The silent succes. The social advancement of Southern European labour migrants in the Netherlands
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Dutch history demonstrates that in the long run almost all immigrant groups are ultimately incorporated into Dutch society (Lucassen & Penninx 1997). Only the period of time actually varies in which these groups can be said to have integrated successfully. For the Mediterranean labour migrants, who came to the Netherlands from the sixties on, it is, on the one hand, natural to expect a relatively long integration process. In contrast to immigrants from the former and present-day Dutch colonies, these immigrants come from societies with a different language and different school system. In addition, these immigrants have low socio-economic and educational backgrounds across the board. Their history of settlement is also recent. On the other hand, one can reason that a relatively smooth integration was possible because Mediterranean immigrants are not burdened with a long history as a group at the bottom of Dutch society and have not experienced the Netherlands as their colonizer. Several researchers have pointed out that such experiences can obstruct the process of integration in the sense that they can lead to ‘an adversarial subculture’ or ‘an oppositional frame of reference’, which are barriers to joining mainstream society (Ogbu 1987; Portes & Zhou 1993). The absence of such historical connections with the immigration country can, as a consequence, be seen as promoting social mobility.

Definitive statements about the manner and tempo in which the Mediterranean labour migrants will ultimately find their place in Dutch society are still premature at this time. It is, however, possible to observe diversification in terms of social mobility of large groups within this broader category of Mediterranean labour migrants. For the time being, large segments within this broader category threaten to lag far behind mainstream society in terms of social position. Among other segments, there is relatively rapid intergenerational social advancement. Also within the larger groups of Turkish and Moroccan labour migrants one can encounter youth who, even compared to their Dutch peers, have had successful academic and work careers. These immigrants and their descendants prove to be distinguishing themselves with the speed in which they achieve success. Within the Turkish and Moroccan immigrant populations, the number that have been accepted into the mainstream after two generations is small. At the group level, it is especially the Southern European labour migrants who have distinguished themselves from the other Mediterranean labour migrants. The remarkable educational performances of Southern European youth have actually received little
attention; their structural integration appears to take place in relative silence. On
the one hand, this is due to the fact that Southern Europeans themselves appa­rently do not view this as a feat; they rarely beat the ideological drum. This is
probably connected to the fact that most Southern European immigrants and
their families have little need to profile themselves in terms of ethnic difference.
On the other hand, the Dutch are also inclined to label the ‘cultural distance’
with Southern Europeans as small in comparison to, for example, the Turks and
the Moroccans. The idea seems to have taken root that the promising social pos­
rition of Southern European youth is not so astonishing, and thus does not re­
quire further comment.

Upon closer examination, however, the relatively unproblematic social ad­
ancement is surprising. Measured according to a number of factors generally
considered to be of importance, Southern European labour migrants in the
Netherlands started in a position that is significantly similar to that of less suc­
cessful Mediterranean immigrant groups. For instance, the level of schooling at­
tended by Southern European and Turkish fathers in their native countries is
comparable. The manner in which the immigration of Southern European,
Turkish and Moroccan ‘guest workers’ initially occurred was also virtually the
same. Finally, the labour market position to which these labour migrants in the
Netherlands were assigned was similar in terms of kind of profession and job lev­
el (Lindo & Pennings 1992: 9-30). When contrasted with comparisons that are
made in the United States and Great Britain between, for example, successful
Asians and less successful blacks, the differences in points of departure appear to
be small. Certainly during the first period of settlement, the Southern Euro­
pean, Turkish and Moroccan families occupied the same position in the eco­

nomic structure of the Netherlands. There were differences of course, especially
in the manner in which immigration and the labour position further developed.
The differences and similarities among the groups will be discussed later on in
this chapter.

The success of Southern Europeans in the Netherlands can be called excep­
tional for a number of reasons. First, the success has been quick: the educational
level of the children of first-generation parents (including those who were born in
the country of origin) was already equal to that of Dutch peers at the end of the
eighties. Second, attaining such a level implies very strong intergenerational social
advancement: the vast majority of the first generation had rarely attended more
than primary school in their country of origin, and often had not graduated.
Third, although each individual within the Southern European immigrant popu­
larization is not equally successful, success is ascertainable across the entire range. This
applies to both men and women. As opposed to many other immigrant popula­
tions, no substantial group of Southern European youth with demonstrable social
problems exists. Furthermore, this success appears to involve all of the Southern
European groups. The breadth of the success is also particularly interesting be­
cause, in addition to many similarities, there are also significant differences in
character among the diverse Southern European immigrant populations. These
differences involve characteristics that are often associated with barriers or stimu­
lants for integration and social success, such as strong group cohesion and the
common occurrence of mixed marriages, or their absence, within the group. In
effect such characteristics are even seen as indicators of integration. This raises
the question as to whether, and in what manner, participation in society is con­
ected on different levels. Here a distinction will be made between structural and
social-cultural integration. Structural integration concerns improvement of pos­
iton in ‘hard sectors’ such as education, the labour market, income and housing
situation. In the case of the Mediterranean labour migrants and their descendants
in the Netherlands, we must limit ourselves to a single indicator of structural inte­
gration if we want to say something about the improvement in position over gen­
erations. The second generation is only at the beginning of its social career, and
the labour and income position of these young people is still developing. I will
therefore mainly concentrate on their school performances to make an appraisal
of their social position.

Socio-cultural integration is sometimes also referred to as participation. Broadly speaking, this involves the degree to which one participates in the insti­
tutions of the surrounding society, or the degree to which and the manner in
which one develops these institutions one’s self. At a more informal level, socio­
cultural integration involves the degree to which one develops interpersonal con­
tacts with individuals from the receiving society, or if these contacts remain lim­
ited to one’s own group. Ethnic cohesion and participation in society are not mu­

tually exclusive; persons who associate a lot with members of their own group
do not necessarily have fewer contacts with people and institutions outside of
their own group. In addition, the degree to which one adopts the behavioural
patterns that are customary in the surrounding society, and the degree to which
one’s own lifestyle, habits and practices are accepted by the surrounding society
belong to the domain of socio-cultural integration.

Below I will describe the extent to and the manner in which the position of
the first generation of Southern Europeans developed differently than that of the
other Mediterranean labour migrants. Afterwards, I will examine if this diver­
gent development of the first generation of Southern Europeans can offer an ex­
planation for the successes of the second generation. First of all, I will briefly fo­
cus on the compatriots of the Southern European immigrants who settled in the
Netherlands earlier.

Migration

Pre-war immigrants
The vast majority of Southern Europeans in the Netherlands are post-war immi­
grants and their descendants. However, people from the Southern European re­
region have settled in the Netherlands over the centuries. These people occupy a
different social position in the Netherlands than do labour migrants who arrived after the Second World War. Practically all of them came to the Netherlands to establish themselves as entrepreneurs or tradesmen. I will principally discuss Italian and Greek pre-war immigrants. These groups had not been fully assimilated into the Dutch population after the war, and could therefore be recognized by newcomers as their compatriots. Pre-war immigrants sometimes came to play a role in the settlement process of their post-war fellow-countrymen.

Plasterers, chimney sweeps, granite craftsmen, statue merchants and gelato (Italian ice cream) makers from Middle and Northern Italy have established themselves in the Netherlands since the 1980s. Greek sailors found work in and around the harbour in Rotterdam as peddlers and ship brokers; other Greeks started cigarette factories or fur businesses in the Netherlands. Thanks to their trades and enterprises, many of these families achieved, in two or three generations, a certain degree of prosperity. These small family businesses must be seen as vehicles in this process of social advancement. In this process, grandchildren and great grandchildren followed different educational careers and ultimately chose for futures other than in the family business (Bovenkerk et al. 1983: 197). Especially the Italian small businesses generated their own form of chain migration: young men were recruited from Northern Italian villages to work as journeymen, street vendors or assistants in the enterprise of a family member or fellow villager in the Netherlands.

Before the war, different groups of Italians came into contact with each other mainly in the work domain. Children of terrazzieri (granite craftsmen) sometimes worked in the businesses of the gelatieri (ice cream makers) and thus ended up in the gelato business (Bovenkerk et al. 1983). There was no formal community building on the basis of nationality. If there was no cause for contacts between diverse ‘professional groups’ for economical reasons, then these seem not to have come about. In the Southern province of Limburg, for example, there was hardly any contact in the twenties between the Italian granite craftsmen and the Italians who worked in the mines (Brassé & Van Schelven 1980). While the different groups of pre-war Italian immigrants were from Northern Italy, they came from various areas within this broad region. There were not any institutionalized contacts between pre-war Greek immigrants either. The plan to build their own Greek Orthodox church only emerged during the war. Shortly after the war, the Association of Greeks in the Netherlands was founded to accomplish this. This association has continued to serve as a meeting place for Greeks who settled in the Netherlands before the war (Vermeulen et al. 1985: 39-40).

The first Southern European guest workers arrived in the twenties. Slovenians, and, in much smaller numbers, Italians came to work in the coal mines in Limburg, and lived in different places in the southern part of the province. Before the war, the Slovenians had their own associations, their own priest and schooling in their own language for more than three hundred children from their communities. The children were taught by a Slovenian teacher who traveled between different locations in Southern Limburg. During the crisis years and also after the war, most of the Italians and Slovenians returned to their native countries. Those who stayed behind and their descendants have their own small communities, but due to regional differences, they never came into close contact with post-war newcomers (Brassé & Van Schelven 1980; Schneider 1984).

The arrival of Southern European labour migrants after the Second World War

The end of the forties marked the beginning of the arrival of post-war Southern European labour migrants. Approximately seven hundred young men from alpine Italy, chiefly stone-cutters, came to Limburg under a special recruitment agreement that was entered into for the mining industry. Not everyone reacted positively to this agreement. Especially the local union appeared to have formed its opinion about the newcomers before they even boarded the train for the Netherlands. The union journal warned that Limburg customs and culture would be negatively affected by these ‘warm-blooded, easily excitable idlers who have never seen a mine’. It took until the mid-fifties before more Italians came to the Netherlands. The mining industry was again the largest employer of these labourers in the first few years. In 1956, the year that the arrival of two and a half thousand Hungarian refugees received so much attention, some two thousand Italian men also came to the Netherlands to work, this time for the large part from Sardinia. Objections from the unions were rarely heard anymore. There was enough work for everyone, and fewer and fewer Dutch were prepared to perform unskilled labour (Schneider 1984).

It is often assumed that post-war immigration of Southern Europeans preceded that of Turks and Moroccans. In fact this applies to only a minority of the Southern European immigrants: the ‘early’ Italians mentioned above and some of the Spaniards.7 The most significant difference with the large Mediterranean groups is not the starting point, but the scale of immigration. While the Turkish and Moroccan populations continued to undergo a continuous, prolonged and exponential growth, the Southern European groups stabilized in size around 1974; the Spanish, the largest Southern European group up to that point in time, even decreased in numbers.

The Netherlands entered into recruitment agreements with all of the Southern European countries. The recruitment treaty of 1960 with Italy was the model for other treaties. Nonetheless, there were also differences, especially regarding selection possibilities, which made it more attractive for Dutch enterprises to recruit in some countries more than in others. The agreement with Italy made it basically impossible for companies to recruit workers themselves in regions of their choice; they had to make do with the people who were offered by the selection centre in Milan. The number of Italian labour recruits rapidly declined after 1960. Italians mainly came to the Netherlands on their own initiative; often they came from Germany where they first went to work. When the spontaneous immigration was curbed by the 1968 freeze proclaimed by the Minister of Social Affairs Roolvink, this hardly affected the Italians given the fact that they, as citizens
of a member state of the European Union, fell under the free traffic of employees that came into being that year.

A recruitment agreement was entered into with Spain in 1961. This agreement enabled employers to recruit on their own under the supervision of the Dutch National Employment Service in regions designated by the Spanish government. This explains why more Spaniards were recruited than Italians. In addition, many Spaniards came to the Netherlands on their own initiative, or on the advice of friends or family. The number of Spanish employees surpassed the number of Italian employees for the first time in 1964. It was also in this year that a sizable group of Turkish labour migrants first came to the Netherlands. Until the economic crisis of 1967, there was massive immigration from Spain: in 1965, almost ten thousand Spaniards came to the Netherlands. Afterwards this number quickly dropped. Immigration again increased after the crisis, but to less of a degree than in the past. The Spaniards were the largest labour migrant group in the Netherlands until 1970. A year later they were outstripped by the Turks. The Spanish population in the Netherlands, however, continued to grow in the beginning of the seventies. Reunification of families accounted for a significant share of this growth. The size of the Spanish group has been declining since 1974, when more than thirty thousand Spaniards were living in the Netherlands. The Spaniards are the only group of labour migrants in the Netherlands to have had a visible, long-term decrease in size since the middle of the seventies. In the following section, I will devote more attention to the phenomenon that Spaniards and their families carry through with their plans for return migration much more so than other labour migrants. The other Southern European groups stabilized in size from the second half of the seventies and on.

A recruitment agreement was entered into with Portugal in 1963. The immigration, however, got underway very slowly; only in 1966 did the number of Portuguese immigrants in the Netherlands exceed one thousand. The majority of the Portuguese labour migrants came on their own initiative. Of the Southern European groups, only the Greek group is smaller. The recruitment agreement with Greece was put into effect in 1966, but hardly resulted in recruitment. The following year, the economic crisis set in, and the colonels in Greece seized power, which made the opening of a recruitment office in Greece politically inappropriate. Before this point in time, the Dutch metal industry recruited independently in Greece. Vermeulen et al. estimate that the total scope of recruitment remained limited to approximately 1,500 men (1985: 45). Most of the Greeks, thus, came to the Netherlands on their own initiative, or via channels that one could call 'alternative recruitment'. In 1963, a peak year as far as Greek immigration to the Netherlands is concerned, one third of the Greek immigrants came from Belgium. These were mainly Greeks who had not served out their contracts in Belgian mines, and who came to a Dutch company by way of recruiters, themselves Greeks. These go-betweens arranged for themselves to be paid by both the Dutch companies and the Greeks whom they helped find work for in the Netherlands.

In 1970, a recruitment agreement with Yugoslavia came into effect. Yugoslavians had already been making their way to the Netherlands earlier; a few hundred came to work in mines in Limburg in the fifties and sixties. Only after the sixties did the immigration from Yugoslavia take serious shape, when in a few years' time thousands of Yugoslavians came to the Netherlands to work in the Dutch metal industry. They were, for the large part, unskilled workers from the harbour cities of Slovenia and Croatia who were 'lent out' by Yugoslavian 'state-run temporary agencies' to moribund Dutch ship building companies, which could take on and lay off these immediately employable workers according to whether or not there was work (Turksma 1986).

The Southern European groups have followed a similar immigration pattern. The majority of the first-generation families were reunited or formed rather soon after the arrival of the family head to the Netherlands. More than half of the immigrants from Portugal, Spain and former Yugoslavia had their wives come over to the Netherlands within one year. Only in about 10 percent of the cases did the separation last five years or longer (Lindo & Pennings 1992: 16). Also among the Greeks, the reunification of families was fully underway before the economic crisis of 1967. Chain migration played only a small role in the migration of Italians to the Netherlands; the vast majority of Italians married Dutch women.

After 1974, the year in which the borders were virtually closed to labour migrants, the reunification of Southern European families had already passed its apex, even though spouses and children continued to come to join the head of the family. In this manner, the immigration history of the Southern Europeans diverges from that of the Turks and Moroccans, whose numbers continued to sizably grow as a result of chain migration (family reunification and formation, illegal labour migration), after the mid-seventies as well. Insofar as can be verified, legal and illegal chain migration never played a significant role in the immigration of Southern Europeans as it did with the formation of Turkish and Moroccan communities.

The Southern European group in the Netherlands is a heterogenous one as far as regional origin and social background are concerned. This heterogeneity does vary per group. The Italian community in the Netherlands probably displays the greatest diversity in socio-economic background, also because the regions in Italy from which the immigrants come are in different stages of development. Most of the Italians come from the South or the islands of Sardinia and Sicily. They share the educational and professional background of the vast majority of Southern Europeans: after primary school, whether or not they graduated, they worked in Italy in unskilled or low-skilled professions. A not to be ignored minority, however, came from the North, and their educational level is on average much higher than that of the others. The social origin of these immigrants was much more varied, and they less often shared the characteristics of typical 'guest workers'. Thirty percent of those who immigrated were not in...
search of work, but had become involved with a Dutch woman in Italy and came
to the Netherlands for this reason (Tinnemans 1991: 16).

More than eighty percent of the Portuguese, Spaniards and Greeks of the first
generation had not completed more than primary school in their country of
origin. Their educational profile is similar to Turkish men of the first generation.
Southern European men often have a slightly higher level of education than their
spouses, but generally speaking the differences between sexes in educational
background are not especially great, certainly if one compares them to those
within the Turkish and Moroccan groups. Women in these groups were much
more likely not to have completed primary school or to have attended school at
all. Of all of the Southern European groups, the Yugoslavians were the best edu-
cated upon arrival in the Netherlands. Three quarters of the men and half of the
women had at least completed one form of secondary education after primary
school. Furthermore, regarding the profession that one practised before emigrat-
ing, the Yugoslavian labour migrants were the odd men out in comparison to the
other Southern Europeans. More than half of the men had worked in industry in
Yugoslavia; members of the other groups had often worked in all kinds of un-
skilled service occupations as well as in industry. None of the Southern European
groups worked predominantly in the agrarian sector; the percentage of Greeks
who worked in agriculture was probably the highest. Among Portuguese, Span-
iards and Italians, this percentage was considerably less; for the Spaniards it was
approximately 25 percent, for the Portuguese and Italians well under 20 percent.

Half of the Portuguese and a little more than half of the other groups lived in a
village before emigrating. The proportion that grew up in a rural environment is
in all probability even greater. Southern European societies quickly began to
urbanize immediately after the war; many of the immigrants who lived in a city
before coming to the Netherlands had not settled there long before.

The process of settlement and adjustment

Reception and assistance

In the beginning, certainly in the case of contracted labour migrants, accommo-
dation and housing were arranged by the companies where Southern Europeans
came to work. For the first few years, the labour migrants lived in boarding
houses, but also in barracks and even in old passenger boats. Compatriots often
lived in close quarters and socialized with one another. Especially as a result of
recruitment, small-scale clustering took place within the companies and board-
ing houses on the basis of region of origin. In the beginning, there were many
complaints to be heard, particularly over the circumstances under which one was
housed, the meals that one received and the sometimes patronizing restrictions
of the landlords, among others, to which one was subjected. Still, positive mem-
ories predominated among the first generation of the way they were received in
the Netherlands, and the manner in which the Dutch approached them.

In the pillarized Netherlands, it went without saying that progressive mem-
bers of especially Catholic institutions took care of the Italians, Spaniards and
Portuguese. Priests and social workers who were paid by the church as well as by
charitable institutions and the industrial community initially organized the care
for the Southern European labour migrants. It was mainly these institutions
which also took the initiative to set up the first _casas_ for Italians and Spaniards, the
idea being that Dutch social workers could best aid the adjustment process of the
labour migrants in an environment which they trusted (Tinnemans 1994: 51).

The first Italian and Greek labour migrants sometimes profited from the
advise and help of compatriots who had settled in the Netherlands before the
war. It was mostly entrepreneurial immigrants who made an effort to help the
newcomers from their native land; family members of Greek traders even be-
came involved in Greece with the official recruitment (Vermeulen et al. 1985:
41, 47). In their book _Italiaans ijs_ (Italian ice cream) Bovenkerk et al. (1983)
describe the ambivalence of Italian _gelatieri_ (proprietors of Italian ice cream
pastry) towards their fellow countrymen who arrived after the war. Italians who
came to the Netherlands in the fifties and sixties enjoyed the Italian atmosphere
in the ice cream parlours, and met each other there to chat and drink an es-
presso. The _gelatieri_ , though, did not take any liking whatsoever to this noisy
clientele. According to the proprietors, their fellow-Italians did not behave in a
manner befitting of such parlours, which were designed to serve a high turnover
of mainly Dutch clientele. Several _gelatieri_ even hung up signs in Italian which
read 'Italians keep out'. Their reticence with respect to the newcomers was not
only inspired by commercial motives. They also thought that the arrival of guest
workers would reduce the standing of the Italian immigrant community in the
Netherlands. _Gelatieri_ from Northern Italy sometimes spoke of Sardinian shep-
ders and Sicilians in the following manner: 'We are European, _those_ people are
actually African or Asian.' However, if the newcomers arrived 'through the back
door', they were given shelter and provided with assistance. Pre-war entrepre-
neurs also served as interpreters in court or the police station upon the request
of Dutch authorities (Bovenkerk et al. 1983: 29, 149-151).

In the early sixties, Italians were going out on the town after work. This made
them popular with some, and unpopular with others. Young Italian bachelors
were successful with the young women and in Limburg and in Twente, a region
in the east of the Netherlands, local male adolescents perceived this as a threat.
In 1961, this led to small clashes in Twente. Guest workers were refused admis-
tance to dancing halls, resulting in a massive outcry among Italians and Spani-
iards. Practically all of those who worked in textile factories in Twente went on
strike. After new confrontations with adolescent troublemakers, one hundred
Spaniards and Italians even decided to repatriate. The press made much of the
events (Groenendijk 1990; Simons 1962). In addition to this friction on the
street, there were also ambivalent feelings on the work floor. Many Dutch were
afraid that the arrival of new Southern European colleagues would undermine
the negotiating position of the unions _vis-à-vis_ the employers. People were also
envy of the extras, such as reimbursement for travel expenses, that the guest workers received in a period in which general austerity and wage restraints set the tone (Tinnemans 1994: 45).

A number of studies revealed that in the late fifties and early sixties Dutch employees and their bosses spoke negatively of their Italian colleagues or subordinates, especially in comparison to Spanish colleagues. For example, Italians were reputed to stay home for small injuries and minor sicknesses, and were referred to as ‘spoiled children’ and ‘less disciplined’ in company memoranda of the steel enterprise Hoogovens. Spaniards fared much better in these memoranda than the Italians. ‘The seriousness, pride, loyalty and thrift of the Spaniards’ was contrasted with ‘the immaturity, flippancy and vanity of some of the Italians’ (Van Elteren 1986: 884, 1056). Motta (1964) observed that the stereotype attributed to the Spanish employee by Dutch business executives in those years was similar to the Dutch self-image: goal-orientated, honest, modest, punctual and thrifty. Nevertheless, Spaniards were not always thought of in a positive light, and it was sometimes presumed that workers from the south of Spain would not be able to adapt as well as those from the rest of the country. A similar distinction was often made with respect to Italians (Van Elteren 1986).

In the late sixties and early seventies, it appeared that there was still prejudice against Italians among the Dutch. In his study The Dutch plural society (1973), Bagley noticed that residents of a neighbourhood in The Hague were indeed less hostile towards the Italians than towards the Moroccans, but that their attitude towards Italians was still significantly more negative than towards the Surinamese. Employees of the Rotterdam tram company judged their Italian colleagues far more harshly in comparison to their Spanish colleagues (Coenen & Ter Hoeven 1973: 23-24). These negative stereotypes did not distress the Italians from establishing themselves in the Netherlands. Brouwers-Kleywegt et al. (1976) already concluded in the mid-seventies, when the first large-scale study of Italians was conducted, that this group was highly integrated into Dutch society. Prejudices against Italians are no longer common. The inclination to compare diverse groups of newcomers with one another is inherent in the stereotyping of foreigners. The attention shifts to the groups which one feels diverge the most from one’s native culture. The arrival of large groups of Turks and Moroccans probably distracted attention away from the Italians, and the Southern Europeans in general.

Family reunification

The image of the Mediterranean immigrant as an ‘international commuter’ (Wentholt 1967) continued to exist long into the seventies, although the Southern Europeans had begun to bring their families over to the Netherlands a decade earlier. One of the reasons this image lasted so long was that the Southern Europeans themselves saw no reason to contradict it. Renouncing the idea of a temporary stay in the Netherlands was a long and difficult process for most of those who stayed; some still cling to the idea of a return.

Among the Southern Europeans who came to the Netherlands, there were more bachelors than among the Turkish and Moroccan labour migrants. Those who married in their country of origin within a few years, and subsequently brought their bride over to the Netherlands, did not yet have children and were therefore freer in the choices to be made. Preparations were made prior to the arrival of the spouse, and the decision was taken mutually and on the basis of rational considerations. The expectation was that, thanks to the doubled income in the Netherlands, the undertaking could end in a quicker and more successful repatriation. But it was also a common occurrence among Southern Europeans that one already had a family with children upon their arrival in the Netherlands. These immigrants found themselves faced with having to weigh ambivalent feelings and emotional arguments against more practical considerations. Bringing children over was sometimes postponed a bit longer, even if the wife had already joined her husband. Still, the average duration of the separation of a family among Southern Europeans was considerably shorter than that among Turkish and Moroccan families (Lindo & Pennings 1992).

Only in exceptional cases did the arrival of children signify that one had accepted a permanent stay in the Netherlands. It was an overlooked outcome of family reunification that the children would grow up and settle in the Netherlands. Many never entirely let go of the idea of the family’s return, but it gradually became less concrete and more of a ‘dream’. Little by little, the first generation resigned itself to a very lengthy stay in the Netherlands and came to realize that, in most of the cases, the children would stay in the Netherlands. The fact that almost all Southern Europeans follow the conjugal mode of cohabitation surely helped the first generation to accept this situation. Anticipation of the autonomy of the future family of adolescent children is part of the cultural pattern of most Southern European immigrants. Conversely, for example, many first-generation Turks still assume that the parents and parents-in-law will still play a guiding role years after the marriage of their children.

Housing

If one decided to have the family come over, then suitable housing was a condition for admission. Often it was only possible to fulfil this condition in a formal sense, in which case the family lived in relatively poor circumstances for the first few years. The family subsequently moved to better accommodations. The Southern Europeans who lived in the four large cities in the second half of the seventies were more integrated into the Dutch population than the Turks and Moroccans (Van Praag 1981: 51-59). In 1985, the average quality of the homes in which the Southern Europeans lived was somewhat better than that of Turkish and Moroccan families. In the following years, the difference in quality continued to grow, and the Southern Europeans surpassed the Surinamese as well in this respect. The Southern Europeans are able to enjoy their physical living situations more because their families are smaller which results in more space
per family member. Southern Europeans are also somewhat more likely to own their own home (Van Dugteren 1993; Van Praag 1989: 25-32).

**Adjustment and community building**

The overwhelming majority of Southern Europeans who remained in the Netherlands have become accustomed to life there and live inconspicuously among the Dutch. For most members of the first generation, adjustment entailed habituation to a life with relatively few contacts in the Netherlands. Kinship networks had usually stayed behind in the country of origin, and neither was there equivalent replacement for other friendships in the home country, not with the Dutch nor, oftentimes, with fellow countrymen.

Some Southern Europeans had more contacts with the Dutch because they married a Dutch woman. In this regard, there are differences between the groups. There were indications already in the late sixties that roughly half of the Italians who were married had a Dutch wife (De buitenlandse arbeider (The foreign worker) 1971: 23). In the most recent study of Italians in the Netherlands, the number of first-generation Italians married to a Dutch woman was estimated to be eighty percent (Tinnemans 1991). Mixed marriages also occur among other Southern Europeans groups, but to a lesser degree. Twenty to thirty percent of the Greeks, ex-Yugoslavians and Spaniards are married to a Dutch partner. Portuguese labour migrants virtually never married Dutch women. The question is: to what extent is marital integration an indication of the degree of integration in a broader relational sense and in other social realms? Italians in mixed marriages appear to spend more time with Dutch people in their leisure time than their fellow counymen who are married to Italian women. At the same time, a not insignificant minority of Italians seem to experience a certain isolation within their half-Dutch families. The contacts with Dutch people and authorities take place via their Dutch spouses, and contact with the children leaves something to be desired (Beukenhorst et al. 1987).

Paradoxically enough, Italians in homogeneous families are the least likely to spend time with fellow-Italians in the Netherlands. They consider the Italian clubs to be 'too Dutch', while regional differences often impede the creation of friendships. Men in mixed marriages feel the greatest need to have contacts with fellow countrymen, be it individually or in a club context, to at least maintain a bit of a bond. These men have relatively fewer contacts with family and friends in Italy. Children of mixed marriages describe themselves as more zealous than others in their attempts 'to bring Italians together' (Tinnemans 1991: 67-74).

Generally speaking, the Italians in the Netherlands have not built up tightknit communities. This certainly has to do with the fact that eighty percent of them are married to Dutch women, but Italian campantismo (regional chauvinism) probably stood in the way of community building beyond regional borders (Tinnemans 1991: 73). The Italian group is too small in size for community building on a regional basis. That second-generation Italians feel entirely at home in the Netherlands comes as little surprise given the fact that most of them have a Dutch mother. But children from homogeneous Italian families are also strongly oriented towards Dutch society. As a rule, Italian youth have fewer and fewer 'Italian' contacts. Tinnemans concludes that the future of Italian community life does not look very rosy (1991: 75).

The most tightknit local communities are without a doubt the Portuguese. As was mentioned earlier, this is precisely the group in which mixed marriages rarely occurred. First-generation Portuguese spend a significantly greater amount of time with one another than other Southern Europeans, and this also holds true for their children. Portuguese youth who socialize a lot with one another have fewer contacts with the Dutch than youth who are not so involved with the Portuguese community. This is not to say that Portuguese youth who exhibit strong group cohesion do not have any contacts with the Dutch at all. In fact, the Portuguese community is characterized by the presence of active members with strategic contacts in many segments of Dutch society. Others profit from these contacts. The Greeks – and earlier the Yugoslavians too – are also relatively well organized at the local and national levels. However, as the following section will demonstrate, this sometimes strong local group cohesion did not by any means stand in the way of integration in important social spheres.

Where compatriots are in regular contact with one another, community life is organized in a certain sense. Group cohesion and formal organization influence each other positively. It took several years before the Southern European immigrants began to organize themselves; apparently a certain degree of acclimatization is necessary for the emergence of structural group cohesion. The influence of pre-war immigrants on the creation of post-war communities was slight. Greek and Italian entrepreneurs had built up their own networks before the war, and they continued to function after the war, separate from those of the new labour migrants.

Political developments in the country of origin often played an important role in the formation of communities. Political struggle against dictatorial regimes and, generally, passion for politics 'back home' led to a division of the communities in the Netherlands into diverse camps. Nonetheless, to a significant degree, the Portuguese and Greeks have their politically active compatriots (sometimes political refugees with a somewhat better education) to thank for the tightness and the relatively good infrastructure of their communities. These compatriots combined their involvement in politics 'back home' with efforts to improve the position of the immigrant groups in the Netherlands in different areas. The struggles against dictators in Portugal, Spain and Greece and the fight for a better lot for guest workers also stimulated the creation of relations with politically equally-minded Dutch individuals and with Dutch organizations. I already reported earlier on the role of religious (especially Catholic) institutions in the reception of newcomers. Over the years, the contacts with the church were woven into some of the local community networks. Thus, Dutch priests still play an important role in the Portuguese and Spanish communities in Amsterdam.

Regional clubs and networks have also emerged on the local level, but probably
Immigrant Minority Language Instruction throughout the city, surely affected the degree of group cohesion. The diverse and often urban origin of Greeks in Rotterdam as opposed to the predominantly agrarian background of the Greeks in Gorinchem also influenced the character of the communities (Vermeulen et al. 1985).

**Ties with country of origin and return migration**

We can safely say that almost all Southern European immigrant families maintain contact with their families in the country of origin, and that the great majority of them vacation there at set times, among other things to visit the family. Naturally, the regularity with which one goes on holiday in the country of origin and maintains contacts with kin and friends there varies. It is obvious that the first generation is more connected by families ties to the country of origin than the children who came to the Netherlands at a young age or who were born there.

A 1989 survey among Portuguese, Spanish and Yugoslavian youth (Lindo & Pennings 1992) revealed that Spanish youth maintain somewhat more contacts with their families in their country of origin, but that the differences are not great. The overwhelming majority of Southern European youth have a certain bond with their parents’ native land, but do not idealize it. A visit to Italy, Spain or Portugal goes hand in hand with ambivalent feelings about their identity: while they feel most in touch with their roots while on vacation, it is precisely when they are on vacation that immigrant children realize that they are seen and treated as strangers by their compatriots ‘back home’. In 1989, the number of Portuguese, Spanish and Yugoslavian youth who still seriously considered returning was, however, remarkably high. The desire to return is particularly pronounced among Spanish youth. Less than a third claimed to want to remain in the Netherlands; of those who wanted to return in varying degrees, two thirds actually expected to do so (Lindo & Pennings 1992). Italian youth, on the other hand, are not generally very interested in ‘returning’ to their parents’ country (Tinnemans 1991). For most Southern European youth, a ‘return’ actually entails emigration; most of the youth who want to settle in their parents’ native land are born in the Netherlands.

In practice, it is mainly the first-generation immigrants who return. When, after the oil crisis in 1974, the government announced the curtailment of labour migration and proposed the introduction of a ‘repatriation bonus’ there was a public outcry, also among the immigrants. From 1974 on, nevertheless, the return migration resulted in an absolute decrease of the Spanish population in the Netherlands; this decline was to be brought to a halt only in the nineties. In the seventies, the repatriation of Spaniards took place fairly quietly. The discussion about the benefit of subsidized and assisted return migration for the development of the regions of origin seemed to mainly concentrate on the return migration of Turks. Only a few Turks appeared to be eager to return, whether as part of a return programme or not. However, in the early eighties it appeared that such help actually met a need in the return migration of many Spaniards (Van Duijnhoven 1981; Mulder 1981). In addition to individual projects, collective return programmes were also developed.18
The return migration of Spaniards could hardly be attributed to macroeconomic push-and-pull factors. The economy in Spain had indeed developed greatly, but this was mainly made possible by the low wages in Spanish industry. These wages were rarely attractive to Spanish labour migrants who had worked in Western Europe and who were used to higher wages, different terms of employment and better working conditions. The unemployment among labour migrants in the Netherlands did increase in those years, but was significantly lower among the Spanish than among other Southern European groups. Many Spanish repatriates resigned in order to return and went back to the regions where they came from, where the circumstances were far from ideal. These regions had not profited at all from the ‘Spanish wonder’, which mainly took place in and around urban centres. The return migrants knew that they would be facing difficult and unsure times in Spain, while giving up all of their rights and security in the Netherlands.

Most of the Spaniards who returned to Spain as part of a repatriation scheme, had already reunited with their wives and children in the Netherlands. The entire family was therefore involved in the repatriation. Little is known about the motives of the Spaniards who returned to their country. Research among Greek return migrants, who returned in massive numbers from Germany in the same time period, showed that fear of ‘Germanification’ of the children and the strong desire to have them attend school in Greece were important motives for a return. Only a very small minority of the repatriates were unemployed before departing from Germany. Well over a third of them set up their own small businesses in Greece.9

Of the Southern European groups in the Netherlands, the Greeks were surveyed the most extensively about their considerations concerning a possible return. They reported homesickness as the most significant reason for which they would possibly return, but discrimination and the downturn of the Dutch economy also scored high. The researchers were not, however, able to establish a connection between the readiness of these immigrants to repatriate and their social position in the Netherlands. It was apparent that the desire to return was greater the more contact these immigrants had with fellow-Greeks in the Netherlands (Vermeulen et al. 1985: 131–146). In actuality, the return migration of the Greeks from the Netherlands was not as great compared to that of the Spaniards.

Could changed political circumstances in the countries of origin have contributed to the return migration of the Southern Europeans? The changes after the death of Franco that took place in the second half of the seventies in Spain could have motivated some Spaniards in the Netherlands to return home. Especially participants in the cooperative return programmes were politically and ideologically motivated. The question, however, remains whether the political orientation of Spaniards in the Netherlands and the democratization in Spain can sufficiently explain the continual return migration of the Spaniards. Even in the years before Franco’s death, Spaniards returned to Spain significantly more so than other groups did to their respective countries of origin. Furthermore, the arrival of democracy in Portugal and Greece in 1974 did not lead to an increase in return migration among labour migrants from these countries.

The differences among groups in scope of return migration were caused by more factors than only economic and political developments in the countries of origin. Assessments of the economic possibilities naturally influence individuals’ considerations, but it is not clear if they are decisive. Expectations regarding the manner in which one will be accepted in networks of kin and by the local community probably play an equally important role. It is highly probable that the variation between individuals in this respect is not entirely arbitrary, but that the differences between immigrant groups from diverse countries or regions are also a contributory factor. Before such expectations of contacts at micro and intermediate levels are systematically included in research studies, it is not possible to make any definite pronouncements regarding the causes of return migration from the Netherlands.

Social position

The first generation

The branches of industry in which the Southern Europeans came to work in the Netherlands were already discussed in the first section. While the Italians and Spaniards initially came to work in the mining, metal and textile industries, they and other Southern Europeans quickly found employment in other branches. Still, until the seventies, the metal industry remained the most important employer of the Mediterranean labour migrants, and also of the Southern Europeans. In 1971, well over forty percent of the Southern European groups were employed in the metal industry (Gastarbeid in Nederland (Foreign labour in the Netherlands) 1971: 26–27).

The ability of industry to attract the increasingly better educated Dutch population diminished sharply in the seventies. A structural shift to the service sector was apparent. Foreigners, and also Southern Europeans, continued, however, to work in industry in large numbers, where their relatively poor wages offered outdated branches of industry a temporary reprieve (Tinnemans 1994: 106). In 1972, eighty percent of the Mediterranean labour migrants still worked in industry.

At the end of the sixties, the overwhelming majority of Southern European labour migrants were still employed as unskilled labourers.10 Their position in this respect was very similar to that of the Turkish labour migrants.11 Dutch workers in the same companies were much more likely to be skilled labourers. The job level of the labour migrants more or less corresponded with the level of schooling they had attained in their country of origin. In this respect too, as was described earlier, there were great similarities between Turkish and Southern European men of the first generation.

If the immigrants changed jobs early on, this often involved a lateral move. The work continued to be unskilled labour, although the immigrants naturally
sought work that was less taxing and dirty, and if possible better paid. In the beginning of the eighties, a survey of Greeks in the Netherlands established that at that time, an overwhelming majority of Southern Europeans were still performing the same unskilled labour as the Turks and Moroccans (Vermeulen et al. 1985: 60). With respect to the Italians, Tinnemans noted that changes in jobs were not necessarily the result of further education or training. By working as an assistant in a warehouse or canteen, one improved one’s working conditions, but not one’s social position (1991: 29). Nevertheless a survey conducted at the end of the eighties among Portuguese, Spanish and Yugoslavian youth demonstrated that their fathers had some kind of Dutch certificate in a quarter of the cases.² Among some Iberian immigrants, a job level was established that indicated an improvement in position during their stay in the Netherlands (Lindo & Pennings 1992: 26-27). For some, these Dutch certificates probably resulted in this improvement in position, while for others these certificates probably did not so much improve but secure their positions in the companies where they worked.

Social advancement among first-generation Southern European labour migrants was often the result of entrepreneurship. The degree, however, to which the various groups are inclined to set up an enterprise differs greatly. The Greeks and Italians are the most inclined to become entrepreneurs, and the ex-Yugoslavians to a lesser degree; there are far fewer entrepreneurs among the Iberian immigrants in the Netherlands. The part of the Greek and Italian labour force that has its own business is higher than the share of self-employed within the majority population. Some of these entrepreneurs, the pre-war immigrants and their descendants, were discussed in the first section. Virtually all of them arrived in the Netherlands with the preconceived goal of starting their own business. The large majority of the Greek and Italian self-employed, however, came as part of the large post-war stream of labour migrants, and the question must be asked to what extent they differ from the ‘average’ labour migrant. Research has revealed that post-war immigrants rarely chose to emigrate with the conscious goal of establishing an enterprise (Van den Tillaart & Reubsaet 1988; Vermeulen et al. 1985). They normally got started as workers in Dutch companies. In the early eighties, Pennings ascertained that the lack of opportunities for advancement in salaried employment was a significant incentive for the labour migrants to start their own business (in Vermeulen et al. 1985: 118-119). The Greek entrepreneurs in his study had acquired more urban experience in Greece than the average immigrant, and were more likely to have emigrated individually.³ With their restaurants, cafes, catering businesses and small trading companies, the Italian and Greek entrepreneurs primarily target Dutch clientele; in this sense, their ‘ethnic enterprises’ can be distinguished from most Turkish and Moroccan businesses in the Netherlands.

In the second half of the eighties and in the beginning of the nineties there was a sharp increase in the number of ethnic minority entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship is developing most rapidly among the larger ethnic minority groups in the Netherlands; nevertheless, the percentage of entrepreneurs in the total Turkish and Surinamese populations is still less than that of the Greek, Italian and former Yugoslavian. The percentage of entrepreneurs within these last groups is far above the national average, and that of the large immigrant groups is, still, just under the national average (Setzpfand et al. 1993). Although business closures were a common occurrence in the seventies, the unemployment among Southern Europeans initially only increased slowly. In the beginning of the eighties, however, the unemployment rate rose rapidly. In 1986, approximately one quarter of the Greek, Italian and Yugoslavian labour force was unemployed. The percentage was just over twenty for the Portuguese, and just under twenty for the Spanish. The degree to which one became unemployed (and was not able to find work again) varied per group and place of residence. In the meantime, a shift had also taken place among labour migrants from the industrial to the service sector. Many labour migrants, and Southern Europeans too, traded in production work for work as a cleaner. As was described above, a few immigrants, especially among the Italians and the Greeks, went into business for themselves.⁴

In the second half of the eighties, unemployment declined. In 1990, the unemployment among Southern Europeans had fallen to just over ten percent⁵, making the unemployment among this group a number of percentage points above the national average, but three to four times lower than that of the Turks and Moroccans.⁶

Why is the unemployment among Southern European labour migrants so much lower than that of first-generation Turks and Moroccans? Only a premature answer can be given at this time. There are data that indicate that a not insignificant group of first-generation Southern Europeans attended training courses, and that this led to an improvement in job level for some of them. It is not clear to what extent this helped people hold onto their jobs in times of economic malaise. Participation in these courses could also be a general indication of the versatility and readiness of this group to find other jobs, characteristics which proved useful when the traditional industries closed down in the seventies and eighties.

Initially, as was indicated above, the distribution of first-generation Southern Europeans over the sectors of the Dutch economy did not, or only rarely, differ from that of the other Mediterranean labour migrants. In the eighties, the largest proportion of them still worked in industry, but there are indications that at that time relatively more Southern Europeans than, for example, Turks were able to find work in other sectors of the economy, especially the service sector. This by no means signified an improvement in their social position in all cases; often the new work involved cleaning jobs. This was often experienced as a step backwards in terms of status. In 1989, less than two thirds of the fathers of the Iberian and Yugoslavian youth surveyed worked in the industry and transport sectors, while ninety percent of the Turkish fathers were employed in these sectors. The Turkish labour force in this age category had, however, decreased more sharply in comparison to the same age categories of Southern Europeans because relatively more Turks had been declared disabled. Within this Turkish labour force,
When the economic recession hit, the labour migrants who were the last to be hired were the first to be laid off. Not referring here to the arrival of family members. Their position in companies was therefore probably more vulnerable than that of the Southern Europeans.

In macro-structural terms, there is much to be said in favour of this hypothesis. It is true that most of the countries in Southern Europe have experienced economic development in the past decades, and that Turkey and Morocco have lagged behind. In concrete cases, however, it proves difficult to determine how and to what degree these push-and-pull factors affect individual decisions to return. In some local communities, long-term unemployment has indeed led to return migration. Between 1982 and 1986, a large proportion of the Greek community from Gorinchem, including families and individuals who were affected by the closures of local industries, left for Greece. Unemployment worked here as a push factor, and the circumstances in Greece had improved with respect to the pre-migration situation. From a national perspective, however, it is not possible to detect a strong statistical relationship between unemployment and return migration. When in the eighties the unemployment among Southern Europeans (and other Mediterranean groups) began to increase in large measure, the return migration of Southern Europeans from the Netherlands rose somewhat in comparison to the years just prior to this. This small increase, however, was pale in comparison to the fluctuations in the migration statistics from the preceding decades. If one takes a look at the Spanish return migration in the eighties alone, it is a mere and insignificant ripple compared to the wave of repatriation in the seventies. There are no indications that the repatriates in that decade were relatively more likely to be unemployed, or were likely to become so.

It is more helpful to look at the divergence in the growth of the groups in the decade before the development of massive unemployment if we want to understand the differences in the labour market position between the first-generation Southern Europeans and the other Mediterranean groups. While the Southern European groups diminished in size, the size of the other Mediterranean groups increased exponentially. Return migration played a relatively insignificant role in this demographic development. The largest share of the first-generation Turkish and Moroccan family heads arrived later than the Southern European (we are not referring here to the arrival of family members). Their position in companies was therefore probably more vulnerable than that of the Southern Europeans. When the economic recession hit, the labour migrants who were the last to be hired were the first to be laid off.

Return migration is sometimes named as a factor to explain the relatively favourable social position of the Southern Europeans. Two other assumptions are connected to this hypothesis: the first argues that return migration is selective, in the sense that people with the worst position – or prospects – return the most often. The second assumes that the varying temps in which the countries of origin develop, make it easier or more attractive for some groups to return than others. Following this reasoning, the social profile of the Southern European communities in the Netherlands should benefit from repatriation of the least successful families more than, for example, the Turks.

The silent success. Social advancement of Southern European labour migrants

Starting one’s own business is considered to be a strategy that kept some of the immigrant labour force from becoming unemployed (Bovenkerk 1982). However, in Pennings’ research among Greek small business owners, his informants seldom cited unemployment as a motivation for setting up a small business. Practically no one started such a business while being unemployed. From the point of view of the jobless immigrant, self-employment is not an obvious solution: his worsened income position and weakened credit ratings make it difficult for him to secure the investments needed to start a small business (in Vermeulen et al. 1985: 110-130). Thus, from the perspective of individual Southern Europeans, entrepreneurship was not a reaction to unemployment. However, among the Greeks, Italians and to a lesser degree the ex-Yugoslavians, it might have influenced their level of unemployment somewhat because the proportion of the labour force that was self-employed was no longer susceptible to company cutbacks and closures.

Up until now, this section has covered the social position of male first-generation Southern European labour migrants. However, many of their wives also worked. Many of them have become disabled by now. Nevertheless, the labour participation of first-generation Southern European women is still high; high compared to Dutch women and very high compared to their Turkish and Moroccan peers. Cultural differences, that is to say differences in behavioural patterns that had developed in the societies of origin, explain these differences in labour participation. Excluding the possible economic contributions of children living at home, we can assume that because of this much greater labour participation of women, the family income of Southern European families in the Netherlands is on average higher than that of Turkish and Moroccan families. This could partly explain their somewhat better housing position, which was discussed earlier in this section.

The children of the labour migrants

The educational position of Southern European immigrant children in the Netherlands is considerably better than that of their Turkish and Moroccan peers. A survey that was conducted in a number of municipalities revealed that Portuguese, Spanish and Yugoslavian youth have an educational profile that hardly deviates from that of their Dutch peers. Italian youth also appear to measure up to Dutch youth. In all of the groups, the girls are more than able to hold their own with respect to the boys. In fact, young Southern European women who have completed senior secondary and higher professional education as well as university education are over-represented in comparison to their Dutch peers (Lindo & Pennings 1992: 60). Of the almost four hundred women and men studied who attended school in the Netherlands, only a few left school before the age of eighteen without completing secondary education.

In 1989, unemployment among those who were no longer in school was at the same level as that among the Dutch in the same age category. Two thirds of
Southern European youth work at the same intermediate level as the majority of Dutch youth. They are still under-represented among the highest levels and over-represented among the lowest levels, but in comparison to their Turkish and Moroccan peers, the distribution of job level of employed Southern Europeans is far better. The average function level of women is the same as that of the men.

It is not easy to predict the terminating point of the educational careers of those who are still attending school, but there are indications that they will indeed do better than those mentioned in the previous paragraph. Already ten years ago, one third of Southern European students were attending senior secondary education and university preparatory education. Twenty percent of the women were attending higher professional education and university; in the Spanish group, this was the case for one third of the women. The popularity of lower professional education among these students was far lower than among those who had already finished school. The above indications lead to the conclusion that the social position of the Southern European groups is greatly improving in one generation's time. In this respect, they compare very favourably to the Turks and Moroccans in the Netherlands, even if one takes into account the fact that the children of these last two groups have begun their education in the Netherlands as transfer students. The fact that a relatively large share of Southern European youth started their educational careers in the Netherlands can only explain to a small degree why their school performances are so much better than Turkish and Moroccan youth. Turkish and Moroccan youth who were born in the Netherlands and have completed their education there still attain a considerably poorer educational level than their Southern European peers.

Conclusions

An analysis of the causes of the pronounced social advancement of the Southern Europeans actually compels a systematic comparison with other immigrant groups. In concluding this chapter, I can only examine a number of factors, and to elaborate my points, I will make occasional comparisons to other immigrant groups, especially the Turks.

Above, I discussed indications that a substantial minority of first-generation Southern Europeans have followed various kinds of training courses during their stay in the Netherlands, and in doing have improved their position in terms of job level. In addition, the number of persons who started their own businesses was above average within some Southern European groups (particularly the Italians and the Greeks). Such social advancement is not perceptible among the first-generation Turks and Moroccans. What are the consequences for the second generation? Is it true that children of immigrant families in which breadwinners were able to improve their position in the Netherlands are stimulated to perform well in school more than others? Research surveys have not provided sufficient indications that there is a direct connection between the social mobility of first-generation Southern Europeans and the striking educational performance of their children. Children of fathers who work as unskilled labourers do not perform any more poorly than their peers whose fathers work in better jobs (Lindo & Pennings 1992: 61). Nor are there any indications, in spite of the relatively large number of entrepreneurs in certain Southern European groups, that small family businesses of post-war labour migrants contribute more than the average to intergenerational social mobility. While entrepreneurship was practically the only means of advancement for pre-war Southern Europeans, for the children of post-war labour migrants from Southern Europe it is no longer the only stepping stone to other sorts of careers, given their promising educational performance.

In the previous section, a relationship was posited between the relatively large number of trained or retrained among the first generation of Southern Europeans and the fact that they are considerably less unemployed than other immigrant groups. It is difficult to say if the relatively lesser dependency on benefits among Southern European families gives the children of these families more chances than others. Survey data related to Turks in the Netherlands nevertheless reveal that the dependency of families on benefits does not in any way predict the educational level of these families’ children.

At first glance, the family backgrounds and qualifications of the parents do not appear to be the key to the social success of Southern European youth. In the first section, I also reported that the educational level that the fathers attained in their country of origin rarely compared favourably to that of Turkish labour migrants. Furthermore, whether their parents come from a city or a village or whether one of them is Dutch does not have any impact on the educational position of Southern European youth.

Discrimination is often advanced to explain the poor position of youth from the large immigrant groups. Is it possible that Southern European youth suffer less from discrimination than their Turkish and Moroccan peers? There is practically universal consensus among researchers that in the labour market Turkish and Moroccan youth are not treated equally in comparison to Dutch youth. Although no research has been carried out to substantiate this, it is very possible that Southern Europeans suffer less discrimination in the labour market. In an earlier section, the way in which Italians were treated up until the seventies was discussed as well as the inclination of the Dutch to compare them with the Spaniards, who were judged to do far better. This period of labelling the Italians now seems to be far behind us. I proposed that their much more positive image today was initially caused by the rapid growth of immigrant communities whose cultures appeared to deviate more from Dutch culture. When stereotyping a group, implicit or explicit comparisons play an important role. In comparison to the Turkish and Moroccan labour migrants, the Italians, and the Southern European group in general, seem more familiar to the Dutch. But this familiarity is not only the result of the arrival of groups which are more different. There are indications that Italians and other Southern Europeans integrated in spite of
persistent prejudices against them. The disappearance of prejudices and stigmas is also the result of what a group accomplishes in terms of integration in various spheres. It is, for example, highly likely that the readiness of a substantial minority of the first generation to train and retrain themselves in the Netherlands gave the Southern European groups in their entirety a good name, and that the second generation – regardless of their family background – has therefore come across fewer barriers in securing employment. The unequal treatment of different groups in the labour market is the result of the way in which these groups are perceived by employers, personnel managers and employees. This perception however is, at least to some degree, created by the behaviour of the group in question. Needless to say, discrimination and prejudice are inexcusable and their effects can never be dismissed; they must, however, also be seen as a link in the interaction process between immigrants and the members and institutions of the receiving society. Their effects are therefore not a constant factor.

The question as to whether the receiving society has varying attitudes towards different minority groups regarding education, and if so whether such attitudes lead to divergent performances in school, is even more difficult to answer. Turkish and Moroccan children are more likely to attend concentration schools, where children from the same countries of origin constitute the largest proportion of the student population. Research into the effect of the expectations and behaviour of teachers in such concentration schools on the educational career of immigrant children has not lead to unequivocal results. The expectations teachers have for individual children from a certain immigrant group is at least partly based on their perception of the position of that group in Dutch society. Here as well, these expectations are only to be understood as links in an interaction process, in which the immigrant group is also one of the actors. Moreover, expectations of teachers are challenged by children and parents. Later in this section, we will see why Southern European families have been more successful than Turkish and Moroccan in doing this. The comparative study of Iberian and Turkish immigrant children indicates that success is not so much the result of less unequal treatment, but that successful students react to discrimination more effectively; this holds true for youth from both groups: the successful take less notice of racist harassment. Young people probably put such experiences into perspective more easily if they also have positive interactions or a good relationship with one or more Dutch individuals (a neighbour, a teacher, or a friend). In the stories about successful youth, it is not the absence of discrimination that is striking, but the presence of a relationship with a Dutch person who is described by the informant as being important. Iberian youth, even if they mainly associate with fellow-Iberians, were more likely than Turkish youth to indicate that such a contact was very significant to them in an emotional sense. The character of the Southern European communities and the relative ease with which Southern European families approach ethnic diversity make the realization of these contacts easier.

So far, I have only discussed the Southern European family situation in connection with the labour force position and participation of the fathers. I pointed out the similarities that existed between Southern Europeans and Turkish families in this respect and also concluded that variations could not explain the pronounced difference in social advancement of the children from these immigrant families. There are, however, other aspects of the family situation of Southern Europeans that shed light on the divergent social profile of Southern European youth. One important aspect is related to the significant differences in educational level and labour market participation between Southern European and other Mediterranean women of the first generation. These differences are an indication of their position in the family. In the Southern European conjugal family, the position of the woman is indeed subordinate to that of the head of the family, but compared to that of Turkish and Moroccan women, it is nonetheless more influential. With respect to matters outside the family's direct environment, Southern European women also have a say, and their authority is more likely to have grown than to have diminished during the process of immigration and settlement. Traditional power relations between spouses are liable to erode in the Netherlands because social control within the networks of Southern Europeans is less effective than, for example, among the Turks. The position of mothers in Southern European immigrant families is related to the socio-economic progress that the second generation is likely to make. In the authority structure of Southern European immigrant families, mothers fulfil an important intermediary role between the children and the head of the family, who usually believes in a strict upbringing. Mothers are closer to their children, and are therefore more involved with their trials and tribulations. In immigrant households of the first generation, the guiding role of the parents is limited because they have less knowledge of life in the Netherlands. On the one hand, children are kept on a tight rein out of fear for an unfamiliar society that is not experienced as one's own; on the other hand, they have a certain freedom to make choices in some areas because they have more expertise in these areas than their parents. It appears that children from Southern European families make better use of this freedom because they are more effectively supported by their mothers. These mothers have developed contacts with Dutch people more so than Turkish or Moroccan mothers. These contacts are also more diverse, not only because mothers work outside of the home, but also because Southern European families are residentially more dispersed. Although their knowledge of Dutch society continues to be inadequate, Southern European mothers are likely to have picked up some practical, basic information about Dutch education, usually by way of these contacts. The motive behind the gathering of such basic information is not a cultural fixation on education. In studying the educational careers of Iberian youth, it becomes clear that, in the majority of cases, the interest of mothers in the education of their children only emerged after it appeared that they were doing well at school. They then stimulate their children, sometimes by encouraging them to follow a higher subsequent level of education, and to not...
automatically follow the advice of the school. Mothers also seek advice about school from their colleagues at work and from their neighbours. Because of this, Southern European children more often end up at schools with a lower concentration of students from immigrant families. Because the participation of mothers in Dutch society does not lag behind that of their husbands, they usually have as much information at their disposal. This allows them to advocate on behalf of their children in discussions with the head of the family, which prevents the taking of decisions within the family that, whether intentionally or unintentionally, negatively interfere with the educational careers of the children (Lindo 1995, 1996 and 1999).

Behavioural patterns in Turkish families that impede the social careers of children, such as the pressure to marry at a relatively young age, are not only based on traditions ‘imported’ from the communities of origin, but on the fear on the part of parents that their children will become ‘Dutchified’. For Southern European parents, the thought of their children becoming ‘Dutchified’ is less frightening, although they often find it difficult if their daughters (or sons) bring home a Dutch partner. The fact that children do bring home Dutch partners – with all the negative repercussions this may have for family relations in the short term – is an indication that Southern European labour migrants more easily accept ethnic difference. The academic success of the daughters of Southern European labour migrants must be seen in this light. Young women from diverse Southern European nationalities are granted less latitude than their Dutch peers in choosing their friends and leisure activities and in the area of courtship. But already in 1982, Van Attelkum and Pennings concluded that the lesser degree of independence of Greek girls was more likely to have favourable rather than unfavourable consequences for their academic careers:

‘A side effect of the restrictions that are placed on the girls is that attending school is the most important, if not the only, event outside of the family. While the boys may have a circle of friends with whom they play football or socialize, school is the place for girls to prove themselves and win appreciation’ (1982: 104).

The difference between Southern European girls on the one hand, and Turkish and Moroccan girls on the other, is that the restrictions imposed on the former do not extend to school. Although Southern European parents by and large do not adhere to an explicit educational ideology and do not exert pressure on their children to perform well at school, they do not perceive Dutch schools to be potentially dangerous institutions that will alienate their children from them.

In this chapter, I have focused on the development of the position of first-generation Southern European labour migrants to try and understand the surprising success of their children in the Netherlands. I examined their integration at both the structural and socio-cultural levels. These domains of integration are, of course, intertwined, and must be viewed in such a context. The informal contacts parents develop with their immediate environment and outside of their own group contribute significantly to the integration of their children into their Dutch social and school environments. This influences their academic performance positively. But parents’ informal contacts are also connected to their relatively non-segregated living situation and their relatively high participation in the labour market, which are, in turn, indicators of the structural integration of fathers and mothers.

It is one thing to indicate such relationships, but to place them in the cycle of cause and effect is a much more difficult task. The first generation of Southern Europeans had, in any case, no preconceived plan to acquire a position in Dutch society, let alone ideas as to how and in which order they could best accomplish this. Paradoxically, an ambivalent attitude lies at the root of successful integration. Still, socio-cultural integration of the first generation appeared, even if unintentionally, to play an important role in the success of the second generation. However, concepts such as social cohesion or participation, operationalized as the degree to which one associates with members in the group or outside, are not a good or sufficient indicator of socio-cultural integration. Social cohesion, for example, does not only involve the tightness of one’s own community measured by the number of contacts, but also the way in which this community is structured: community formation among Southern European labour migrants did not stand in the way of the development of emotional, friendly and strategic contacts with persons and institutions in the receiving society.

Regardless of the degree of inclusion in one’s own community, the relationships within the family also play a role in the integration of the family in the informal domains of the surrounding society. The relatively influential position of the wife and mother in the Southern European immigrant family appears to generate bonds with Dutch individuals in the immediate vicinity of the family. Although, once again, we must not make too much of these bonds, such contacts may be just the support that children growing up in these families need to make their way in Dutch society. The ideological stand towards Dutch society also plays a role. Although many Southern Europeans of the first generation criticize the ‘Dutch way of life’, they are far more accepting of Dutch society than first-generation Turks and Moroccans.

Notes

1 See for example Ogbu (1987), Sowell (1981) and Steinberg (1989).
2 I understand Southern European labour migrants to include immigrants from Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece and former Yugoslavia, and Mediterranean labour migrants to include these groups as well as immigrants from Turkey and Morocco. The position of most of the Southern European groups has been established in research surveys (Lindo & Pennings 1992; Tinnemans 1997). Research among the Greeks in the Netherlands is dated, but it is not probable that the position of this group sharply deviates from that of other Southern European groups (Vermeulen et al. 1985). There is
still little to say about the social advancement of recent political refugees from former Yugoslavia. Further information about the five groups in this chapter was taken from Lindo (1988 and 1997).

1 The immigration of the Surinamese at the end of the sixties was not as large in scope as from the national average. The job level of those who work still lags somewhat behind that of their Dutch peers, but is considerably better than that of Turkish or Moroccan youth (Lindo & Pennings 1992).

2 Although the Federation of Yugoslavia was a common denominator among the Slovenians and the Croats, Bosnians, Macedonians and Serbs who came to work in the mines after the war, they spoke different languages which made communication difficult. Attempts by the Slovenians to involve them in their associations were unsuccessful (Brasse & Van Schelven 1980).

3 Spaniards started to come in the beginning of the sixties. The Spanish immigration stream immediately grew to unprecedented proportions. The arrival of Greeks and Portuguese took place parallel to the arrival of the larger groups of labour migrants in that time, and the immigration of Yugoslavians only got well underway in 1970. Particularly in the beginning period, it was a question of one coming and the other leaving. Of the many Southern Europeans who settled in the Netherlands until the economic recession of 1967, most returned to their native countries. Only the majority of the Portuguese remained in the Netherlands.

4 Only in the past few years has an increase again been perceptible, probably caused in part by the admission of Spain to the EU.

5 A slight increase is even perceptible if one takes into consideration those who have obtained a Dutch passport (Lindo 1988: 22).

6 In a minority of families from former Yugoslavia, the woman was the first to arrive in the Netherlands as a labour migrant, and her husband followed later.

7 The sizes of different Southern European groups in the Netherlands at present are presented in Table 1.1 in the Introduction.

8 See for example Perrepet (1974). Also the fact that the companies sometimes hired family members or fellow villagers upon the intercession of employees (nominal recruitment) promoted a certain clustering of people from the same villages and regions. Here it must be added that such early positive experiences are often reported to underlie that the climate with regard to foreigners has deteriorated over the years. One sometimes personally experienced this deterioration. More often, people are afraid that the negative attitude towards large Mediterranean groups that they notice will also have repercussions on their own position.

9 See the introductory chapter for a detailed discussion.

10 The immigration of the Surinamese at the end of the sixties was not as large in scope as in the following decades. Nevertheless, at that time they were the largest of the groups compared here (Bagley 1973: 130; see also Van Niekerk in this volume). In the meantime, the Moroccans had also surpassed the Italians in number.

11 For the differences with Turks and Moroccans, see the chapters by Böcker and by Nelissen and Buiks in this volume.

12 An example of this is the attitude of gelato makers towards their compatriots who arrived later, as was described earlier in this chapter.

13 With the outbreak of ethnic conflicts in former Yugoslavia, the Yugoslavian community has broken up entirely. Smaller communities of Slovenians, Croats, Serbs and Bosnians now exist. It is not known to what extent these new organizations are able to reach their rank and file.

14 For obvious reasons, with the exception of many families who come from former Yugoslavia.

15 When these collective programmes were not subsidized by the government, they usually proved to fail (see also Zegers de Beijl 1985).


17 Except for the Yugoslavians who began to arrive at that time (see the section on migration),

18 Eighty to ninety percent of the Italians, Spaniards and Turks were employed as unskilled labourers in the companies that were included in the study De buitenlandse arbeider in Nederland (1971). This percentage was well above ninety for the Moroccan workers.

19 The most part, these certificates were for courses and company trainings of an unknown level, but we can assume that this level was rarely higher than the lowest level of secondary education. A substantial number of cases most likely involved language courses.

20 Nevertheless, local Greek entrepreneurs in, for example, the cities of Utrecht and Nijmegen have precisely the same characteristics as 'typical' labour migrants; those in Utrecht generally come from the countryside in the north of Greece, and those from Nijmegen were all recruited.

21 Such a shift could be confirmed among Greeks in Utrecht, but in Gorinchem, where a relatively large Greek community had settled, the service sector could not compensate for the declining employment in industry. In the beginning of the eighties, the unemployment was higher there than in other Greek communities in the Netherlands, and the average family income the lowest (Vermeulen et al. 1985).

22 This figure is based on data from the Labour Force Survey, which was processed further by the Social and Cultural Planning Board. The category 'other Mediterraneans' was made up of Southern Europeans and Tunisians, but the inclusion of the Tunisians should only be of marginal influence. Since 1987, no statistics have been kept at the national level on the distribution of unemployment between the sexes, nor among the different age groups of the Southern European population in the Netherlands. Both women and members of the second generation who have entered the labour market in the meantime are therefore included in the figure of ten percent. A survey among Portuguese, Spanish and Yugoslavian youth in a small number of municipalities (including Amsterdam) revealed that in 1989 the unemployment of both the fathers and the mothers of these youth approximated the national average (Lindo & Pennings 1992: 21-23). This also applied to the youth themselves.

23 Since then, no more reliable statistics have become available about the labour position of Southern European labour migrants (and their children). First, data with respect to small immigrant groups are no longer collected by means of a survey. Second, circumstantial statistical evidence does not exclude the possibility that the population of the Southern Europeans in the Netherlands, as far as socio-economic background is concerned, is greatly diversified due to the free traffic in and out of these countries as the result of the entrance of the majority of them into the European Union. It is, however, probable that in terms of labour market position a large difference with the other Mediterranean groups has continued to exist in the Netherlands.

24 See for example Lucassen and Penninx (1997: 144).

The statements made about Italian, Portuguese, Spanish and Yugoslavian youth are based on survey data from 1986 (Italians) and 1989 (Portuguese, Spanish and Yugoslavian youth) (Lindo & Pennings 1992; Tinnemans 1991). Comparable survey data which describe the educational performance of Greek youth do not exist. There is, however, no reason to expect that their performance deviates from, for example, their Spanish or Portuguese peers.

For more extensive results from the comparative research I carried out among Iberian and Turkish youth, see Lindo (1995, 1996, 1999 and 2000).

In the survey among Southern European youth, there were too few respondents with unemployed parents to draw any conclusions about this.

Data from the 1991 SPVA survey, which were processed upon request of the author by ISEO.

There are, for example, reports which conclude that Moroccan and Turkish children receive recommendations for higher levels of education than Dutch children; see among others Mulder and Tesser (1992), Tesser et al. (1995).

My comparative research involved youth who had taken the first decisions about their school careers ten years earlier. Recent research among younger students demonstrates that a growing number of Turkish and Moroccans parents are displaying an active interest in the education of their children and also greater assertiveness vis-à-vis the school management regarding the choice for the next level of education (see also the contributions of Nelissen and Buijs and of Böcker in this volume).

In an exploratory essay about immigrant success Ellemers (1990) points out that, in general, immigration strengthens the position of immigrant mothers with respect to their spouses. In this relatively strong position, mothers can exert more influence over the educational performance of their children. Ellemers' somewhat psychological analysis, however, does not address the question of why such development takes place in some groups more than others (1990: 184-185).

To some degree, such concentrations are also avoided because they are more residentially dispersed. Presently, there is also a tendency among Turkish and Moroccan children who go on to higher levels of secondary school to avoid schools with a high concentration of students from immigrant families (Het Parool, 28 October 1998).

See also Böcker; this volume.