013.

⁵⁷ Interview at the Municipality of Leeuwarden, Leeuwarden, 5 November 2012; interview with *Kleurrijk Beraad*, Leeuwarden, 14 November 2012.

⁵⁸ IMPACIM Local Workshop, Leeuwarden, 14 June 2013.

⁵⁹ Interview with *Kleurrijk Beraad*, Leeuwarden, 14 November 2012.

⁶⁰ Interview with *Welzijn Centraal*, Leeuwarden, 15 November 2012.

⁶¹ Interview with *Kleurrijk Beraad*, Leeuwarden, 14 November 2012; interview with *Welzijn Centraal*, Leeuwarden, 15 November 2012.

⁶² IMPACIM Local Workshop, Leeuwarden, 14 June 2013.

⁶³ This paragraph is based on an interview at *Bureau Zelfstandigen Fryslân*, 6 November 2012.

financially. The employment agency (UWV) has better instruments now. It arranges trial positions for people receiving subsistence assistance.⁶⁴

Another strategy of overcoming unemployment for migrants is *self-employment*; although not everyone who is unemployed can become an entrepreneur.⁶⁵ However, migrant entrepreneurs also experience difficulties in the Netherlands as they are used to different and sometimes fewer rules and regulations in their country of origin. *Bureau Zelfstandigen Fryslân* (BZF) has a designated contact person for migrant entrepreneurs. BZF has the task of providing support to beginning entrepreneurs for three years, e.g. with setting up their business plan and administration. The idea is that other migrants can also go to the bank to get a credit as it is often easier for those who have already had a job and then want to start their own business as they have more experience with the language and work contacts. How big is the risk? What are the rules and regulations around having your own business in the Netherlands? BZF prepares entrepreneurs by addressing questions such as these, so that the business has a better chance of succeeding. It also informs them about regulations concerning shops, security and health issues, and the permits they need to obtain before starting. Migrants who have already started their business but have ended up with debts also need assistance with the relevant rules and regulations. In BZF's experience, migrants tend to live by the day: 'I have earned money today, so we see what tomorrow brings.' They are not future-oriented. Migrant entrepreneurs thus need some introduction to the Dutch enterprise culture.

Another strategy involves *care work*. In the Netherlands care work is mostly given by professional institutions. Children are taken care of in childcare groups, playgroups and pre-school programs. There are also after-school childcare facilities. The elderly are taken care of in homes and they can live independently, receiving some care or full care depending on their circumstances. Care work within one's family is not considered by the Dutch government as participation in society, as it is considered to diminish the chances of participation in society through volunteer work outside of the house or participation in the labour market.⁶⁶ For migrant families, on the other hand, providing care within the extended

⁶⁴ The same is valid for the city of Rotterdam, where returning to work trajectories are by now not being used anymore.

⁶⁵ This section is based on an interview at Bureau Zelfstandigen Fryslân, 6 November 2012.

⁶⁶ See <http://www.participatieladder.nl/faqs.html> (accessed on 18 April 2013).

family is often considered important, but they are criticized as not being integrated because of the time they invest in caring for their family.⁶⁷

In addition, *volunteer work* is considered very important in the Netherlands; it is “something that is really Dutch”.⁶⁸ The Dutch state “glorifies the idea of the role model and volunteers are celebrated.”⁶⁹ However, it is important to recognize that this can only happen if a certain definition and distinction between the private and the public sphere is accepted. This is especially relevant in relation to the demands of social participation made upon migrants and their families. The desired form of participation is paid or unpaid work. Thus other forms of social participation, such as care work within the sphere of the family, are not recognized as participation. Yet, “Most migrants already do what is called volunteer work. While many of them take care of their extended families, many also work for their communities, for purposes which they find important, without receiving any benefit in money. But this is not necessarily called volunteering.”⁷⁰ For many migrants this is just a normal thing to do and no organization is needed to coordinate these efforts. What the state wants is already happening. In the opinion of migrant organization FORUM, “This is something that Dutch people can learn from migrants: commitment to the social environment.”⁷¹

Furthermore, in the case of family migrants, care work is not only an option but in many cases also a choice.⁷² Since family migrants come to the Netherlands to set up a family or to be reunited with their family, their primary concern lies with their family. As a result, family migrants might be less interested in formal participation in the Dutch society and might focus more on their family. Young women, in particular, are initially more occupied with setting up their new family and looking after their infant children. Older women also have care tasks, especially if they have been separated from their husbands. If their chances of getting a job are meagre, they prefer combining their care tasks with volunteer work, while they also learn or practise the Dutch language.

⁶⁷ This section is based on an interview at FORUM, Utrecht, 3 May 2013.

⁶⁸ Interview at SONOR, Rotterdam, 19 December 2012.

⁶⁹ Interview at SONOR, Rotterdam, 19 December 2012.

⁷⁰ Interview at FORUM, Utrecht, 3 May 2013.

⁷¹ Interview at FORUM, Utrecht, 3 May 2013.

⁷² This paragraph is based on informal interviews with family migrants at *Taalpunt*, Leeuwarden, 13-14 November 2012 and an interview with Dona Daria, Rotterdam, 27 November 2012.

4.1.2 Education

Having a basic educational qualification is crucial for integration in the Netherlands. Migrants who have had no education tend to have a low income. However, migrants with education and skills also encounter difficulties on the labour market, due to non-recognition of diplomas, discrimination and imperfect knowledge of language (see also Work Package 4 Statistics on Family Migration, the Netherlands). Migrants often tend to earn less due to language and cultural barriers.

As mentioned earlier, the most often experienced obstacle, as identified by migrant organizations, is the non-recognition of diplomas obtained in the country of origin. The partial or non-recognition of foreign diplomas is a problem which particularly affects highly-skilled family migrants. In cases where the diplomas are officially accepted, they are not considered equal to a degree obtained here. Over the years the characteristics of the women who come to the Netherlands as family migrants have changed.⁷³

In the city of Rotterdam, most currently arriving family migrants have a higher education. This is partly due to the changes in migration policies, but it is also a result of the improvement of education in many 'non-Western' countries. However, while the characteristics of the migrants have been changing, their problems are more or less the same. Problems can be individual, but they are also structural, such as difficulties in finding a job, problems in learning the language well enough. This is often the case for highly educated family migrant women coming from countries like Philippines, Thailand, India or other Asian countries.⁷⁴

From the interviews we had with family migrant women in Leeuwarden, it appeared indeed that the difficulties in finding skilled jobs are caused for some migrants by the non-recognition of foreign diplomas.⁷⁵ Local officials point out that this is due to a mismatch between the norms and level of the Dutch system and that in the country of origin.⁷⁶ Sometimes there are migrants with medical diplomas who have not had any practical experience or migrants who have worked as managers in their uncle's company.⁷⁷ This was especially a setback for highly educated women (a history teacher, an accountant, a

⁷³ This paragraph is based on an interview at Dona Daria, Rotterdam, 27 November 2012.

⁷⁴ This paragraph is based on an interview at Dona Daria, Rotterdam, 27 November 2012.

⁷⁵ This paragraph is based on informal interviews with family migrants at *Taalpunt*, Leeuwarden, 13-14 November 2012.

⁷⁶ IMPACIM Local Workshop, Leeuwarden, 14 June 2013.

⁷⁷ IMPACIM Local Workshop, Leeuwarden, 14 June 2013.

computer programmer) who often had already built up some work experience before coming to the Netherlands. Despite their diplomas, they could not find a job. They had adopted different strategies to deal with this situation. The history teacher had worked some time as a class assistant but could not study further (see Case I in Box I), so now she was doing volunteer work. The accountant was still learning Dutch, but if she could not find a job at her own level she still wanted to settle down with a job below her level. The computer programmer decided it would cost too much time and energy to get her diplomas recognized or to study in her own area. Instead, she would do a short study course to become a dental assistant, which would allow her to find a job and earn money easily.

The non-recognition of foreign diplomas and work experience is problematic, especially for highly educated migrants, which tends to be the case for refugees in Friesland. If the diplomas and work experience have been attained in the country of origin, employment agencies and companies tend to treat these as irrelevant. As a result, a great deal of potential gets lost because the skills of migrants obtained in the country of origin are not recognized. Various respondents who have worked with migrants⁷⁸ and migrants themselves⁷⁹ thus call for the need to evaluate people based on what they are capable of doing and not merely on formal qualifications.

4.1.3 Language

Lack of knowledge of the Dutch language is a shortcoming that migrants seem to be facing in various areas of life from setting up a business to guiding the education of their children. To begin with, weak command of the Dutch language can be a barrier to accessing information as most official websites and most flyers are available only in Dutch. Learning the language is thus seen as important both for the migrants themselves and for their children. As language is seen as indispensable for participation in society, a lack of knowledge of Dutch or a weak command of Dutch is seen as an obstacle in access to jobs.

There has been a lot of policy attention to the learning of Dutch language. In Rotterdam, Dutch language lessons are available at all levels, both on a voluntary basis and as a

⁷⁸ Interview with Tûmba, Partoer, *Kleurrijk Beraad* in Leeuwarden; Spior; Dona Daria.

⁷⁹ Informal interviews with family migrants at *Taalpunt*, Leeuwarden, 13-14 November 2012; De Witte (2010).

requirement for certain population groups.⁸⁰ Until the beginning of 2013 there was a lot of choice in institutions and organizations offering language tutoring, but at present, due to the financial crisis and the restructuring of the local policy areas and the subsidy system, it is becoming more and more limited. As “language teaching and civic integration exams have become centralized”,⁸¹ civic integration has ceased to be a task of municipalities.

“There have also been changes in the local policy discourse regarding language learning, especially in relation to integration”⁸². In Rotterdam, in language learning as in almost all other policy areas, the emphasis is on the responsibility of the individuals and their duty to integrate. This means that language courses are no longer receiving subsidies, thus migrants have to pay for them themselves. The municipality hopes that migrants can fulfil the task of finding a course, paying for it and finishing it on their own. For the time being, social loans are available for those who do not have the means to pay for their courses, but this possibility will also become limited in the future.

These developments point to a radical change in the policies of the city of Rotterdam: “Until now migrants have been taken care of; they have been provided with everything and thus they have been spoiled. Now it is exactly the opposite.”⁸³ As migrants need language knowledge in order to settle in the Netherlands, but also in order to be able to have access to the labour market, it can be expected that changes in the structure and financial support given to language courses will have a great impact. They will affect the starting position of migrants. The effects of these measures will only be felt a few years from now “so only then will we find out that we need a different policy to deal with the problems that we are causing now.”⁸⁴

Leeuwarden has several forms of language education for migrants. *Taalpunt* is voluntary, but non-participation can be a sign of problems.⁸⁵ The language classes are offered in women-only classes. The idea behind this is that (some) women are not allowed to leave the house and remain isolated otherwise, and it is exactly these women that the courses aim to reach.⁸⁶ When the classes were organized separately, a lot of people started attending.⁸⁷

⁸⁰ This and the following paragraph are based on an interview the Municipality of Rotterdam, Rotterdam, 18 December 2012.

⁸¹ Interview at the Municipality of Rotterdam, Rotterdam, 14 December 2012.

⁸² Interview at the Municipality of Rotterdam, Rotterdam, 14 December 2012.

⁸³ Interview at the Municipality of Rotterdam, Rotterdam, 30 November 2012.

⁸⁴ Interview at the Municipality of Rotterdam, Rotterdam, 22 November 2012.

⁸⁵ Interview with Welzijn Centraal, Leeuwarden, 15 November 2012.

⁸⁶ Informal interview with volunteer at *Taalpunt*, Leeuwarden, 13 November 2012.

There is no *Taalpunt* for men “as they do not accept that their language skills are not good”.⁸⁸ At the intermediate level, classes are mixed. The classes are free (subsidized by EIF), but participants pay a €0.50 fee for the coffee every class. The language classes are not only about learning Dutch, as there are also other activities taking place, such as sex education and practical activities like cooking and hand care.⁸⁹

There are some concerns with regard to the quality of the language courses and the level that is reached as a result. Migrants find that the courses are not challenging enough and focus more on establishing social contacts (De Witte 2010). This is in line with recent research and independent evaluations of civic integration courses concluding that the quality of the courses does not allow the migrants to access the labour market (Suvarierol and Kirk 2012). Our respondent in *Kleurrijk Beraad* in Leeuwarden emphasized that civic integration courses need to become more functional.⁹⁰ Migrants need to learn professional language, not that “they need to eat with a fork. The process of learning Dutch becomes easier when migrants receive some support. In that sense it is regrettable that the government will not subsidize civic integration courses anymore from 2013/2014. Highly educated migrants should be supported in their language needs so that they can find work that matches their level.”⁹¹

Migrants have the idea that after a language course they will have a job immediately, but this is seldom the case. They do volunteer work with the idea of getting used to customs and language. In the end, the problem is often not only the command of the Dutch language, but also the command of the Dutch system, structures and societal expectations: “Language knowledge is extremely important, but there are also other rules and informal barriers that will interfere.”⁹² Lack of familiarity with Western norms is often seen as an obstacle. For example, “ideas of time and punctuality which may be culturally specific are seen as a reason why migrants are not preferred as employees.”⁹³ In this way, language and culture become barriers to integration. “Although migrant women can find their way to meet other migrant women, it is not easy for them to integrate into Dutch society. Language, for example, is a

⁸⁷ Interview with Welzijn Centraal, Leeuwarden, 15 November 2012.

⁸⁸ Interview with Welzijn Centraal, Leeuwarden, 15 November 2012.

⁸⁹ Informal interview with volunteer at *Taalpunt*, Leeuwarden, 13 November 2012.

⁹⁰ This paragraph is based on an Interview with *Kleurrijk Beraad*, Leeuwarden, 14 November 2012.

⁹¹ Here the respondent refers to the content of civic integration courses, which emphasize Dutch societal norms.

⁹² Interview at the Municipality of Rotterdam, Rotterdam, 30 November 2012.

⁹³ Interview at *Dona Daria*, Rotterdam, 27 November 2012.

very big problem and language is also the cause of other problems such as not finding work.”⁹⁴ Some respondents question whether language is really an issue or whether some people are too picky about migrants speaking Dutch with an accent, using language as an excuse for discrimination based on nationality or country of origin.⁹⁵ Even though people are getting more and more used to Dutch being spoken with an accent, yet there is still this “presumed problem (*schijnprobleem*)” of language to which too much weight is accorded.⁹⁶

As such, it seems that the issue of language is often used to define other qualities: “An example of this is a woman who applied for a job as a flight attendant. The response she received was that the company stood for high quality and that people with accents did not fit the image of the organization” (Ghorashi and Van Tilburg 2006: 58-59).

4.1.4 Civic and political participation

As civic and political participation is not an issue that falls under the socio-economic issues dealt with by the policy-makers and practitioners we interviewed, we interviewed ProDemos, an organization specializing in stimulating the civic and political participation of citizens.⁹⁷ The right to vote is one of the major topics to which ProDemos devotes its information campaigns. Citizens with a migrant background have a lower turnout in elections. In 2010, the migrant turnout in national parliamentary elections was 40%; the turnout at the local elections in 2010 was 25-30%. However, it should also be pointed out that overall turnout in Dutch elections is also not that high, especially for non-parliamentary elections: whereas the turnout was 75% during the parliamentary elections in 2012 (ProDemos 2012: 1), it was 47% for the 2007 provincial elections and 39% for the 2009 elections for the European Parliament.

The Netherlands was one of the first European countries to allow non-citizens to vote at local elections. It was in 1986 that the right to vote was introduced for migrants who have been residing in the country for five years. It was partly a result of the wish and effort of Dutch civil society organizations, rather than of the migrants themselves. The voting right was not extended to other levels. Now, however, the new cabinet has announced plans to

⁹⁴ Interview at Dona Daria, Rotterdam, 27 November 2012.

⁹⁵ Interview at Dona Daria, Rotterdam, 27 November 2012.

⁹⁶ Interview at Partoer, Leeuwarden, 13 November 2012

⁹⁷This section is predominantly based on the interview at ProDemos (The Hague, 21 November 2012) with an official who works in particular with migrants.

raise the residence requirement to seven years.⁹⁸ As our respondent at ProDemos noted, this is not an impulse for political participation:

Ideally you would say, ‘You live here at least for five years legally; you pay all your contributions and costs; why would you not have the right to vote? So that's the paradox actually. So now the cabinet wants to limit it further for migrants. I do not know what purpose they have. It does not seem good to me to exclude people if you want to build trust in politics. I find it regrettable... Like this, you do not get any further. Voting is so important. It is not good to limit it further.’⁹⁹

The Netherlands is one of the leading countries in Europe when it comes to the number of politicians with a migrant origin. Nevertheless, the representation of migrants in politics is lower than their share of the population at all governance levels. In 2012, the number of national parliamentarians with a migrant background dropped, and ‘non-Western’ migrants are not proportionally represented any more (ProDemos 2012: 1): Their share in the Parliament is currently 7% whereas their share in the population is 11% (ibid: 3). In 2010, however, they were evenly represented in the Parliament (ProDemos, 2012: 3). Then, 6 of 150 Parliament members are of Moroccan origin, 3 of Turkish origin, 1 of Afghan and 1 of Surinamese origin. There are also differences with regard to the political parties that have Parliament members of ‘non-Western’ migrant origin. The Labour Party (PvdA) has the largest number of migrant Parliament members (ibid).

The overall representation of migrants at the provincial level is lower than at the national, however, with 4% of all provincial parliament members in two consecutive elections in 2007 and 2011 having a migrant origin (Huis voor Democratie en Rechtstaat 2011: 3). Noord-Holland is the province with the highest number (6) and share (11%) of chosen migrant politicians in 2011 (ibid). Comparing these shares of elected migrant politicians with the total number of migrant inhabitants in each province, we see that the two provinces with the highest share of migrants, Flevoland and Zuid-Holland, have the lowest proportions represented: 18% migrant inhabitants vs. 5% elected migrants (Huis voor Democratie en Rechtstaat 2011: 3). In this respect, Utrecht fares best at the level of provincial political representation with 12% migrant inhabitants and 9% elected migrants (idem). In terms of

⁹⁸ *Bruggen Slaan. Regeerakkoord VVD-PvdA, 29 oktober 2012, p. 31.*

⁹⁹ Interview at ProDemos, The Hague, 21 November 2012.

ethnic origins of migrant provincial representatives, we see that Turkish migrants deliver the most provincial representatives (14), followed by Moroccans (5), Surinamese (2), and Iraqis (2) (ibid: 4).

At the local level, the local council elections in 2010 resulted in the election of 303 migrant citizens out of a total of 9400 seats, which amounts to a mere 3% of the seats (ProDemos 2010: 7). 163 of these local councillors were Turkish, 66 Moroccan, 32 Surinamese, 7 Antillean, and 35 of them belonged to other ethnic origins (idem). It should be kept in mind, though, that in major cities, where the migrant share in the population is largest, the number of council seats per capita is (much) smaller than in rural communities, where fewer migrants live. FORUM works together with councillors by letting them know more about the situation of migrants, the specific problems they face and the initiatives that are being undertaken at the grassroots. It is the experience of FORUM that councillors are interested in migrants and try to work for their benefit.

For migrant voters, name recognition helps, and there is ethnic voting, but migrants have become much more critical. They want to know what the candidate has to offer; ethnicity alone is not sufficient. They realize that substance is in a good member of parliament. In terms of voting, the Turkish community in Rotterdam only became interested in the whole issue when they had a Turkish candidate to vote for who had come from a very impoverished background and who had 'made it'. They felt proud and they wanted to contribute to his success. Most of the Turkish community in Rotterdam is interested in voting for other Turkish people. That is the most important factor and comes before adherence to a political party. This means that older and more established communities in the city are much more politically active than smaller communities. Many family migrants might not even identify with a community, as they are focused on their family, which is also the reason for their migration to the Netherlands. Smaller ethnic communities are not interested in participating in politics; nor are they not confident enough. On the other hand, other communities deliberately keep a low profile. Although some migrant organizations try to positively influence the political participation of migrants, especially on the local level, their request often falls on deaf ears.¹⁰⁰

In Rotterdam, political participation of Turks and Moroccans increased in the local elections of 2006 but in 2010 again showed a decrease. The increase from 2002 to 2006 can be

¹⁰⁰ This paragraph is based on an interview at SONOR, Rotterdam, 19 December 2012

explained by the dissatisfaction with the position of *Leefbaar Rotterdam* in the city (Burger et al. 2010). Among migrants, Turks had a relatively high turnout. Ethnic voting could also be observed in the 2006 elections (ibid: 20). FORUM relates the decrease after 2006 to the fact that migrants “have less interest in politics and have a greater trust in government than four years ago”.¹⁰¹

In Friesland, political participation of migrants remains low despite the efforts of political parties (Van der Feen 2009: 13). In the Leeuwarden local council, there are only three members with a migrant origin (idem). The participation of migrants in neighbourhood panels has also been a concern for migrant organizations in Leeuwarden.¹⁰² Whereas their aim is to increase citizen involvement at the local level, the neighbourhood panels tend to be populated by “old white people”. Efforts have been made to encourage the participation of migrants in these panels and to contribute more to activities in the neighbourhood.

4.1.5 Discrimination

The most common reason for discrimination is discrimination based on nationality or country of origin. This form of discrimination is encountered in all domains of social life, but especially in the area of employment and services.¹⁰³ The Netherlands Institute of Human Rights reports that the majority of judgements concern discrimination in the labour market on the basis of nationality. Examples include verbal abuse, unequal compensation, unequal mobility within the labour market, illegal dismissal, poor working conditions and discrimination when hiring somebody.¹⁰⁴ Of the discrimination cases that RADAR received in 2011, more than half were on the basis of origin, colour or race, involving contentious treatment when people are denied access to services or goods.¹⁰⁵ Of the discrimination cases that Tûmba receives in Friesland, 60% is on the basis of race (country of origin and skin colour) and involves incidents of insulting behaviour and denying access e.g. to nightclubs and to jobs.¹⁰⁶ There are 250 complaints received annually, but it is assumed that

¹⁰¹ <http://www.forum.nl/Portals/0/publicaties/Factsheet%20Politieke%20Participatie.pdf> (accessed on 17 June 2013)

¹⁰² This paragraph is based on an interview with *Kleurrijk Beraad*, Leeuwarden, 14 November 2012.

¹⁰³ Interview at the Netherlands Institute of Human Right , Amsterdam, 26 February 2013

¹⁰⁴ Interview at the Netherlands Institute of Human Rights, Amsterdam, 26 February 2013

¹⁰⁵ http://radar.nl/sites/rad0ar/files/20120306121901_1_Feitenkaart-Discriminatie-Rotterdam-Rijnmond-2011.pdf (accessed on 17 June 2013)

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Tûmba, Leeuwarden, 8 November 2012.

only 4% of the persons who experience discrimination report it.¹⁰⁷ People do not like to see themselves as victims.¹⁰⁸

Some employers refuse to give jobs to migrants.¹⁰⁹ Experimental research has time and again shown that when the same CVs were sent under native and migrant names, the migrant CVs were disadvantaged (Dolfing and Van Tubergen 2005; Andriessen, Nievers and Dagevos 2012). Discrimination is furthermore experienced during job talks and on the work floor. Migrants often do not feel welcome at the work floor and may often lose their jobs due to communication problems. “Most people also ignore [discriminatory remarks], but if you get to hear it day in and day out at work, it is not fun anymore of course. A joke is funny once. And especially if they also notice that they are excluded because of that, that they are not be allowed to take a course or to participate, that they are talking behind their backs, or for example, that they may not take days off – ‘Yeah, you guys always want to be free’ – That kind of comments are often made.”¹¹⁰ They sometimes think they are not wanted, and at some point it becomes mutual. Migrants need to really prove themselves, as they are different. They often need extra support in terms of expressing their opinions and with language. The current economic situation is also a disadvantage for migrants, not only because the jobs are scarce, but also because people tend to be more receptive to migrants when the economy is doing well.¹¹¹

The municipality of Rotterdam emphasizes the role of discrimination especially in relation to labour market participation. The policy document Participation: Choosing Talent (*Participatie: Kiezen voor Talent*) for the years 2012 to 2015) targets “combating discrimination and exclusion as they are a serious obstacle to participation.”¹¹² The municipality’s point of view is not only to stand for the legal prohibition of discrimination, but also to increase the resilience and the prevention of victimization through positive empowerment. On this policy area, the municipality works together with RADAR, the anti-discrimination bureau. Migrant organizations in Rotterdam often intervene to ease conflicts between employers and the employee. If we look at participation in the labour market, we see that many migrants,

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Tûmba, Leeuwarden, 8 November 2012.

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Tûmba, Leeuwarden, 8 November 2012.

¹⁰⁹ Interview with *Kleurrijk Beraad*, Leeuwarden, 14 November 2012.

¹¹⁰ Interview at Tûmba, Leeuwarden, 8 November 2012.

¹¹¹ Interview at Tûmba, Leeuwarden, 8 November 2012.

¹¹² <http://www.rotterdam.nl/Clusters/Maatschappelijke%20ontwikkeling/Document%202013/Jeugd%20en%20Onderwijs/Subsidies/Beleidsregel%20Burgerschapbeleid%20Participatie%20KiezenvoorTalent.pdf> (accessed on 6 June 2012)

especially Moroccan youngsters do not have a job. Furthermore, even though new migrants to the Netherlands are more highly educated than in the past, they are still not able to find a job.¹¹³

Discrimination also takes place in schools. Children who have a migrant background are advised to pursue 'lower' level studies. It is often migrant organizations and not the school that inform children and their parents about the Dutch education system and its different possibilities. In many cases migrant organizations are used as intermediaries between schools and parents.¹¹⁴

Another important domain of discrimination concerns access to goods and services. "This happens for example in the domain of mobile telephony: sales campaigns are claimed not to be valid for migrants and contracts are not made because of the nationality of the individual"¹¹⁵. These forms of discrimination are experienced by migrants as unfair.¹¹⁶

The municipality of Leeuwarden has been working actively on the issue of discrimination. As many respondents noted, Friesland is not like Rotterdam, where people are used to migrants. Leeuwarden is a small city, so one is noticed as a migrant. This has its advantages and disadvantages. Even though the local population speaks Frisian and has a Frisian accent themselves when speaking Dutch, they jump quickly to the conclusion that migrants do not speak Dutch well. The views of people are quite 'white': "A lot of Frisians are not used to much [immigration]. Thus foreign people are very quickly perceived as being different and weird. It is not that a Frisian would easily make a point of it, but what I notice in diversity policy is that many people have grown up in a very white world, so their mindset is very much Western, white. So it is not that people are not willing to think differently, but it does not even come to their minds."¹¹⁷ This is why Leeuwarden has invested in interculturalization training so as to make employees of the municipality and social service organizations conscious of unconscious exclusionary practices.¹¹⁸ Companies have been visited by trainers and there appeared to be a lot of discrimination and categorical thinking in terms of 'us and them' as a result of which the willingness to employ migrants appeared to

¹¹³ This section is based on an interview at the Municipality of Rotterdam, Rotterdam, 10 December 2012.

¹¹⁴ This section is based on an Interview at SONOR, Rotterdam, 19 December 2012.

¹¹⁵ Interview at the Netherlands Institute of Human Rights, Amsterdam, 26 February 2013.

¹¹⁶ This section is based on an interview at the Netherlands Institute of Human Rights, Amsterdam, 26 February 2013.

¹¹⁷ Interview at the Municipality of Leeuwarden, Leeuwarden, 5 November 2012.

¹¹⁸ Interview at the Municipality of Leeuwarden, Leeuwarden, 5 November 2012.

be low. The project 'Talent Works (*Talent Werkt*)' aimed to provide migrants traineeships and trial positions. Yet, getting a job at a mid to high level and getting a permanent job remains difficult.¹¹⁹ The municipality professes interculturalization, but local officials observe that there is as yet little diversity in their own labour force.¹²⁰ There is only diversity at the level of cleaners.¹²¹ The police, however, are doing slightly better in terms of diversity.¹²²

Migrant organizations we spoke to believe that discrimination in the labour market needs to be recognized and addressed as such: "If this is not named, people will never admit that this is a problem, even though research after research has pointed out that discrimination in the labour market is a problem which comes to the fore very often."¹²³ FORUM is "working on stereotypes and employers to let them see that migrants can work well, that they should not think less of them."¹²⁴ The main reason for discrimination, as identified by FORUM, is the lack of acceptance of diversity: "We deal with the fact that some people have trouble seeing that not everybody is the same. This is why we are here as an institution, to make people aware of diversity."¹²⁵ FORUM stresses that diversity is not only caused by migration, but it is also to be found within the native population who is not as homogenous as is sometimes portrayed. They believe it is disrespectful to pick up one group, namely migrants, and blame on them all the troubles of society, something which happens both in society and politics. Discrimination on the basis of nationality or origin forms the basis of all other forms of discrimination, such as discrimination on the labour market and discrimination in providing services. Migrants have many backgrounds and many motivations for being here. This is why integration should not only be seen as *their* duty and their responsibility, but their differences should also come to be valued. As for migrants, the challenge is not to give up in the face of discrimination.¹²⁶

¹¹⁹ Interview at Partoer, Leeuwarden, 13 November 2012.

¹²⁰ Interview at Tûmba, Leeuwarden, 8 November 2012; interview with *Kleurrijk Fryslân*, Heerenveen, 12 November 2012.

¹²¹ Interview with *Kleurrijk Fryslân*, Heerenveen, 12 November 2012.

¹²² Interview at Tûmba, Leeuwarden, 8 November 2012.

¹²³ Interview at FORUM, Utrecht, 3 May 2013.

¹²⁴ Interview at FORUM, Utrecht, 3 May 2013.

¹²⁵ Interview at FORUM, Utrecht, 3.5.2013

¹²⁶ Interview with Frontlijnteam Heechterp Schieringen, Leeuwarden, 14 November 2012.

4.2 Advantages and disadvantages for family migrants

In certain respects family migrants are better off than other migrants coming to the Netherlands. Their advantage is that their sponsor takes care of some of their basic needs. When family migrants arrive, they do not need to worry about their residence permit, their basic income, housing, health insurance, etc. That enables the migrant to settle down at his or her own pace in the beginning.

During the first five years the sponsor carries the financial responsibility and not the family migrant herself or himself. However, this financial dependence may also put a strain on the relationship. Family migrants are not only dependent on their sponsor financially and for their residence status, but also “for obtaining information about society”. This is sometimes difficult for the sponsor, even if he or she is a Dutch citizen, “as most people do not know anything about laws and rules for migrants before they are really in a situation where they have problems and have to find the way to solve these”.

Under such conditions it is difficult to have a sincere and unbiased family relationship. The relationship between sponsor and migrant often is an unequal one. If any problems emerge in that relationship, the practical implications for the right to stay also need to be taken into consideration. It can easily be that one of the partners takes advantage of this unequal relationship. This is a recurrent problem signalled by churches and religious organizations. Many migrants keep their problems hidden from the authorities and try to cope in informal ways. In such situations, migrant churches may offer support and information, while church members may provide temporary housing.

On the other hand, family migrants may also be in a favourable position since their family may help them with the integration process. They have someone to help them with getting to know the Dutch language and Dutch society. Especially if the partner is Dutch, the family migrant has the advantage of being automatically incorporated into a Dutch family. But a family can also have a negative effect on integration as one can lock oneself up in it and never have contact with society at large.

Thus, the role of the family is not always positive. The family may provide support and information, but it can also be a “constraining factor”, consciously or unconsciously. For example, “migrant women may opt to care for their children instead of paying the costs of childcare or may choose to stay at home instead of doing unpaid volunteer work, but they

may also be pressured to do so by the family.” This also depends on the social-economic position of the migrant: “Highly skilled migrants may be able to find a way out of their situation more easily, for example by finding a job suited to their level of expertise. For unskilled migrants this is almost impossible.”

The disadvantage of being a family migrant is that “you have not chosen for the country, but rather for a partner and for his or her family”. Partners and their families also have certain expectations. Often, the family migrant has no family of his or her own nor friends or networks, while the partner already has his or her own contacts. Newly arrived family migrants often wish to start a family of their own, and some see certain advantages to this: “The young parents are ready to do everything for their children, so having a family may help their integration. Especially for women, surviving for the sake of the future of their children is a major drive for succeeding in their new environment. On the other hand, when the children are still small, women tend to focus on their upbringing, rather than on their own personal development, which causes delay in their integration and labour market participation.“

4.3 The local context of integration

In large cities like Rotterdam, migrants are in a different position than in smaller localities. On the one hand, migrant families can find a lot of support among each other. Many migrants live in cities, so one can easily find people who are in the same situation. As urban migrants have stronger and larger networks, they might have an advantage. On the other hand, in a large city, “if there are problems, then these problems are also concentrated.”¹²⁷ Rotterdam “was and still is a rich city which has invested in its migrant population. However, this investment has largely decreased due to the crisis”¹²⁸ and the changes in the welfare state. The effect of the disappearance of many of its opportunities and facilities is yet to be seen. It also should be mentioned that there is no safety net for many migrants. Many migrants are not able to find work. Although there is news about work possibilities in the port of Rotterdam or in the care industry, there are so many young people with migrant origins who do not have work. “There is often a lack of receptiveness and discrimination in the

¹²⁷ Interview at the Municipality of Rotterdam, Rotterdam, 10 December 2012.

¹²⁸ Interview at the Municipality of Rotterdam, Rotterdam, 10 December 2012.

labour market”.¹²⁹ There is also a discrepancy between the education received and the availability of work in that area. Many youngsters with a migrant background choose to train for positions for which there is no demand. Other migrants have received training or education that is not (fully) recognized.

The local political scene and discourse in Rotterdam concerning migrants are unstable. “Although the right-wing populist *Leefbaar Rotterdam* is present in the local council, their influence is not as strong as in the past.”¹³⁰ At the same time, migrant-oriented policies have given place to generic policies, meaning that migrant groups are not directly targeted as in previous policies. Rotterdam is very diverse and the city is currently home to new groups of migrants as well as second and third generation migrant groups¹³¹ and migrants are present at all levels of life. Migrants are represented in politics, in local councils, diverse local institutions and through diverse migrant organizations.

Leeuwarden experienced a substantial growth of migrants in the late 1980s-early 1990s.¹³² The first migrants were refugees and asylum seekers, who were followed by family migrants. Historically, Leeuwarden has been receiving relatively more former asylum seekers than the rest of the Netherlands due to the many asylum centres in the northern regions of the Netherlands, Friesland and Groningen. There were 25 of these in Friesland alone. As Leeuwarden had a good supply of rental housing, it has been the destination for many refugees after their period at the asylum centre. “When people obtained residence permits, they had the right to move wherever they wanted, but if you already sat in a refugee centre in Friesland, then you are likely to move to the large regional centre and that was Leeuwarden. Back then Leeuwarden also a fairly favourable market for rental housing, so then the two factors interacted.”¹³³

Currently, Leeuwarden fulfils more than its legal obligations in terms of supply of social housing for migrants. The inflow of migrants has also decreased in recent years due to new legislation making asylum and family migration more difficult. Still, compared to the Randstad, Leeuwarden has a larger share of refugees and a smaller share of “traditional migrants”, such as Turks and Moroccans (Gemeente Leeuwarden 2008: 1). Furthermore, in Leeuwarden, the

¹²⁹ Interview at SONOR, Rotterdam, 19 December 2012.

¹³⁰ Interview at SPIOR, Rotterdam, 10 December 2012.

¹³¹ This paragraph is based on an interview with SPIOR, Rotterdam, 10 December 2012.

¹³² This paragraph is based on an interview at the Municipality of Leeuwarden, Leeuwarden, 5 November 2012.

¹³³ Interview at the Municipality of Leeuwarden, Leeuwarden, 5 November 2012.

Freedom Party (PVV) is absent in local politics, which makes things less polarized than in national politics.¹³⁴

An important local disadvantage of migrants is their lack of knowledge of the local Frisian language. In Frisian villages, there are people who do not speak Dutch. This can also be a general issue in terms of informal communication at the work floor. More specifically, in areas such as elderly care, it can also impede communication with clients who at older age fall back to their mother tongue.

¹³⁴ Interview at the Municipality of Leeuwarden, Leeuwarden, 14 November 2012.

5. Conclusion

Following the identification of entitlements and restrictions for TCN family migrants in Ivanescu and Suvarierol (2013), this report has explored how these restrictions and entitlements are implemented in practice and what impacts they have on the integration of family migrants. WP3 concluded that, even though many restrictions and entitlements are not specific to family migrants *per se*, there are various restrictions and entitlements for TCN migrants that might affect their integration process.

Our analysis shows that a direct (causal) relationship between restrictions and entitlements of TCN family migrants and their integration process is difficult to establish. A major reason for this is that too little research evidence exists on this specific topic, a conclusion that has also been drawn in WP4b, the IMPACIM Working Paper that analyzed the available statistics. However, our research does question one of the key government assumptions when it comes to restrictions for TCN family migrants. This has to do with the income requirement for sponsors to prevent reliance on public assistance by the family migrant. The government encourages the family migrant to enter the labour market quickly, which it considers the best and the quickest road towards integration in the Netherlands. Besides, having a job enables the family migrant to earn a personal income. This reduces dependence on the sponsor, even though the latter continues to be formally responsible during the first five years. Research data to testify how realistic this expectation is are very scarce. Those that are available seem to indicate that most family migrants find it very difficult to find a job during their first years of residence. After three years in the Netherlands the numbers of gainfully employed go up, but it is unrealistic to expect that more than half of all TCN family migrants will ever participate in the labour market (even though the research on which this expectation is based dates from before the introduction of stricter family immigration policies).

Our interviews indicate that for many TCN family migrants entering the labour market is a step too far. They may have the right to do so, but in practice they encounter many additional barriers, such as the non-recognition of foreign diplomas, a lack of networks, an insufficient knowledge of Dutch, and discrimination. Of course, the current economic crisis with its rising unemployment has reduced job opportunities even further. As a consequence

of all this, quite a few family migrants see themselves obliged to take up a job well below their level of education, which often is a frustrating experience.

Besides, during the first three years of residence, family migrants also need to prepare themselves for the civic integration exam, which they must pass in order to put an end to the sponsorship period and to have their temporary residence permit changed into a permanent one. Many family migrants also prefer to give priority to establishing a family. Birth rates are high during the first years after arrival, and childcare may take a lot of the family migrant's attention, particularly among female family migrants. At best, family migrants find some form of volunteer work, which the authorities consider to be a first, but insufficient, step in the integration process. Unfortunately, this first step is not always followed by paid activities in the labour market.

Family migrants, however, also have certain advantages in comparison to other newcomers. First, they can rely on their sponsors, who are financially responsible for them, and who usually provide housing, health insurance as well as their much needed experience and knowledge acquired through a longer stay or through having been born in the Netherlands. Since family migrants usually are accommodated by their sponsor, they may have better opportunities than other migrants to concentrate on the initial steps of their integration, such as learning Dutch and familiarizing themselves with their new surroundings and with life in the Netherlands. They already have the networks of the sponsor to rely on. Particularly if the partner is a Dutch native, the migrant has the advantage of being automatically incorporated into a Dutch family. While having a family can provide newly arrived migrants with a social environment and with some basic knowledge, social networks and information, their new surroundings can also exercise control and withhold information and knowledge. Thus, while some families may support the migrants towards a fuller participation in society, other families may do exactly the opposite.

Our analysis shows that a family migrant's dependence on a sponsor can also become a disadvantage as it may put a strain on the couple's relationship. If any problems arise in that relationship, the family migrant is not free to step out of it, since this will have immediate consequences for his or her right to stay. The only family migrants who are allowed to obtain an independent status before having fulfilled the five-year period are those who experience forms of relational abuse, such as forced marriages, domestic or honour-related violence. Thus, many family migrants with relationship problems that do not come under

one of these categories keep these hidden from the authorities and try to cope with them through informal channels, often provided by ethnic and religious communities.

Government not only decides on the rules of admission and residence that affect TCN migrants in general and family migrants in particular; it also has a responsibility to make sure that assistance can be provided in situations where residents, including TCN migrants, are no longer able to look after themselves. In the past, the national government of the Netherlands as well as most local governments used to have extensive policies to promote migrant integration. These have rapidly disappeared over subsequent years, and our interviews in Rotterdam and Leeuwarden have very clearly shown what consequences this has had and how the local administrations are coping. Austerity policies have led not only to the shrinking of the welfare state, but also to decreasing budgets for local government and civil society. These changes also affect migrant associations and other organizations providing assistance to migrants (and other citizens) in need. Austerity policies have gone hand in hand with a major change in the dominant political discourse. The emphasis is now on self-reliance of citizens, and targeted integration policy has thus been replaced by generic participation policies, which aim to ensure labour market participation for everyone and, as a consequence thereof, to decrease reliance on public assistance. As the national and local governments have moved from a group-oriented to a generic/integrated policy approach, the challenge for policy-makers with limited means is to find out if these policies succeed in addressing the specific problems of migrants, including family migrants.

Our conclusion is that, in recent years, the Dutch authorities have imposed more restrictions on TCN family migrants – both before and after their entry – in order to encourage them to integrate more quickly. Integration is primarily understood by the authorities as having a job, earning an income by oneself and not having to rely on the provisions of the welfare state. Although the impression is that, on average, the new rules have positively influenced the educational level of newly arriving family migrants, there is insufficient research evidence to determine whether this approach has really worked. Besides, a tension may be observed between the concept of self-reliance on the one hand – a cornerstone of current government policy – and the continuing dependence of TCN family migrants on their sponsors during the first five years of residence. In addition, the authorities seem to ignore that the ambitions of most family migrants differ from those of labour migrants. Many family migrants have different priorities than finding a job, and unlike labour

migrants they have not been admitted because the labour market needs their qualifications. This, in combination with the economic crisis, makes it difficult for family migrants to enter the Dutch labour market. From our analysis it has become clear that, although legal restrictions do play a role for TCN family migrants, these interact quite often with difficulties of a socio-economic nature. Thus, stricter rules, informal constraints in the labour market, and the abolishment of targeted policy efforts to support migrant integration constitute a real challenge for TCN family migrants in their efforts to find themselves a place in the Netherlands.

Appendix A: List of respondents

National:

- Ministry of Security and Justice (*Ministerie van Veiligheid en Justitie*)
- Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (*Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid*)
- IND, Immigration and Naturalisation Service (*Immigratie- en Naturalisatie Dienst*)
- ACVZ, Advisory Committee on Migration Affairs (*Adviescommissie voor Vreemdelingenzaken*)
- The Netherlands Institute for Human Rights (*College voor de Rechten van de Mens*)
- ProDemos – House for Democracy and the Rule of Law (*Huis voor democratie en rechtstaat*)
- FORUM, Institute for Multicultural Affairs (*Instituut voor Multiculturele Vraagstukken*)
- Foreign Partner Foundation (*Stichting Buitenlandse Partner*)

Rotterdam:

- Municipality of Rotterdam (*Gemeente Rotterdam*)
- Rotterdam Knowledge Centre on Diversity (*Rotterdams Kenniscentrum Diversiteit*)
- SPIOR, Islamic Organizations Platform Foundation Rijnmond (*Stichting Platform Islamitische Organisaties Rijnmond*)
- DONA DARIA, Knowledge Centre on Emancipation (*Kenniscentrum Emancipatie*)
- SKIN, Together Church in the Netherlands Rotterdam (*Samen Kerk in Nederland Rotterdam*)
- Immanuel Church Rotterdam (*Immanuelkerk Rotterdam*)
- Residents Association Oosterflank (*Stichting Bewonersorganisatie Oosterflank*)
- SONOR, Foundation for Community Work Rotterdam (*Stichting Onderneming Opbouwwerk Rotterdam*)

Leeuwarden:

- Municipality of Leeuwarden (*Gemeente Leeuwarden*)

- Welfare Centre (*Welzijn Centraal*)
- Self-Employed Bureau Friesland (*Bureau Zelfstandigen Fryslân*)
- Tûmba, Frisian Centre for Global Citizenship and Equal Treatment (*Fries centrum voor wereldburgerschap en gelijke behandeling*)
- Partoer – Frisian Bureau for Socio-Economic Issues (*Fries bureau voor sociaal economische vraagstukken*)
- Colourful Reflection Foundation (*Stichting Kleurrijk Beraad*)
- Advisory Board Multicultural Leeuwarden (*Adviesraad Multicultureel Leeuwarden - MEVEZ*)
- Colourful Friesland (*Kleurrijk Fryslân*)
- Frontlineteam Heechterp Schieringen (*Frontlijnteam Heechterp Schieringen*)

6. References

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