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Migrants in Dutch cities at the end of the nineteenth century.¹

Two patterns of migration

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century the Dutch cities formed part of two migration circuits. The first one was characterised by stepwise migration according to the third law of Ravenstein.² People migrated from small villages to larger ones and small cities, and then sometimes took the last step to the regional capital. This 'vertical' migration circuit was region-bound.

The second migration circuit was linked to the urban network system which connected all regional capitals and the national capital, which in the Netherlands actually consisted of three cities: Amsterdam, The Hague, and Rotterdam.³ Long distance migration took place along the lines of this urban network system and was therefore more horizontally organised.

Larger cities in the Netherlands therefore linked migration on a regional scale to migration on a national scale. To put it in terms formulated by Hohenberg and Lees, they acted as a gateway between the central place system and the urban network system.⁴

Previously, the ways in which the two migration systems worked has only been analysed for one city: the city of Groningen between 1870 and 1914.⁵ Some general observations, however, have been made about other cities: Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Leeuwarden and Dordrecht.⁶ Therefore, we have information about migration in two regional capitals: the capitals of the provinces of Groningen and Friesland (Leeuwarden) in the north of the Netherlands, and we know something about migration in two of the national capitals, as well as about Dordrecht, a second-rank city situated near Rotterdam. This information mainly

¹ From Denis Menjot & Jean-Luc Pinol (eds.) *Les immigrants et la ville. Insertion, integration, discrimination (XIIe-XXe siècles)* (L'Harmattan: Paris 1996) 207-230.

² E.G. Ravenstein, 'The laws of migration', *Journal of the Statistical Society* (1885 and 1889).

³ R. van Engelsdorp Gastelaars and M. Wagenaar, 'The rise of the Randstad 1850-1930', in H. Schmal (ed.) *Patterns of European Urbanization* (London 1981) 229-247.

⁴ Paul Hohenberg and Lynn Hollen Lees, *The making of urban Europe, 1000-1950* (Cambridge Mass. 1985) ch. 2.

⁵ Pim Kooij, *Groningen 1870-1914. Sociale verandering en economische ontwikkeling in een regionaal centrum* (Assen/Maastricht 1987) ch. 3.

⁶ Ad Knotter, *Economische transformatie en stedelijke arbeidsmarkt. Amsterdam in de tweede helft van de negentiende eeuw* (Utrecht 1991); P.J. Bouman and W.H. Bouman, *De groei van de grote werkstad* (Assen 1952); Henk van Dijk, *Rotterdam 1810-1880. Aspecten van een stedelijke samenleving* (Schiedam 1976); Rolf van der Woude, *Leeuwarden 1850-1914. De modernisering van een provinciehoofdstad* (Leeuwarden 1994). Carolien Koopmans, *Dordrecht 1811-1914. Een eeuw demografische en economische geschiedenis* (Hilversum 1992).

concerns the development of the occupational structure and the labour market in relation to migration. Systematic information concerning, for example, living conditions, social mobility, and return migration is only available for Groningen. Therefore, the greater part of this article will be devoted to that regional capital.

Dutch cities and migration

The industrialisation of the Netherlands, which began after 1850, took place chiefly in the cities. The completion of the urban network system, thanks to the coming of the railway and the (re)construction of interregional canals and highways, enabled the cities to specialise in particular industrial products.⁷ Therefore, the larger old cities could maintain their positions in the rank-size distribution. Only one new industrial city obtained a high rank: Tilburg in the south developed a large woollen industry. Runners up were Enschede in the east (cotton industry) and Apeldoorn in the centre, which was a producer of paper and also an important residential centre. In 1900 these cities each had about 25,000 inhabitants. After 1900 Eindhoven (electronics) would join the duo. Table 6.1 shows that most cities had a positive migration balance.

Table 6.1. Migration balance of the largest Dutch cities

	inhabitants	1860-1869	1870-1879	1880-1889	1890-1899
Amsterdam	510853	0.9	6.5	12.4	*6.0
Rotterdam	318407	2.6	16.7	14.8	*27.8
The Hague	206022	4.7	13.8	16.7	11.9
Utrecht	102086	6.0	4.5	8.2	1.2
Groningen	66537	3.7	11.5	8.0	4.5
Haarlem	61702	2.2	7.7	18.8	10.7
Arnhem	56812	16.4	14.6	5.1	1.3
Leiden	53657	-4.7	-3.3	-7.5	*8.6
Nijmegen	42755	0.9	2.2	16.2	18.4
Tilburg	40628	17.1	4.5	1.3	0.7
Dordrecht	38386	2.4	4.2	5.9	6.6
Maastricht	34220	-4.8	-6.1	0.6	-5.6
Delft	31589	1.2	6.8	0.4	-5.1
Leeuwarden	31162	-3.4	5.2	-3.0	-4.3
Zwolle	30560	-1.0	1.5	2.9	0.3
's-Hertogenbosch	30517	-1.1	-4.5	0.8	0.9

Source: Census; Annual population statistics individual cities

Explanation: Numbers of inhabitants 1-1-1900 (all cities with 30,000 inhabitants and over are included). Migration balances calculated per thousand (averages of 10 successive years); * = inhabitants of adjacent municipalities included.

⁷ Pim Kooij, 'Peripheral Cities and Their Regions in the Dutch Urban System until 1900', *The Journal of Economic History* XLVIII (1988) 357-371.

The harbour city of Rotterdam, which also had a high birth rate, was the fastest grower. But The Hague, which became the bureaucratic centre of the Netherlands, also attracted many immigrants. The high positive migration balance of Nijmegen was caused by the construction of a railway in the seventies, which made Nijmegen an attractive residential centre, a position which before that time was held by Arnhem. This stresses the fact that industrialisation was not the only factor which attracted people. In fact it only prevented cities from too much emigration. Haarlem was the only exception to this general rule. The large metal industry in that city was an important pull factor. As we will see later on, the food and allied products manufacturing in Groningen, and some branches in Amsterdam, were also attractive. Only four cities had a migration deficit for most of that time: Leiden, where the old cloth industry could not compete with the new industrial textile centres; Maastricht, which had industrialised very early on, had, however, stagnated by the end of the century. The position of 's-Hertogenbosch as a regional capital was challenged by adjacent Tilburg as well as by Eindhoven. Leeuwarden in the nineteenth century did not succeed in creating industrial specialisation.⁸

In view of the evidence concerning migration in individual cities, we may conclude that around the middle of the nineteenth century there was a balance between the immigration of families and individuals. In the following decades, however, the number of individuals among the immigration units rose in comparison to the number of families (Table 6.2).

Table 6.2. *Families and individuals among the immigration units*

	1850		1870		1900	
	ind	fam	ind	fam	ind	fam
Dordrecht	59.0	41.0	75.5	24.5	78.6	21.4
Groningen			70.7	29.3	75.8	24.2
Rotterdam	50.0	50.0			73.6	26.4

Sources: Koopmans, *Dordrecht*, ch. 8.2; Kooij, *Groningen*, ch. 3.2.4; Van Dijk, *Rotterdam*, ch. 5.8.

Explanation: Dordrecht 1855, 1879, 1904; Groningen 1870-1880, 1900-1910; Rotterdam 1853, 1907.

The immigrating individuals were, for the greater part, rather young, and over time the average age dropped even further. In Dordrecht in 1855, 2.0% were 16-20 years old, 30.5% were 21-25, 29.4% were 26-30, and 12.7% were 31-35. In 1907 these percentages were 25.1, 31.4, 12.1, 7.5 respectively.⁹ In Groningen in the decade 1870-80, 56.7% of the immigrating individuals were 15-24 years old, and 18.2% were 25-29. In 1900-1910 the proportion of those aged 15-24 was about 3% higher while the proportion of those aged 25-29 had fallen by 2%.¹⁰

⁸ Van der Woude, *Leeuwarden 1850-1914*, ch. 3.

⁹ Koopmans, *Dordrecht*, appendix table 8.

¹⁰ Kooij, *Groningen*, table 32.

An interesting difference was that more single women migrated to Dordrecht than men. In 1855 the ratio was about 60:40. In the following decades this ratio changed to 55:45. In Groningen the ratio was just the opposite, 57:43 men to women in 1870–80 and 52:48 in 1900–1910. This difference may have been caused by the fact that more men migrated to Rotterdam, which was situated only 25 kilometres from Dordrecht and for that reason ‘competed’ with Dordrecht for workers. Unfortunately, the study on Rotterdam provides no evidence on this matter.

To complete the picture of the general characteristics of urban immigrants, it should be added that the heads of the immigrating households were generally much older than the immigrating individuals. In Groningen around 1870, 60% of the heads of households were over 35 years of age, and in 1900 this percentage was not much lower.¹¹

Vertical migration

Most migration to Dutch cities in the last part of the nineteenth century can be characterised as stepwise migration. In Groningen in 1870–80, 72% of the individual male immigrants came from the surrounding countryside and villages and smaller cities in the north of the Netherlands. For the women this figure was as high as 80%. During the next decade, when the agrarian depression struck the north of the Netherlands, this type of migration increased by 10% because of the fall in migration from other parts of the country. In 1900–1910, 61% of the individual men and 74% of the individual women still came from the north.

Leeuwarden was also an important destination in stepwise migration. From 1850 onwards, about 60% of the immigrating families came in from the province of Friesland.¹² Among the migrating heads of households, about 30% went back to their area of origin. Almost half of the migrating families in the period 1870–90, however, went to the West, mainly to Amsterdam, although some went to Groningen. Long-distance emigration from Groningen by heads of households around 1890 took place in as many as 60% of the cases.¹³

The greater number of the families also arrived in Groningen by means of stepwise migration: 74% in 1870–80 and 70% in 1900–10. The smaller cities in the province of Groningen, Winschoten and Appingedam, played an important role by ‘collecting’ people from the countryside who then migrated to Groningen. Direct migration to the city was mainly from the adjacent countryside.

The migration to Dordrecht, which has been analysed thoroughly only for two separate years, 1855 and 1904, to some extent shows the same pattern. In 1855, 50% of the immigrating individuals came from the surrounding countryside. For families this figure was as high as 69%. In 1904, 45% of the individuals

¹¹ For other cities there is no information on this point.

¹² Van der Woude, *Leeuwarden*, 314. This analysis does not include individuals.

¹³ Analysis based on samples from the Registers of Population in benchmark years. Only migration within a decade after those benchmark years is taken into account.

and 48% of the families arrived by means of stepwise migration. A substantial part of the Dordrecht immigrants, however, came from Rotterdam and The Hague. In 1855 this category made up 25% of the individuals and by 1904 had risen to 40%. For the greater part this must have been return migration.¹⁴

Indeed, return migration made up a substantial proportion of the total migration movements. An analysis of immigrants who arrived in the city of Groningen from the Groningen countryside in the first five years of a decade, indicated that during that decade only 50% stayed in the city. About 35% went back to their places of origin or to another village or small town in the north. In the period under consideration here, 1870–1910, only 5% (in the beginning) to 7% (towards the end) moved on to big cities in other parts of the country.¹⁵ This brings us to horizontal migration.

Horizontal migration

Migration from Dordrecht to Rotterdam and The Hague has already been mentioned in the previous section. One may characterise this migration as horizontal, but it can also be considered as a next step in a vertical migration movement. This was also the case in Groningen. More than two-thirds of the migrants from the province of Groningen who emigrated along the lines of the urban network system, as mentioned above, went to the three largest cities in the Netherlands, most of them to Amsterdam. The others went to cities of the same rank as Groningen.

Still, the city of Groningen received its share through horizontal migration. In the period 1870–1910, a growing number of migrants followed this pattern. At the beginning of the period Amsterdam and larger cities not so far removed from Groningen were virtually the only destinations. Towards the end, however, Rotterdam and The Hague also received their shares, and other large cities in the Netherlands received numbers of Groningen emigrants more or less corresponding with their size. To investigate the growing importance of this horizontal migration, I traced the movements of people who were born in the city of Groningen in 1870. At the age of 30, in 1900, 16% of the living members of this birth cohort lived in other large cities all over the country, with one-third of them living in Amsterdam. Only 4% lived in other places outside the north.¹⁶

Until now, migration to Amsterdam has never been analysed quantitatively. We have, however, some information on the second city in the Netherlands, for the greater part based on a quantitative analysis for 1853 and 1858. In that period Rotterdam held a top position in vertical migration. Rotterdam collected 20–25% of its immigrants from the smaller cities in the southern part of the province

¹⁴ The analysis of the migration in Dordrecht unfortunately does not include return migration.

¹⁵ The others died in the city or went abroad. A small number migrated to small places outside the north of the Netherlands.

¹⁶ 62% still lived in Groningen, 9% lived in neighbouring municipalities, 15% in the north most of them in middle-sized towns like Leeuwarden, Winschoten, and Meppel, and 2% had gone abroad.

of Zuid Holland and the western parts of the provinces of Utrecht and Gelderland. These immigrants came especially from small cities situated along the big rivers. The surrounding countryside was also an important expulsion area. However, many migrants from this area first settled in smaller cities, such as Brouwershaven (in Zeeland), Hellevoetsluis, Delft, Schiedam, and, as we have seen already, Dordrecht.¹⁷

It is not clear what role Rotterdam at that time played in horizontal migration, but there are signs that Rotterdam's harbour already functioned as an attraction to a substantial number of immigrants from other cities, as well as from Belgium and Germany. In 1850, 16.8% of the Rotterdam heads of households were born outside the province of Zuid Holland, and 2072 heads of households (3.8%) were born in foreign countries. In 1880, on the eve of the large migration waves due to the agrarian depression, these percentages were 16.8 and 2.8 respectively.

Unfortunately, the first subsequent period for which quantitative data are available is 1907-1913. At that time about 30% of the immigrants had come into the city along the lines of the urban network system.¹⁸ Therefore, we may conclude that in the second half of the nineteenth century, though the greater part of urban immigrants came from the surrounding areas of individual cities, specialisation became more and more important as a pull factor for immigrants, especially for those coming from large cities all over the country.

Immigrants and the urban labour market

One might expect that most urban immigrants found a job in the sectors of industry which stressed the industrial specialisation of individual cities. This, however, was only partly the case. In Amsterdam, for instance, it proved to be extremely difficult for immigrants to find a job in the modern industrial sector.¹⁹ This sector, where wages were relatively high and labour conditions were better than in the traditional craft sector, was dominated by people born in Amsterdam. Immigrants for the greater part did not even succeed in finding a regular occupation in the traditional craft sector, and were obliged to accept irregular work in the docks.²⁰ There was a big 'reserve army' of immigrants from the Noord Holland countryside, especially during the agrarian depression.

There are signs that a dual labour market existed not only in Amsterdam, but also in other cities in the Netherlands. In Rotterdam for instance, the docks played the same role for immigrants as they did in Amsterdam.²¹ Even in a city without a modern sector such as Leeuwarden, the immigrants who migrated ver-

¹⁷ Van Dijk, *Rotterdam*, 212.

¹⁸ Bouman & Bouman, *Groei grote werkstad*, 132-137.

¹⁹ L. van Zanden, *De industrialisatie in Amsterdam 1825-1914* (Bergen 1987).

²⁰ Ad Knotter, *Economische transformatie en stedelijke arbeidsmarkt. Amsterdam in de tweede helft van de negentiende eeuw* (Utrecht 1991).

²¹ Bouman & Bouman, *Groei grote werkstad*.

tically from the Frisian countryside were blocked by the locals.²² As a result, many of them went back to their place of origin or migrated to Amsterdam where they met with the same mechanism.

Recently I tried to find out if this dual economic structure, combined with a dual labour market, also existed in Groningen.²³ Groningen at the end of the nineteenth century had a modern industrial sector consisting of printing firms, food industries (tobacco, coffee and tea, sugar and canned meat), a producer of bicycles, and a ready-made clothing industry.²⁴ Although the average size of these firms seldom exceeded 50 employees, these modern industries employed 25% of the total workforce in industry. They paid higher wages.

To measure the effects of this dual economic structure on the labour market, I compared random samples of the Groningen heads of households in benchmark years with random samples of immigrants covering the decades after those benchmark years and a cohort of children born in Groningen in 1880. Table 6.3 gives their occupations around 1910.

Table 6.3: Occupational structure of Groningen heads of households (1910), immigrants (1900-1910), and birth cohort members (1910)

	heads of households		immigrants		cohort members
agriculture	1.5	(1.8)	0.7	(1.0)	4.3
modern industry	12	(14.5)	4.4	(6.1)	19.9
traditional crafts	20	(24.1)	25.4	(35.1)	24.2
services	42	(50.6)	35.3	(48.8)	46.3
free labour	7.5	(9.0)	6.5	(9.0)	5.7
without employment	17		27.7		-
n	760		889		146

Source: Samples from the Registers of Population (heads of households and immigrants 1:25; birth cohort 1:2).

See also Kooij, 'Artisans'.

Explanation: Only men included. Between brackets: percentages excluding the unemployed.

The table shows that the immigrants had the greatest problems in the labour market, they had almost no access to modern industry. Therefore, Groningen immigrants for the greater part found employment in the traditional craft sector, especially in the food sector (mainly in bakeries and butcher's shops). In the service sector they generally obtained only low-status jobs as porters or very small shopkeepers. Many of them had irregular jobs (free labour) and many were unemployed. The single women usually became domestic servants. The better paid

²² Van der Woude, *Leeuwarden*, 309-323.

²³ Pim Kooij, 'Artisans and the structure of the labour market in Dutch provincial capitals around 1900' (paper presented at the 2nd international urban history conference, Strasbourg September 1994).

²⁴ Pim Kooij, 'Groningen: central place and peripheral city', in Pim Kooij and Piet Pellenbarg (eds.) *Regional Capitals. Past, Present, Prospects* (Assen 1994) 37-63.

jobs in the service sector were for the indigenous heads of households, and the cohort born in Groningen also included high percentages of bookkeepers and clerks. Unemployment was totally absent from this group.

This picture is coloured by vertical short-distance migration, which as we have seen formed part of the process for the bulk of the young single immigrants. The immigrants who had travelled long distances, however, sometimes obtained very different jobs, as civil servants, professors, teachers, vicars, lawyers, bank or insurance company officials or nurses. In these job areas the 'horizontal' immigrants surpassed the 'vertical' ones. For the greater part heads of households were involved. Unmarried males gained entry as shop-assistants in chain stores. Unmarried women tried, often successfully, to get jobs as teachers or nurses via the urban network migration system.

Of course, not all long-distance immigrants were successful. Many of them were returned emigrants who had great difficulties finding jobs in the just same way as the short-distance immigrants.

The Groningen evidence shows an important difference between horizontal and vertical migration. People with higher education and exclusive occupations only migrated via the horizontal circuit and usually travelled long distances. Their recruitment partly took place on a national level, for instance via advertisements in national newspapers or through professional networks covering the whole country. In addition, this long-distance migration sometimes took the form of transfers within the bureaucratic system, the railway companies or between branches of banks, insurance companies and department stores. Moreover, the university became an important pull factor.

An interesting point is that factory owners, who were of special importance in determining the specialisation in towns, were, for the greater part, immigrants. They immigrated vertically as well as horizontally. In 1910 Groningen counted 28 rather rich factory owners. Eleven of them had been born in the city itself, 13 in the province of Groningen, and 4 had been born in the west and in Germany.²⁵ Therefore, specialisation was, for the greater part, induced by people from the region itself.

When we take a closer look at Groningen as a supplier of migrants for the national circuit, we can distinguish five sectors of commerce and industry for which heads of households were inclined to migrate. These sectors, for which more than 10% emigrated in every decade and more than 50% of these emigrants left the north, were building, trade, traffic, the professions, and the civil service. The inclination to migrate was greater in the higher income groups than in the lower income groups, especially before 1890. After that year, members of the middle classes also acquired a growing propensity to migrate. This was connected with rising opportunities in the west where a 'take off' was taking place. The relative proportion from the lowest income group remained below 10%, with

²⁵ Kooij, *Groningen*, 338.

the exception of the period 1890–1900 when 12% of this income group emigrated. However, in absolute terms this low-income group formed the largest group. Many carpenters, bricklayers and small merchants tried their fortune in Amsterdam and other cities. Unless they were civil servants, lawyers or railway officials, their chances were not very good. Many of them returned in despair. Indeed, in this way ‘horizontal migration’ of families also showed a dual structure.

Among the single male emigrants to other cities there was an overrepresentation of journeymen, bakers, shop assistants, merchants, tailors, and unemployed. Almost all the single women became domestic servants. Almost 10% of the domestic servants, who had previously migrated to Groningen, moved to other, larger cities. Many of them also had to return.

Living conditions

The urban migration waves in the second half of the nineteenth century coincided with the removal of the ramparts. In 1874 a law was proclaimed which approved the dismantlement of the city walls in the north, east and south of the Netherlands, because the French–German war had shown that the ramparts were no longer of any use. That decision had been taken some decades earlier for the western cities. There the Dutch inundation line had to assume a defence function.

This development enabled a fundamental rearrangement of the urban space, which before that time was limited by walls, which in most cities dated from the beginning of the seventeenth century. For three centuries these walls had determined the distribution of the urban populations.

This distribution had taken the same pattern in every city. Though the elite clustered in or near the city centre, there was no clear residential segregation. The upper class for the greater part lived along the main streets, the side-streets were characterised by houses for the middle classes, while the lower status groups crowded into houses in back-streets. Even this system was repeatedly broken through, because of the fact that many low-income people lived in the cellars of the houses of the rich.

Therefore, no Dutch city showed an ideal-typical distribution, as described, for instance, by Sjöberg.²⁶ Still, some cities showed some vague reflections of that pattern. In Groningen, for instance, the elite lived right in the town centre, while the lowest social groups crowded against the city walls. Many of them, however, also lived in the centre, as did middle-class people. This pattern could also be found in other cities which were not situated alongside rivers, for instance The Hague, Haarlem, 's-Hertogenbosch and Delft. In river cities the elite usually lived alongside the river and the harbours (for example Rotterdam and

²⁶ G. Sjöberg, *The preindustrial city* (New York 1960). In some preindustrial cities Sjöberg discerned a population distribution in concentric zones: the elite occupied the city centre, circled by other groups with diminishing status up to the lowest ranks on the outskirts.

Dordrecht), but many labourers also lived in that neighbourhood because they worked there.

Amsterdam was a case apart. Here the elite had created its own concentric zones formed by the artificial canals. The labourers for the greater part were locked up behind the boulevards which lined these canals, while a portion of the middle class lived in houses in side-streets.

The removal of the ramparts created a need for a new kind of urban planning. In most cities a part of the ramparts was transformed into parks, another part became a dwelling area for the well-to-do, and a third part was transformed into an area for industry and large utility buildings. Outside that zone new houses were built, usually with low rents.

Map 6.1 shows that that situation existed in Groningen. The park is in the north-west. A large Academic Hospital was built in the east. And in the south, representative boulevards for the well-to-do were constructed. New industry was situated in the neighbourhood of the railway station. The rich also occupied an area of villas near the station. In the extreme north and in the south-east, low-rent houses were constructed. For the greater part these cheap houses were constructed by private individuals. There were also some enclaves of houses built by public building companies with the financial participation of the elite. However, before World War I they provided only less than 5% of the new houses needed.

How did the migrants fit into this pattern? Migration into Groningen rose at the time that residential segregation started to take shape. The elite moved from the city centre to the new boulevards in the south. Their houses were transformed into big shops, banks, hotels, restaurants and offices. Smaller shops were located mainly along the exit routes where the people from the province came to shop on market days. This process of city formation did not, however, cause a fall in the number of dwellings. Many shop-owners lived above their shops, and in the cellars there remained room for low-status people. The average number of inhabitants in the inner city, however, fell from 7.5 per house in 1870 to 6 in 1910.²⁷

The locals tried to move out of the inner city, the rich because of the noise and the presence of the poor in the backstreets, the middle class because of their increasing awareness of the unhealthy living conditions in their neighbourhoods, which were stressed by 'hygienists' such as L. Ali Cohen who was a leading figure in the Dutch public health movement. Therefore, many members of the lower middle class settled in newly built houses in the south of the city. House owners preferred these types, postal workers, policemen, carpenters, painters and shop assistants, to lower status workers because of their ability to pay the rent. However, their new houses also had many deficiencies, such as the absence of a sewage system. Only the houses of the public building companies, or most of

²⁷ Kooij, *Groningen*, 241.

them at least, had modern utilities.

The middle class first left the old parts in the west and the south-east of the inner city where the houses were worst, leaving the low-income, working-class people who could not afford the rent of about two guilders a week which had to be paid in the south of the city. It was there and in the inner city, from where most locals had departed, that room was created for immigrants.

In 1890-1900, 31% of the immigrating units settled in the city centre, near the central square, and 11% in the two old working-class areas. The rest of the old city received 14%. The new well-to-do areas along the boulevards in the south and the so-called professors area in the west received 14% of the immigrants. As for the rest, 21% settled in the southern outskirts and 8% in the northern ones; 2% came by ship.²⁸

It is not surprising that most immigrants settled in the city centre since most of them were young and unmarried. Many of them rented a place above the shops and behind the workshops where they were employed. But many others rented a room, or a bed, in a working-class houses. If the elite had not moved to the boulevards, the number of single immigrants living in the inner city would have been even higher, because most immigrating young women entered domestic service in the houses of the elite and the upper middle class.

The immigrating families tried to avoid the inner city. However, about 30% settled there. Another 30% found houses in the new southern parts of the city. Among them was a small percentage that settled in more expensive houses along the main road to the south. Most of them, however, had to be content with houses the locals had left there. The same was the case with the 20% in the northern outskirts.

The housing situation of immigrants in other Dutch cities has never been studied quantitatively. Qualitative studies, however, indicate that the settlement pattern seems to have been similar to the one in Groningen. In Rotterdam, for instance, the immigrants who worked in the harbours also seem to have mainly lived in the inner city, in bad housing left by the locals. These locals moved to new areas on the outskirts of the town. The inner city, where city-formation also took place, could not of course accommodate all the immigrants. The new areas in the south (Feijenoord, for instance) were indeed partly built for immigrants, although many of them could not afford the rent of two guilders a week. As a result, the average number of inhabitants per house in the inner city in Rotterdam was very high. In 1909 11% of the Rotterdam houses consisted of only one room with an average of 2.9 inhabitants.²⁹

The Rotterdam elite for the greater part left the inner city. They moved for instance to Kralingen in the north-east. Some of them even moved to The Hague, which at that time was becoming famous as a residential city.

The Hague was considered by many as an attractive place of settlement for

²⁸ Calculated from a sample of immigrants from the Register of Population (n=775).

²⁹ Bouman & Bouman, *Groei grote werkstad*, 58.

retired people from the colonies and for civil servants employed by the national government, which was situated in the city.

However, this government sector employed only 6% of the workforce. Even The Hague had an important industrial sector employing 36% of the workforce, although the trade sector was the fastest grower (17% in 1900). Compared to Amsterdam and Rotterdam, the traffic sector was rather small because of the absence of harbours and international trade. Also of importance were domestic service (20%) and other services (17%).³⁰

As a result, The Hague, as the immigration numbers show, not only attracted well-to-do 'horizontal' migrants but also functioned as an important destination for low-status immigrants from the countryside, especially during the agrarian depression. The industry was mainly small-scale and focused on the local and regional market: printing, food, furniture, clothing. Large mechanised industry was not totally absent (metal, bread and dairy products factories), but in 1889 only employed 14% of the labour force.³¹ It is unclear if the labour market had a dual character, but there was at least a big traditional crafts sector, and the expanding number of shops also offered opportunities for immigrants. At that time even some emigrants from Groningen went to The Hague to open a shop there or to become a shop assistant.

Residential segregation in The Hague took a special form. The city had never had fortifications and therefore limitations on the use of space had been absent. As a result the big houses had ample courtyards which were used for the construction of houses for the working class. These were the so-called *hofjes* (almshouses), which in other cities were only built for the old and the sick. In 1895 there were 7000 of these *hofjes* where about 40,000 lived people out of the sight of the elite.

When the population of The Hague started to grow, in about 1860, the elite started to move from the inner city to newly built villa parks just outside that area. In years to come they filled in the whole area between The Hague and the old fishing village of Scheveningen. This movement was supported by the construction of tramways. By doing so they created room for the construction of shops, offices and public buildings in the inner city (city formation) but also for the construction of more *hofjes*. It is here that the low-income immigrating families must have found their lodgings, because the number of inhabitants of the inner city hardly fell.

In 1892, for public health and security reasons, the construction of more *hofjes* was forbidden. About the same time the building of multi-storey houses for the middle classes started, rather removed from the villas of the rich. Some working-class houses were built, although not many by public companies. As in Groningen, these houses were monopolised by upper working-class and lower

³⁰ P.R.D. Stokvis, *De wording van modern Den Haag* (Zwolle 1987).

³¹ Stokvis, *Wording modern Den Haag*, 111.

middle-class people.³² The chances are that most of them were locals, too.

Amsterdam extended in a way comparable with other cities. The removal of the fortifications created space for a new belt of large industries, villa parks, working-class districts and public buildings. There were, however, some differences. The first was that many members of the old Amsterdam elite refused to leave their houses along the canals.³³ They kept living near to or on top of their offices. Some of them did depart, but often to move to villages situated alongside the railway to the south. This process of suburbanisation only took place in other Dutch cities after 1900. One alternative for the elite inside Amsterdam proved to be successful: the construction, in 1864, of the Vondel Park just outside the canal belt, where villas were also built. Here some members of the elite settled to make room for city-formation in the inner city. In other villa areas outside the inner city, there was an overrepresentation of rich immigrants.³⁴

Most new houses were built by private companies for workers with an income of between 600 and 1000 guilders a year and for members of the lower middle class who were considered safe tenants. Middle-class houses acted as a buffer for the houses of the rich. In Amsterdam, not only social segregation took shape but the also segregation of working and living.³⁵

Most immigrants, victims of the dual labour market, did not earn that 600 guilders. Together with the lowest strata of the autochthons, they had to live in three parts of the city: De Jordaan, De Eilanden, and the Jewish quarter.³⁶ De Jordaan was the large working-class area in the extreme north-west of the inner city. Living conditions were very bad there, as was repeatedly pointed out by the Amsterdam 'hygienists'. The same was true of the semi-islands alongside the river IJ and the harbours, while population density and sanitary conditions in the old Jewish quarter in the east of the inner city were just as bad.

Therefore, in every city the bulk of the immigrants had to live in the inner city in bad houses vacated by the locals. In the next section we will see if they had any chance of escaping that situation.

Immigration and social mobility

It is not easy to determine how successful the urban immigrants were exactly. In the previous sections, it has been pointed out that their vicissitudes differed depending on which group they belonged to. There was a difference between the opportunities for migrants who travelled long distances and for those who immigrated vertically from the surrounding countryside. There were also unequal opportunities for single migrants and heads of households. But it might

³² Stokvis, *Wording modern Den Haag*, ch. 2.

³³ Boudien de Vries, *Electoraat en elite. Sociale structuur en sociale mobiliteit in Amsterdam 1850-1895* (Amsterdam 1986) 63.

³⁴ De Vries, *Electoraat en elite*, 64.

³⁵ M.F. Wagenaar, *Amsterdam 1876-1914. Economisch herstel, ruimtelijke expansie en de veranderende ordening van het stedelijk grondgebruik* (Amsterdam 1990).

³⁶ Wagenaar, *Amsterdam*, ch. 8.

have been that a person's chances depended in the first place on the social group they belonged to.

The Amsterdam experience gives some support to that view. While the immigrating members of the lower class and the middle class seem to have been very unsuccessful, the elite did rather well. The upward social mobility of the immigrating members of the elite and the upper middle class was greater for some periods than that experienced by the indigenous elite. This is indicated by an analysis of the people who were entitled to vote for the Dutch Tweede Kamer (the equivalent of the British House of Commons). This group contained about 7% of all heads of households. Between 1854 and 1864, according to the levels of tax assessments, upward social mobility of the people born in Dutch cities other than Amsterdam itself was 26.2%; the figure for the people born in Amsterdam was 18.7%. Between 1874 and 1884 the Amsterdam elite was more successful: 25.9% versus 16.7%. In both periods the locals experienced less downward mobility than the newcomers: about 9% versus 13.1% and 11.7% respectively.³⁷ It is possible, however, that many of these immigrated elite members had come in at a very early age and had therefore made their career in Amsterdam from the start.

The Rotterdam evidence spans the total group of married immigrants without differentiation. In 1870 the distribution of the total Rotterdam population was 66.8% autochthons versus 32.2% allochthons. In terms of upward social mobility of heads of households, the ratio was 73% autochthons versus 27% allochthons (between 1870 and 1880). As regards downward social mobility, this was 62.9% versus 37.1%.³⁸ Therefore, the immigrating families were generally worse off. Moreover, we must keep in mind that most immigrants never succeeded in becoming tax payers. It was within this group that real proletarianisation occurred.

To gain a glimpse of the distribution of social mobility, I made a new analysis of the Groningen database of immigrants in the period 1890-1900. In that period only 6.7% of the immigrating units had to pay the local poll tax. This means that almost all immigrants belonged to the lowest social level. This is not surprising because most of them were young and single. But even the heads of households had a lower income. Only 25% of them had to pay tax compared to 35.3% of the indigenous heads of households. Moreover, most of the taxpayers did not earn much more than the 500 guilders which was the limit for taxation.

Upward social mobility only occurred for 2.5% of immigrants; 0.5% of the immigrants experienced downward social mobility in the period under consideration. The 19 cases of upward social mobility for the greater part concerned people from large cities in the west (people in military service, the civil service, the professions, and higher education). A smaller group came from places in the north; they had jobs in the craft sector or had retired. Within both groups there

³⁷ De Vries, *Electoraat en elite*, table 10.4.

³⁸ Van Dijk, *Rotterdam*, 148 and 214.

was a small proportion of people born in Groningen who had made their money elsewhere and returned.

Apart from this intragenerational mobility, the Groningen database also enables us to shed some light on intergenerational migration. We constructed birth cohorts in benchmark years for nine villages and small towns in the province of Groningen. As has already been pointed out, many of the people born in the villages migrated to the city of Groningen. At least 15% of the members of the birth cohorts of 1850 and 1870 lived in the city at some point in their lives. This was a substantial percentage when we bear in mind that about 30% of the cohort members had died very young.

For one village, Hoogkerk, a municipality of dairy farms to the west of the city, we already know how much social mobility there was among the people who went to the city. At the age of 40, when the career of most people was already complete, 35 members of the 1850 cohort (N=120) and 26 members of the 1870 cohort (N=120) lived in the city of Groningen. Some had migrated at an early age with their parents. Others, an almost equal amount, had arrived individually. Most immigrants had a low-status background (working class and lower middle class). Table 6.4 shows their social mobility.

Table 6.4. Social mobility of people born in Hoogkerk living in Groningen at the age of 40

	cohort 1850				cohort 1870			
social class of cohort member	lower	lower	middle	elite	lower	lower	middle	elite
<i>social class of father</i>	<i>middle</i>				<i>middle</i>			
lower class	14	4			12		2	
lower middle class	5	2	3	2	3	2	1	
middle class	1				1	1		1
elite		1	2	1			1	
N		35				26		

Source: Marcel Clement, 'Demografisch gedrag, leefsituatie en mobiliteit. Een analyse van vier generaties', in P. Kooij, *Dorp naast een stad. Hoogkerk 1770-1914* (Assen 1993) 160-199, 193

Explanation: The incomes of the cohort members or their partners are compared to the income of their fathers at the time of their birth.

The table shows that most social mobility was downward. The greatest fall was experienced by those women who married a partner of a lower rank. The happy few who reached a higher position became, for instance, architects, surveyors, grocers or merchants. We still do not know what happened to the 9 people from the 1850 cohort and the 7 people of the 1870 cohort who went via Groningen to the big cities in the west or abroad, but we doubt if they were better off there.

Social relations

Our knowledge of the relations between immigrants and locals for the greater part concerns the upper classes. Research into the composition of elites has been conducted for a number of cities. One of the observations which emerged from this research is that, in the course of the nineteenth century, thanks to greater opportunities for geographical mobility, a national elite took shape consisting of the top layers of several local and regional elites.³⁹ This elite was not homogeneous, but consisted, according to some researchers, of people who had high assessments in land tax, a tax on wealth, or the *patentbelasting* paid by industrialists.⁴⁰

There was indeed a growing geographical mobility among local elites, which caused a concentration of them in the west of the country. The Hague and Amsterdam were the main centres. A number of the old elite of Delft and Rotterdam, for instance, moved to The Hague, as did a number of the old Frisian nobility.⁴¹ But we may wonder if this is indeed an indication of the formation of a national elite. Perhaps The Hague became in this way a stronghold of the traditional elites, whilst in Rotterdam and Amsterdam the modern 'economy based' elites became stronger.

But even in Amsterdam the traditional elite, a mixture of noble and old patrician families, remained strong. Of course new groups came forward, especially rich Jews and Germans, people who had made fortunes in the colonies, and industrialists. But this did not necessarily mean *connubium* and *convivium*.⁴²

This was also the case in provincial capitals. In Maastricht for instance, rich industrialists were not considered as equals by the old elite, even if they had been born in the city itself. Top civil servants, however, who migrated along the lines of the urban network system, gained easy access to the upper echelons of society.⁴³ Leeuwarden showed the same picture.⁴⁴

In Groningen the traditional elite remained dominant right up until 1915. There was not much emigration, and even marriages between members of the local nobility and partners from elsewhere were rare. The new industrialists, who, as has already been mentioned, originated for the greater part from the province of Groningen, did not mingle with the old aristocracy. Their sons and daughters married children of other members of the economic elite.⁴⁵ If *connu-*

³⁹ K. Bruin, *Een herenwereld ontleed. Over Amsterdamse oude en nieuwe elites in de tweede helft van de negentiende eeuw* (Amsterdam 1980).

⁴⁰ N. Bos, R. de Peuter, 'De lijsten van verkiesbaren voor de Eerste Kamer als bron voor verkiezingsonderzoek (1850-1892)', *Tijdschrift voor Sociale Geschiedenis* 14 (1988) 412-437.

⁴¹ J.A. de Jonge, 'Delft in de negentiende eeuw. Van stille nette plaats tot centrum van industrie', *Economisch-en Sociaalhistorisch Jaarboek* 37 (1974) 145-248; Stokvis, *Wording modern Den Haag*, ch. 3; Yme Kuiper, *Adel in Friesland 1780-1880* (Groningen 1993) 134.

⁴² De Vries, *Electoraat en elite*.

⁴³ Nick Bos, 'De "deftige lui". Elites in Maastricht tussen 1850 en 1890', *Tijdschrift voor Sociale Geschiedenis* 12 (1986) 53-90.

⁴⁴ Van der Woude, *Leeuwarden*, 332-349.

⁴⁵ Kooij, *Groningen*, ch. 2.4.

bium was almost absent, there was *convivium*. As in Maastricht, the old and new elites, immigrants and locals, met in 'De Groote Sociëteit', an exclusive club. And in politics there was cooperation, too. In 1900, 17 of the 31 members of the municipal council had been born in the city itself, 8 had been born in the province of Groningen, and 6 had been born elsewhere; 22 of them belonged to the elite. In spite of their different backgrounds (newcomers had more modern occupations such as director of the power station, engineer on the railways), in politics the old and new elites established a firm *esprit de corps*. What is good for the elite is good for the city, was their conviction.⁴⁶

Around 1950 Bouman and Bouman collected the ego-documents of people who had migrated to Rotterdam at the end of the nineteenth century. This collection of letters, diaries and retrospective essays gives some insight into the social relations of immigrants from the working class and the lower middle class.

Their social contacts seem to have been limited to people from the same region of origin, who clustered together in the same parts of the city. They kept speaking their own dialect, which caused a lot of trouble for their children at school. The contact with their families in the region of origin in many cases remained intact and was an impulse to chain migration. Religion in some cases was an aid to integration, but in other cases people ceased to visit church, because, for example, they did not like the style of the vicar. The socialist movement became an alternative for some immigrants.⁴⁷

Some of these characteristics, I found, also applied to the Groningen immigrants. There was clustering. There was even an overrepresentation of immigrants from the countryside east of the city in the eastern parts of Groningen, from the west in the western parts, and so on. This was also the case in Rotterdam. The existence of chain migration was sometimes very clear. For instance, in some cheap hotels in the city centre people arrived from the same place year after year. There were also student houses with only students from Friesland, while others only lodged students from Amsterdam. Some shopkeepers and craftsmen always recruited their employees from the same places. And many domestic servants were succeeded by girls from the same place of origin, sometimes even by younger sisters.

It is not easy to be certain about the scale of integration of immigrants in the urban society. One indicator, however, is *connubium*. To find out if immigrants were accepted by a local partner, for a Groningen born cohort, 1880, the place or origin of the partners of a group of people born in Groningen in 1880 was taken into account. Table 6.5 gives the places of birth of the partners of the cohort members who still lived in the city at the time of their marriage.

The data on the heads of households give a very rough indication of the

⁴⁶ Pim Kooij, 'Fingerprints of an urban elite', in H. Diederiks, P. Hohenberg, M. Wagenaar (eds.) *The visible hand and the fortune of cities* (Leicester 1992) 102-124.

⁴⁷ Bouman & Bouman, *Groei grote werkstad*.

Table 6.5. Birthplaces of partners of cohort members around 1900

	heads of households	partners men	partners women
City of Groningen	45.2	67.2	61.4
Province of Groningen	30.1	20.9	20.5
North-Netherlands	16.5	6.0	6.0
Elsewhere	6.3	6.0	10.6
Abroad	1.9	0.7	3.0
N	753	134	132

numbers of autochthons and allochthons at that time. The table shows that the men were more inclined to choose their partner from within the city. The women secured relatively more partners from far away. This is in accordance with the general structure of immigration, since men migrated longer distances than women. Therefore, more men from other parts of the country were available. An interesting point is that not all partners lived in the city of Groningen just before marriage. Some people lived in the province. This means that they must have met their partner when they visited the city. This could have been on market days or at the annual fair, which was a big attraction at that time.

Conclusion

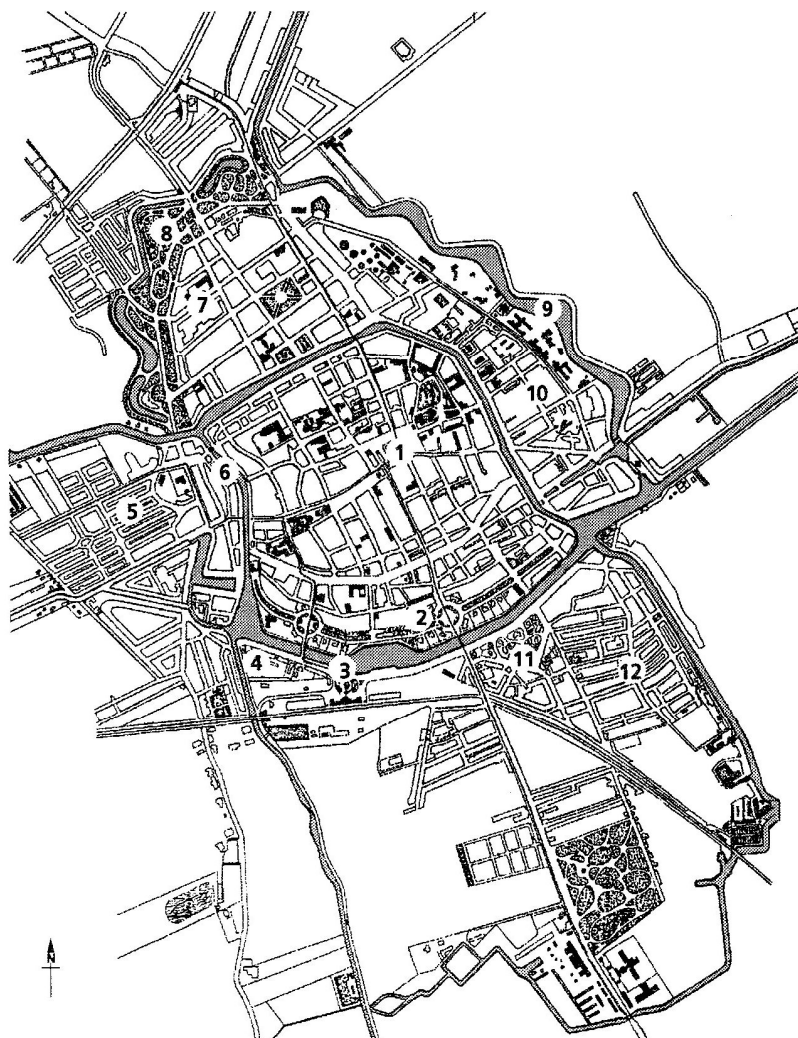
In most Dutch cities in the second half of the nineteenth century, the number of emigrants and immigrants in any given decade together outnumbered the population of the city itself. The greatest number of immigrants came in from the surrounding countryside. They might have been pulled by the opportunities specialising cities seem to have offered. However, that they were pushed by the mechanising of agriculture and the agrarian depression seems to be a better explanation.

Actually, the cities could not offer them very much. The locals had better chances of finding their way in the labour market. Therefore, many immigrants departed for a larger city. But there the duality of the labour market proved to be an even bigger obstacle, while living conditions were bad. As a result, many of them remigrated, bitterly disappointed, to their region of origin or to a smaller city which they had perhaps passed earlier.

Migration along the lines of the urban network system was sometimes more successful, especially when highly educated people were involved who had specific jobs which were distributed on a transparent national labour market.

Yet, many low-status immigrants must have had positive feelings about their initiatives. The situation in the countryside was even worse. Moreover, a number of the men found a partner in the city, or the opportunity to learn skills for a job, and returned as craftsmen.

Map 6.1. Groningen in 1913



- | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1 City Centre | 5 Professors area | 9 Academic hospital |
| 2 Boulevards | 6 Old western working class area | 10 Old eastern working class area |
| 3 Railway Station | 7 Old northwestern working class area | 11 Villa park |
| 4 Industrial Area | 8 Park | 12 New working class/lower middle class area |

