Young migrants' transition from school to work

Obstacles and opportunities

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De overgang van school naar werk van migrantenjongeren
Obstakels en mogelijkheden
(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)

Proefschrift

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1.1 General introduction

There is ongoing concern in the Netherlands about the position of second generation migrant youth. This worry is fed by two, rather persistent phenomena: their educational disadvantage and the high youth unemployment levels. After primary school the majority of migrant youngsters[1] end up in (lower) vocational education and training (VET) and upward mobility to higher professional education is limited (OECD, 2010; Council for Work and Income [RWI], 2006). Young migrants generally drop out before graduation twice as often as their native counterparts (Min. OCW, 2009). Moreover, secondary vocational education, where migrant youth are overrepresented, has the highest dropout rates (Ministry of Education [Min. OCW], 2010).

This unfavourable picture is reflected on the labour market: young migrants are concentrated in the lower segments and have persistent high unemployment rates (Statistics Netherlands [CBS], 2008). More than is the case with their native counterparts, the position of young migrants on the labour market is also dependent on fluctuations in the economic cycle: in a period of declining growth, migrant youth run a high risk of becoming unemployed (CBS 2008; RWI 2006) because of their low educational level and often being employed under flexible work contracts (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment [Min. SZW], 2009a; RWI, 2006). This means that their position has deteriorated rapidly in the current economic downturn: last year 21 per cent of migrant youngsters in the 15-25 age range were unemployed compared to 10 per cent of their native counterparts (CBS, 2010).

The rather unfavourable educational and labour market outcomes of young migrants can also be observed in other European countries. However, the considerable differences with the labour market outcomes of the natives in the Netherlands are more marked (Liebig & Widmaier, 2010). As in other European countries, migrant youngsters are also overrepresented in the most difficult 'NEET' group, i.e. Not in Education, Employment of Training, or they are recidivist dropouts, not active jobseekers, and they are referred to in the current Dutch discourse as non-participants, vulnerable, overburdened youngsters or in need of care (Min. SZW 2006, 2010; Scientific Council for Government Policy [WRR], 2009). The OECD (2008) points out the relatively large group of marginalized youngsters in the Netherlands of whom

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[1] The term 'young migrant' generally refers to the children of migrants, i.e. the second generation, born in the Netherlands. It can also refer to children of migrants who were born abroad (the first generation). Furthermore, the young migrants referred to in the thesis are in the Netherlands categorized as non-western. Non-western means migrants from Turkey, Africa, Latin America and Asia, with the exemption of Indonesia and Japan, and with at least one parent born in one of these countries. In the thesis these youngsters are mostly Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese or Antillean. These are also the four largest migrant groups in the Netherlands. Furthermore, dropout rates and unemployment figures are the highest for these groups.

many are migrants who dropped out of school and are far removed from the labour market.

Early school leaving is considered to be the main cause of other problems that cost the individual and society dear: it is deemed to be a forerunner of long-term unemployment, criminality, and poor integration and leads to marginalization (Min. OCW, 2007a). Moreover, what is at stake is the ambition to raise the general educational level in order to become and remain a knowledge society. The fear is that too many migrant youngsters will not make a successful transition from school to work, and they will end up in marginalized positions of unemployment or criminality. Migrant youngsters are seen in policy circles as a group in need of additional attention if they are to improve their educational level or to be encouraged to join the labour market (Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands [SER], 2007). However, their transition problems are mainly dealt with within the general framework of education and youth labour market policies.

Over the past few years the dropout problems have led to a slew of, often mandatory, measures and projects. For instance, in 2007 an additional year was added to the compulsory education age and a 'qualification obligation' imposed on those who have not yet obtained the basic qualification (Min. OCW, 2007b). The basic qualification is the minimum required vocational educational level to secure work. Last year saw the introduction of a study-work obligation to the age of 27 (Min. SZW, 2009b). If young people refuse a social services 'offer' to learn or work, they may no longer be entitled to financial benefit. A recurring theme is to send 'unwilling' (migrant) youngsters to 'prep' camps or boarding schools (Taskforce Jeugdwerkloosheid, 2006).

The current economic crisis has rendered the dropout problem even more urgent (Min. SZW, 2010). Dropouts and migrant youngsters tend to swell the ranks of the long-term unemployed. It is the non-participants who are affected the most, and unemployment figures in this group are rising sharply (CBS, 2009a). In response, the Youth Unemployment Action Plan aims to improve the youngsters' labour market potential by encouraging them to continue studying, by mounting a trainee post and internship offensive, and by providing special resources and finance for migrant and vulnerable youngsters (Min. SZW, 2009a). In spite of being relatively small in number, the vulnerable or overburdened pupils are at the fore of the policy debate and are often seen to represent whole groups of migrant dropouts (de Graaf & van Zenderen, 2009).

Worthy of note is that there is a tendency in this debate to explain the young migrants' problems with the school-work transition more by their supposed cultural or ethnic deficits. For instance, a popular explanation for young migrants' problematic labour market integration relates to their lack of social or soft skills which are considered essential to employability (Min. SZW, 2010; SER, 2007). More generally, dropout and unemployment problems are seen as signs of failed integration. Because migrant youth are overrepresented in the dropout figures, policymakers and public

opinion leaders tend to believe that many migrant youngsters are in danger of not participating or integrating in society (de Graaf & van Zenderen, 2009).

There are a number of different explanations for the difficulties migrant youngsters experience with the school-work transition: a less advantaged socio-economic background, low educational level, early school leaving, language deficiency, disconnected migrant networks, and ineffective search strategies by migrants, and employers (OECD, 2009; Regioplan Beleidsonderzoek, 2005; RWI, 2006; SER, 2007). But structural and institutional obstacles are also mentioned: for example, the restructuring of the labour market in a bid to become a service and knowledge society; (early) selection processes in stratified educational systems; segregated neighbourhoods; and problems with discrimination in the labour market itself (Education Council, 2010; Gans, 1993; Pfeffer, 2008; Portes, Fernandez-Kelly, Haller, 2005; Social and Cultural Planning Office [SCP], 2007; Wilson, 1999; Zhou, 1997).

It is also important to look at how the very nature of the school-work transition has changed over the past few decades. The school-work transition phase in the life course is now longer; the life course is more fragmented and de-standardized; and there is more room for individual agency. Walther (2006) refers to the 'yoyo' mechanism when describing the swing between periods of education, employment and relationships that characterize young people's contemporary school-work-family sequences. However, in spite of greater opportunity for individual agency, the outcome of school-work transitions are still bound by structural factors such as class, the VET system itself, and the labour market (Furlong, 2009).

This thesis focuses on the socio-economic integration of migrant youngsters, i.e. their unfavourable educational and labour market position. Central to the thesis is the school-work transition that is hindered by early school leaving and youth unemployment. Attention is hereby given to the trend towards increased polarization among and within migrant groups (Crul, Pasztor & Lelie, 2008; de Graaf & van Zenderen, 2009). The situation for most migrant youngsters appears to be far from bleak since their position in the educational system and on the labour market is gradually improving and showing clear signs of upward mobility. There is, for instance, a considerable increase in the number of migrant youngsters in higher education (CBS, 2009b; CBS, 2010). On the other hand there are groups of migrant youngsters who drop out and are in danger of marginalization. Furthermore, several studies point to considerable gender differences in school engagement and performance within migrant groups, with, interestingly enough, girls outperforming boys (López, 2003; Rumbaut, 2000; Schmid, 2001).

The aim of the thesis is twofold: 1) to gain an understanding of migrants' school-work transition by looking at their school careers, at their experiences with internships and labour market entry, and at the strategies they have developed to deal with these situations; 2) to examine what is and can be done to prevent dropout and/or unemployment, or to help dropouts or unemployed return either to school or work, so that migrant youngsters can participate fully, both socially and economically, in society.

This requires an evaluative examination of national policies and projects and initiatives as provided in the young migrants' local context. Decentralization of responsibilities for policy execution means that the local context is where the policies are actually put into practice.

The study focuses primarily on the Netherlands context. Nevertheless, the school-work situation of young migrants will be put in an international comparative perspective throughout the thesis. A comparative perspective, for instance, is used to situate the Dutch VET system. Moreover, the Dutch data are supplemented with a European comparative study of the school-work experience of migrant youngsters. The analysis of policies, figures and the situation of young migrants focuses on the current situation and developments in the last decade since it was then that the position of young migrants was given even more attention, and policies to combat early school leaving and to integrate migrants developed rapidly.

Central questions:
1. *How do young migrants experience their school-work transition, bearing in mind the migrant youngsters' social networks and abilities, the VET system, and the local labour market itself?*
2. *What are the contributions of the policies and practices that aim to stimulate and smoothen the school-work transition by preventing dropping out or by encouraging re-integration back into school or the labour market?*

The following sub-questions are addressed:
- What difficulties and opportunities do migrant youngsters experience in their VET school careers?
- What experiences do migrant youngsters have with inclusion and exclusion on the labour market?
- What is the role of migrant youngsters' social networks in the school-work transition?
- How are policies on early school leaving and youth unemployment implemented in the local context (Utrecht)?
- What are the consequences of policy implementation for the migrant youngsters involved, and does (new) policy fit their own strategies and perspectives?

1.2 Theoretical (and policy) notions

1.2.1 Segmented assimilation: divergent integration and adaptation to host society

The problems of migrant youth are theoretically contextualized by the debate on segmented assimilation. This debate shows that the migrants' integration in and adaptation to the host society involves different paths with different socioeconomic outcomes (Portes & Zhou, 1993) that are, in fact, divisions linked to existing social stratification. The classical idea is a path of upward, steady, gradual integration and acculturation in the host society. However, instigators of the debate on segmented

assimilation question this and point to the emergence of two other paths: 1) successful integration in the host society whilst maintaining one's own cultural heritage; and 2) the opposite - downward mobility with migrants ending up in a marginalized or underclass position (Gans, 1993; Portes & Zhou, 1993; Zhou, 1997).

These different routes for adaptation and integration are the outcomes of the interplay between institutional or structural factors, such as the education system, labour market restructuring (i.e. de-industrialization, increasing demand for technical and professional skills), living in deprived neighbourhoods, integration policies, labour market discrimination, and social biographical resources (Gans, 1993; Portes et al., 2005; Zhou, 1997). For instance, impoverished living conditions in inner cities are associated with multiple problems such as poor schooling, school dropout, drugs and criminality, and affiliation with youth gangs (Portes et al., 2005; Zhou, 1997). These studies also point to the detrimental effects racism or discrimination have on occupational and upward social mobility. Faced with these impediments, migrant youngsters may even develop a negative stance towards education if they are sceptical about school achievement as a means to upward mobility (Schmid, 2001; Zhou, 1997). Social capital -a supportive and strategic ethnic network with a strong identity- can at the same time help overcome obstacles to upward mobility (Fernandez-Kelly & Schauffler, 1994; Portes et al., 2005; Portes & Zhou, 1993).

Some authors feel that the downward spiral is the prevailing reality for many second generation migrants as a result of the restructured labour market, and experience with discrimination or disadvantaged living conditions in inner cities (Gans, 1993; Portes et al., 2005). Gans (1993) speaks of second generation decline by which he means that changing economic conditions can hamper or interrupt full acculturation and have negative consequences for young migrants who then end up in marginalized and impoverished positions. However, others reject the idea of second generation decline and feel the classical pattern currently still applies (Waldinger & Feliciano, 2004; Perlmann & Waldinger, 1997). They see similarities between early 19th century European and post-1965 immigrant waves. Both had disadvantaged starting points at the lower end of the occupational and educational ladders and both were confronted with non-receptive native groups. Nevertheless, they clearly advanced. Others express reservations about the classical adaptation pathway: Sassler's (2006) historical analysis of the school enrolment of immigrant youth shows that adaptation is a slow process and it can take more than three generations before school participation is similar to that of native groups. Furthermore, the debate on segmented assimilation fails to capture in-group differences, and gender differences in particular (Crul & Thomson, 2007) with studies pointing out that girls are often better adjusted to school and outperform boys (Feliciano & Rumbaut, 2005; Lopez, 2003; Qin-Hilliard, 2003; Rumbaut, 2000; Schmid, 2001).

The segmented assimilation theoretical framework is predominantly based on observations in the US. Their applicability to the European context is therefore questionable. European inner cities tend to be less deprived, and the scale of social

problems is less than in US ghettos. Therefore there are fewer constraints to assimilation in the European context (Crul & Thompson, 2007; Silberman, Alba & Fournier, 2007). Moreover, Heath et al. (2008) argue that migrant workers already entered at the bottom of European societies, so their children have nowhere to go but up.

So the debate on segmented assimilation gives rise to a somewhat contradictory, mixed and polarized picture of the young migrants' situation. Today, migrant children in Europe are generally performing better in the education system and on the labour market, and are showing signs of upward mobility (Crul & Thomson, 2007; de Graaf & van Zenderen, 2009). On the other hand, there are groups who do not do well, who might be considered to be marginalized, and who even end up in criminal circles. The OECD (2008) point to the relatively large group of marginalized youngsters in the Netherlands (including many migrants) who dropped out of school and are far removed from the labour market.

To summarize, the theoretical debate on the integration process of migrant youngsters covers the interplay of structural and individual and or network factors and the possible social mobility outcomes thereof. By using this overarching framework to look at the young migrants' school-work transition, an opportunity structure with success factors and constraints can be designed to explain the possible mobility outcomes. Some of the main factors that influence the school-work transition are examined briefly below.

1.2.2. Activating policy landscape

As stated above, the transitional problems of migrant youth during the past few years and decades has led to the introduction of numerous (mandatory) policies, measures, and projects. According to one estimate, 40 per cent of all unemployed youngsters in Europe are involved in one of the measures or programmes to help disadvantaged youth integrate in the labour market (Dietrich, 2003). The underlying policy line is firstly a more activating approach towards youth unemployment (Eichhorst, Kaufmann & Konle-Seidl, 2008), in which activation to work has increasingly taken priority over social security provision, and actually functions as a reintegration tool, as an incentive to activate the 'inactive' unemployed or benefit recipients to participate in the labour market (van Berkel & Borghi, 2008). Secondly, the aim is to avoid future labour market exclusion by raising the educational level of youngsters thereby helping prevent them from dropping out. As part of the European aspiration to become a knowledge economy, these goals are set as top priorities in the Lisbon and Europe 2020 agreements (European Council, 2000, 2010).

The implementation of activation policies can be considered a form of new governance (van Berkel & Borghi, 2008; Lindsay & McQuaid, 2009). New governance means new ways of providing activation services deemed necessary to deal with complex social problems such as dropouts or unemployed youngsters who are marginalized. This demands that activation or welfare provision is organized less at state level, and instead, responsibilities for providing services are decentralized to locally responsive

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multi-agency partnerships consisting of multiple stakeholders with specific expertise (Daly, 2003; Lindsey & McQuaid, 2009; van Berkel & Borghi, 2008). Policies on early school leaving and youth unemployment are developed and coordinated on national and European levels, but are *decentralized* and on a local level. Municipalities, employment offices, and schools are all responsible for the implementation and provision of activation services and for achieving the national and European goals.

This promotes *interagency cooperation* (van Berkel & Borghi, 2008; Lindsey & McQuaid, 2008): the local organizations should cooperate intensively and provide tailor-made activation and income services for the unemployed, including the founding of one-stop shops. One example is the recently established youth offices in which interdisciplinary teams, comprising vocational schools, social work, employment offices, school attendance officers and social affairs, aim to help the youngsters return to school or find employment by giving dropouts a tailor-made offer to learn or work.

A last feature is *marketization*: (semi) privatized reintegration markets were created to make the execution of activation and welfare services more cost effective and efficient (van Berkel & van der Aa, 2005; Lindsay & McQuaid, 2009; Struyven & Steurs, 2002). Activation and welfare services are (partly) contracted out to private activation companies (providers) by government institutions such as employment offices, who act as purchasers of these services. It is hoped that this promotes more individually focussed and responsive service provision. However, financing through outflow in work placements can lead to situations where only the 'workable' clients are creamed off and catered for in the programmes, and difficult clients are parked in long term programmes where there is barely any job mediation or training at all (van Berkel & van der Aa, 2005; Struyven & Steurs, 2002). Moreover, involving commercial partners might lead to private activation services applying standard approaches instead of individual, high quality approaches which are more cost effective for them (van Berkel & van der Aa, 2005; Lindsay & McQuaid, 2009).

By applying the theory of street level bureaucracy, attention is also given to the voice or influence of the professionals i.e. the street level bureaucrats, who are responsible for putting the activation policies into practice. Despite formal policy procedures, according to Lipsky (1980), it is not the policymakers but the street level bureaucrats who make the policy and in the end decide what kind of services and benefits clients receive (Evans & Harris, 2004; Winter, 2003). They use their discretionary power to apply coping strategies to deal with complex work situations and time pressure. Creaming and parking strategies can in this sense also be seen as coping behaviours that professionals deploy in order to handle time constraints and meet targets. This thesis specifically investigates the consequences for migrant youngsters of implementing activation policies. This reveals that creaming and parking practices do exist, and can obstruct migrant dropouts who want to enter the labour market.

1.2.3 Policy tendency towards assimilation: processes of delegitimizing and abnormalising

As mentioned above, there is a tendency in the debate surrounding young migrants to place the blame for school-work transition problems partly on their ethnic or cultural background. For instance, the latest government plans to tackle labour market discrimination address the young migrants themselves: discrimination is not seen as too serious a problem, and it is partly the young migrants' own responsibility. They should adapt better to the needs and requirements of the labour market by improving their labour market orientation, by investing in developing the necessary social skills or motivation (Min. SZW, 2008).

This tendency can be placed in the current integration climate in the Netherlands in which, since the start of the current decade, Dutch society has striven for an assimilation model of acculturation (Ghorashi, 2003; Vasta, 2007; WRR, 2007). Berry's (2001) theory of acculturation indicates that migrants and members of a host society may all have distinct views about how one should adapt to the other. These acculturation strategies may vary between total assimilation, integration (multiculturalism) or separation and marginalization. Conflicts arise when most migrant groups adopt an integration strategy (integrating in society while retaining their cultural background, particularly in the private sphere), whereas the dominant native groups expect full assimilation and adaptation, which they consider to be incompatible with cultural maintenance (Chryssochoou, 2004). Several authors observe this lack of acculturation fit in the Netherlands and the result is a widening ethnic distance (Entzinger & Dourleijn, 2008; Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002).

In the context of different acculturation expectations and ethnic distance, processes of delegitimation or abnormalisation of migrant groups are taking place (Bal Tar 1990; Verkuyten, 2001). Young migrants are constructed by the dominant native group as being unwilling to integrate and as not having the necessary cultural habits and practices to become 'normal' Dutch citizens (Ghorashi, 2003; WRR, 2007). This thesis points out that this can be seen in the way the problematic labour market integration of migrant youth is explained: they are generally considered to lack the appropriate soft or social skills needed to be employable (Min. SZW, 2010; SER, 2007). This can turn out to be a form of discrimination if employers use the presumed lack of certain skills as a reason for not employing migrant youngsters. Several authors point to the value of soft or social skills as important selection criteria in today's labour market, which can be used as a form of indirect or aversive discrimination towards ethnic minorities (Boscigno, 2007; Moss & Tilly, 2001; Schaafsma, 2008).

1.2.4 Individualization of the problems of migrant youth

Related to the above is that there is a general tendency to individualize the social problems of migrant youth. Individualization means that the deficits are localized in the individual instead of in social or structural issues, such as a disadvantaged socio-economic background or labour market discrimination (Holmqvist, 2010). This is also

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inherent to the current activation paradigm in which the accent is on personal responsibility for constructing one's own potential, competences and situation, and this leads to more personalised activation approaches and interventions (Serrano Pascual, 2007).

This individualisation tendency recurs throughout the thesis: various professionals in the field generally ascribe migrant youngsters' transition problems to individual or social network deficits such as a lack of social skills, psychological or cognitive problems, a maladjusted ethnic or cultural background, and a lack of parental involvement. Consequently, they are deemed to be partially to blame for their own disadvantage. Structurally established barriers, such as ineffective school reforms and labour market discrimination, are ignored, and are not considered above the perceptions of individual responsibilities and failures.

1.2.5 Institutional context: vocational education and training system

It is also important to pay attention to the institutional structures and context i.e. the organization of the vocational education and training programme (VET) and the labour market because they also shape the school-work transition: several studies point to an interplay between how the VET system is set up and labour market outcomes (Pfeffer, 2008; Shavit & Müller, 2000; Wolbers, 2007).

The majority of non-western migrant youth are enrolled in the VET system, with over 69 per cent participating in prevocational secondary education (OECD, 2010). An important feature of the Dutch VET system is that it is a highly stratified system: students and their educational opportunities are sorted by tracks that start early in a student's school career and prepare them for different routes in general academic training (university) or in vocational training (primary, secondary and tertiary vocational education) (Shavit & Müller, 2000). Mobility between the tracks is somewhat limited compared with less stratified systems where the selection of a particular track is generally taken later, and the tracks are less differentiated. Another feature of the Dutch VET system is that it is occupation or vocation specific: youngsters are equipped with specific skills to practice certain occupations instead of general overall competences (Shavit, Müller, 2000). The Dutch system is also said to have an 'employment logic' which implies close ties between the VET system and the labour market, through the curriculum and internships, and weak links to higher education (Ianelli & Raffe, 2007). A vocation-specific system is usually accompanied by high stratification with early selection of vocational tracks.

The effects of a stratified and vocation-specific system are double sided: the lack of mobility severely restricts educational opportunity and scope to reach higher prestige professions, but at the same time it does increases labour market opportunities and even acts as a safety net (Arum & Shavit, 1995; Brunello & Checci, 2007). A safety net in the sense that there is a high correlation between qualifications and jobs, and youngsters quickly enter a first significant job. Learning occupational specific skills reduces the risk of unemployment (Wolbers, 2007). Nevertheless, several studies point to the strong 'diversion' effect of vocational specificity which shows that it has a

negative effect on continuing (higher) education and leads to jobs with a low occupational status (Ianelli & Raffe, 2007; Wolbers, 2007). It is held that school tracking -which happens along socio-economic background lines- reproduces the effects of social class and family background in educational performance and labour market outcome (Brunello & Checci, 2007; Pfeffer, 2008).

This can also be observed in the Dutch VET system with its early selection which seems to work negatively for youngsters with a low socioeconomic background: they end up in lower tracks and their performance lags behind (Education Council, 2010). This affects migrant youth in particular - as stated in the introduction, after primary school, migrant youth tend to end up in lower secondary vocational education (OECD, 2010). In spite of this 'diversive' effect, the educational mobility of young migrants is actually quite high: more than their native counterparts, they manage to reach higher vocational education by 'piling up' courses and by doing so they make up for the early selection mechanism (Crul & Schneider, 2009; OECD, 2010).

1.2.6 Institutional context: globalization and the labour market

Secondly, globalization has led to considerable changes in conditions on the European labour markets. This is leading to a new international division of labour with rising competition and increased flows of goods, capital and services throughout the world and consequently to an augmented demand for skills, flexibility and mobility. To cushion and deal with the effects of globalization, the European Union defined the Lisbon Agenda and more recently the EU 2020 strategy which aim to strengthen the European economies in the coming years by them becoming 'knowledge and service societies'. The goals that have been set include more people in higher education, fewer school dropouts, and higher rates of labour market participation for young people, women and the older population (European Council, 2000, 2010). In line with the Lisbon and EU 2020 agendas, active labour market policies to reduce unemployment and promote lifelong learning to create a more flexible workforce have been introduced or reinforced.

Several scholars consider that these developments i.e. globalization and the accompanying transition towards a knowledge-based economy, will have serious implications for disadvantaged groups (Buchholz *et al.*, 2009; Esping-Andersen, 2000; Giddens, 2007). One major implication of globalization is a general increased (market) uncertainty with international and local markets becoming more intertwined and more volatile and unpredictable (Buchholz et al., 2009; Mills, 2009). Companies and employers, who are exposed to greater market risks, consequently are asking more flexibility from their employees. For employees the labour market is likely to become more insecure with an increase in flexible or fixed term contracts and new risks will emerge, e.g. increased risk of losing one's job. Buchholz *et al.* (2009) believe that young adults in particular will be threatened by unemployment, and refer to them as the "losers" of globalization. They are more exposed to the uncertainties on the labour

market than the already established and more protected workers, and are increasingly confronted with flexible and precarious forms of employment.

Coping with this labour market insecurity requires an increased demand for skills, flexibility, and mobility. Educational credentials in particular are a key factor for making oneself 'competitive' and to integrate well into the labour market (Buchholz et al., 2009). The transition to a knowledge or service economy is accompanied by increased polarization among those able to meet certain labour market requirements and demands and those who are not (Bude, 2008; Wilson, 1999). There is also fear that a 'dualization' process is underway i.e. increased polarization among people who are able to meet certain skill requirements and those who are not (Davidson & Nacyk, 2009). The result will be an emerging group of 'outsiders' or 'disadvantaged' people. Particularly at risk are young migrants who face unemployment because of their lack of educational and social resources (Bude, 2008; Wilson, 1999).

As mentioned in the introduction, current figures indeed show that young migrants in Europe have an unfavourable position when it comes to schooling and the labour market. The current economic crisis seems to be intensifying this disadvantage as evidenced by increasing unemployment rates among migrants (OECD, 2009). However, despite these negative developments for young migrants, the results of the thesis show a rather positive picture with young migrants displaying considerable optimism and resilience. Generally speaking they do not see many obstacles, and they believe that if they work hard and obtain a diploma they will have plenty of opportunity on the labour market.

1.2.7 Role of the young migrant's social network

A final important factor that influences the school-working transition of migrant youngsters is their social network, or social capital, that they have at their disposal. According to Lin (1982: 132) social capital includes the "social resources accessible through one's direct and indirect ties".

Having family webs with supportive family members can stimulate educational engagement: Rumbaut's (2000) study of migrant youngsters showed that their school achievements benefited from them coming from harmonious families with positive parent-child interaction. This was also positively related with discipline and the time migrant youngsters spent on schoolwork and actually prevented them from leaving school without graduating. Supportive older siblings or extended family members are of primary importance. Extensive studies on US Mexican migrant youth showed that older siblings often have considerable responsibility within their family and they can act as inspiring role models offering emotional, social and institutional support (Stanton-Salazar's, 2001; Valenzuela, 1999).

Related to this is the fact that migrant parents often hold school in high esteem, a belief they pass on to their children which stimulates their learning and academic performance. This is referred to as the immigrant optimism hypothesis (Andriessen, Phalet, & Lens 2006; Kao & Tienda, 1995): migrant parents clearly wish for upward

mobility and expect their offspring to take advantage of the educational opportunities available in the host society which then motivates them to perform well at school. Migrants have a positive dual frame of reference: they compare the disadvantaged situation back home in their country of origin with the better opportunities for their children in the host country and believe education and having a career is the road to (financial) success (Ogbu & Simons, 1998).

Traditional gender roles in the home tend to affect the educational performance of migrant girls in different ways. For instance, the high dropout rate of Turkish girls in the Netherlands was, in the past, the result of lower educational and professional parental expectations. Instead, parents expected their daughters to marry and have children (Crul & Doomernik, 2003). Confronted with more parental control and supervision, migrant girls can, however, also benefit academically from the home situation: they are expected to behave correctly and they are consequently pushed, more so than boys, towards academic performance (Feliciano & Rumbaut, 2005; Qin-Hilliard, 2003; Zhou & Bankston, 2001).

An oft-heard explanation for young migrants' difficulties with entering the labour market is that they lack suitable overlapping networks, or use the wrong search strategies and channels (Regioplan Beleidsonderzoek, 2005; RWI, 2006a). We can make a distinction between bonding capital and bridging capital (Putnam 2000): the support of one's own network (family and peers), and the benefits of being connected to other networks respectively. Young migrants seem to lack the bridging capital that connects them to valuable informants for accessing the labour market.

However, according to the segmented assimilation theory, upward mobility can also be stimulated by maintaining strong co-ethnic bonds (Portes & Zhou, 1993). This strategy of selective acculturation means that migrants achieve economic mobility by benefiting from the social capital available in their closely-knit community. Young migrants can, for instance, benefit from their solid co-ethnic bonds because they can provide opportunities for employment or success in self-employed entrepreneurship (Aldrich & Zimmer, 1986; Dagevos, Odé, & Pels, 1999). A study on second generation youth in Amsterdam and Rotterdam found that many young Turkish men found a job through their own network (40 per cent) (Crul et al., 2008). Being self-employed can also shield against labour market discrimination (Portes & Zhou, 1993). The last government hoped to improve the labour market position of young migrants by specifically creating more opportunities for setting up one's own business (SER, 2007).

Gans (1993) discusses the self-employment opportunities for second generation migrant youngsters in ethnic niches, often businesses started off by their parents. He questions whether the children of migrants want to take 'immigrant jobs' or want to continue the family business if it entails working long hours, often for low wages. They are after all acculturated in their work standards and status expectations. An extended US study on the integration of second generation migrants confirms these doubts: none of the migrant youngsters investigated were working in a workplace dominated by their own ethnic group. The majority wanted to find employment outside their

community, simply because ethnic economy jobs do not provide a good income, and also because they prefer to be part of an ethnically diverse group (Kasinitz, Mollenkopf, Waters, & Holdaway, 2008). These jobs can act as a safety net for some youngsters, particularly if they are not highly educated. Nevertheless, self-employed jobs are often restricted to lower labour market positions and do not significantly contribute towards upward mobility (Dagevos et al., 1999; Kasinitz et al., 2008).

1.3 Methods

The content and results of the thesis are based on mixed methods research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004), as explained below.

1. Extensive qualitative studies (ethnographic case studies, in-depth interviews) were conducted in two neighbourhoods, home to many young migrants in the city of Utrecht, the fourth largest city in the Netherlands. Contacts with a vocational school were established which kindly provided access to all the school's activities and made it possible to conduct several case studies both in and outside the school. Courses were attended, and the introduction of new educational methods, youngsters' networks and dropout problems were studied. Participant observation in a local community centre made it possible to contact some at-risk youngsters i.e. youngsters who had dropped out, were unemployed or involved in criminality.

Furthermore, several evaluative case studies were held of projects aimed at preventing early school leaving, taking care of dropouts or preparing youngsters for work. Various organizations were visited including a company that provided training places (garage), activation and or rehabilitation services, mentor or buddy projects (adult mentor and peer-to-peer system) and the youth employment office. Additionally interviews and group discussions were held with a variety of key informants such as social workers, school attendance officers, teachers and policymakers in order to get a better understanding of the transitional issues of local migrant youth.

2. Quantitative: a survey was conducted involving a sample of 608 youngsters at five secondary vocational schools in Utrecht and Amsterdam (including the above-mentioned school) of which 164 natives (27 per cent) and 441 young migrants (73 per cent). Youngsters filled out online and written questionnaires in class, supervised by teachers. The content of the questionnaire was partly based on two research projects (TRESEGY & SIG/RVO) that focussed on youngsters' experiences with exclusion, such as perceived discrimination or poor living conditions in their neighbourhood and on their inclusion in education and the labour market. This was complemented with questions based on insights from the preceding ethnographic studies and on the existing literature. Questions covered reasons for truancy and for dropping out of school, support from networks, school satisfaction and aspiration and (future) vocational orientation and aspiration.

In both the survey and the case studies the research populations are not strictly limited to migrant youngsters which makes comparisons with native counterparts possible.

3. An analysis of existing data (literature, figures) to explore the national and local situations of migrant youngsters, to investigate their school-work transition, and the role of early school leaving and unemployment in the transition.

4. Lastly, policy document analysis of initiatives and measures to tackle early school leaving and youth unemployment and to promote smoother transition to the labour market.

There are several advantages to mixed methods research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004): it firstly enables *data triangulation* by seeking convergences and confirmations between results of different methods studying the same social incident. Throughout the thesis, results of the survey and ethnographic studies are compared and used to check and justify the other findings. Results from both methods showed, for instance, that migrant youngsters experience discrimination when looking for work. In spite of this, both the survey and case study results echoed optimistic future (labour market) expectations. Mixed method research also facilitates *complementarity* i.e. clarifications, illustrations and enhancements of the results of one method with the other. Survey results showed many migrants with high school satisfaction which was related to receiving school support from their family. Results of the ethnographic studies provided some clarification: older siblings can be important supportive role models which motivate the youngsters to study. Lastly, the other method can be *developed* by using the results of one method. As said before, insights from the ethnographic studies in the school were used to formulate questions for the survey. Interviews with teachers revealed, for instance, important reasons for early school leaving which were added to the survey as answer categories.

The methods and empirical data are part of two distinct research projects: 1) the European comparative research project TRESEGY (Transnational Research on Second Generation Youth) which ran from June 2006-2009. The project studied how young migrants experience life in their country of residence, the problems they face and the kind of support they receive from their social network or social policy. Six European countries with nine cities as research locations participated in the TRESEGY project. The project conducted extensive quantitative (youth surveys) and qualitative ethnographic studies (participant observations and interviews) in various local settings such as the street, in schools and community centres, and programmes for young people. In the Dutch context we focused on the school careers of (migrant) youngsters and their transition to the labour market.

2) 'Pathways to Work Research Program' (SIG/RVO) started in 2008 and is still running. This project builds and elaborates on the TRESEGY project. In addition it also pays specific attention to the school-work transition of the marginalized group of young migrants who dropped out of school or who are unemployed. The SIG/RVO project studies the dropouts and their transition to work problems from the (interre-

lated) environments of which they are part: the institutional and social environment (Sol, Knijn & Frings-Dresen, 2007). It looks for effective factors within these two environments, factors which contribute to ease the dropout's transition to the labour market. In the institutional environment it explores and evaluates national and local policies and initiatives that aim to tackle early school leaving and youth unemployment in order to get a better understanding of good practice. The migrant dropout's social environment or family network is examined for sources of support or constraints.

1.4 Introduction and summary of the chapters

Chapter two, '*Segmented assimilation in the Netherlands? Young migrants and early school leaving'* examines the data on young migrants' early school leaving and on whether they have the basic qualifications or not. Negativity prevails in the discussions surrounding young migrant dropouts: dropping out is seen as a forerunner of long-term (youth) unemployment and future marginalization. This chapter questions the trend towards downward mobility. It is clear that the situation is polarized: the overall majority of dropouts do, in fact, perform well on the labour market. At the same time there is a fairly small group of youngsters, referred to as 'non-participants', who do not fare well - they are neither in school or training, nor are they employed. However, this group is seen to represent the entire group of dropouts and this has a negative impact on how migrant dropouts in particular are viewed.

Chapter three '*School satisfaction of young migrants: the role of gender and social network'* presents the results of a study on the school satisfaction of young migrants with an emphasis on gender. Several international studies show that migrant girls perform better and are more dedicated and motivated than migrant boys. The results of our study, using a mixed method approach, confirm the gender differences in school satisfaction. Moroccan girls in particular do well at school. However, school satisfaction was mostly explained by having positive relations with family and teachers. Experiences with discrimination for both girls and boys and a lower life satisfaction among girls have a negative effect on school satisfaction. Furthermore, interviews with teachers and youngsters pointed out that being in school gives migrant girls a less restricted social space to meet friends. Care responsibilities at home can hinder the school engagement of migrant girls.

Chapter four '*School-work transition: the interplay between institutional and individual processes'* examines how problems with school-work transition, such as early school leaving and youth unemployment, are dealt with in the Dutch vocational education and training (VET) context. School work-transition has generally become more complex and fragmented, with more room for individual manoeuvre while still being shaped by how the VET system is organized and the labour market. This leads to a more individualized perspective on school and labour market outcomes. Both our quantitative and qualitative empirical studies confirm this trend towards individualization: professionals ascribe school failure first and foremost to individual problems such

as, for example, students making wrong study choices or to them having even more serious psychosocial problems. Institutional barriers i.e. early selection and ineffective school reforms do not interfere with this strong belief in individual strengths and failures.

Chapter five '*Young migrants' transition to work: soft skills become hard barriers'* discusses the problems surrounding young migrants' entry into the labour market. Discrimination in particular can hamper young migrants in either finding or keeping a job. In addition, there is more emphasis on acquiring soft skills as a criterion for success on the labour market. Migrant youngsters are presumed not to have these skills, and this hampers their transition to the labour market. This can actually turn out to be a form of discrimination if employers do not hire migrant youngsters because they are presumed to lack the necessary soft skills. This development can be placed in the current integration debate in which migrant youngsters are portrayed as being either incapable of or unwilling to integrate.

In chapter six '*Education and labour market participation of young migrants: challenges and policies'* considers the results of the European comparative research project TRESEGY by placing them in the context of current societal developments, namely the globalization process and new social policies. Globalization leads to a more flexible labour market, albeit a more insecure one. The accent in the new social policies is increasingly coming to lie on personal responsibility for constructing one's own potential in terms of acquiring sufficient educational credentials and employability. In view of their disadvantaged societal positions, migrant youngsters were expected to find it difficult to cope with these developments and consequently to express negative experiences and future expectations. The TRESEGY results show, however, that migrant youngsters are very optimistic about their future opportunities and display considerable resilience.

Chapter seven '*New governance strengths and pitfalls: activation policies for young migrant dropouts in the Netherlands'* is an evaluative study of local activation policies for early school leavers and the consequences thereof for migrant dropouts. Policy implementation is decentralized which means that municipalities, schools and activation services are mutually responsible on a local level for implementing them. The results show that (interagency) cooperation is complicated by 'partners' who continue to work in their own interest. Participation in the activation programmes is voluntary, so they do not reach the most difficult group. It is the most workable youngsters who are helped, and other youngsters are parked in lengthy schemes with little attention for labour market preparation and mediation. The policy aim for every dropout to obtain a basic qualification is considered to be unrealistic.

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Chapter 2

Segmented assimilation in the Netherlands? Young migrants and early school leaving

Abstract:
There has been ongoing debate in the Netherlands in recent years about the position of second-generation immigrant youth. This debate is fuelled by two, rather persistent phenomena: high school dropout and unemployment among migrant youth. Fear exists that a large number of migrant youth will become marginalized. This raises the question to what extent the position of migrant youth can be viewed as manifesting downward mobility, leading therefore to a form of segmented assimilation? This chapter examines the problems of education and dropout, and discusses the significance of the many statistics on dropout which either prove or refute the assumed gravity of the problem. The chapter includes an outline of the policy landscape and the concomitant ethnifying effects to complete the picture of migrant youth. We conclude that downward segmented assimilation is not the dominant trend, and end with a discussion of new forms of ethnic exclusion that lay the blame for not integrating well into Dutch society at the foot of migrant youth themselves.

Keywords: segmented assimilation, school dropout, unemployment, second generation, migrant youth, ethnification

2.1 Introduction

The position of non-western migrants in the educational system and on the labour market is generally not very favourable. This is a pattern that can be seen throughout Europe, and also in the Netherlands. Young migrants in particular, i.e. second generation migrants, often leave school early and risk exclusion from the labour market and society at large. There are several reasons for this state of affairs, such as shifts in the qualification structure for entering the labour market as a result of the emerging service and knowledge society; difficulties with raising the schooling levels of migrants; the existence of segregated neighbourhoods; problems of discrimination in the labour market itself; and ineffective search strategies by migrants on the labour market. All these factors are covered in the theoretical debate about the integration process of second generation migrants and the possible outcomes thereof. This debate has been fuelled by the observation that the supposed steady, gradual integration and acculturation into the host society was not taking place (Portes & Zhou, 1993). Instead, two different pathways seemed to emerge: first the diametrically opposed route into poverty and slipping into the underclass; and secondly, economic integration all the while maintaining cultural values and social commitments, in which case support from one's own social networks helps overcome obstacles to upward mobility (Zhou, 1997). Based on experiences in the USA in the first half of the twentieth century, the classical idea is that a gradual process of assimilation generally prevails. Some studies claim that this classical pattern can still be observed today (Perlmann & Waldinger, 1997). However, others stress that changes in the structure of the labour market, institutional discrimination, and the living conditions in inner cities in particular mean that the classical

pattern is now outmoded. They point out that the downward route was more prevalent among migrants following the Second World War (Portes, Fernandez-Kelly, & Haller, 2005). The empirical results, both in the USA and Europe, show a mixed and contradictory picture (Silberman, Alba, & Fournier, 2007; Thomson & Crul, 2007), which may be the result of different national contexts. This mixed picture applies also to the young migrants in the Netherlands: their overall situation is improving and more and more young migrants are faring well (Statistics Netherlands [CBS], 2008), but on the other hand there are groups that are not doing well, might be considered to be marginalized and are even ending up in criminality. This raises the question as to whether segmented assimilation exists in the Netherlands and can a tendency towards downward mobility be observed? The answer to this question is important since the public and political debate about the integration of migrants has been shifting to the conclusion that integration has been a failure and that more pressing measures have to be taken (Roggeband & Vliegenthart, 2007; Scientific Council for the Government Policy [WRR], 2007). Also internationally this shift in the Netherlands has been remarked and so it seems relevant to look into the specific Dutch national context in order to disentangle this complex matter of integration.

This chapter answers these questions by examining early school leaving among young migrants, also because dropping-out is seen as a marker for downward mobility in the discussion on segmented assimilation. The Dutch case is particularly interesting because, with a rate of almost 13 per cent of Dutch youth leaving school with less than upper secondary education, the Netherlands is below the EU average but above that of neighbouring European countries (OECD, 2008). Since this figure is barely diminishing, the OECD warns for long lasting unemployment which results from dropping-out and points to a group of marginalised, often migrant youth, who are detached from the labour market. Dropping out of school is also seen in the Netherlands as a disaster, and it is something that must be combated (WRR, 2008).

Because migrant youth are overrepresented in the dropout figures, the resulting 'moral panic' tends to see all migrant youth as being highly problematic and in danger of not participating in society. In fact, dropping out by migrants is seen as prove of their failure to integrate. And this in itself may contribute towards further ethnic stigmatisation and exclusion of young migrants. It is therefore very important that the problems in the transition from school to work be analysed, and similarly, that the effect the interpretation of these problems has on the position of migrant youth in general be examined.

There are two steps to our argument. The first step takes a look at a number of general findings about the educational position of young migrants and then analyses the existing data on dropout in the context of the transition from school to work. Our analysis shows that dropout rates are difficult to establish and may be used to both confirm and contradict the thesis of downward segmented assimilation. Moreover, there is no simple connection between dropping-out and success on the labour market. There are many different types of dropouts whose employment success differs. We

point out how the discourses surrounding the supposedly problematic status of migrant dropouts may lead to their being blamed for their own disadvantage and failure to adapt successfully to the educational system.

In the second step we indicate more precisely how the context of policies, measures and reforms influences the educational situation of young migrants. We discuss the reforms in vocational education, the measures put in place to prevent migrants dropping out and to reintegrate dropouts, and how these arrangements are monitored and managed. We also attempt to show how this policy context contributes to the discursive representation of all migrant youth as a problematic group.

2.2 Overall data on migrant youth in education

The ethnic diversity of migrant groups in the Netherlands is considerable. In addition to the four main migrant groups: Moroccans, Turks, Surinamese, and Antilleans, there are also immigrant groups from Africa, Eastern Europe and Asia. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to examine all these groups in detail, so we concentrate here on general patterns found among the youth of the four main migrant groups. The general socio-economic picture of these migrant youth in Dutch society is unfavourable. Compared with their native counterparts, most migrant youngsters are disadvantaged when it comes to education and work. They are less highly educated, have higher school dropout rates, unemployment levels are also greater, and their position on the labour market tends to be vulnerable (SCP/WODC/CBS, 2005). But when the socio-economic status of parents is taken into account, there are no big differences compared with native Dutch youngsters with the same background. Therefore, the position of migrant youth may largely be explained by the low educational and professional levels of their parents. But we will also show how policies actually reproduce the effects that they are intended to combat.

2.2.1 Educational level and dropout

There is a gap between the educational performance level of migrants and their native counterparts (Ministry of education [Min. OCW], 2006). Migrant youth leave primary school at a considerable disadvantage i.e. some 1-2 years behind their native counterparts in language and maths. This means that they generally end up in lower vocational education, and migrant youth tend to follow the lowest streams of training courses (SCP/WODC/CBS, 2005). Of special concern are migrant school dropouts because they are overrepresented in the dropout rates: the percentage of migrant dropouts is almost twice as high: 9 per cent of the 18-24 age group compared with 5 per cent of the natives (CBS, 2007a; Min. OCW, 2007b). Despite this lower educational position, the trend for the educational performance of young migrants is positive. Their educational disadvantage has diminished over the past 15 years (SCP/WODC/CBS, 2005) and the performance level of second generation migrants is now closer to that of their native counterparts. The proportion of young migrants with

the basic qualifications required for the labour market is on the increase, from 34 per cent between 2001 and 2003 to 43 per cent between 2004 and 2006 (CBS, 2007b). The proportion of migrants in higher education has increased substantially over the past five years (Council for Work and Income [RWI], 2006) and successful migrants are increasingly seen as role models in the public sphere. Despite the general lower educational levels and higher dropout rates, migrants are making up for their deficit (Social and Cultural Planning Office [SCP], 2007b). But this is a statement based on averages. It is important to note that there seems to be a divide between successful young migrants, who, in a roundabout way, end up in higher education or who have found a solid position in the labour market, and migrants who neither finish their education nor find suitable, regular jobs. There is, for instance, an increasing group of young people who do not attend school and who are not active jobseekers, 52,000 in 2004, and in 2005 this figure was 59,000 youngsters. This corresponds to 14 per cent of the native young people in the 15-22 age group and 32 per cent of migrant youth in this age group (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment [Min. SZW], 2006). The growth of this group is due to an increase in the number of native youngsters, but migrant youth are still overrepresented. This non-participating group is difficult to reach and is considered unemployable. Other figures are sometimes mentioned to define the group of unwilling and/or problematic youngsters, in which the young migrants always appear to be at a higher risk of marginalisation. We will see later that defining problematic groups is also important in relation to school dropouts.

2.3 Transition from school to work and early school leaving

The problem of early school leaving is, in the Netherlands, generally considered to have negative consequences for young people's labour market opportunities. The present discussion about the problematic transition from school to work actually began over thirty years ago when there were complaints about the lack of quality in the labour force, due to insufficient education, in relation to the promoted mobility and flexibility of workers. In 1990, a governmental advisory committee on the education-market relationship, the Rauwenhoff committee, promoted more equal participation in school and the establishment of a basic qualification that would guarantee access to the labour market and further vocational training (Houtkoop, 2004). "Investing in the schooling of unskilled workers clearly represents something of a threshold. The risk of not doing so however is that employees will be insufficiently mobile and flexible in the later stages of their working lives and so will be forced to drop out of the labour market prematurely" (cited in Houtkoop, 2004). The committee's proposals for a basic qualification were adopted by the government, thereby accepting the idea that a basic qualification focused on the problem of leaving school prematurely, because a minimum of vocational training was seen as a necessary condition for career development. Furthermore, this basic qualification was not only defined in educational terms, but also in terms of the personal and social skills required to participate in society.

The basic qualification involved completing at least the second level of secondary vocational education. Without a basic qualification, securing work is assumed to be difficult. This is why the definition of 'dropouts' in the Netherlands actually refers to all those who do not obtain this basic qualification. In fact, one is considered to be a dropout even with a certificate at the level of primary vocational education.

The dropout problem is high on the political agenda, because school dropouts are assumed to run a greater risk of being unemployed or of holding less favourable positions on the labour market, of having a low income, and of being jobseekers much longer than people with a basic qualification (Min. OCW, 2002). The discussion is further strongly influenced by the Lisbon agreements to halve the number of dropouts in the 18-24 age range between 2000 and 2010, and the national goal to reduce the number of new dropouts in the 12-22 age group by 50 per cent between 2002 and 2012 (Min. OCW, 2007a). What all these debates have in common is that dropping out is seen as a problem to be solved, while, at the same time, the extent of the problem remains unclear. We now go on to analyse the existing data on dropouts and show that the very nature of the data leaves little room for one simple interpretation.

2.3.1 Registration, number and characteristics of dropouts

Concern about dropout levels has led to a considerable amount of research being conducted with the primary aim of ascertaining the exact number of dropouts. However, measuring and registering school dropout numbers meet with numerous difficulties, and there are in fact no reliable figures available (Eimers, 2006). There are a number of reasons for this.

Firstly, measurements are partly based on incomplete data. The Netherlands has, since 1994, been divided into Regional Report and Coordination Points (RMC regions) to facilitate tackling the problem of school dropouts. Their task is to register the number of dropouts, and to ensure that dropouts do go on to obtain a basic qualification by taking the appropriate measures. Schools are obliged to report their dropouts to the RMC, but they do not report accurately and consistently, simply because, should they do so, they run the risk of getting a bad reputation. The RMCs admit that their registration method is not up to scratch and that they are unable to provide definite numbers (Sardes, 2006). However, the RMC figures indicate the number of new dropouts in the 12 to 22 age range every school year. In 2006 there were 56,000 new dropouts (Min. OCW, 2007a) comprising 35 per cent migrant youth. But the problem is that the figures do not take account of pupil mobility – some pupils may return to school in the same school year. These registration problems could therefore mean that the number of dropouts is either underestimated or even overestimated (Central Planning Office [CPB], 2006).

A second point is that there are numerous different definitions of school dropouts, and many different methods to record measurement and timing. Dropouts are generally defined as young people in the 12 to 22 age range who have not attended vocational education for more than four weeks and who do not have a basic qualifica-

tion. However, different studies apply different definitions, and this, in turn, leads to differing figures. For instance, besides the RMC, the CBS (Statistics Netherlands) provides figures on dropout rates based on the data from the Employed Population Survey (EBB), which is taken from a sample of the working population. The EBB data are used to present the Dutch dropout figures to the European Union, but they only pertain to the 18-24 age range. In 2006 the percentage of youth without a basic qualification and not attending school compared with the total number of young people in this age category of 18-24 is 12.9 per cent, which amounts to some 175,000 young people (SCP, 2007a). This number includes both new and old dropouts.

A new, third measurement method based on the educational number (ON) was introduced recently. This number identifies every individual participating in education and makes it possible to follow students throughout their entire educational career. The educational number measures the net number of dropouts in a school year. With this number, for the very first time, school dropout rates could be measured more accurately (Min. OCW, 2007b). The ON registration system indicates that there were 57,000 new dropouts in 2006. This figure is close to the RMC figures, which could imply that the flaws in the RMC figures have been gradually corrected and/or that the ON registration is also still lacking.

Although the figures differ according to the sources used, it is possible to get an idea of the personal profile of dropouts. There are more males than females (60-40 per cent), while their share in the young age groups is more or less equal. The dropout rate is highest in the category 17-18 years of age and most (67 per cent) are from secondary vocational education, and in particular from the first and second levels, intended to be the criterion for the basic qualification! Dropouts are already behind in their school career. Dropout rates are highest in regions where incomes are low, where there are more people on benefit, and where there are higher numbers of migrants. The chance of dropping out is twice as high in urban areas than in other areas, and this is particularly apparent in urban neighbourhoods characterised by poverty, segregation and poor housing (Min. OCW, 2007a). Furthermore, family circumstances i.e. being in a one-parent household or even being a parent, seem to influence higher dropout rates. In addition to the above characteristics, several analysts have also taken the efforts to define exactly which groups of dropouts are at high risk of non-participation - not working, not attending school.

Firstly, Sardes, the monitoring institution of the RMC figures, distinguishes pupils with a primary vocational certificate with other youngsters without any certificate at all, who are referred to as 'priority' dropouts (table 2-1).

Table 2-1 *Drop-out numbers, priority and total (x 1000)*

	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05
Total new	41	39	40	47	71	64	64	60
Priority	13	12	12	16	12	20 [1]	16 [1]	15 [1]

Source: Sardes, 2006 (RMC data)

Note: [1] new, before 2003 not possible to differentiate between old en new

The proportion of young migrants in the total of new dropouts was about 41 per cent in 2004 and 35 per cent in 2005, a figure which is still disproportionately higher than their share in the age group, but a decline has been observed. However, the picture for migrants looks less positive if we consider their share in the priority group. Other findings indicate that the young migrants in the priority group in particular are overrepresented (table 2-2).

Table 2-2 *Percentage priority drop out by ethnic origin, 2005*

Ethnic origin	priority drop-out	remaining drop-out	total drop-out
Dutch	4	6	10
Turk	11	6	17
Moroccan	12	4	16
Surinamese	11	4	15
Antillean	14	9	23
Other non-western	11	4	15

Source: Herweijer, 2006

Secondly, Eimers, generally seen as an expert on Dutch school leaving, makes a distinction between school leavers at risk and non-problematic school leavers School leavers at risk are confronted with problems both at school and outside it, which make it difficult for them to perform well or even attend school. Some of them are not capable of obtaining a basic qualification. This group amounts to 25,000, and this figure seems to be relatively stable. The non-problematic dropouts consist of 35,000 early school leavers, but they often do have a diploma at primary vocational level, have a job or do not want to work or cannot work because they have care responsibilities (Eimers, 2006).

Thirdly, there is a link between not having a basic qualification, being unemployed and/or not willing to work, and not being registered in the Public Employment Service. Non-registration would imply that this group is difficult to locate and approach through the official channels. This group is estimated to be around 38,000, a figure that crops up at times to refer to hard core problematic youth and also points at migrant youth as having a disproportionate share. This is the outcome of calculations made by the Taskforce Youth Unemployment (Taskforce Jeugdwerkloosheid, 2006)

Fourthly, when assessing which dropouts are most at risk it is also possible to focus on the long-term unemployed, i.e. those who have been unemployed for over half a

year. A survey among second generation Turks and Moroccans in Amsterdam and Rotterdam showed that this group is relatively small with only 9 per cent falling into this category (Crul et al., 2008), and the remainder had been unemployed only for a couple months.

These examples of high risk dropouts make it clear that different criteria are used and consequently different numbers emerge. Furthermore, it is still unclear what exactly their 'problematic' status is. But whatever the criteria used, the at-risk groups are surprisingly small. However, in the debate surrounding early school leaving it is these groups that are placed at the forefront and are used to point to the grave nature of the problem. What we learn from these data is that some groups may, indeed, be cause for concern even though the criteria for belonging to these groups are not well defined. The problems about registration, definitions and groups-at-risk clearly indicate that what is needed is a more refined analysis of what these figures mean and of how they are interpreted and used in the context of the debate on school dropout levels. This would help assess the migrant proportion of dropout levels and the tendency to downward or upward mobility of young migrants. We will show that there are a number of different ways of looking at and interpreting these figures and of assessing the extent of the problem. By doing so the problem of early school leaving can either be overestimated or underestimated.

2.3.2 Overestimation of the problem

The discussions and concerns about the persistent 'high' dropout rate imply that there is a big problem, particularly in relation to future labour market prospects. But the question remains about the extent to which the lack of a basic qualification is a real problem in the transition from school to work. Research findings suggest that a basic qualification is not necessarily essential when looking for work. Many of the dropouts are, in fact, employed. At least 65 per cent of the total group of dropouts aged between 15 and 22 do have a job, and three quarters of this group have a permanent contract (Min. OCW, 2007a). Many young dropouts with only a basic pre-vocational certificate do participate in the labour market (71 per cent), while the employment rate for youngsters with a basic qualification is 81 per cent. These data do not indicate that the lack of a basic qualification is a major obstacle on the labour market.

According to the Education council (2004), the basic qualification is not a critical boundary per se for success on the labour market. It is even stated that using the basic qualification in this way means that many youngsters are stigmatised. Generally, the effect of qualification is more of a sliding scale: the more highly qualified, the better one's chances on the labour market (CPB, 2006). The basic qualification should therefore be seen as an educational level that offers opportunities on the labour market but it does not necessarily mean that young people without a basic qualification do not have any prospects. This was recently confirmed by a survey among second generation Turkish and Moroccan youth in Amsterdam and Rotterdam. A quarter of these youngsters, who left school without obtaining a basic qualification, are considered to

be at risk. However, the majority of men who are supposedly at risk are easily employed once they leave school and are only unemployed for a couple months. These findings confirm the fact that the labour market clearly has an integrative role for many of these youngsters (Crul et al., 2008).

To avoid overestimating the problem of early school leaving in relation to successful entry into the labour market, it is therefore necessary to analyse more precisely the characteristics of the group without a basic qualification. Several studies show that dropouts are not a homogenous group, and they can be divided into different categories with different statuses and different dynamics on the labour market. The abovementioned description of the various at-risk groups is already one way to point to differentiated factors involved in dropping out.

However, other factors are also at play. Some students may not be capable of obtaining a basic qualification because of a lack of aptitude or as a result of their social circumstances (CPB, 2006), and they will also have difficulties on the labour market. Dropping out for other students depends on a combination of push and pull factors. For instance, an important pull factor is what is referred to as 'green picking' (RWI, 2005), which means that employers hire students shortly before they finish their formal education and obtain a basic qualification. This is often the case when students are in work placement and are offered a contract. The effect of green picking recently curbed the decline in the dropout rate and caught the attention of the government. Many vacancies became available because of the current positive economic situation and young people are encouraged to leave school and to work (Min. OCW, 2008). However, this clearly depends on the economic situation: when labour market opportunities are tight, pull factors may become push factors; see the following section.

A final important question is how dropouts see their qualifications in respect of their situation on the labour market. The little research that has been conducted on this issue seems to indicate that many dropouts enjoy gainful employment and do not consider themselves to be a problem (Lee & Breen, 2007; Dekkers & Claassen, 2001). Work seems more rewarding for them because it gives them money, respect, freedom, independence and responsibility. Qualitative research in the Netherlands on a group of dropouts confirms that the majority of youngsters were, in fact, satisfied with their current situation and did not particularly regret leaving school early. Those with a job seemed to have got used to their income level (Portengen & Dekkers, 1998). The dominant discourse in which dropouts are constructed as unsuccessful and problematic is, according to the dropouts themselves, clearly false (Lee & Breen, 2007).

2.3.3 Underestimation of the problem

But it is also possible to construe the argument that the dropout problem is actually underestimated. This argument starts with how the dropout rate is calculated. This rate is determined each year by counting the number of new dropouts. All the old dropouts from previous years are therefore excluded from these figures, and this makes a considerable difference in the reported dropout rate. According to the RMC data, there

were almost 57,000 registered new dropouts in the 2004-2005 school year, but there were also 45,500 registered old dropouts who did not return to school, so this amounts to a total of 102,500 dropouts.

Another problem is that the dropout rate, however it is calculated, is on the decrease, but it is a slight decline, and not sufficient to meet the European target, which is to halve the total number of new dropouts since 2000, which means reaching a figure of 35,000 in 2010 (Min. OCW, 2007b). This would indicate that the problem is rather persistent and difficult to combat, particularly if the target figures were to include the old dropouts.

Furthermore, attention should be given to the fact that the relationship between the basic qualification and labour market positions is strongly mediated by economic cycles. When the economic climate deteriorates, the employment opportunities for young people without a basic qualification diminish rapidly (RWI, 2006; Taskforce Jeugdwerkloosheid, 2006). Young people without a basic qualification tend to have temporary and flexible contracts which makes it easy for employers to fire them. Dropouts are therefore the first to lose their job, and they have less chance of sustainable labour participation (RWI, 2006; Taskforce Jeugdwerkloosheid, 2006).

These discussions about underestimating or overestimating the problem of dropout are important because they point to the dynamics involved in the transition from school to work. As we have shown, the number of dropouts is related to economic developments, to low educational levels and low socio-economic status, and to personal and social problems. Furthermore, this discussion must not preclude the situation of migrant youth, who are overrepresented in all dropout rate figures. They also have a disproportionately high share in the most marginal groups, the so-called non-participants (15-24 years of age, not at school, not in work, and no regular income), 36 per cent for young migrant people compared with 18 per cent for native youth (Min. SZW, 2006). But at the same time, we should not forget that the general tendency of participation of migrant youth in education and work is positive.

2.4 Policies on the transition from school to work

Although there are projects and measures in place to help migrant youth into work, there is no formal education or labour market policy for specific groups. The problems of migrant youngsters in school are tackled from the angle of compensatory policies or of achieving the basic qualification, and unemployment of young migrants is combated within the general framework of enhancing labour participation for young people. Therefore, the policies pertaining to the school-work transition for migrant youth are mostly described as part of more general measures and proposals. But at the same time it has to be acknowledged that in these policies the explicit or implicit referral to migrants has always the function to stress the urgency of the problem, as if it is primary a migrant problem .Especially in the debate about dropping-out the focus is on

migrant youth as the group 'in danger' whereas the positive outcomes of their increasing successful participation in education and labour are underexposed.

2.4.1 Vocational education and basic qualification

The norm of the basic qualification stemmed from a major reform of vocational education in 1996. The reform aimed at flexible and individualised learning paths, at reducing the dropout level, and at a greater influence of the business community on content. The new system of (pre)vocational education entailed more theoretical elements which made it more difficult for groups of pupils to get a diploma, which led to a higher number of 'early school leavers'. So, paradoxically, the reform that aimed, amongst other things, to combat dropout, had, in fact, the opposite effect.

This sparked a fierce debate about the efficacy of the reform. Criticism of the resultant too theoretical level and the static content have led to plans for new attainment targets and new forms of teaching in vocational education. These plans have been developed with the approval of the business community, and are also considered to meet the needs of migrant youth (see Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands [SER], 2006). In a nutshell, attainment levels are now defined in terms of competences, both professional and social: i.e. the 'hard' and 'soft' skills. Students must learn these competences through what is referred to as 'new learning', which assumes that students work individually and in project groups on learning objectives, with teachers as coaches. But finding satisfactory translations of generally formulated competences into specific and testable skills is a problem, and both pupils and teachers feel that the move towards self-governed learning does not truly support the learning process. Preparations have started, but the difficulties encountered along the way have proved to be considerable (for a debate see Stevens, 2006; van der Werf, 2006). These problems have given rise to a social debate about the dangers of new learning, and although the concept has not yet been abandoned altogether, the government decided in 2007 to postpone the introduction of the reform, planned for 2008, by at least one year. The educational concept of new learning is deemed to be detrimental to migrant youth in particular, because their cultural background does not prepare them for the self-guidance required. These concerns also indicate a shift in the construction of migrant youth as a problematic group.

Related to the discussion about the best way to set up vocational education, the compulsory age for being in education has become the focus of debate. In 1969 the compulsory school age was prescribed as being the end of the school year in which the pupil reached 16 years of age, followed by a year of part-time compulsory education. Compulsory school attendance ends at the age of 17. In practice, checking the part-time compulsory age proved to be difficult and many 16-17 year old pupils left education early without a basic qualification. This state of affairs was behind proposals to extend the school leaving age. As of 1-8-2007 the Compulsory Education Act has been extended with a 'qualification obligation' (Min. OCW, 2007b). This implies that

all youngsters between 16 and 18 years of age who do not have a basic qualification are obliged to attend school full time in order to obtain this basic qualification.

This is seen as a first step. The plan is to extend the compulsory age to 23, and possibly even to 27. The focus in this period is on combining school and work. But other, more drastic plans have also been put forward, with the aim of forcing 'unwilling youth' into prep camps or boarding schools, the so-called campus approach, where they would be taught discipline, and again find the motivation to participate in society. How the coercive nature of this plan would be regulated within the existing legal framework is still not clear. Experiments based on voluntary participation are currently taking place (Ministry of General Affairs [Min. Algemene Zaken], 2007; Taskforce Jeugdwerkloosheid, 2006). The main target for these plans are generally young migrants who are seen as troublemakers on the streets because of their lack of education and work and their resistance to being 're-educated' by social work and/or training.

2.4.2 Combating dropout and youth unemployment

Describing all the measures, projects, and taskforces that have been put in place to combat dropout and unemployment is beyond the scope of this chapter. We will, instead, present a brief overview of the three categories of underlying strategies. The first category is the strategy of supervision and obligation. Several routes are possible: one is refined registration and control, which means that young people without a basic qualification can be traced and returned to education or work experience programmes. When young people are past the compulsory school age (now 18), this can only be done on a voluntary basis. So extending the compulsory school age is a means to end this situation. Another way of forcing young people into work (and training) is, when they apply for social assistance, to refuse benefit and oblige them to work instead, i.e. the 'work first' approach. Proposals to send problematic youngsters to prep camps or boarding schools also fall into this category (Berenschot, 2006).

The second strategy involves creating training posts, work experience placement, jobs etc.. This is done by agreements between the social partners (government, employers and trade unions), municipalities and other involved players. These agreements are sometimes supported by measures such as wage subsidies or employers being exempt from having to pay certain social security contributions, or extra budgets for municipalities. In particular, the measures and projects in the second strategy are generally short term, local in nature, and have hardly been evaluated at all. The same activities are sometimes undertaken under new names.

The third strategy is the reform of vocational education, concentrating on a better rapport with the labour market through training positions, the development of professional and social (employee) skills as attainment levels, and flexible programmes. However, implementing these reforms is proving to be very difficult, and they meet with serious opposition from some quarters, including teachers, political parties, and students. Another development is to introduce the concept of 'practically acquired

skills', through which work experience may be re-evaluated as being the equivalent of certain school qualifications.

2.4.3 Self-fulfilling prophesies?

Although the number of dropouts is decreasing slightly, the results are still unsatisfactory and it is unlikely that the target of halving the number of dropouts will be achieved. As a result of growing anxiety about migrant youth becoming criminals or radicalised, the disappointing effect of the existing policies has led to continued attention being given to measures to combat school dropout.

In this context, the policy discourses have resulted in these dropouts being presented along the following lines: in general, low educational achievement is considered to be the result of student-related deficits: the low educational level of parents, poverty, broken families, insufficient language use etc.. This explanation in terms of individual characteristics is further enhanced by stating that migrant youth, because of their cultural background, lack the competences required to adjust to and participate in the Dutch educational system, and also fail the modern requirements of self-development and social negotiation. Migrants are consequently portrayed as a high-risk group in need of special attention and care, particularly when it involves the group of non-participating young people who are seen as very problematic and are associated with 'undesirable behaviour' (SZW, 2007). The consequence of this discourse may mean that young migrant people are blamed for their own disadvantage and that this contributes to the prevailing image of migrant people in the Netherlands as unwilling to integrate and adapt to Dutch society (Vasta, 2007). This may end up in the equation of ethnicity with failing skills, and may thus argue in favour of migrants being excluded without it being referred to as discrimination.

2.5 Conclusion

We wanted to know if forms of segmented assimilation could be detected in the Netherlands with drop-out figures of migrant youth as a marker. Our analysis of the dropout rates and the link between early school leaving and success or failure on the labour market shows that the general tendency for migrant youth is not necessarily downward. Although some migrant youngsters end up in unemployment because of their lack in educational qualifications, many others with the same background have found a position on the labour market. These findings are corroborated by other studies. For instance, there are signs of polarization among young second generation Turkish people in the Netherlands (Crul & Doomernik, 2003). On the one hand an increasing group of young Turkish people are successful in higher education and they form a cultural and political elite in their community. On the other hand, Turkish dropouts seem to reproduce the low-class position of their parents. This polarization can also be found among the Moroccan migrants (see Crul et al., 2008). Other migrant groups like the Surinamese are as a group faring better in education and employment.

So polarization is not only taking place within the same migrant group but also between migrant groups. Furthermore the second generation migrants are clearly performing better than the first generation in terms of educational level and participation on the labour market. So, there is no overall prove to assume a segmented, downward assimilation of migrant youth.

We have shown furthermore that dropping out of school should not necessarily be seen as something dramatic, and the term dropout cannot, in fact, be used as a marker per se for downward mobility. The majority of dropouts can actually be considered to be less of a problem than imagined. They are in employment and have often even obtained an educational certificate. However, the fact is that the problematic group sets the image for the rest of the group. Discussions about early school leaving focus far too much on the dark side, and this means that early school leavers might possibly be stigmatized by the use of the term dropout.

The overview of figures and policies shows that the position of groups of young migrants in education is still, after numerous attempts to change their situation, unfavourable and is in need of improvement. Educational disadvantage, disproportionate dropout and unemployment levels, and discriminatory practices characterise their life chances in the Netherlands. This would seem to be the result of complex interaction between maladapted institutional methods to integrate migrants, and the migrants' own ways of situating themselves in Dutch society. It is especially important to point at the Dutch educational system as an institutional factor in distributing opportunities. The early selection for vocational or general secondary education works out as a disadvantage for migrant youth (Crul & Vermeulen, 2003), who because of still lesser performances in primary education are referred to vocational education. And within vocational education it is difficult for them to make the right choices for the labour market, which causes delay or disappointment and may enhance dropping out (SCP, 2008).

We think that these outcomes are interesting for reworking the theory of segmented assimilation. The presumed relation between early school leaving and reduced labour market opportunities, the phenomenon of, polarization between and in groups, and the specifics of the national contexts have to be dealt with in order to analyse more precisely the position of the second generation migrants.

It is, however, important to note that institutional barriers and policies targeting migrant youth as problematic contribute towards maintaining ethnic categorization. We have attempted to show how groups-at-risk are defined in the debate about dropout and unemployment, and how this process enhances the idea that disadvantage is linked to cultural and ethnic background. This implies a change in the social representation of second generation migrants. The problems of migrant youth, such as educational disadvantage, dropout or unemployment, are seen here in terms of a 'youth at risk' who is not capable of or even willing to participate in Dutch society. And because of a deliberate link between this incapacity/unwillingness and problems of harassment and criminality, the call for drastic measures is being heard ever more

loudly. Problems of discrimination on the labour market, of changing qualifications, or of inadequate forms of education are only discussed in the margins. Living conditions in the urban conurbations, where highly segregated neighbourhoods are located, are mostly discussed as proof of unwillingness to mix and therefore to integrate. The troublemaking behaviour of some migrant youngsters in the inner cities is seen as illustrative of this refusal to adapt to Dutch society.

Discourses in the 1980s and 1990s were predominantly in terms of structural disadvantage that had to be overcome (SCP, 2006), whereas today the terms tend to be more cultural or ethnic in nature: the migrants' problems are related to their cultural or ethnic peculiarities and to the problems they have identifying with the norms and values of Dutch society. This redefinition implies that the Other i.e. migrants, fail to meet the social and cultural norms prevalent in the Netherlands, and that migrants are therefore responsible for their own exclusion. Problems of integration are attributed to migrants, and any reciprocity in the process is swiftly put aside. We hope that our discussion on the transition from school to work for migrant youth has opened the way to explore the dynamics of exclusion and participation, and to consider the importance of discursive constructions that may contribute to the creation of new forms of exclusion.

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Chapter 3

School satisfaction of migrant youth: the role of ethnicity, gender and social network

Abstract:
This study focuses on school satisfaction among young migrants in secondary vocational education in the Netherlands with an emphasis on gender differences. The results of our study, using a mixed method approach, show that being a Moroccan girl has a positive effect on school satisfaction. This ethnicity effect fades once socioeconomic background, social capital, and school environment variables are included in the regression model. School satisfaction for all groups was generally explained by social network variables: positive relations with parents and teachers. School satisfaction improves where there is communication with parents about school, and where there are fewer conflicts with teachers. Lower life satisfaction has a negative impact on how migrant girls adjust to school. Interviews with teachers revealed that being in school offers migrant girls a less restricted social space with opportunities for meeting friends. Care responsibilities at home can hinder the school engagement of migrant girls.

Keywords: school satisfaction, migrant youth, gender differences, social network, discrimination

3.1 Introduction

Young migrants in the Netherlands are steadily doing better in the educational system and second generation migrants are showing clear signs of upward mobility. Compared with their Dutch counterparts, despite these improvements, young migrants are still in a disadvantaged position when it comes to schooling: they are concentrated in the lower segments of education and generally have a higher dropout rate (nearly twice as often) than their native counterparts (Social and Cultural Planning Office [SCP], 2009).

In spite of this somewhat negative picture, it is important to note that the school performance of migrant youngsters varies widely and there are clear differences both in and among different migrant groups. There are signs of polarization among groups of migrant youngsters that are more successful and those that are less successful (Crul, Pasztor & Lelie, 2008; de Graaf & van Zenderen, 2009). There are also gender differences and, in general, girls outperform boys at school. This is also the case among native youngsters, but the difference is more pronounced for migrant youngsters. Several international studies on the school performance of various migrant groups show that gender is an important factor for migrant school success and that migrant girls perform better than boys (Abada & Tenkorang, 2009; Feliciano & Rumbaut, 2005; OECD, 2009; Qin-Hilliard, 2003; Rumbaut 2000; Schmid, 2001; Suárez-Orozco & Rhodes, Millburn, 2009), and that migrant girls are more dedicated to their schoolwork (López, 2002; Suárez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004). A recent study on the integration of young migrants in education in the Netherlands indicated that

migrant girls have caught up with migrant boys and currently migrant girls outperform boys at every stage of their educational career (SCP, 2009). Increasing numbers of migrant girls are participating in higher education, whereas this is not the case for migrant boys. Furthermore, participation among some migrant groups, for instance Moroccan and Turkish girls, is even higher than for their male counterparts. Their considerable increase in participation in higher education shows that migrant girls have higher intergenerational mobility than boys: compared to their low-educated mothers, they have made a higher leap forward (Crul et al., 2008). More migrant girls than boys in higher education in the Netherlands graduate, and they also tend to do so more quickly (Jennissen, 2006; SCP, 2009). Furthermore, migrant girls leave school far less often without having graduated than boys (SCP, 2009). Despite this progress among migrant girls, it should be noted that there is still a considerable difference compared to the performance of native girls (SCP, 2009).

Migrant girls not only perform well in education, they also show high levels of school satisfaction (Ding & Hall, 2007; Lopez, 2003; Qin-Hilliard, 2006). Studies on youngsters' school satisfaction in the US context reveal that youngsters who are dissatisfied with school and feel detached from school perform less well in education. For instance, dropouts often point out their negative school experience as a major obstruction to their educational aspirations (Lee & Breen 2007; Tidwell, 1988). In another study, interviews with dropouts revealed that it is important for youngsters to get enough personal attention and to be involved in school. They expect the school to provide care and structure. Youngsters want to be acknowledged and to be seen at school and are looking for attachment (WRR, 2009; Oberon, 2008). Negative school satisfaction may contribute to bad school performances and students opting to leave school early (Ding & Hall, 2007).

Therefore, negative school experience may contribute towards a problematic school career. How young people fare at school is an important predictor of their future outcomes such as high school and college graduation and labour market opportunities (Garcia-Reid, 2007). Early school leaving, for instance, has a negative effect on labour market prospects (SCP, 2009). Van Geel and Vedder (2009) discuss that a positive school adjustment results in an increased general adaptation of immigrant adolescents to the host society. Having a positive school career is particularly important for young migrants, since education and labour market participation contribute to their social and economic integration.

There is plenty of information about how young migrants perform in education in terms of grades or educational outcomes, but understanding the personal school satisfaction and commitment of young migrants is still rather limited, particularly among migrants living in European countries. US studies on these topics show that

migrant youngsters have high educational aspirations and are dedicated to performing well in school (Rumbaut, 2000). These studies also indicate that there are clear differences between migrant boys and girls. In general, these studies found that girls are better adjusted to school than migrant boys: boys are less engaged, have lower levels of interest and work effort, and lower career and educational aspirations (Lopez, 2003; Qin-Hilliard, 2006). Migrant girls, in turn, experience school in a more positive way than boys do, they are more motivated and dedicated, and have better relationships with teachers and classmates compared to migrant boys who, generally speaking, have more conflicts and encounter more difficulties (Ding & Hall, 2007; Suárez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004).

This study focuses on the school satisfaction of young migrants in secondary education in two cities in the Netherlands - Amsterdam and Utrecht - where half the residents under 25 have a migrant background. As stated above, little research has been conducted on this topic in Europe. Our first aim is therefore to examine whether these differences in school satisfaction between migrants and natives and between migrant boys and migrant girls do, in fact, actually exist in the Netherlands. To outline how young migrants experience school in the Netherlands, we present our results from extensive quantitative and qualitative research, which used a mixed-method approach. The second aim of this study is to explain possible gender differences in the school satisfaction of natives and different ethnic groups, using, in the first place, the results from our quantitative study and applying multivariate analysis, complemented with the results from the qualitative study.

3.2 Theory

Studies into the educational performance of migrant youth often refer to the immigrant optimism hypothesis (Andriessen, Phalet & Lens, 2006; Bankston & Zhou, 2002; Kao & Tienda, 1995). Migrant parents, in most cases, clearly wish for upward mobility for their children, and have high expectations of their offspring's socioeconomic prospects. Especially migrant parents coming from underdeveloped countries where there are fewer chances for educational and professional success. They feel their children should take advantage of the educational opportunities available in the host society. Migrants have a positive dual frame of reference: they compare the disadvantaged situation back home in their country of origin with the better opportunities for their children in the host country and believe education and having a career is the road to (financial) success (Ogbu & Simons, 1998). This stance is adopted by their children and tends to motivate them to perform well at school. Young migrants themselves have high educational aspirations and expectations and almost all emphasize the importance

of a good education (Rumbaut, 2000). Therefore, the advantage of migrant parents having high educational aspirations for their children is that it boosts their offspring's learning and academic performance (Shah, 2008).

Noteworthy is that the above insights are based on the US context and its applicability for the European or Dutch context might thus be questionable. However, the frame of reference of the subjects of our study, young migrants who are officially categorized as 'non-western'[2], might not be different since their parents originate from rural disadvantaged areas in their countries of origin and occupy the lowest socio-economic positions in the Dutch society (SCP, 2009). This might make migrant parents expect their children can benefit from the available educational opportunities and experience upward mobility. We therefore hypothesize that when migrant parents in the Dutch context hold school in high esteem their children will have high levels of school satisfaction.

Migrant girls tend to be exposed to traditional gender roles in the home, and this may affect the girls in different ways. First, girls' parents may not have particularly high expectations for them on the educational or professional front. For instance, the Turkish community in the Netherlands did not, in the past, place much store by their daughters doing well in school. The result was a high dropout rate among Turkish girls: if they found school difficult or dropped out, parents expected the girls to get married and have children (Crul & Doomernik, 2006). However, this rejective attitude towards education among the Turkish community began to change at the turn of the century towards a more positive and open stance (Coenen, 2001), as evidenced by the improving educational performance to be found among Turkish girls (SCP, 2007).

However, the opposite may also be true, with migrant girls, paradoxically, also benefiting from traditional gender roles. Studies among migrant groups in the US reveal that the home situation motivates migrant girls to perform well at school as a means for them to free themselves from gender inequality. In these studies the authors applied the dual frame of reference theory at migrant girls specifically (Lee, 2006, 2007; Lopez 2002, 2003). They argue that these migrant girls have a positive dual frame of reference: they are aware that their current opportunities are better than those offered by their country of origin, and that education will help them achieve a gender equality greater than their own mothers experienced. Young migrant girls realize that they are being offered opportunities their mothers never had. Seen in this light,

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[2] The term 'non-western' refers here to its application in the Netherlands. This term is widely used in official Dutch national statistics and public debate. Non-western means people from Turkey, Africa, Latin America and Asia, with the exemption of Indonesia and Japan, and with at least one parent born in one of these countries.

education serves as a means for achieving gender equality. The results of these US based studies show how ethnicity intersects with gender in explaining the educational drive of migrant girls (Lopez, 2002).

The above might also apply to non-western migrant girls in the Dutch context as the overall majority of their mothers, particularly Turkish and Moroccan foreign born or first generation migrant woman, are in a disadvantaged situation: they received hardly any education, many are unemployed and benefit depended and belong to the lowest income groups. Moreover, traditional views on gender roles and involvement in care tasks seem to obstruct their labour market participation (SCP, 2007). It is visible that many of their daughters, particularly second generation Moroccan women, have high aspirations and they often postpone getting married and having children by continuing in education and entering the labour market (Crul & Doomernik, 2006). We hypothesize that because of a positive dual frame of reference regarding gender opportunities for woman, non-western migrant girls are motivated for school, and as a result they have higher levels of school satisfaction.

The gender relations at home also mean that parents control and supervise their daughters, and they expect their daughters to behave in the correct manner. As a consequence, the girls are pushed, more so than boys, towards academic performance (Zhou & Bankston, 2001; Feliciano & Rumbaut, 2005; Qin-Hilliard, 2003). Boys, in turn, experience less supervision and enjoy more freedom, and they are consequently easily distracted from school in general. Zhou and Bankston (2001) found that Vietnamese immigrant girls were exposed to considerable parental supervision which resulted in them behaving correctly both at home and in school and in positive school performance. This is not explained by girls wanting to escape gender inequality, but it does fit in with the traditional gender patterns. Fathers, for example, valued their daughters' obedience and encouraged them to perform well at school. From the fathers' perspective, doing well at school is essential if their daughters are to contribute towards the future family income, and it makes them eligible to marry high status husbands.

One important factor involved in explaining school success and dedication is the social network youngsters have at their disposal. Family webs are valuable and offer migrant youngsters a safe haven through the availability of supportive family members. Rumbaut's (2000) study of migrant youngsters and their school achievements shows that the strongest predictor of children leaving school early was that they came from a disrupted family where there was little or no positive parent-child interaction. Intact, harmonious families were positively related with discipline and the time migrant youngsters spent on schoolwork.

Stanton-Salazar's (2001) extensive study on US Mexican youth and Crul's studies (2006, 2008) on education and labour market integration of Dutch second generation

Turkish and Moroccan youngsters showed that older siblings and extended family members can help young migrants overcome their disadvantages and improve their resilience and mobility opportunities. They both particularly point out the supportive role older brothers and sisters may have on the educational and career outcomes of young migrants. The oldest children often have a lot of influence within the family and can be key figures in offering emotional, social and institutional support to their younger siblings. They can act as inspiring role models for their younger brothers and sisters (Valenzuela, 1999).

Support for school is not just a matter of having family members who value school. What is also essential is that family members actively participate in discussions on school issues. An extensive meta-analysis of dropout literature showed that communication within the family has a positive effect on educational performance and reduces the risk of students opting to leave school early (Strom & Boster, 2007). This not only entails discussing day to day school experiences but should also be accompanied by parents expressing their aspirations and educational goals for their children. Previous studies also found that girls receive much more social support from their family ties than boys do (Lopez, 2003). Girls talk about school more often and also discuss their schoolwork more frequently with family members. These results indicate that migrant girls are inclined to be more socially embedded in networks at home and in their community.

We hypothesized above that youngsters are positively motivated for school if their parents value school highly. We now hypothesize that the support young migrants receive from the social network as assessed by the quality and frequency of communication about school issues, has a positive influence on their school satisfaction. This applies in particular to girls who are expected to communicate more about school.

The literature also refers to gendered relations at school i.e. teachers perceive and treat girls and boys differently. The literature indicates that boys are punished and corrected more often, and that girls are generally considered to be good pupils (Lopez, 2002, 2003). For these reasons boys and girls are treated differently and this has a negative impact on how boys experience school. Strom and Boster's (2007) meta-analysis of dropout studies revealed that negative student-teacher interactions and a lack of perceived teacher support increase the risk of a pupil dropping out of school.

The relations at school can take on an additional dimension in the context of a multicultural school. Teachers may hold gendered stereotype and deficit views of migrant students and their families, and this may contribute towards a negative school experience and educational disadvantage (Patterson, Hale & Stressman, 2007). Boys in particular are affected by these stereotypes, and teachers' views of migrant boys are generally more negative than their views of girls. This is partly responsible for boys

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doing worse in school than girls (Lee, 2007; Lopez, 2002; Suárez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004). For instance, teachers assume that migrant boys do not perform well, that they are involved with gangs, and that parental involvement is limited because the youngsters themselves or their families are deficient in some way. Qin-Hilliard (2003) found that immigrant Dominican and Mexican girls had better contact with and received more support from teachers, and this had a positive influence on their school aspirations. The hypothesis we would like to derive is as follows: girls are expected to have higher school satisfaction because relations with their teachers are better than those of boys.

Finally, we need to mention the negative experiences in society at large that affect school satisfaction. If youngsters feel that roads are blocked and upward mobility is not possible for them, because of discrimination for instance, they are liable to develop a negative attitude towards education (Andriessen et al., 2006). The literature on school satisfaction and commitment refers to negative social mirroring. This means that migrant youngsters, and boys in particular, often feel treated unfairly by society, they feel that they are discriminated against and act accordingly to this sense of social exclusion (Suárez-Orozco 2000; Suárez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004). This is referred to as an oppositional culture in which migrant boys confronted with disadvantage and discrimination shy away from education as a means for upward mobility (Lee, 2007; Schmid, 2001; Suárez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004; WRR 2007; Zhou 1997). They question if achieving success through education really is an option that is open to them.

There are indications that non-western migrants in the Netherlands might encounter the same feelings of exclusion and disillusion concerning future options and prospects. A previous study reveals that many migrant youngsters perceive discrimination (44 per cent) (TRESEGY, 2009a). Main places where this occurs are on the street, when searching for work or at work and in the school. The main reasons are due to their (Islamic) religion or ethnic background. Important is also to mention the rather hostile Dutch (political) climate on integration which evokes feelings of exclusion among migrant youngsters. Full socio-cultural adaptation is demanded and migrants, Muslims in particular, are in a rather gloomy debate, often portrayed as incapable or unwilling to meet integration demands (Ghorashi, 2003; Vasta, 2007). Wearing a headscarf is in this debate perceived as a symbol of woman's oppression and as a barrier or even refusal to integrate well in the labour market. Many complaints about discriminatory practices in the Netherlands also concern the hijab of headscarf (SCP, 2010). Employers admit that for representative jobs or jobs that require neutrality, women with headscarves are not hired. The hypothesis we would like to formulate in line with our expectations is that negative experiences of non-western migrant young-

sters in the Dutch society at large i.e. discrimination and satisfaction with life in general, are negatively reflected in their school experiences.

3.3 Data and methods

The data for our analyses are firstly derived from TRESEGY a comparative European research project. The project ran from June 2006 through June 2009 and focused on: "Factors of inclusion and exclusion of second-generation migrants in Europe". We studied how young migrants experience life in their country of residence, what problems they face and what kind of support they get from social policy. Six European countries with nine cities as research locations participated in the TRESEGY project. The project conducted both quantitative and qualitative (ethnographic) case studies in various local settings where many migrant youngsters live or hang out. Secondly, this study is part of the 'Pathways to Work Research Program'. This project elaborates on the TRESEGY project and pays specific attention to youngsters with difficult educational careers, who face dropping out or dropped out already. It approaches their problems with schooling from different interrelated perspectives, from an interplay between the institutional and social environment (Sol, Knijn & Frings-Dresen, 2007). It aims to find factors which can reduce early school leaving.

We use data from the Dutch context to answer our research questions. We employed mixed methods research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004) consisting of three steps: firstly, explorative case studies involving participant observations and interviews were set up in a school (secondary vocational education) and other settings such as the street, community centres and workshops for young people.

Secondly, a quantitative study was conducted with 608 respondents. A sample was drawn from students from five secondary vocational schools in the cities of Utrecht and Amsterdam (Amsterdam is the largest and Utrecht the fourth largest city in the Netherlands). Our sample is a so called cluster sample, in which the population is concentrated in a natural cluster (the school). The schools are similar concerning their urban context, location in deprived neighbourhoods, population with a majority of migrant youngsters with various backgrounds, and the size and urgency of the dropout problem. The sample consists of 164 natives (27 per cent) and 441 young migrants (73 per cent) and both genders are equally represented (54 per cent girls, 46 per cent boys). Questions of the survey were partly based on the TRESEGY project survey (social, economic and cultural inclusion and exclusion), partly on the SIG/RVO project (support with school from family network), and partly on findings from the preceding ethnographic studies. Written questionnaires and an online survey were used which students had to fill out in the classrooms under the guidance and instruction of

teachers, in this way most of the selected students filled out the questionnaire (both the written and online survey). The average response rate was about 60 per cent per school).

During the third step, the descriptive results of the survey were discussed in interviews and focus groups with youngsters, educational managers, policymakers and teachers, both individually and during staff meetings, from the schools involved. The results of the survey served as topics for questions and discussion during the interviews. We use these insights below to reflect on and to illustrate the quantitative results.

3.3.1 Survey

The results of the survey form the main body of our analysis and we now describe the variables used for the analysis. In order to measure the school satisfaction we constructed a scale consisting of eight questions using 5-point Likert scales ranging from *never* to *very often*. The scale consists of items regarding how students experience school life as well as their motivation for school performance. The questions are as follows: "Do you enjoy school?; "Do you try to do the best that you can in school?"; "Do you feel forced to be at school against your will?"; "Are you satisfied with your schoolwork?"; "Is school easy for you?"; "Are you satisfied with what you learn at school?"; "Can you get along with your classmates?"; and "Are you satisfied with the contact with teachers?" The first five items are derived from the scale for measuring school adjustment by Kerr and Stattin (2003) and the others from the TRESEGY project. After conducting a factor and reliability analysis, we found that the third question: "Do you feel forced to be at school against your will?" needed to be removed from the other items to achieve a reliable scale. The items are highly intercorrelated ($r > .500$ for all bivariate relations) and the reliability for this adjusted scale was Cronbach's alpha .81 compared to Cronbach's alpha .71 when the third question was included. The scale used for our analysis thus proved to be a reliable measure for school satisfaction in terms of being satisfied with school life and being motivated for scholastic performance.

As far as ethnicity is concerned, the categories represent the largest ethnic groups in the Netherlands: Moroccan, Turkish, Surinamese and Antillean youngsters. The Antilleans are underrepresented in our sample and form a too small group for the regression analysis (19 youngsters). We therefore combined the Antillean and the Surinamese groups because both groups have a lot of cultural resemblance. For instance: household composition - Surinamese and Antilleans generally grow up with their mother in a single parent family. Both groups also have in common that they origin from former Dutch colonies (SCP, 2007). Once these two groups had been combined, there are five different ethnic groups in our sample: natives, Moroccan, Turkish, Surinamese/Antilleans and other. The category "other" is quite heterogeneous and mainly includes youngsters with a North-African or Middle Eastern background from countries such as Somalia, Ethiopia, Afghanistan or Syria. The five ethnicity

variables are all dichotomous and coded as "1" if a respondent reports belonging to a certain ethnic category and "0" if not. Gender was coded as "0" when a respondent was male and "1" when a respondent was female.

To test the hypotheses on immigrant optimism and dual reference we use the following questions: "Do your parents feel school is important?" using a 5-point scale *not very important* to *very important*. We also ask about the mother's highest achieved education level. The answer categories were "1" for no education; "2" for just primary school; "3" for high school; and "4" for a higher education. In the first place this variable can be used to control for the influence of socioeconomic status on school experience. At the same time the mother's educational level is also an indication of dual reference, the wish of young migrant girls to end up in a better socioeconomic situation than their mother.

We focus on support from parents and siblings to assess the amount of support youngsters receive with school and schoolwork from their social network. Parental and sibling support is measured by questions about frequency of communication with parents and siblings about school-related issues. We constructed two scales, one for parents and one for siblings, each consisting of five questions using 5-point Likert scales ranging from *never* to *very often*. The questions are as follows: "How often do you talk with your parents/siblings about your grades"; "…about the teachers"; "…about your homework"; …about your fellow students"; and "…about what you did during the lesson". The items in both scales are highly intercorrelated (r > .500 for all bivariate relations) and the reliability was Cronbach's alpha .88 for the frequency of communication with parents and Cronbach's alpha .95 for communication with brothers and sisters respectively.

The relationship with teachers was measured by a question on how often pupils conflict with teachers. The respondents could answer how often they had problems or conflicts with their teachers on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from *never to very often*. Problematic school behaviour was measured by asking if the students ever dropped out of school before graduation with code "0" for non-dropouts and "1" for former dropouts. Dropping out of school is seen as a major indication of a problematic school career with negative consequences for future employment. It is important to note that most dropouts in the Netherlands return to school before permanently leaving the educational system. When a youngster is in danger of dropping out, schools are also obliged to send students to a different school to make sure they start a new educational course. For this reason our sample includes many former dropouts (23 per cent).

We included questions about negative experiences of youngsters in society at large to measure indications of possible negative social mirroring and oppositional culture. We first ask whether youngsters had felt discriminated against during the past year. Youngsters who did not feel discriminated against are coded "0" and youngsters who did were coded "1". Secondly, we measure the overall satisfaction of youngsters with their lives. Youngsters could answer on a 4-point scale ranging from *not very satisfied* to *very satisfied*.

3.3.2 Analysis

Our analysis of the survey data comprises two steps. We begin our analysis with a descriptive analysis of the main topics and its variables by ethnic group and gender. This enables us to distinguish the major differences between the various groups with regard to immigrant optimism, support and communication about school, socioeconomic status, experiences with discrimination, and life satisfaction. The descriptive results presented in the following section are based on the distinction between the main groups: natives, migrants and by gender (see table 3-1).

We then employ sequential regression with a series of regression models to look at the predictors of school satisfaction. We constructed five models in which the relevant topics and their variables are represented per model. In the first model we test our model of school satisfaction on the four ethnic groups with the natives used as reference group. In this way we first show the differences between ethnic groups. In the following models we examine whether ethnic group and also gender variations in school satisfaction can be attributed successively to immigrant optimism, socioeconomic status, support and communication about school, and negative experiences with the broader society by entering the corresponding variables per topic in the regression models. Finally, we re-ran the analysis for boys and girls separately to trace possible gender differences.

3.4 Results

3.4.1 Descriptive results

School satisfaction: The school satisfaction scale (7 items, 5 points) indicates that youngsters are fairly satisfied with their life at school with migrants and natives showing an equal average score of 3.8. However, boys are less satisfied. Turkish and Moroccan girls are the most satisfied with their school life (4.1). We computed t-tests to test whether there were significant differences in school experience between the genders. We found significant differences between boys and girls: girls have higher school satisfaction than boys ($p<.001$), with a small-sized effect, Cohen's D = -0.30 (see Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007 p.54). After further analysis we found that the differences between boys and girls were significant for the migrant group ($p<.001$), with a small-sized effect, Cohen's D = -.35, and not for the native group.

If we examine the items on the school satisfaction scale separately we see that, on average, 62 per cent of all the youngsters report they enjoy school. Migrants report that they try to do their best more often than natives do (81 per cent of vs. 72 per cent, $p<.05$) and migrant girls put in more effort than migrant boys (87 per cent compared to 74 per cent, $p<.05$). Young migrants are more satisfied than natives with regard to

what they learn (55 per cent vs. 42 per cent, p<.05) and migrant girls again even more than their male counterparts (62 per cent compared to 46 per cent, p<.05).

Immigrant optimism: Our descriptive results show manifestations of existing immigrant optimism: migrant youngsters, for instance, tend to have parents who believe school is very important (88 per cent compared to 64 per cent of the natives, p<.001). Furthermore, migrant girls report more often that their parents stress the importance of education than migrant boys do (91 per cent compared to 84 per cent, p<.05). The opposite was found to be the case between native girls and boys, although not significant, boys claim their parents strongly value education more often than girls (69 per cent vs. 59 per cent).

Mothers' level of education: Mothers of young migrants are significantly not as highly educated as the mothers of their native counterparts (p< .001). Forty-four percent of the native mothers, for instance, have an educational level above high school compared to 32 per cent of the mothers of migrant youngsters.

Support and communication about school with parents: Both young natives and migrants regularly talk with their parents about school-related issues, such as their teachers or homework. Grades are discussed the most. Girls in both groups speak significantly more about school with their parents than boys, with an average of 3.1 for native girls, (p<.01) and 3.2 for migrant girls (p<.001) with medium-sized effects, Cohen's D = -0.40 for natives and D = -0.41 for migrants. The gender differences are more pronounced between migrant boys and girls. The latter score significantly higher on all communication indicators except talking about teachers: they tend to discuss with their parents their grades, homework, fellow students and what they did during the lesson.

Support and communication about school with siblings: Youngsters do not generally often discuss school-related issues with their siblings. Young migrants, however, clearly talk more often with their siblings than natives (p<.001) with a medium-sized effect, Cohen's D = -0.55. This counts for all separate indicators of communication about school. For example, 35 per cent discuss their grades with their siblings compared to just 14 per cent of native youngsters (p< .001).

Again, as with parents, migrant girls communicate about school significantly more often than migrant boys (p<.001) with a small-sized effect, Cohen's D = -0.36. They talk more often about their grades, teachers, homework and about their fellow students.

Conflicts with teachers: More than a quarter of the youngsters reported having conflicts with their teachers. In most cases, however, these conflicts are only occasional (20 per cent). A slight minority report having regular conflicts (7 per cent). Migrant

girls have conflicts somewhat more often than boys, and native boys more than girls, although these figures are not significant.

Early school leaving: Quite a few youngsters are former dropouts (23 per cent) which corresponds to the high dropout rates in secondary vocational education in national figures (Ministry of Education [Min. OCW], 2009). There are more native youngsters than migrants who dropped out of school before graduating: 29 per cent as opposed to 21 per cent, and more native boys than girls.

Perceived discrimination: Migrant youngsters have felt themselves discriminated against more often in the past year than their native counterparts, 41 per cent compared to 21 per cent (p< .001). There are no appreciable gender differences.

Life satisfaction: Both migrant and native youngsters are relatively satisfied with their current lives (85 per cent is satisfied). Migrant girls are slightly more positive than migrant boys. The opposite is the case for natives, with boys being slightly more satisfied than girls.

Table 3-1 *Descriptive statistics*

			Migrants		Natives	
	Natives	Migrants	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
School satisfaction (5 points never to very often = .81)	3.8	3.8	**3.7***	**3.9***	3.7	3.8
Indicators of school satisfaction (% agree/strongly agree)						
Do you enjoy school?	64.7	61.5	60.2	63	62.9	66.7
Do you try to do the best that you can in school?	**72***	**81.3***	**74**	**86.7**	71.9	72
Are you satisfied with your schoolwork?	57.3	51.8	44.7	57.2	55	60
Is school easy for you?	65.4	62.9	60.6	64.5	63.6	67.6
Are you satisfied with what you learn at school?	**41.7**	**54.9**	**46.1***	**61.7***	39.4	44.6
Do you get along with your classmates?	87.7	85.2	82.9	86.8	85.4	90.7
Are you satisfied with the contact with teachers?	**75**	**70.9**	66.3	76.7	71.9	78.7
Parents feel school is very important (%)	**64.4***	**88.2***	**84***	**90.9***	69.3	58.7
Mothers with an education higher than high school (%)	**43.9***	**32.2***	31.9	32.3	41.7	46.9
Communication about school with parents (5 points never to very often = .88)	2.9	3	**2.8***	**3.2***	**2.8**	**3.1**
Indicators of communication about school with parents (% often/very often)						
...about your grades	40.1	50.3	**38.9***	**57.5***	32.2	49.3
...about the teachers	31.5	31.6	31.3	32.1	28.7	34.7
…about your homework	**21.1**	**38.1**	**29**	**44.2**	14.9	28.4
…about your fellow students	**27.3***	**33.3***	**23**	**40.1**	**19.5***	**36.5***
…about what you did during the lesson	33.3	37.2	**28.4***	**43.1***	32.1	34.7

	Natives	Migrants	Migrants Boys	Girls	Natives Boys	Girls
Communication about school with siblings (5 points never to very often = .95)	**1.9*****	**2.5*****	**2.3*****	**2.7*****	1.8	2
Indicators of communication about school with siblings (% often/very often)						
...about your grades	**13.7*****	**34.5*****	**24.3****	**40.9****	10.7	17.2
...about the teachers	**9.3*****	**28.5*****	23	32.4	6.7	12.4
…about your homework	**9.4*****	**26.4*****	**19.2***	**31.1***	8	10.9
…about your fellow students	**9.4*****	**27.2*****	**19.8***	**32.1***	**6.7***	**12.5***
…about what you did during the lesson	**11.5*****	**27.4*****	22.3	31.1	12	11
% reporting have conflict with teachers	27.5	26	26.1	29.2	30.4	23
Early school leavers (%)	28.7	21.2	23.9	19.4	33.7	22.7
Perceived discrimination last year (%)	**21*****	**40.6*****	42.5	39.1	21.6	20.3
Life satisfaction (% very satisfied)	32.1	36.2	32	39.4	34.1	29.7
N	164	432	181	251	89	75

* p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

3.4.2 Regression

Sequential regression was applied for this study. The data were first examined for missing values, outliers and assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. Furthermore, the variables were examined for multicollinearity.

The *education mother* variable appeared to have too many missing values (11 per cent). After close examination using missing values analysis (MVA), we decided to apply means substitution for the missing values of the variable *education mother*, except for those respondents who do not have a mother (2.5 per cent). Means substitution is a conservative way of estimating missing data; it reduces the variance of the variable and the mean for the distribution as a whole does not change (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007, p.67). Using this method prevents overestimation of the effect of the education of the mother. Three cases in our data were multivariate outliers, one case had a significant Mahalanobis distance (p<.001), the standardized residuals for the other two were too high (<3), and these three cases were removed from the sample. One variable (*school importance*) did not meet the assumption of linearity and a logarithmic transformation was performed. After these transformations all the evaluations of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity had the correct values. The variables included in our study showed no signs of multicollinearity. All variables had small missing values, but the cases with missing values were deleted from the dataset for the regression analysis, which led to a final dataset of 497 cases.

The regression analysis tested several models starting with a model to examine the differences in school satisfaction between the different ethnic groups. The second model includes a variable for gender, since our hypotheses anticipate differences in

school satisfaction between boys and girls. In ascending order we include in models three, four, five and six variables to test our immigrant optimism and dual reference theories, the effects of social support, the effects of teacher conflict and dropout experience, perceived discrimination and life satisfaction. The change in R^2 is significant for all our models (p<.005). The final model has a value for R^2 of .27.

Table 3-2 *Multivariate regression school satisfaction*

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Turkish[a]	.088	.083	.033	.002	-.015	.002
	(.084)	(.084)	(.087)	(.086)	(.083)	(.081)
Moroccan[a]	.246***	.226***	.140**	.085	.046	.057
	(.064)	(.064)	(.073)	(.073)	(.070)	(.070)
Surinamese/	-.004	-.024	-.049	-.040	-.054	-.032
Antillean[a]	(.073)	(.073)	(.074)	(.073)	(.069)	(.068)
Other[a]	-.045	-.043	-.073	-.072	-.069	-.047
	(.072)	(.072)	(.072)	(.071)	(.067)	(.067)
Girl		.124**	.125**	.072	.064	.055
		(.049)	(.048)	(.048)	(.046)	(.045)
School			.102*	.056	.041	.043
importance			(.199)	(.197)	(.188)	(.185)
Education			-.120*	-.153**	-.142**	-.155**
mother			(.028)	(.027)	(.026)	(.026)
Communication				.189***	.147**	.124*
Parents				(.028)	(.027)	(.027)
Communication				.100	.124*	.123*
Brothers/sisters				(.024)	(.023)	(.022)
Teacher					-.277***	-.259***
Conflict					(.022)	(.022)
Dropout					-.043	-.022
					(.053)	(.052)
Perceived						-.111**
discrimination						(.047)
Life satisfaction						-.145***
						(.031)
Constant	(.043)	(.049)	(.107)	(.119)	(.125)	(.151)
	.531	.527	.522	.507	.483	.474
R^2	.069	.084	.104	.161	.239	.271

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001   [a]reference group: native Dutch

   Our first model shows clear differences in school satisfaction among different ethnic groups: youngsters with a Turkish, Moroccan or Surinamese/Antillean background have higher levels of school satisfaction than native Dutch youngsters (reference group). Youngsters from the group with 'other ethnic backgrounds' are the least satisfied with school of all the groups included in the model. The differences in school

satisfaction, however, is in comparison with the native Dutch youngsters, only significant for the Moroccan group (p<.001).

The second model shows that girls have a significantly higher school satisfaction level than boys (p<.01). The effect of ethnic background decreases the most for Moroccans and Surinamese/Antillean youngsters when gender is included in the model, so for these groups gender explains the differences in school satisfaction. For Moroccans, the effect of ethnic background is still significant after the variable *girl* is included in the model (p<.001).

Model three examines the immigrant optimism hypothesis, the variables *do your parents think school is important* (log) and *education of the mother* were entered. Both variables have a significant influence on the youngsters' school satisfaction (both p<.05). Youngsters have higher school satisfaction levels when parents feel school is more important. When the mother has a low educational level, the youngsters have higher school satisfaction levels. So therefore the low educational level of the mother is a motivating factor for youngsters in school. Our results are therefore in line with the immigrant optimism hypothesis. This effect is particularly strong for the Turkish and Moroccan groups, where the positive effects of ethnic background diminishes when controlled for the importance parents give to school and the educational background of the mother. The effect of ethnic background is still significant for the Moroccan group (p<.01), and the effect of being a girl also remains significant (p<.01). So being a girl or having a Moroccan background still influence school satisfaction positively when controlled for school importance (log) and educational level of the mother.

In the fourth model we included the variables that account for school support from family members. The frequency of communication about school with parents has a strong significant positive effect on school satisfaction (p<.001). Communication with brothers and sisters also shows a positive relation with school satisfaction of youngsters, however, this is not significant. None of the other variables are significant except for the education of the mother (p<.01). This means that the higher school satisfaction of Moroccans and girls is not only explained by their parents greatly valuing education but more by the fact that they also seem to communicate more about school. This model underlines the importance of parents communicating with their children about school; just saying that you feel school is important does not turn out to be sufficient for a pupil to have higher school satisfaction.

The fifth model shows the effects of having a history of leaving school early and of having conflicts with teachers. School dropout does not, according to our model, influence the school satisfaction of youngsters. Teacher conflict, however, is strongly related to school satisfaction (p<.001). Interestingly, communication about school with brothers and sisters becomes significant after controlling for early school leaving and

teacher conflict (p<.05). The effects of communication with parents and the educational background of the mother remain significantly important.

Finally, in model six we included the variables of perceived discrimination and life satisfaction. We found a negative significant effect for perceived discrimination (p<.01). When youngsters felt discriminated against in the past year they are less satisfied with school. When youngsters are satisfied with their lives, they are also significantly more positive about school (p<.001). Controlled for these variables, the educational level of the mother, communication with parents and siblings about school and conflicts with teachers remain significant predictors of school satisfaction.

We also ran the analysis for boys and girls separately in order to explore possible gender differences in predictors for school satisfaction. The results for ethnicity show that the effect of being Moroccan only seems to apply to girls: Moroccan girls are significantly more satisfied with school. The other groups do not show significant differences with the native Dutch reference group. As far as boys are concerned, the group of boys from 'other' ethnic backgrounds seem significantly less satisfied with school even when model five controls for all other variables.

An interesting difference between boys and girls is that, contrary to our expectations, the educational level of the mother appears to be more important for the school satisfaction of boys than for the school satisfaction of girls. When the mother has a low educational level, both girls and boys are more satisfied with school, but the effect is stronger for boys.

Communication with parents remains significant in the analysis for girls, while for boys the effect of communication with the parents disappears in model five when controlled for teacher conflict, dropout, perceived discrimination, and life satisfaction. As expected, communication about school is more important for the school satisfaction of girls than for the school satisfaction of boys. Having less conflict with teachers strongly relates to more school satisfaction for both groups. Life satisfaction is only significant for girls and not for boys, which means the general wellbeing of girls clearly influences school satisfaction, while this is less the case for boys.

Table 3-3 *Multivariate regression school satisfaction for boys and girls*

	Boys					Girls				
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Turkish[a]	.041	-.019	-.060	-.101	-.081	.127	.080	.057	.064	.073
	(.124)	(.129)	(.130)	(.126)	(.127)	(.113)	(.119)	(.116)	(.110)	(.107)
Moroccan[a]	.135	.044	-.004	-.053	-.027	**.310***	**.223**	**.171***	**.145***	.131
	(.102)	(.113)	(.115)	(.112)	(.114)	**(.084)**	**(.097)**	**(.096)**	**(.091)**	(.091)
Surinamese/ Antillean[a]	.016	-.008	.028	.000	.017	-.026	-.065	-.052	-.053	-.040
	(.122)	(.122)	(.122)	(.118)	(.118)	(.092)	(.095)	(.092)	(.087)	(.086)
Other[a]	-.132	**-.164***	**-.165***	**-.190****	**-.170***	.047	.016	.027	.051	.072
	(.100)	**(.100)**	**(.099)**	**(.096)**	**(.096)**	(.103)	(.106)	(.102)	(.097)	(.096)
School importance		.083	.052	.056	.052		.111	.043	.012	.028
		(.283)	(.280)	(.269)	(.271)		(.284)	(.281)	(.268)	(.265)
Education mother		**-.172***	**-.197****	**-.188****	**-.201****		-.088	**-.133***	-.116	**-.130***
		(.043)	**(.043)**	**(.041)**	**(.041)**		(.036)	**(.036)**	(.034)	**(.034)**
Communication parents			**.197****	**.151***	.130			**.199****	**.153***	**.124***
			(.044)	**(.043)**	(.042)			**(.037)**	**(.036)**	**(.036)**
Communication brothers/sisters			.056	.120	.126			.123	.122	.112
			(.041)	(.041)	(.040)			(.029)	(.027)	(.027)
Teacher conflict				**-238****	**-229****				**-321****	**-295****
				(.035)	**(.0.34)**				**(.030)**	**(.029)**
Dropout				-.107	-.084				-.001	.022
				(.078)	(.078)				(.073)	(.073)
Perceived discrimination					-.100					-.101
					(.076)					(.061)
Life satisfaction					-.121					**-.177****
					(.047)					**(.041)**
Constant	(.061)	(.157)	(.180)	(.189)	(.233)	(.061)	(.143)	(.164)	(.169)	(.198)
	.542	.536	.524	.504	.500	.513	.511	.492	.464	.452
R²	.047	.077	.125	.198	.219	.095	.111	.183	.279	.320

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001   [a]reference group: native Dutch

3.4.3 Results of the Ethnographic Study

Our study consisted of two phases of qualitative field work: first, as part of the TRESEGY and SIG/RVO studies, 14 case studies were set up in neighbourhoods in the city of Utrecht where many young non-western migrants, in majority Turkish and Moroccan youngsters, live and attend school. The case studies consisted of participant observations in several locations such as classrooms, a community centre, an internship project and workshops, and of interviews with migrant youngsters, mainly with a Moroccan or Turkish background, teachers and professionals. The case studies were chosen within the TRESEGY and SIG/RVO framework and concerned education, the transition from school to work, and more generally, young migrants' networks (TRESEGY, 2009b; Sol, Knijn & Frings-Dresen, 2007). Many questions in the survey of the quantitative part of our study were based on these case studies. The second phase of qualitative fieldwork started when the quantitative study had ended; we returned to the participating schools and attended three staff meetings where the results were presented and discussed in focus groups. We also conducted participant observations in the schools that participated in the survey and held in-depth interviews with four teachers and organized focus groups with Turkish and Moroccan girls. The topics covered in the interviews and focus groups were based on the findings of the survey and used to validate our findings. A number of interesting results of the ethnographic study which confirmed the survey results are discussed below.

Interviews with teachers and youngsters about the results of the survey confirm the differences in school satisfaction between migrant boys and migrant girls: they state that, generally speaking, migrant girls not only do better in school, but they also enjoy school more. The dedication to perform and behave well at school might explain why it is even more important for girls to maintain good relationships and have fewer conflicts with their teachers, as evidenced by the regression analyses. One policymaker from a secondary vocational school in Utrecht states that he feels migrant girls are sometimes even too obedient when it comes to school and they almost try to behave over-correctly.

Furthermore, more so than boys, it is important that migrant girls perceive school as a social space where they meet and interact with their friends without being restricted or supervised by family or other members of their community. Teachers talk and give examples of Moroccan and Turkish girls who stay at school longer than necessary to meet up with friends or just to be away from home:

'When I just started working in this multicultural school I was surprised to see that Muslim girls stayed longer at school to surf the internet and spend their time on other things than school work, just because of the freedom, to be away from the social control and the home situation.'

'School is a social space for migrant girls, a meeting place, away from home. So they do not have to help with housekeeping.'

The case studies in classrooms and the internship project and the subsequent interviews with young migrants and teachers all point to existing immigrant optimism: young migrants can generally be considered to be rather positive about their current situation and future expectations. Most migrant youngsters are motivated to graduate from school and are optimistic about their future prospects, and have a clear wish for upward mobility. They stress the importance of obtaining a diploma for a successful career. They expect that, compared with their parents, their own future prospects will be better and can be achieved through education or by setting up an independent business. Girls in particular feel they must do better than their mothers, some of whom are often not educated at all. Migrant girls clearly state during the focus groups that they want to end up in a better position than their mothers. The girls are highly motivated to make the most of the educational opportunities their mothers never had:

Interviewer: 'How come migrant girls are so positive about school?'
Migrant girl: 'Those girls just like school a lot, they are eager to learn. They want to demonstrate they are willing to accomplish something and to oppose the negative image of their ethnic group which is portrayed by the media. And we want to take the chances our mothers never got (the girl just told that her mother is illiterate).'

The results from the case studies indicate that the will or motivation of youngsters to graduate or to work is influenced by the existence of a supportive network and important role models such as older siblings. They can stimulate and motivate young people to finish and continue their education and focus on a career. Youngsters who dropped out and are unemployed often lack support from family members. This corresponds with the quantitative results that highlight the importance of communicating about school with family members for being satisfied with school. The reverse is also true when youngsters are negatively influenced by their friends or peer group who are also truants or school dropouts.

Most youngsters say they communicate with their parents about school. However, migrant students feel that their parents are not particularly well informed about the Dutch educational system, and this prevents them from sharing their experiences and related matters with their parents. Despite this constraint, the descriptive results from the survey did not display any differences in the frequency of communication with their parents between native and migrant students. At the same time, schools and the overall majority of teachers would like to see migrant parents actually becoming more involved. Where parents are unable to support their children, older sisters or brothers can take on this responsibility as the following quote from an interview with a migrant youngster reveals:

Migrant youngster boy 16: 'I have three brothers and one sister.'
Interviewer: 'Do they assist you with school and work?'
Migrant youngster: 'Yes.'
Interviewer: 'How do they help?'
Migrant youngster: 'For instance, with homework, when I do not understand something, I can ask them. When I have to look something up on the internet they look together with me and see what suits me. For example, together with them I made the study choice for electro training.'

Several case studies show that most young migrants do feel that there is discrimination, and they state that the labour market in particular is an area where they have less opportunity than their native counterparts. In line with the quantitative results, migrant youngsters report having been discriminated against, for instance Turkish or Moroccan girls for wearing a headscarf, or during their attempts to secure a trainee position. Despite the general feeling that discrimination exists, it is not viewed as a serious hindrance: they are optimistic, and feel if they do their best at school they will be able to find a job.

However, teachers do refer to tension and discrimination among different ethnic groups in their schools. Furthermore, the media often present this type of school, i.e. secondary vocational education, in a very negative light, and often portray it as a dumping ground for problem or incapable youngsters. Migrant youngsters are well aware of these perceptions and this may contribute towards them feeling stigmatized as a group. This is consistent with our findings that perceived discrimination has a negative impact on school satisfaction.

The case study at the community centre provided an opportunity to speak to the most marginalized youngsters who are neither in school nor in work. Worthy of note is that these youngsters talk of discrimination more than the more successful youngsters. This might be an indication of an oppositional culture. Classroom observations also brought instances of aversive or problematic behaviour to light. Teachers explain this behaviour by saying that youngsters adopt street culture (fighting/standing up for oneself, gaining respect from others) that conflicts with the school culture, which involves behaving in line with the school's code of conduct i.e. obeying teachers and showing respect to fellow students. Young migrant boys in particular bring their street culture to the classroom. They refuse to take off their jackets and hats because their clothes give them status, make them look tough, and give them a sense of feeling protected. It is interesting that despite this 'oppositional' behaviour youngsters do not reject schooling as a means towards upward mobility, and they clearly state they want to obtain a diploma. It must be said that most migrant youngsters show resilience against discrimination and negative media images; instead of adapting to an oppositional culture they are more eager to provide proof to the contrary and are determined to perform well at school.

3.5 Discussion

Our study confirmed that differences in school satisfaction between migrant boys and migrant girls also exist in the Netherlands. Moroccan girls in particular do well at school and they are satisfied with their school life. This article attempted to establish the predictors for school satisfaction among migrant youngsters and to explain the gender differences. We will now summarize our main results and use an ethnicity-gender framework (see Lee, 2006, Lopez, 2002) to show in which ways, in the Dutch context, ethnicity intersects with gender in explaining school satisfaction of non-western migrant girls. In other words how being a migrant and a girl shape educational experiences and future prospects.

Instances of immigrant optimism were clearly visible among all migrant youngsters. Their parents, compared with native parents, tend to stress quite frequently that education is important. The qualitative data indicate that migrant youngsters also appear to be optimistic about their future prospects and they clearly wish for upward mobility. Our hypothesis that when migrant parents greatly appreciate school their children will have high levels of school satisfaction would seem, initially, to be confirmed. However, this optimism does not prove to be decisive in explaining higher school satisfaction. What is more important is that parents or siblings actively engage in communication about school. Our results show that girls communicate more about school with their parents and siblings than boys do, and their high level of social embeddedness explains their higher school satisfaction. We can therefore confirm our hypothesis that the support young migrants, and girls in particular, receive from their social network - formulated as the frequency of communication about school issues-positively influences their school satisfaction.

We hypothesized that migrant girls in the Dutch context, like migrant groups in the US, have a positive dual frame of reference: they are more motivated for school because they compare their own opportunities with their mother who are in many cases low- or uneducated. Our qualitative data shows that Turkish and Moroccan girls, because of the low educational levels of their mothers, are more motivated to perform well at school and have high levels of school satisfaction. However, our quantitative data showed that a low educational level of the mother proved to be important for boys as well which might mean that the comparison with the disadvantaged situation of their mother stimulates their schooling as well.

Traditional gender patterns might mean that migrant parents have lower expectations for their daughters and this undermines their personal educational aspirations. However, in our study migrant girls more often than boys reported that their parents strongly underline education. Future studies could focus more on parent-child relationships to shed more light on the relationship between traditional gender roles and school performance.

For both boys and girls having fewer conflicts with teachers appeared to be the most important contributor to high school satisfaction. This is an important finding

for schools and teachers who, as it emerged in the interviews, are not fully aware of their influence or felt they had only a modest level of influence on the wellbeing of their students. A study among Hispanic middle school girls in the US showed that social support provided by teachers offered the greatest contribution to school engagement, even more than support from parents and friends which was also positively associated (Garcia-Reid, 2007). In this study we did not find any significant differences between migrant boys and girls in the degree of conflict with teachers, so our hypothesis that differences in school satisfaction between migrant boys and girls are related to differences in teacher contact is rejected.

Possible alternative explanations for migrant girls faring well in school emerged from the interviews with teachers and relate to girls being confronted more often with strong social control and restrictions from their parents and the community than boys. Firstly, according to teachers, just being in school gives migrant girls a less restricted social space with opportunities for meeting friends. This applies to Turkish and Moroccan migrant girls in particular, who, in some cases, function as surrogate parents and might possibly have care responsibilities for younger siblings. The combination of being controlled and having feelings of obligation towards their family means that girls show more discipline and responsibility towards schoolwork and at the same time they experience school as a less restricted social space to which they can temporarily escape. This clearly shows that the experiences of migrant girls differ from boys and how gender and ethnicity, being a Turkish or Moroccan girl from a traditional household, shape and explain their school satisfaction.

The above particularly seems to count for the Moroccans girls who stand out with high levels of school satisfaction and high educational and professional aspirations. This might point out shifting gender roles in the community with enlarged opportunities which enables them to enjoy schooling. A study of the schooling trajectories of Turkish and Moroccan youngsters in the Netherlands showed that in spite of girls from both groups are confronted with traditional gender roles at home and in the community, Moroccan girls gained and enjoyed more freedom to attend schooling. This led to better school achievements compared to the Turkish girl whose community placed less value on education (Crul & Doomernik, 2006).

However, on the other hand, care responsibilities for, for example younger siblings, can mean it is inevitable that girls are less engaged in school and in this sense being a migrant girl imposes restrictions. Our qualitative data confirm this picture, but unfortunately the questionnaire did not include questions on this topic. As stated above, in this area of gender patterns at home, research still needs to be conducted into the role of care responsibility and restrictions on girls in migrant families.

Our results make it clear that there is discrimination in the life of many young migrant people and that it significantly contributes to diminished school satisfaction. According to the teachers, there are instances of discrimination in their schools among different ethnic groups. Furthermore, not being satisfied with your life results in less school satisfaction, particularly for girls. Our hypothesis that negative experiences of

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migrant youngsters in society at large (discrimination and satisfaction with life) are negatively reflected in their school experiences is confirmed. This might also indicate that the harsh Dutch integration climate and debate with its focus on the failures of integration (Prins, 2010) and its critics on the multicultural society proposing ever-more stricter assimilation measures, combined with the prevalence of labour market discrimination (see SCP, 2010), have their repercussions on the lives of migrant youngsters, generating feelings of exclusion. The qualitative study even showed some indications of young migrants adopting an oppositional stance towards school, and they adapt to street culture instead. However, these youngsters do not reject education altogether, and in the end the majority, even the dropouts, hope to obtain a diploma. So, to speak of a real oppositional culture in the Dutch context, is actually going too far.

Our findings of migrant girls' high school satisfaction and their optimistic stance are at par with their gradual but clearly improving position in the educational system. Worthy of note is that the better school achievements of migrant girls and their more positive stance and experience of school generally do not yet result in higher rates of labour market participation of migrant females. It seems they often drop out prematurely from the labour market or do not enter the labour market at all (E-quality, 2009). For migrant girls access to the labour market in the Netherlands remains limited. Migrant girls' transition from school to work is a topic that requires more attention in the scientific field.

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Chapter 4

School-work Transition: the interplay between institutional and individual processes

Abstract:

This study examines how problems with the transition from school to work, such as early school leaving and youth unemployment, are dealt with in the Dutch vocational education and training (VET) system. School-work transition has become more complex and fragmented with more room for individual manoeuvring. This leads to a more individualized perspective on school and labour market outcomes and on the reasons for transition failures. However, at the same time, the transition is still shaped by structural factors such as how the VET system and the labour market are organised. Our empirical studies on VET schools, both quantitative and qualitative, confirm this tendency towards individualization: professionals, including teachers, generally ascribe school failure to individual problems such as choosing the wrong study and psychosocial problems. This is reinforced by the students themselves who display a strong belief in individual agency and feel in charge of their own learning and labour market outcomes. Structurally established barriers like early selection mechanisms and inefficacious school reforms do not interfere with this perception of individual strengths and failures.

Keywords: school-work transition, individualization, drop-out, VET system, cooling out

4.1 Introduction

The transition from school to work has changed considerably over the past three decades. The more or less regulated school-work-family sequence has been replaced by a 'yoyo' mechanism (Walther, 2006), characterized by young people's lives oscillating between periods of education, employment and relationships. Consequently, both dependency and autonomy may co-exist in the same biography. In the life course, the transition phase from school to work has lengthened, patterns have been de-standardized and there is now more room for individual manoeuvring. In addition, it is also important to consider changes in the labour market which has seen a shift towards a service or knowledge economy, with a concomitant transformation in the qualification structure i.e. an emphasis on soft skills, and a need for employability and lifelong learning. Furthermore, entering the labour market has become more difficult as evidenced by the persistently high youth unemployment figures in the EU, around 20 per cent the last few years (Eurostat, 2010).

But these changes are embedded in the specific structural, cultural and institutional contexts of the various welfare states, and in that way a typology of transition regimes can be envisioned (Niemeyer, 2007; Walther, 2006;). The various educational systems in this typology play an important role, in addition to the social security system, the cultural norms for youth, the structure of the labour market etc. (Pohl & Walther, 2007; Raffe, 2008). These different contexts create the conditions for both choice and regularities. The space for choice has increased because education has become more complex and the link between education and labour market has become more relaxed

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and flexible. But these choices are still constrained by structural and cultural regularities such as class, gender and ethnicity, which make up the background for social reproduction.

This means that transition regimes can be characterized by more individualized openings for agency, while at the same time the negotiations with school and labour market are embedded in class-based settings (Furlong, 2009). Individualization is, in this respect, seen as the expression of changes that have modified the transition from school to work in a more complex and fragmented way and have made individual negotiation almost essential. But individualization also has another connotation: if individuals are to be more responsible for the outcomes of the negotiations, they are also to blame for possible failure: the deficits are localized in the individual instead of in systemic factors, and can be explained by cognitive and behavioural problems, by (ethnic) family background, or by unrealistic expectations. This second aspect of individualization may then call for practices to reconcile the individual and his deficits and failures, which are known as cooling-out practices (Clark, 1960; Goffman, 1952). This is a 'soft' way for all parties to make early school leaving for instance more acceptable because it is not seen as failing to reach the required standards but merely as a mistake, the wrong choice.

In this article we analyse the specific ways in which the transition and its problems are explained and dealt with in the Netherlands with the help of this theoretical framework in which individualization is understood in its two meanings: as a 'real' enlarged space for manoeuvring in the transition, and as a way of attributing the reasons for failure to individuals. We concentrate on the role of vocational education and training (VET), as most children over 12 (60 per cent) follow this path, and any difficulties, such as early school leaving and the adjustment of migrant youth, are found predominantly in this particular field of education. Secondary vocational education, where migrant youth are overrepresented, has the highest dropout rates (Ministry of Education [Min. OCW], 2009).

The aim of this article is to show how transition problems are mainly individualized in both senses and how more structural aspects of education are disappearing from sight, and especially what this means for migrant youth.

The article is arranged as follows.
We first describe Dutch vocational education by placing it in an international comparative perspective. The analysis is based on a literature review. This allows us to draw a number of conclusions about the characteristic effects of the Dutch schooling system and about the question of inequality and problems of migrant youth. Secondly, we outline the policy changes in the Dutch VET system in order to understand the inherent individualizing tendencies. We base our findings both on the literature and on empirical work with teachers and students. Thirdly, we present the results of empirical studies, both quantitative and qualitative, into the way students and professionals view the transition problems, the school system, and at youth at risk.

4.2 The Dutch VET system in an international context

Generally speaking, two major dimensions are used to compare secondary educational systems (Kerckhoff, 1995, 2001; Shavit & Müller, 2000). The first dimension is the degree of vocational specificity. Countries vary between general or comprehensive systems on the one hand and rather specific occupational preparatory systems on the other. There can also be a difference in the vocational specific systems in the extent to which the education is school based or is more oriented towards a dual system of apprenticeship.

The second dimension is the degree of system stratification. Highly stratified systems are characterized by tracks that start early in a student's school career and prepare them for different routes in general academic training (university) or in vocational training (primary, secondary and tertiary vocational education). In less stratified systems, the selection of a particular track is generally taken later, and the tracks are less differentiated. Mobility between tracks is also greater.

The Dutch VET system can be described along these dimensions. It is a highly stratified system with early course selection (Education Council, 2010; van Hoof, 2005; Werfhorst & Mijs, 2007), and it is vocationally specific: youngsters are equipped with specific skills to practice certain occupations instead of general overall competences (Shavit & Müller, 2000). The Dutch system is also said to have an 'employment logic' which implies close ties between the VET system and the labour market, through the curriculum and internships, and weak links to higher education (Ianelli & Raffe, 2007).

But although the system does have separate tracks, both in vocational training and between general and vocational education, mobility between these tracks is actually existing. It is possible to jump from one track to another and to end up moving from a vocational track to university. This 'piling up' of certificates can compensate for earlier mistakes or for having chosen the wrong track. This asks a lot of the student, and is generally seen only among highly motivated students. Students with a non-western background tend to choose this option more than their native counterparts do in order to rectify early selection, but are still making out a small proportion of migrant youth (Crul & Schneider, 2009; OECD, 2010).

These two dimensions of the VET system are often combined with certain aspects of the labour market such as employment protection, (youth) unemployment etc. in order to analyse the effects of these different educational institutionalizations. In this context we will limit ourselves to the most general outcomes of these studies. The most persistent outcome is the relevance of macro-economic influences: when they are disadvantageous, the effects of institutional educational differences tend to disappear (OECD, 2009, 2010; Wolbers, 2005).

But apart from this overarching factor, stratification and vocational specificity in education do seem to have a negative effect in that the occupational status of the jobs available is lower than those open to more general educational systems (Wolbers,

2007). However, specific vocational education is favourable in terms of employment rates and of opportunities for further training (the specialization effect, Brunello & Checci, 2007), and it therefore acts as a safety net (Shavit & Müller, 2000). Hence the effect is double sided: on the one hand, the vocational specificity of education is helpful for finding and keeping a job, but on the other hand the jobs it leads to are low prestige jobs and it is therefore 'diversive' in that higher education and professions are beyond reach (Ianelli & Raffe, 2007). Since highly specific vocational education is usually accompanied by high stratification with an early selection of vocational tracks, it is a kind of system that reproduces the effect of social class and inequality in educational performance by early streaming along social origin lines (Brunello & Checci, 2007; Kerckhoff, 1995; Pfeffer, 2008).

These conclusions on social inequality seem to apply to the Dutch VET system: with its early selection, the system reinforces the effect of social class on educational performance (Education Council, 2010; Central Planning Office [CPB], 2009; Werfhorst & Mijs, 2007). This relates to migrant youth in particular who more often stay down a class, drop out, or fail their exams. They also choose the path of 'piling up' more often and are therefore subject to the diversive effect of vocational education (OECD, 2009).

It is also interesting and important to pay attention to the choices and decisions of the youth, their peers and parents (Heinz, 2009; Walther, 2006). This subject-oriented approach is of particular interest in a situation where the transition is much more fragmented and de-standardised and calls for individual decision making in a context of a widening gap between education and labour. Particularly, the school-work transition of young migrant is impeded by early school leaving and (youth) unemployment. Young migrants have persistent high unemployment rates (Statistics Netherlands [CBS], 2008), and currently a quarter of all migrant youngsters are unemployed (FORUM, 2010). One of the research outcomes is that educational systems call for more active participation of parents in managing and advising their children when these systems are (highly) stratified instead of general (Pfeffer, 2008). But as far as the students are concerned, this relationship seems to be inverse: in more comprehensive systems, the role of students' choice is greater than in highly differentiated systems (Kerckhoff, 2001). But, in fact, beneath the surface of these relations the picture actually turns out to be more complex. In stratified systems, as in Germany, where sorting students into tracks starts early and is persistent in that there is little mobility between tracks, there are a lot of variations, so there is more flexibility than is generally assumed. The same holds for comprehensive systems, as in the US, where the courses that students choose appear to be more clearly classified and oriented towards the labour market (Kerckhoff 2001).

Another outcome of studies that examine the subjective aspect of the transition is the mapping of biographical paths (Walther & Plug, 2006). These paths are embedded in different national contexts, and do not therefore just reflect 'free choice' but they are still based on (unequal) opportunities and institutional arrangements (Heinz, 2009).

The patterns these biographies show may vary between smooth transitions, with a gradual and trouble-free path from school to work, to downhill processes as a result of life events, marginalized positions and loss of perspective. But there may also be paths where students make up for educational deficits and unemployment, or where periods of work with an uncertain outcome alternate with unemployment or training (Walther & Plug, 2006).

This (biographic) dynamic between structural factors and individual choice can be documented in the Netherlands, particularly among migrant youth. Several studies (Crul & Doomernik, 2003) show how parents and siblings are of growing importance as support to help young migrants find their way through the Dutch educational system.

The above implies that the outcomes of educational systems differ from country to country, and that they are grounded in different principles as to the time of selection in general, the comprehensive nature of the system, the compulsory school age, and so on. Young people in these differentiated contexts attempt to develop their life course by taking strategic steps, running risks, or gradually building up a career, and are assisted in varying degrees by parents and peers. In the following section we concentrate on the policies that have been developed in the Dutch VET system to assimilate the changes in the transition regime.

4.3 Policy measures to remodel the Dutch VET system

In the 1980s and 1990s the tie-up between education and the labour market was a hot topic because youth unemployment was high, and because there was a considerable gap between education and the world of business. Several commission reports advised that there should be closer links between vocational education and business. This resulted in major reforms in the mid nineties with the establishment of a primary vocational system (VMBO) and a secondary vocational system (MBO) (Social and Cultural Planning Office [SCP], 2006). But this institutional reform was also accompanied by changes in the qualification structure (van Hoof, 2005). The new qualification structure should be in line with changing job requirements which should be translated into educational goals. However, grouping these qualifications into sufficiently broad packages turned out to be a problem, and a list was produced of over 700 qualifications, each with more than one hundred educational goals (van Hoof, 2005).

To date, a satisfactory qualification system has still not been developed, a scenario that has been exacerbated by the introduction of competence-based learning. Competences should replace the classical content of courses and should also be studied in a new teaching concept, referred to as 'new learning'. All this was done with the approval of the business community who felt that employees should be more flexible and employable, and have more social skills (The Netherlands Association of VET Colleges [MBO/AOC Raad] 2006). Attainment levels were then defined in terms of professional and social competences i.e. 'hard' and 'soft' skills. Hard skills include the

technical or knowledge skills required to practice a certain profession. Soft skills are needed for contact with clients, customers and colleagues and involve presentation, communication and cooperation skills. Students must learn these competences through 'new learning', which assumes that students work on learning objectives both individually and in project groups, with teachers as coaches.

New learning abandons the whole-class setup of school teaching. Students are placed in work simulation scenarios and they have to work on (computer assisted) assignments. However, these reforms have posed serious problems for both students and teachers, and although schools may continue to work on these innovations, the government has postponed the final introduction of these reforms.

Besides, the dropout levels in the vocational educational system are still high. This phenomenon, initially observed in the 1990s and one of the main grounds for reform, is deemed to be a major problem in the Netherlands, particularly following the Lisbon Agreements of 2000 which aimed to the halve the number of dropouts by 2012 (de Graaf & van Zenderen, 2009). The decrease in dropout rates is insufficient to achieve this target, and in 2006 the government launched the 'Attack on Dropping Out' (Min. OCW, 2006). This campaign attempted to combine a number of individual measures and to develop new targets, supported by covenants between the municipalities and the Ministry of Education, in order to decrease the dropout rate by 10 per cent annually. The main spearheads of the policy are as follows:

1. to enforce a strict school attendance policy. If students are absent for three school days, then schools are legally obliged to notify the school attendance officer.

2. to enhance the guidance and care structure within schools. Care and advisory teams should be set up, consisting of the school, youth healthcare representatives, school attendance officers, school social workers, and police and justice which offer support to youngsters who face dropping out. Furthermore, rebound classes are installed where at-risk youngsters can temporarily fuel up and be given additional attention (LCOJ-monitor, 2006). The focus in these classes is on career counselling because the assumption is that learning and behavioural problems are primarily the result of making the wrong choice of study. (20 per cent of dropouts give making the wrong choice of study as the reason for leaving school early (ROA 2009)). Most schools also offer career counselling for students who made the wrong study choice (ECORYS, 2009).

3. to allow small-scale initiatives as part of the care structure. These initiatives are often run by external organizations but facilitated with help from the schools. Firstly, there are programmes where youngsters are allocated a mentor or buddy for help with homework or advice when choosing a study. Secondly, there are empowerment projects to give youngsters more self-confidence and societal awareness, or to help them prepare better for the labour market by coaching them in professional and social skills.

4. to enhance cooperation between primary vocational education and secondary vocational education in order to offer guidance to pupils and to help them make the right study choice. The aim is to reduce the annually 6000 dropouts during this 'risky' transition period (Scientific Council for Government Policy [WWR], 2009). There are also experiments to combine the primary and secondary tracks of the vocational education in order to smooth the transition between these tracks.

5. to strengthen the links between education and the labour market. Schools focus on practice-oriented learning so that students can develop employee skills and are better equipped to enter the labour market. Schools also work closely with the business community to establish student internships.

All the above policies are by and large aimed at the individual level: in competence-based learning it is the students' responsibility to master the competences by accumulating a range of course certificates. And if there are problems, the aim is to rectify wrong study choices or solve private problems. There is currently considerable reluctance to making any changes to the vocational educational system because a parliamentary inquiry concluded that educational reforms had, in general, been introduced too crudely, with no adequate evaluative procedures in place. So, while the failures of the vocational educational system, such as early selection and the rather stratified structure, are widely acknowledged and debated (Education Council, 2010), there is currently no political will for these problems to be addressed in the near future. There is, instead, money for career counselling in the hope that the negative effects of early selection can be redressed. But since the counselling practices are aimed at the individual student, the structural shortcomings remain out of sight, and individualizing tendencies are reinforced.

We now present the quantitative and qualitative material to illustrate how these developments in the Dutch VET system are perceived by students and teachers.

4.4 Experiences with the Dutch VET system

4.4.1 Method

Our empirical data are firstly derived from the European TRESEGY research project that ran between 2006 and 2009. The project looked at how young migrants experience their life in their country of residence, at the problems they face, and at the kind of support they receive from social policy. The project's research locations were nine cities in six different European countries. Secondly, this study is part of the 'Pathways to Work Research Program'. This project builds on the TRESEGY project and pays specific attention to youngsters with a difficult school-work transition. It approaches their transition problems from different interrelated perspectives, from an interplay between the institutional environment e.g. the organisation of the educational system,

and social environment e.g. role of parents and siblings (Sol, Knijn & Frings-Dresen, 2007). It aims to find factors which can reduce early school leaving or promote labour market participation.

The projects conducted mixed methods research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004) consisting of a number of extensive quantitative and qualitative ethnographic studies in various local settings such as schools, community centres and activation programmes for young people. In the Dutch context we focused in particular on the inclusion of (migrant) youngsters in vocational education and their transition to the labour market.

By using both quantitative and qualitative methods we got the best of both worlds: the survey made it possible to make more general statements about our target group regarding school satisfaction, and the ethnographic studies were used to explore the field (school, neighbourhood and projects), and to better understand the youngsters' and professionals' perceptions.

The Dutch ethnographic case studies were conducted in two neighbourhoods in the city of Utrecht, the fourth largest city in the Netherlands. These neighbourhoods are designated by the national government as deprived and problematic and as deserving extra attention. We established informative contacts with key people from a vocational school and from the field of social work. The contacts granted us access to all school activities and allowed us to conduct several case studies within and outside the school. This school has more two thousand students in the age-range 16 to 23 and offers vocational studies in the areas of business and administration, information and communication technology (ICT). The school has a population with more than half of a migrant background, and a high number of early school leavers, around 12 per cent new dropouts annually (Min. OCW, 2009), and is representative of other Dutch inner city VET schools. In 17 case studies, a great number of youngsters – about 100 migrants (mainly from Morocco, and some from Turkey) and some 30 local native young males and females in the 14 to 23 age range were contacted. Each case study treats a distinct subject within the TRESEGY and SIG/RVO framework (TRESEGY, 2009). Courses were attended, and the introduction of new educational methods, youngsters' networks and dropout problems were studied. Participant observation in a local community centre made it possible to contact some at-risk youngsters who had dropped out, were unemployed or involved in criminality. Furthermore, several evaluative case studies were held of projects aimed at preventing early school leaving, taking care of dropouts or preparing youngsters for work. Moreover, around 50 professionals -teachers, social workers and policymakers- were also interviewed on the school-work transition.

A survey was conducted involving a sample of 608 youngsters at five secondary vocational schools in Utrecht and Amsterdam (including the above-mentioned school) of which 164 natives (27 per cent) and 441 young migrants (73 per cent). Questions covered reasons for dropping out of school, school satisfaction and aspiration, the youngsters' perceptions of education and guidance offered by the schools. The schools are comparable with each other concerning their location in deprived neighbourhoods,

their populations with a majority of migrant youngsters and their size and urgency of the dropout problem.

4.4.2 Perspective of youngsters on educational aspirations and choices

The survey results show that youngsters are positive and optimistic about their educational expectations and aspirations. Migrant youngsters in particular have high educational aspirations and expect to attain high educational levels, 70 per cent expect to attain a higher vocational education diploma or higher (compared to 53 per cent of the young natives). The majority (72 per cent) also feel their situation in the future will be better than that of their parents.

The ethnographic studies confirm these high aspirations among migrant youngsters who are motivated to graduate from school, are optimistic about their future prospects and have a clear wish for upward mobility. They expect that, compared with their parents, their own future prospects are better, and can be achieved through education or by setting up their own independent business. Girls in particular feel they must do better than their mothers, who are often not educated at all. They stress the importance of obtaining a diploma for a successful career:

Migrant girl, age 19: 'It'll be easy with a diploma, without a diploma you can't get anywhere, that's what I think. If you have a diploma, you can speak Dutch well, you can talk well, you know about something, then they need you.'

Migrant youngsters seem convinced of their own future opportunities and think there is little that stands in their way. They clearly have an individualistic meritocratic perspective of equal prospects and opportunities: as long as you do your best and try hard, the future will look bright.

Migrant girl, age 17: 'I want to be independent, to show everybody I can do it, what you can do, so can I. Because yes, I feel everybody is equal, nobody is higher or lower than anyone else, what one person can do, then another can do as well. Maybe you are good at that but then I'm good at this, so we reach the same things. So yes, I think it's very important to show what you can do. Because you have it in you, you didn't get your talent for nothing.'

Interviewer: 'After secondary vocational education, do you want to go on to higher vocational education?'
Migrant boy, age 19: 'Yes I really want to do that, where there's a will, there's a way, if you want to achieve something you can do it, but you need to be patient and to fight for it.'

4.4.3 Perspective on study choice

In their choice of study or trainee posts, both migrant and native youngsters are quite sensible and self-assured: most youngsters are genuinely interested in the subject of the study (66 per cent) and because it offers them good opportunities on the labour market (38 per cent). They choose a certain trainee post because it fits in nicely with what they are studying (45 per cent), or they are simply interested in the trainee post (44 per cent).

Furthermore, the majority states that they are confident about their future profession (35 per cent generally speaking, and 44 per cent definitely) and that their heart lies with the profession for which they are now studying (35 per cent generally speaking, 43 per cent definitely). Migrants are even more confident than natives. 83 per cent endorse the statement that they have clear ideas about their profession compared to 71 per cent of the native group, $X^2(4) = 10.871$, p<.05.

Interviewer: 'Why do you want to continue studying, to go on to higher vocational education?'
Migrant boy, age 19: 'Because, I'm good at helping, I want to do something with social work, that's my best quality that I know. I really want to help people.'

Migrant girl, age 19: 'I'm doing the hairdressing course and I want yes, I really want to have my own business.'

4.4.4 Problems with study choice

However, the results also indicate a number of serious problems with migrant youngsters' choice of study. A considerable number of them (22 per cent) left school without graduating because they chose the wrong course (41 per cent), are not satisfied with the contents of the course (29 per cent), have personal problems (24 per cent), or did not like the profession for which they were learning (20 per cent).

Interviewer: 'Why did you quit your training or school?'
Migrant girl, age 19: 'Because it was nothing for me, sitting all day long at a computer isn't really for me. I thought I'd give it a try, but no, that wasn't really it.'
Interviewer: 'And what would you like to do now?'
Migrant girl: 'Now I want to go to hairdressing school, that's what I actually always wanted to do.'
Interviewer: 'Why?'
Migrant girl: 'Well, it's just something for me, anyhow I'm often busy doing my friends' hair.'

Migrant girl, age 18: 'I didn't like the course at all, administrative worker, that's not for me, I like to work with people, a make-up or a hairdressing course, that would suit me much better.'

Interviewer: 'What do you want to achieve?'
Migrant girl, age 16: 'My own office yes, but I don't know yet what. Just start my own
business. Something small, it doesn't need to be big.'
Interviewer: 'And what kind of business?'
Migrant girl: 'I don't know, something with youngsters, I think I'd like that.'

These counterexamples show that the optimistic and confident ideas concerning educational choices do not always turn out to be positive. Other results indicate that more than half the migrant youngsters (55 per cent) state that their ideas about the future often change and nearly a quarter (25 per cent) hope to change something about their education in the coming year. Despite making 'wrong' choices and consequently having negative educational experiences, the quotes point out that they remain confident in themselves and their high expectations remain in place. This illustrates a strong believe in individual agency, in personal strength and responsibility.

4.4.5 Perspective of professionals on the educational aspirations of youngsters

The views of the professionals, including teachers and policymakers, on the youngsters' educational and vocational aspirations and choices both contrast and converge with the optimistic perspective of the youngsters. In general, professionals indicate, like the youngsters, making a wrong vocational choice as the primary reason for the youngsters' dissatisfaction with school and with early school leaving. Professionals, however, often say that youngsters' expectations are too high and unrealistic, as a care coordinator observes:

'Youngsters have a very positive self-image, they all want to achieve higher professional education or even higher. They have a clear goal. However, the steps to reaching that goal are less clear. They clearly overestimate their possibilities. Without ambition there is no future (the care coordinator jokes). A desire for upward mobility and for higher education is clearly present, but it doesn't always translate into doing well at school.'

Or they report that the motivation to choose a particular study and future profession is often related to status and the opportunity to make a lot of money. Teachers stated in the case studies that ICT students' reasons for choosing their particular course were often based on vague ideas that they liked to play around with computers. Or the status of working in an office made students decide to study economics and management. These vague and unrealistic career images often result in students being disappointed and dropping out.

Professionals relate problems with study and vocational choices to migrant youngsters having a limited perspective. This results from the absence of people in their social networks who can function as role models (parents, older siblings). In their opinion, young migrants have short-sighted ideas about the opportunities available on the labour market.

They also see a lack of vocational attitude. A recurring theme in several case studies is that youngsters, and migrants in particular, lack soft skills such as motivation, presentation and communication which hinders their labour market integration. Vocational schools, activation and rehabilitation services therefore focus on training soft skills by stimulating learning in simulation or practical lessons that resemble actual work practices. This is in line with current governmental plans to tackle unemployment among young migrants in which the importance of soft skills training is stressed (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment [Min. SZW], 2010). This is another example of individualization of the problems of migrant youth: by focussing on a lack of vocational competences, the responsibility for the labour market entry problem is put with the youngsters, without referring to more structural issues such as discrimination.

Worthy of note is that for migrant youngsters, there is no lack of vocational attitude. The majority of the interviewees seem to be aware of these demands and find it logical and obvious that you behave and communicate in the right way at work:

Interviewer: 'What do you think is important for finding a job? What does an employer expect?'
Migrant boy: 'Well, that you just do your thing, be socially good, be on time and do everything that's just normal on the shop floor. Simply be on time, behave normally, just meet all the demands, because after all they didn't take you on for nothing.'

4.4.6 Perspective of professionals on students at risk

In contrast to the youngsters themselves, teachers perceive a lot of (migrant) students (sometimes even the whole class!) as having problems. They use phrases like multi-problem, at-risk, special needs students to explain learning or behavioural problems and dropping out. Problems are clearly individualized and are explained by student's deficits or their private problems. This is particularly the case with the lower level students, who are seen to be the most disadvantaged youngsters. Problems vary from psychological or psychiatric problems to cognitive difficulties such as not being very intelligent, having problems with language or arithmetic, and having a limited attention span. Some students are also in serious debt because they have run up high phone bills, or because they have taken out student or bank loans. A school policymaker:

'Well we see al lot of psychiatric problems, problems with living in two different cultures, problems related to diversity. And also debt problems, which I think is a major issue. There are too many youngsters in serious debt. These are the main causes. Yes, and what's weird is that you also see an increase in psychological, psychiatric problems.'

Girls are prone to specific problems such as being a teenage mother, or they are the victims of young male pimps, or 'lover-boys'. Care responsibilities at home i.e. taking care of the household or looking after younger siblings, are also a problem for migrant girls. These girls are late for lessons, do not attend school or even drop out. A coordinator from Care and Welfare on the problems of students:

'We try to give these students some kind of structure, and keep a tight grip on them. We try like this to change their behaviour. This group of students find it difficult to be on time, they often report in sick, and have psychosocial problems. Many girls have to care for their brothers and sisters and this really isn't good for their schooling. They hand in half finished assignments. These students have a short attention span and need a lot of attention. Only 50 per cent of them finish school in the given time.'

4.4.7 Perspective on migrant parents' ability to provide study choice support

The majority of professionals point out that there is a lack of parental involvement in the education of children, particularly among migrant parents. They do not attend parents' evenings or school information or career days. They only turn up at school if there are serious problems like suspension of their children. The professionals put this parental invisibility down to integration problems. For example, migrant parents know little about the educational system, or about vocational opportunities. Consequently, they are not in a position to help their children make the right decision about what to study. As one coordinator of an activation programme puts it:

'A twelve-year old can't really decide on his own, he needs help. I don't know how you experienced this? You probably had parents who could support you. But in these cases there is no support at home because the parents don't have a clue because they didn't grow up here, they never took part in the Dutch educational system, they don't know how it works, or what the options are. Everyone finds out too late. Well, then children from this kind of family are often already a lost cause. And yes, when there's no support from the family then it falls to society and the school itself to do something about it.'

This situation is exacerbated by the language problems migrant parents have which also prevent them from supporting their children at school. They sometimes mention more serious problems and claim that migrant parents are incapable of laying down rules or providing structure at home.

In spite of this, many professionals do state that migrant parents often have high aspirations for their children and appreciate it if their children do well at school. However, this does not always means that parents actively support their children with school-related issues. A school career counsellor:

'A major issue is a lack of stimulation from the home front. Yes, it amazes me every single time. When parents come to see me who only say that 'he should obtain a certificate' or 'she should obtain a certificate' ..then I sometimes ask them what they themselves actually do at home to help their children, do they give their children the opportunity to do their homework, do they help with homework. Nothing, nothing at all, parents say they don't have the time.'

As shown above the accounts of the professionals reflect the individualisation tendency: migrant youngsters' transition problems are ascribed to parental deficits. Consequently, they are deemed to be partially blamed for their own disadvantage.

What youngsters say on their families contrasts considerably with the above. The survey results indicate the great value placed by parents on the education of their children, and show that the majority of both native and migrant youngsters talk about school at home on a regular basis. For example, 79 per cent discuss their grades with their parents, and 67 per cent their homework. Besides, migrant youngsters often talk about school with older siblings about their grades (62 per cent compared to 35 per cent of natives, $X^2(4) = 35.577$, p<.001). Migrant youngsters also more often report having parents who believe school is very important (88 per cent compared to 64 per cent of the natives, $X^2(2) = 46.064$, p<.001).

It emerges from the case studies that young migrants' motivation for school and work is influenced by the availability of a supportive network. Young migrants often refer to supportive family members like older siblings, aunts or uncles who encourage them to focus on their education and career, as the following quotes reveal:

Interviewer: 'Can your brothers help you?'
Migrant girl, age 17: 'Yes. I can really count on my brothers for support, particularly my oldest brother, he's an accountant. In the past I did business administration, and he really helped me when I had exams. I didn't understand anything and panicked. Then he took a day off to explain everything to me.'

Interviewer: 'Do you have people around you who help you with school, study, internship, finding work?'
Migrant boy: 'Yes I have sisters, brothers, they all help.'
Interviewer: 'Ok, so how do they help you?'
Migrant girl: 'For instance, they look together with me, they ask if I've chosen something, or If I've seen something. If not, they say, we'll look with you, and that goes well.'

4.4.8 Institutional issues: problems with competence and new learning

In several case studies we evaluated new learning and all the evaluations tend to be rather negative. There is tension between competence learning with the teacher as a coach and whole-class teaching. Both teachers and students long for the return of the latter. Youngsters want teachers who answer their questions, who explain things, and

who are not just there to supervise their activities. They see teachers struggle with their role as coaches, some feel teachers are mere supervisors. Our survey results indicate pupils not being very enthusiastic about competence learning. A considerable number (40 per cent) are dissatisfied about how teaching is done and say it is problematic, they complain about the lack of information (34 per cent), and point out that there is a lack of guidance (28 per cent) and that teachers function badly (27 per cent).

Students also complain about a lack of feedback and clarity about how they are actually doing at school. Assignments are not given the traditional marks, but instead they just get a 'satisfactory'. Competences are tested by getting students to write self-reports about how they became familiar with the competences. This leads them to doubt the quality of the education as the following quotes by ICT and economics students illustrate:

Student 1: ' Learning, what is learning? Teacher X is not a teacher. Teachers have become supervisors and coaches and we work on our competences. The teacher doesn't teach a subject anymore. The teacher is a contact person for when you can't manage to do something by yourself.'
Student 2: 'Teachers didn't invent this. We can see that teachers hate it. It's not focused on learning, it used to be about gaining knowledge, now it's more pretending as if. By writing reports you pretend you've learnt something.'
Student 3 reacts: 'The reports are rotting away somewhere in the database.' (Student goes to the system on his computer and shows the researcher that the teacher still hasn't corrected his reports from last year.)
Student 2: 'We write reports but they aren't read. You finish it off, but not the way you wanted to do it through education, the course level needs to be higher.'
Student 1: 'We want to be tested and given grades. When I finish something then I can see if I did it wrong or right. Nothing is measured anymore.'

The following fragment is from an observation report:

'The ICT student talks about competence learning and explains he has a problem with what you learn. He does not have the feeling he really actually learns anything. You look up the assignment (internet), finish it, print it out and then forget about it. He wants real lessons instead of projects and wants more tests. Then you learn more.
The student sees the teacher merely as a supervisor. They don't explain enough and just do a bit of supervising. He wants more and clearer explanations when he asks something. Now they just tell you where to go and look.'

Teachers are not generally negative about new learning. But it is hard to find a satisfactory translation of professional knowledge into (testable) competences. Neither is it clear to them what being a coach instead of a teacher actually entails. This is usually interpreted as being less strict, and they are not comfortable with this because children

need order and discipline. Since the whole-class setup has been abandoned, students do not all physically face the teacher, they now sit in small groups spread around the classroom. This makes it is easy for students to arrive late or even be absent without it being noticed. It is also easy for students to be busy with other (online) 'extracurricular' activities, e.g. maintaining online contacts and playing games. Students feel that it is not really the right thing to be doing but they do it because they are bored. The idea that they can also just Google the information they need for the assignments reinforces the idea that the quality of the education they are getting is not up to standard.

4.4.9 Institutional issues: wrong study choice and early selection

Professionals hardly consider the problems surrounding not choosing the right study or professional choice as an institutional issue that is intensified by vocational specificity or by having to make a choice too early in a school career. These problems are instead mainly ascribed to the youngsters themselves and their dysfunctional network. Some acknowledge that the variety of courses on offer is formidable, which makes it difficult to know exactly what to study. External others, professionals who are working outside the school context, also observe that schools and teachers agree too readily with a student's choice and area of interest, and they also admit that students have to decide what to study too early in their school career. A coordinator with a reintegration service for youngsters who have dropped out or are unemployed says the following:

'I never understand how a boy who, as all his test results show, has no technical aptitude whatsoever, how can you still advise him to take a technical course. Because the job prospects are good in that field? Come on, you just don't know what to do with someone like that. And you see this a lot. I'm sometimes very angry with the educational system. Or advise someone with no communicative skills at all to look for a sales position. You're actually asking for problems, and you'll get them. And when I was twelve I didn't know what I wanted to do, so why not keep youngsters in general education and let them choose when they are sixteen, when they are more capable of standing up for themselves.'

4.5 Conclusion

This article described the Dutch VET system by using an international comparative perspective consisting of vocational specificity, stratification and standardization. From this perspective, the Dutch system is rather stratified and standardized, with school-based vocational orientation and early course selection, to be somewhat compensated by the possibility of 'piling up' certificates. This contributes to the reproduction of class differences, especially for migrant youth.

The Dutch VET system has undergone considerable change over the past twenty years with a view to improving the transition from school to work. The business side now focuses more on general educational aims and flexible qualifications for the labour market. The result was a lengthy list of competences that are still difficult to define in

terms of educational curricula. The didactic methods were also revised to a teacher-as-coach assisted method of individual learning instead of whole-class teaching. The introduction of this 'new learning' met with considerable resistance and problems, and the government has postponed its official introduction. Other problems include that students are forced to choose between general and vocational education very early on in their school career, the dropout rate is still rather high, there are uncertainties surrounding the choice of study, and the number of pupils with learning and behavioural problems i.e. 'special needs pupils', has increased.

What is remarkable is how these problems are interpreted in policy circles and by the professionals and teachers in the vocational schools themselves: the VET system with its selection mechanisms is barely discussed at all, and the 'new learning' approach is being maintained even though the belief is that it poses serious problems. Most attention is directed instead at the pupils who's educational problems are localized in the individual or his social network instead of in structural issues. The difficulties they encounter at school are understood to result from them not opting to take the subjects that are right for them, or from the fact that the students have personal and social deficit problems. An entire career counselling system and youth care programme have been set up to remedy this situation.

This process can be seen as an example of 'cooling out'. Problems with learning and dropping out of school early are generally explained in terms of the youngsters having made the wrong choices about their study and vocational courses. And this situation is actually reinforced by the youngsters themselves when they attribute their failure at school or their actually dropping out, first and foremost to having 'chosen the wrong study'. Career counselling is then put in place by 'agents of consolation' to rectify the state of affairs. The aim is to help students adjust and get over their feeling of failure because they were overambitious, and to help make at-risk students accept and agree to lower education and professional opportunities. Helping these youngsters choose a different course of study that is right for them gives the students an opportunity to achieve something. In terms of status, this alternative option is comparable to what the students have relinquished, and they interpret it as being more appropriate (Clark, 1960).

'Making a wrong study choice' is, however, not simply a matter of agency but relates to an interplay between the organization of the Dutch Vet system, a lack of social resources and individual options. Many migrant youngsters seem to fall victim to their disadvantaged socioeconomic background. This already starts with the early selection moment in the transition from primary to secondary education when young migrants due to their language and learning disadvantages tend to end up in the lower segments of the VET system, and upward mobility from this position is very difficult. Moreover, to cope with the range of opportunities a stratified and vocational specific system offers, youngsters need to be able to rely on a supportive network of parents or siblings who can navigate them through the system (Pfeffer, 2008). According to professionals

migrant parents are unable to assist their children because they are low educated and unfamiliar with the opportunities in education.

The empirical material indicates that instead of addressing the appointed institutional issues, cooling out processes are put in place by teachers and professionals when they consider that their students have failed the system either because they have personal problems, or because their expectations were unrealistic. The students themselves, and migrant youth in particular, present a more ambivalent picture. Although they talk about opting for the wrong course of study and dropping out, they are convinced that schooling is important, and that they will, in the end, achieve a better position than their parents. They say that their parents and other family members support them in their education and also help them choose what to study. This confirms the biographic approach which refers to the complex ways individuals deal with the structural conditions of the educational system. This is not to say that their optimism is always justified: there is a group of students who, in the end, do not finish school, and who end up in the more downhill part of the transition between school and work. However, it is important to state that the rather bleak image presented by the school professionals and teachers often does not correspond with how the youngsters see things. This discrepancy requires further research.

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Chapter 5

Young migrants' transition to work: soft skills become hard barriers

Abstract:

The labour market position of young migrants in the Netherlands is unfavourable, which is generally explained by lower educational levels, language disadvantage, limited social networks and discrimination. In addition to these explanations, the emergence of soft or social skills as important qualification norms for participating on the labour market is something that is also affecting the migrants' position. This chapter explains how these factors conjointly have an effect by placing them in the wider Dutch integration context. In this context, the current discourse on employability takes on a special meaning for young migrants: processes of delegitimising and abnormalising portray young migrants as lacking certain skills. We conclude that the focus on assimilation in public discourses contributes towards making entry into the labour market problematic. Processes of categorization and in- and out-group formation are reinforced and subtle forms of discrimination on the basis of a presumed lack of social skills emerge.

Keywords: assimilation, delegitimizing, discrimination; employability, migrant youth

5.1 Introduction

The position of young migrants on the labour market is generally far from positive. This is a persistent pattern found in most western countries, including the Netherlands. The prevailing explanations for this phenomenon are educational disadvantage combined with language deficit, and little link between migrant networks and the search strategies of employers on the labour market. Discrimination is also given as a reason, but it is almost impossible to ascertain how widespread it is and the form it takes is also difficult to establish (Craig et al., 2005; SCP, 2007a). In line with these explanations, the general policy is to improve the educational level of migrant youth, and to facilitate access to the labour market through traineeships and a combination of work and training. This process should then combat discrimination by creating positive images of migrants and by fighting prejudice. However, we feel that this is not the whole story.

First of all, it is important to note that this sweeping negative image of the position of young migrants should be qualified. The debate on segmented assimilation (Portes, Fernandez-Kelly, & Haller, 2005; Waldinger & Feliciano, 2004) has established that second generation migrants tend, in general, not to be upwardly mobile, but neither are they on a downward spiral into marginality. There is a tendency in a number of countries for different migrant groups to polarize: some groups fare much better than

others groups who are characterized by disadvantage[3]. This polarization among young migrants is also happening in the Netherlands (Crul & Heering, 2008).

Furthermore, with the emergence of the 'knowledge economy' and a shift towards a service economy, the labour market has undergone a number of significant changes. Traditional low-skilled jobs have disappeared, and new qualification criteria for employability are now required. These criteria pertain not only to professional skills and knowledge, but also to social skills including cooperation, communication, flexibility, and inquisitiveness. We argue that these 'soft skills'-as a vaguely defined cluster of competences- are assessed in a certain way when judging the capabilities of young migrants for the entry into work. And this certain way is linked to the ongoing integration debate in the Netherlands which has seen a gradual shift in acculturation perspectives and discourses (Ghorashi, 2003; Scientific Council for Government Policy [WRR], 2007b). Consequently, the position of young migrants should be placed in the context of a Dutch society that started to strive for an assimilation model of accultura-tion, whereas most migrant groups advocate an integration strategy. The result is a problematic acculturation fit between the dominant groups and the migrant groups (Chryssochoou, 2004), where the dominant groups consider adaptation and cultural maintenance to be incompatible, views which run counter to those of the migrant groups. This discrepancy might increase the distance between the groups even further, and it also implies renewed evaluation of migrants by the dominant groups. This evaluation is, to a certain extent, how the dominant groups (re)construct their social representation of migrant groups, and in the context of an assimilation strategy, how the dominant groups delegitimize or abnormalising the migrant groups because they do not have certain habits and practices that are considered to be 'normal Dutch' (Bal Tar, 1990; Verkuyten, 2001). We will go on to defend the thesis that this process of delegitimation or abnormalisation can be seen in the way migrant youth are generally considered to lack the appropriate soft skills. The supposition is that the cultural background of migrant groups means that these groups lack these skills, and therefore, in a process of 'guilt by association' migrant youngsters are already deemed to be out of the running. Soft skills are used like this to mark the boundaries between groups, and to obstruct access to the labour market.

Our argument is constructed along the following lines. We first summarise the findings on the labour market position of migrant youth and the factors put forward to explain them. We examine the problem of discrimination in some detail and also include the transition from school to work in this overview, particularly where work experience or on-the-job training are concerned. We also indicate the need to make a distinction between different migrant groups: in particular, youngsters who lose their way in the educational system and have personal or social problems, may end up as

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[3] Polarisation may also refer to gender: girls in some migrant groups do better than boys (see chapter three on this topic).

unsuitable candidates for the labour market, while others, even those with officially recognised educational handicaps, do well in their jobs.

Secondly, we discuss the emergence of soft skills as a qualification for entering the labour market against the background of substantial changes in the structure of the economy. The rise of the service or knowledge economy now means a need for general social and intellectual skills as the new norms of employability. We then analyse how these soft skills are used as a selection criterion, which affects migrant youth in particular, and which can be seen as a new form of discrimination.

Thirdly, we show how this process fits in with the more general debate and policies surrounding the integration of migrant groups in Dutch society. We point to the tension between the acculturation strategies of migrants and the host country, tension which puts migrants in a bad light because they are deemed to lack the prevailing Dutch norms of participation. This deficit is also detected in the soft skills which migrant youth are supposedly lacking. Culture, or ethnicity, emerges as a generalised or reified category in order to draw lines between 'them' and 'us'.

These three steps allow us to put forward the hypothesis that, in the Dutch context, it is the concomitance of the employability discourse[4] with the assimilation discourse that creates the conditions for new forms of ethnification or culturalisation. By these new forms we understand the discursive reduction of socio-economic inequalities to differences in competencies and capabilities based on cultural or ethnic background. These differences are not ascribed directly to a culture as 'lower' or 'distinct' but rather to a lack of willingness or an inability to adapt to the prevailing norms of the host society. The wish to feel connected to one's own cultural, or religious, background is in itself seen as sufficient reason to discredit a migrant for not being 'integrated', and this, in turn, fuels the idea that migrants do not fit in to society.

To support our hypothesis and illustrate its arguments we will also use some results from the comparative European research project (TRESEGY) in which we participated. The project ran from June 2006-2009 and focussed on: "Factors of in- and exclusion of second-generation migrants in Europe". We studied how young migrants experience their life in their country of residence, what problems they face and what kind of support from social policy they receive. Six Europeans countries with nine cities as research locations participated in the TRESEGY project. The project firstly realized a quantitative study, with 600 respondents in each research location. In general, about half of the respondents are young migrants and the others are young 'natives'. Secondly, an extensive ethnographic study was done involving participant observations and interviews with youngsters in various local settings like on the street, schools, community centres and workshops for young people. The project reveals some interesting results concerning young people's experiences with discrimination.

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[4] Discourse refers here to the Foucauldian sense: it points both to the ways of thinking about the world as of acting in the world.

5.2 Overall data on the labour market position of migrant youth

5.2.1 Labour market participation

Labour participation among migrant groups tends to be lower than among their native counterparts - 50 per cent and 65 per cent respectively over the last ten years. The pattern is the same for the young migrants: 25 per cent and 40 per cent for native youngsters in the 15-24 age range. Moreover, a rather persistent difference in unemployment rates can be seen between young migrant and native groups. Between 1996 and 2006, unemployment rates among migrant groups were three times higher than among native groups. This difference has gradually diminished among young migrant groups, but it is currently still twice as high. Migrants have a high proportion of flexible work contracts (21 per cent), which makes them 'the folding chairs on the labour market'. In times of economic growth, migrants are given access to the labour market, which is denied to them when the economic tide is turning (Statistics Netherlands [CBS], 2008). In a period of declining growth, migrant youth run a high risk of becoming unemployed (CBS, 2008; Council for Work and Income [RWI], 2006a). Between 2002 and 2005, the labour market and income position of migrants was seriously affected by the economic recession (Regioplan Beleidsonderzoek 2005; Social and Cultural Planning Office [SCP], 2006; SCP/WODC/CBS, 2005). In 2005 unemployment rates among migrant youth were over twice as high as that of their native counterparts, 26 per cent and 12 per cent respectively (CBS, 2008). The situation was even worse in the 50 largest cities and municipalities, where in 2004/2005, 40 per cent of young migrants were unemployed (SCP, 2006).

The labour market position of migrant youth improved from 2005 onwards as a result of economic recovery (CBS, 2008). However, the structurally high unemployment levels of migrant youth, and their position in the lower segments of the labour market, continue to be a problem. Furthermore, young migrant people tend to be unemployed longer than their native counterparts, and they also depend more often on social benefits. Of particular concern are migrant girls with little education – unemployment rates are high, and they benefit less from improving labour market conditions (E-quality, 2006). In addition, there is also a group of structurally unemployed youngsters (approximately 38,000) many of whom are migrant youngsters (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment [Min. SZW], 2007; Taskforce Jeugdwerkloosheid, 2006). The concerns are that they will be represented in the lower occupational groups, be benefit dependent, or become involved in criminal activities. The OECD (2008) also points out a group of young people who face long-term unemployment. This group consists mainly of migrants who became unemployed after dropping out of school. These figures and depictions of at-risk groups denote the tendency, as already mentioned, towards polarisation in the socio-economic status of migrant youth. Several studies (Crul, Pasztor, & Lelie, 2008; NICIS/Berenschot, 2007) show, for instance, that being a drop-out does not, for the majority, lead to unemployment (about 60 per cent of migrant drop-outs actually have a job) but for

some it does lead to long-term unemployment. In this case, this marginal situation is caused by a combination of learning and/or personal problems, difficulties at home, and poverty.

The more highly-educated migrants are better off compared with those with only minimal schooling, but more of them are often unemployed, look for work longer, and when in employment they are often in positions below their training level (twice as often!) (RWI, 2006a) compared with the native group.

5.2.2 Work experience placement

One important link in the transition from school to work is the trainee job, which can be an important introduction to the labour market, often leading to a steady job (NICIS, 2007). As with the labour market as a whole, the number of trainee posts on offer very much depends on the economic climate. As a result of the worsening economic outlook, the last few years have seen a downturn in the number of work experience places on offer. This situation was exacerbated by the high demand for work experience places as a result of educational reform, such as the introduction of lower secondary professional education, competence learning, and of longer periods of job training for secondary vocational students (NICIS, 2007).

This dearth of trainee jobs was cause for concern because it is considered to be one of the main causes of young people dropping out of school, for youth unemployment as a whole, and because it has a negative affect on future labour market prospects (E-quality, 2006; PAO, 2007). This situation was and still is regarded as a problem for migrant youngsters in particular because they have more difficulty finding a training position. Consequently, numerous national and local initiatives have been started up to deal specifically with this problem. Some initiatives have met with success and were supported by an economy in recovery, and the market for trainee positions improved. There is now, in fact, according to the trainee-post monitor, even a nationwide surplus of training jobs (Colo, 2008).

However, despite the improvements, group-specific shortages persist (Colo, 2007). There are not enough training jobs for students in lower secondary vocational education and for young migrant people in particular (Colo, 2007; NICIS, 2007). A serious shortage of training jobs is expected in the next school year as a result of the recent economic problems which will affect these groups in particular (Colo, 2009). But one third of non-western migrants in higher education also report having difficulties obtaining a trainee post (RWI, 2006b).

5.3 Problems with access to the labour market

5.3.1 Insufficient preparation

The relatively high unemployment rate among young migrants shows the difficulties migrant youth have in securing a job. Employers prefer the more highly educated youngsters, particularly in an economic recession. This alone explains why migrant youth are finding it difficult to enter the labour market (RWI, 2006b; Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands [SER], 2007). In addition, an inadequate command of the Dutch language among some migrant groups, and high levels of migrant drop-outs from vocational education add up to insufficient preparation for the labour market (Min. SZW, 2005).

However, this is only a partial explanation. Several studies have demonstrated that there is an 'unexplainable residue' - educational deficit is not the only reason for a reduced chance of employment (SCP, 2007a; SER, 2007). This residue can be understood by looking at two other factors faced by migrant youth when entering the labour market: the availability of the right kind of networks, and discrimination.

5.3.2 Networks for access to the labour market

Social networks can either constrain or facilitate the entry of young migrant people to the labour market. According to the social capital theory, networks provide "social resources accessible through one's direct and indirect ties" (Lin, 1982: 132). We make a distinction between bonding capital and bridging capital to refer to the support of one's own network i.e. family and peers, and the benefits of having access to other networks respectively (Putnam, 2000).

Bridging capital is of crucial importance for entry into the labour market. The lower inflow of young migrants in the labour market can, to some extent, be explained by the different search channels used by immigrants and recruiting employers (LBR, 2006; Regioplan Beleidsonderzoek, 2005; RWI, 2006a). The networks of young migrants and employers do not overlap, and migrants do not have suitable networks to access the labour market. In other words, they lack bridging capital which connects them with people who can help them access the labour market. Instead, when looking for work, migrant youngsters often rely on their own, small, social networks or bonding capital, and overlook the more formal and informal access routes through which potential employers recruit. Furthermore, many migrants go to employment agencies to look for work (LBR, 2006). However, many jobs in the Netherlands are to be found through informal social channels rather than through employment agencies or advertisements, about which migrants do not have the right information (Risbo, 2004).

Strong ethnic cohesion has a two-sided effect (Dagevos, Odé, & Pels, 1999): the focus on one's own network (bonding capital) can limit search options, but it can also provide opportunities for (self)employment. A recent survey among second generation

Turkish and Moroccan youth in Amsterdam and Rotterdam showed noticeable differences in unemployment between the two groups: 12 per cent among Turks as opposed to 30 per cent among Moroccans. This difference can be explained to a certain extent by the fact that many Turkish men found a job through their own network (40 per cent) compared with the Moroccans, only a quarter of whom were employed in a similar way (Crul et al., 2008). Furthermore, the strong ties in their networks can lead to success in self-employed entrepreneurship. The density of their networks furthers ethnic solidarity, which provides trust and reciprocity, and facilitates entrepreneurship (Aldrich & Zimmer, 1986). This is clearly visible, for instance, among the Turkish community in the Netherlands, which has been successful in setting up small businesses (SCP, 2007b). The government is aware of this development and its labour market policy explicitly strives for more opportunities for young migrants to start up their own business (SER, 2006). However, too much density might also obstruct successful entrepreneurship because ties to other networks are needed to connect to other potential customers (Aldrich & Zimmer 1986).

Despite the fact that segregated networks can lead to opportunities, the fact remains that these jobs are often in the lower echelons of the labour market (Dagevos et al., 1999). Migrants' networks can therefore open up labour opportunities, but they do not necessarily always boost horizontal or vertical mobility.

5.3.3 Discrimination on the labour market

A second structural factor that contributes to high unemployment levels among migrant youth is discrimination along ethnic or cultural lines. Discrimination and prejudice are gradually being accepted in political circles as serious obstacles for migrants on the labour market (LBR, 2006; Min. SZW, 2007; SCP, 2007a; Min. SZW, 2005).

Nowadays, the existence of discrimination is acknowledged, but its extent is, however, unclear. Migrants are reluctant to report cases of discrimination (LBR, 2006; SER, 2007) and many youngsters do not complain through the official channels about what they experience when applying for jobs. A 2006 study (Entzinger & Dourleijn, 2008) showed that young Turks (39 per cent) and Moroccans (52 per cent) report that they have not experienced discrimination, percentages which are higher than in 1999. But when asked about structural discrimination of their ethnic group, the reverse is true: both young Turks (35 per cent) and Moroccans (37 per cent) report that they are discriminated against as a group, percentages which reveal an increase compared with 1999 (20 per cent and 26 per cent respectively). This discrepancy between reported personal discrimination and structural discrimination makes it particularly difficult to establish exact figures for discriminatory practices on the individual level.

The social partners also admit that discrimination abounds. Employer organisations acknowledge that discrimination based on ethnic background does play a role, particularly in the bigger cities. A number of statistics corroborate this state of affairs: the discrimination monitor (LBR, 2006) indicates that almost a quarter of employers

would rather not hire migrants. A trend study among employers of companies with 20-500 employees also indicated that about 25 per cent of these employers were reluctant to hire migrant groups (Forum/Div, 2007). A Dutch Trade Union (FNV) recently voiced concern about the emergence of a young black underclass as a result of labour market discrimination (Trouw, 2008). According to the trade union, young migrants are seriously hampered by discrimination, and youth unemployment in the Netherlands has a 'colour'. Simply having a foreign name is, in many cases, enough to be rejected. And if migrants are invited to a job interview, 45 per cent of them feel they are assessed in a different way (TNS/Nipo, 2007).

Research into ethnic minorities' experiences on the labour market revealed that one third of the migrants interviewed reported discrimination on the shop floor (Regioplan Beleidsonderzoek, 2005). A study among the Moroccan population in Rotterdam shows that they are often confronted with explicit forms of discrimination (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2007). Furthermore, most complaints received by anti-discrimination bodies were related to discrimination on the labour market (LBR, 2006). This is also confirmed in the study by Entzinger and Dourleijn (2008) who found that discrimination on the labour market is one of the areas of discrimination most frequently mentioned by Turkish and Moroccan youth.

From the TRESEGY survey a broad consensus on the existence of discrimination appeared: the majority of both natives and migrants state that there is "some" racism (40 per cent migrants and 50 per cent natives) or "a lot" of racism (20 per cent and 25 per cent respectively). Migrant youngsters feel discriminated because of their ethnic background, skin colour and religion, and this mostly happens in schools and also in situations as public transportation, shops and bars and in the neighbourhood. Because most youngsters were enrolled in education they were not yet active on the labour market. Exceptions are Madrid and Utrecht were more than half of the youngsters have a job on the side. These cases show that a least a quarter of migrant youngsters are confronted with discrimination at work (Utrecht 24 per cent, Madrid, 29 per cent). (TRESEGY, 2008a)

For the Dutch context we are able to broaden the picture concerning discrimination: we have more information concerning frequency and can also distinguish between gender and ethnic groups (see table 5-1). Nearly half of the migrant youngsters have felt themselves discriminated against (47 per cent) during the past year and 23 per cent of native youth. Young Moroccans most often have had experiences with discrimination (54 per cent). Of those migrants who experience discrimination for the majority this occurs a couple of times (73 per cent) and the others experience this frequent. The main places and occasions where this happens are on the street (44 per cent), while searching for work (29 per cent), at work (29 per cent) and in shops (27 per cent). In addition: the reasons for being discriminated against are religion (55 per cent), ethnic background (41 per cent) and skin colour (36 per cent). (TRESEGY, 2009)

Also from our case studies migrant youngsters report to have concrete experiences with discrimination when entering the labour market. For instance, when obtaining a

trainee post due to wearing a head scarf. The majority feels it plays a role when searching for a job: they feel they have less chance than their native counterparts. In many vocational school teachers play a vital role in mediating between students and employers for obtaining trainee posts. Many teachers notice that it is more difficult for young migrants to find a trainee post than for natives. (TRESEGY, 2008b)

Table 5-1 *Frequency of experiences with discrimination during last year and places where this happened (%)*

	experience of discrimination	Frequency of discrimination last year		main places where discrimination takes place				
	last year	a couple times	frequent	street	at work	searching for work	public transport	school
Natives	23	74	26	33	21	21	18	36
Migrants	47	73	27	44	29	29	25	18
Migrant boys	52	63	36	44	21	33	14	18
Migrant girls	43	81	19	44	34	27	35	18
Turkish	44	73	27	59	36	9	18	27
Moroccan	54	72	28	43	30	34	28	13
Surinamese/ Antillean	42	85	15	39	30	18	32	21
Others	42	64	36	44	22	42	17	17

Source: Dutch sample of TRESEGY survey (n=608 with 164 natives (27%) and 441 young migrants (73%)) (TRESEGY, 2009)

Discrimination on the labour market has three effects. Firstly, it is evidently a cause for lower labour market participation. Discrimination has a significantly negative result on the inflow of migrants in the labour market and their chances of obtaining a regular paid job (SCP, 2007a).

Secondly, discriminatory practices also play an important role in the lack of training jobs for migrant students. One third of the non-western migrant students report difficulties finding a training position (RWI, 2006b). For instance, Moroccan young-sters have, on average, 30 per cent less of a chance of finding a suitable training position than do their native counterparts (Groenlinks, 2005), and Moroccan women who wear headscarves report having much less access to training jobs (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2007; LBR, 2004). But not all migrant youngsters are directly confronted by these practices because vocational schools, which are responsible for mediating between students and employers, keep the students out of those places where discrimi-nation could mean they were rejected (Colo, 2008; LBR, 2004; TRESEGY, 2009). Employers often explicitly ask the school not to send migrant students because they feel that their customers do not want to be assisted by migrants. This kind of justifica-tion is often made simply as a means of avoiding being accused of discriminatory practices. The same applies to explanations for not obtaining a trainee post because of a lack of qualifications, or motivation problems, bad manners, insufficient command of the language, and the way a particular position was applied for (Colo, 2008).

Thirdly, discrimination has a negative affect on the upward mobility of migrants on the labour market, and may also mean they drop out altogether (Regioplan Beleidson-derzoek, 2005). Migrants are promoted less readily, change jobs less often, and their premature outflow is twice as high as among the indigenous population. They feel they have to prove themselves. Their capabilities are frequently called into question, and their work is monitored more closely and more often. This may possibly result in sickness absence and their dropping-out. Complaints about discrimination generally have negative repercussions for the employee (LBR/EARN, 2006).

These factors exert a considerable influence on the labour market integration of young migrants. We now go on to examine important changes that have occurred in the labour market which have a more general affect on the position of migrants. The moves towards a service economy have led to revised qualification norms: soft skills have come to the fore. The importance of these skills as qualification for the labour market has special significance for young migrants, which we explain below.

5.4 General transformation of the labour market: the increasing importance of soft skills

A major change that has had a deleterious effect on the labour market position of migrants is the shift from industry and manufacturing to service jobs. This development started in the Netherlands in the 1960s and gained momentum in the 1970s and early 1980s fuelled by international competition. The upshot was widespread unemployment in the textile and steel industries, sectors that had actively recruited migrants in the 1960s (Bevelander & Veenma, 2004). At this time, much industry was moved to low wage countries, and routine labour tasks disappeared altogether. These developments meant a decreased demand for a low-skilled labour force and hit migrants very hard: they were primarily active in the lower unskilled segments of the labour market and many were made redundant when these jobs died out. At the same time there was an increase in the number of high-skilled service jobs in sectors such as banking, insurance, healthcare, and in low-skilled sectors such as retail, and the restaurant and catering industry. These developments have changed the requirements for labour qualification.

Firstly, the growth of highly skilled service jobs led to an increase in the importance of formal educational qualifications. This was a problem for first generation migrants in particular because they lacked qualifications for this post-industrial labour market (Risbo 2004). Many of them had not even had any formal education before they arrived in the Netherlands.

Secondly, there has also been a shift in the nature of the educational qualifications required. Ever more social skills and competencies are being required (Moss & Tilly, 1995, 2001), such as a good command of the language, general cognitive skills, and soft skills i.e. profession enhancing skills. The latter implies that a person has good

communication skills, is motivated, has a self-monitoring attitude, a high degree of reflectivity, is able to work with many people from different backgrounds etc.

The increasing emphasis on soft skills has also found its way into secondary vocational education where acquiring soft skills is becoming a substantial part of the qualification profiles (Min. SZW, 2007). These profiles are based on a list of twenty-five competencies that help make a student employable (Stuurgroep Competentiegericht Beroepsonderwijs, 2007). Attainment levels are now defined in terms of these competences, both professional and social: i.e. the 'hard' and 'soft' skills. Students must learn these competences through what is referred to as 'new learning', which assumes that students work individually and in project groups on learning objectives, with teachers as coaches. A study into the transition between school and the labour market for students in elementary vocational education and special secondary education showed that employers and schools consider social competences and general labour competences such as discipline and persistence even more important than professional skills (IVA, 2008). This increased emphasis on soft or social skills has a two-pronged negative impact on ethnic minorities. Firstly, the changes in vocational education are demotivating for some groups: they want more precise professional instruction and lose their way in the more individualised and self-instructing forms of education that provide much less guidance than the youngsters expect. Some drop out and try their luck on the labour market. Secondly, the emphasis on soft skills and the difficulties some migrant youth have with acquiring them, has produced, as we will see, the image that all migrant youth lack these skills.

5.4.1 Soft skills and the exclusion of young migrants from the labour market

As indicated above, discrimination affects the labour market position of young migrants. However, the shape or form discrimination takes is less clear. Not many employers are prepared to openly concede that they do not want to hire someone because of his ethnic or cultural background. What happens instead is that employers indicate someone's lack of motivation or social skills when they decide not to hire them. For instance, it is often claimed that discrimination is only subordinate to other factors such as education or employability which are seen as far more important to find a job or trainee post (Colo, 2008; RWI, 2006a). It is presumed that migrants in particular do not have the formal and social criteria that make them suitable for the labour market (SER, 2007). Employers often have negative perceptions of how migrants perform because they don't have formal qualifications (training and language skills) (Regioplan Beleidsonderzoek, 2005), because they lack social skills such as loyalty and flexibility, and because of their general appearance and presentation during job interviews. There is a very thin line between these kinds of justifications for rejection and explicit discrimination. We examine the mechanisms involved in more detail below.

Several authors point out the connection between the emergence and increasing importance of soft skills in today's labour market, and the forms of indirect or aversive

discrimination towards ethnic minorities (Braddock & McPartland, 1987: Boscigno, 2007; Dagevos et al., 1999; Gilbert & Lownes-Jackson, 2005; Moss & Tilly, 1995, 2001; Neckerman & Kirschenman,1991; Schaafsma, 2006; Wilson, 1999; WRR, 2007a). Aversive discrimination means referring to competences such as social skills, motivation, collegiality, emotional stability and seriousness about work as being different from what is expected, therefore rendering migrant candidates unsuitable (Gilbert & Lownes-Jackson, 2005). A strong focus on these personal skills can be an easy way for an employer to reject people: employers believe ethnic minorities lack these skills and they are therefore reluctant to hire them. According to Schaafsma (2007) the lack of soft skills is attributed to quasi-natural fixed traits by which the whole ethnic group is described. These traits then serve as a basis for exclusion. These traits weigh even more strongly for employers than more formal criteria (Moss & Tilly, 2001; Schaafsma, 2007): if an employee shows discipline, other criteria such as command of the language, and education, become less important and this is never the reverse (Schaafsma, 2007). This process appears as a tendency among employers to select more on motivation and employability and less on the possession of basic qualifications (Min. SZW, 2006).

Not all migrant groups are equally affected by the increasing emphasis on soft skills. There are indications that there is an ethnic hierarchy in the Netherlands which can also be observed in ethnic ranking on the labour market (Veenma, 2007). Ethnic groups whose culture is similar to that of the Dutch are higher up the hierarchy. Moroccans are the worst off. This is reflected by the results of the discrimination monitor which shows that this group in particular is confronted the most with discrimination (SCP, 2007a)

We have discussed several issues that influence the labour market position of young migrants in the Netherlands. Insufficient labour market preparation, the ambivalent function of networks, discrimination and the emergence of soft skills as selection criteria, all play a part when explaining the lower labour market opportunities for young migrants. However, when attempting to understand the problem, these different factors are usually treated separately and are not usually considered together. In order to get a better understanding of these factors, we now place them in the wider context of integration in the Netherlands.

5.5 Integration in the Dutch context: debate and policies

We now briefly describe the perspectives on the integration of migrants, and in particular on the changing integration policy in the Netherlands using the theory of acculturation as a framework (Berry, 2001). Migrants and a host society may each have distinct views about how the one should adapt to the other. These acculturation strategies may vary between total assimilation, integration (multiculturalism) or separation and marginalisation. Conflicts are likely to arise when the dominant strategy of migrants and that of the host society differs.

In the 1960s the prevailing policy in the Netherlands became integration while maintaining one's own culture. Migrants should participate but were not required to renounce their cultural background because they would, in the end, be returning to their homeland. This led to a situation referred to as a 'culture of avoidance': both migrant and native groups lived in their own social networks, and socio-economic exclusion in the labour market, education, housing etc. was seen as a temporary situation. But it gradually became clear that most migrants were not returning, and the 1980s and 1990s saw a policy shift towards more comprehensive integration, and in particular more attention was given to the labour market and educational participation of young migrants. Integration was defined as participating successfully in the educational system and the labour market; maintaining one's own culture was still accepted but it was no longer seen to be the responsibility of the government, but of the migrants themselves. This form of multiculturalism remained ambivalent, because socio-economic measures to combat the disadvantages of migrants were fragmented, temporary, and half-hearted, while at the same time measures were taken to compel migrants to participate in citizenship education. In that sense it is questionable whether multiculturalism really ever existed, since the structural problems of educational disadvantage and exclusion from the labour market were never really dealt with, and political discussions about, for instance, the democratic attitude of Muslims (the majority of the migrants) were started already in 1991 (Vasta, 2007).

At the turn of the century, the climate towards migrants in the Netherlands turned harsher: immigration and integration policies toughened, and social and cultural assimilation is an ever increasing requirement (Risbo, 2004; Vasta, 2007; WRR, 2007b). This change expressed itself in the general opinion that integration of migrants has failed. A parliamentary inquiry was held to investigate this, and even when the inquiry's results pointed out that the reverse was actually the case, the outcome was not really taken into account. Differences between natives and migrants continue to be emphasised and are seen to be a problem. In this process, national identity has been brought to the fore and migrants are required to adapt to the 'true' Dutch norms and values. This adaptation is seen to be the solution for integration problems (Ghorashi, 2003; WRR, 2007a). Some authors even refer to this process as a tendency towards cultural fundamentalism (Ghorashi, 2003; Schinkel, 2008; Vasta, 2007), where social and economic disadvantage is explained and linked to the migrants' cultural background.

This shift towards cultural assimilation has resulted in a problematic acculturation fit (Chryssochoou, 2004) between migrants and the host society: natives clearly strive for assimilation, they feel that adaptation and cultural maintenance are mutually exclusive (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002). Migrants tend to opt for both cultural maintenance and adaptation. This lack of acculturation fit has a negative effect on contact and interaction between migrants and natives, and leads to a decline in reciprocal cultural acceptance (Entzinger & Dourleijn, 2008). This may strengthen the orientation of

migrants and natives towards their own networks, and consequently affect the labour market position of young migrants.

Our case studies on second generation migrant youth (TRESEGY) confirm this picture of different preferences for acculturation and ethnic distance. The great majority of young migrants situate themselves clearly in the social reality of their country of residence. It is here they live and were they want to develop their future and they do not want to re-emigrate to their country of origin. In spite of this, they do not want to fully adapt but are inspired by a multicultural perspective: they want to integrate into the (host) society through education or work and at the same strive to maintain and defend their own culture and community. They perceive themselves very strongly as a group and the families and communities are a strong point of reference for identification and for forming networks. In the survey we see a strong segregation tendency between native and migrant youth with regard to living in segregated neighborhoods and the ethnic background of their social network. Noteworthy, is that when asked the majority of migrant youth (62 per cent) would like to have more friends with a different cultural or ethnic background while native youngsters on their turn in majority do not want this (61 per cent).

When Dutch society presents itself as having a hard and robust national identity that migrants must accept and adopt as their own, migrants may feel rejected and find identifying with this Dutch national identity difficult. They retreat and withdraw to their own groups and do not participate fully in society. They may even develop feelings of rebellion. The latter can be observed in particular among second generation migrant youth who are confronted with higher expectations and fewer options to fulfil them (WRR, 2007a).

5.5.1 Context of assimilation and the demand for soft skills

In the current assimilationist framework, migrant youth are constructed as not having the necessary cultural habits and practices to become Dutch (Ghorashi, 2003; WRR, 2007b). This happens through a process of delegitimation or abnormalisation where migrant youngsters, in the eyes of the natives, are seen as being unwilling to adapt or assimilate, and their behaviour is increasingly perceived as deviating from the norm (Bal Tar 1990; Verkuyten 2001). Migrants alone are held responsible for the fact that they do not do well in the educational system and on the labour market.

This process of delegitimation or abnormalisation is visible when young migrants are considered as not having the soft skills that make them fit for the labour market. In the discourses and debates surrounding labour market participation, a change in the social representation of migrant youth is occurring – they are seen as problematic and lacking suitable skills for successful employment. Their background already disqualifies them, and consequently young migrants risk being excluded from the labour market because of their presumed deficits.

In the TRESEGY study a broad range of people working with these youngsters, like employers, teachers and activation coaches, presume that young migrants lack soft or

social skills like motivation, presentation and communication which make them employable. Many educational and activation programmes try to make the transition to the labour market more smoothly by training these competences. This means youngsters have to practice with decent communication during the programmes. The following quote comes from coordinator of an activation program for youngsters who dropped-out or are unemployed:

'They are here being prepared to the labour market and how does that work exactly and what is important? - All the skills necessary to perform decently. So, being on time, keeping appointments, decent communication; no screaming, no getting angry and throwing things and then walk away. But try there, it won't always work, but you have to try to impart that, because they just do not know. -Is that really an absence or a problem of this group?- Yes, yes, with the migrant youth it is that they are not used to it, they are just not used to it. It ignorance too. It is not unwillingness, it is often ignorance.'

Delegitimation or abnormalisation can also be seen in the policies pertaining to improving young migrant labour market participation. In the grounds for these policies, a clear link is made between a lack of soft skills and unemployability, and the ethnic or cultural background of young migrants. The Dutch government is explicitly targeting the soft skills of young migrant people in order to improve their position on the labour market, on the assumption that they do lack these skills (Min. SZW, 2007; SER, 2007). Subsidies are granted to projects that focus on empowerment and on improving the soft skills of migrant job seekers. One important role is given to training the youngsters for job interviews.

In this context, the fight against discrimination is ambiguous: it is acknowledged that practices of exclusion do exist and that they should be dealt with. However, at the same time, discrimination is not regarded as a major problem for the labour market participation of migrants, and instead it is the responsibility of migrants themselves that is addressed. They should adapt more to the needs and requirements of the labour market. For instance, the focus is not on discrimination but on improving their labour market orientation, investing in the necessary social skills or motivation and activating the non-participant young migrants (Min. SZW, 2008). Recent Dutch government plans for tackling discrimination aim to create a more positive image of migrants. On the one hand this campaign focuses on combating negative images among employers when it comes to non-western migrants. However, on the other hand, the negative image that migrants have in certain sectors or among employers should also be dealt with. The government refers to a small group of (young) migrants who they hold responsible for the negative representation of migrants because they are involved in criminal activities, harassment and their behaviour is discriminatory. The government even appeals to the self-cleansing capability of the migrant community to prevent and condemn this behaviour (Min. SZW, 2008). Furthermore, certain migrants should

stop playing the victim and should instead finish their education and make themselves available and suitable for the labour market.

A particular discursive pattern emerges from this policy approach. Starting from general aims such as insertion into work, projects to improve education and to combat dropping out have been developed to eliminate the disadvantages for the at-risk groups. However, these projects are often short lived, fragmented and their effectiveness is hardly ever assessed. The results are therefore generally ambiguous and the projects miss their target. This stirs up further concern about the possible lack of integration of young migrants in particular, and efforts are intensified to define the characteristics of the groups at risk and to develop new interventions. These groups, which may indeed encounter problems acquiring employability competences, are then held up as examples of the ethnic group as a whole, and this, in turn, only adds to the social representation of migrant youth as being a problem and in danger of marginalisation because of the skills they lack. The public debate is fed with the image of ethnic youngsters handicapped by their cultural background. This focus on a lack of skills or on employability can be seen as a cultural approach to the problem of the unfavourable labour market position of ethnic minorities. According to Schinkel (2008), culturalism is a cultural form of racism, which classifies cultures and gives priority to the dominant or host culture over migrant cultures.

5.6 Conclusions

Despite the position of migrant youth on the labour market having recently improved, their situation remains unfavourable. Furthermore, their position strongly depends on the economic situation: when the economic climate deteriorates, labour market opportunities for migrants also deteriorate (CBS, 2008). But we have also stressed the need to look beyond the general, and to discern how polarisation processes in and among migrant groups are actually taking place. We have examined factors that explain the problems surrounding the labour market integration of young migrants. Insufficient education, language problems, different networks and search strategies and discrimination all contribute to this difficult situation. In particular we discussed the emergence of and emphasis on soft skills as important qualifications for labour market participation. We attempted to show how this may lead to forms of indirect discrimination by employers who presume that young migrants lack the appropriate social skills for working in their company environments.

We have tried to show that several of these factors (network mismatch, discrimination and soft skills) can be taken and explained together by placing them in the Dutch integration context. We showed that since the start of this decade there has been a shift in the public discourse towards a strategy of assimilation. Migrants in their turn wish to integrate but also to maintain their own culture and identity. This has resulted in a lack of an acculturation fit between the native group and migrants. In this context processes of categorization and in- and out-group formation are reinforced. This has

led to further distancing between migrants and natives and to segregated networks (lack of bridging capital) making it more difficult for migrants to obtain a job or a trainee post. The discourse on assimilation runs parallel with the growing importance of employability: migrants are expected to adapt fully to the Dutch norms and codes on the labour market.

In this context, processes of delegitimating and abnormalising young migrants as lacking the required skills for employability are developing, based on the marginal position of some at-risk groups. Differences between native and migrant groups are stipulated, maintained and even created and used as justification for their exclusion from the labour market. In this context, subtle forms of racism on the basis of a presumed lack of soft or social skills have emerged.

We therefore conclude that the focus on assimilation in the public and political debate and in the policy for ethnic minorities actually has a deleterious effect on migrants' entry to the labour market. In the current discourse, problems of labour market integration of young migrants are often explained by their ethnic and cultural background. The consequences are that ethnicity is equated with failing skills and young migrants are being blamed for their own labour market disadvantage. This is reflected in the Dutch anti-discrimination and labour market policy which does not really deal with labour market discrimination but instead lays blame for their disadvantaged position on the labour market at the feet of the migrants themselves.

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Chapter 6

Education and labour market participation among young migrants: challenges and policies

Abstract:

This chapter discusses the results of the European comparative research project TRESEGY which studied how young migrants experience their life in their country of residence, what problems they face and what kind of support from social networks they receive. We will reflect on the results of the TRESEGY project by placing them within current changes of the European welfare systems which are set in by the globalization process. Our thesis is that the effects of globalization and of emerging new social policies have far-reaching consequences for young people with a migrant background in European countries, because the general conditions of living and support of social policy are undergoing clear changes. Globalization has changed conditions on the labour market in European societies and influences the extent to which young migrants participate on the labour market, and dualization is something that would appear to be on the increase. New social policies of exercising personal responsibility for one's own life course affect those at the margins of society either because their level of education is insufficient, or because they are unemployed. Moreover, young migrants are increasingly being constructed as an at-risk group. However, despite these developments we found that migrant youngsters display strong resilience and optimism, which can help them overcome the tensions they are confronted with.

Keywords: globalization, welfare state, new social risks, dualization, migrant youth, optimism

6.1 Introduction

Behind the intention to study how young migrants fare at school and on the labour market in European countries is the underlying assumption that they form an easily identifiable group, and that this identification not surrounded with problematic meanings. It is evident that this is far from reality. Firstly, the majority of young migrants studied in TRESEGY, a European research project, are naturalized citizens of their country of residence, as in France and the Netherlands. Some migrants in a few other countries, such as Germany, Italy, Spain and Portugal, are naturalized and others are not, and some are even illegal. Secondly, the majority of young migrants are what are referred to as "second generation" (or even third generation) migrants. However, labelling them as migrants is a misnomer since many of them were born in their country of residence, are nationals of this country and have no plans to emigrate. Classifying them as "migrants" is actually arguable because doing so means that a large proportion of the population of Europe would, under this definition, be classified as migrants. At best, it could be said that they have a migrant background, but even this identifies them as descendants of former migrants which might mean they are placed in a social group with which they do not necessarily identify. When we refer to the group young migrants in this chapter we mean "youngsters with a migrant background", though we are aware that even this qualification can be a problem when these young-

sters are compared with their native counterparts, the descendants of long-term residents of the country in question. For an overview of the diversity of the group young migrants in our study see table 6-1.

As we are interested in how young people with a migrant background fare in education and on the labour market, it is essential that the conditions of social citizenship are considered. It is well known that these conditions are not identical throughout the various European countries because there is no common European social policy. We therefore have to deal with the differences that exist between the different countries and take them into account in our investigation.

Another important reservation has to be made about the negative image of young migrants in European societies. Indeed, current figures indicate that migrant youth are at a disadvantage in the educational and professional spheres compared with their native counterparts. And the current economic crisis would seem to be intensifying this disadvantage. The OECD (2009) has seen both a significant increase in unemployment rates among migrants and a decrease in the employment rates of migrants due to a number of reasons. Migrants are overrepresented in sectors that are vulnerable in an economic downturn, their contractual arrangements are less secure, and they are subject to selective hiring and firing (OECD, 2009).

However, it is important to nuance this negative image because the debate on segmented assimilation makes it clear that the position of young migrants tends towards polarization, and an overall negative image is somewhat unfair (Portes, Fernandez-Kelly, & Haller, 2005). The segmented assimilation theory postulates that migrants adapt to a host society in different ways. One way is successful integration into the host society whilst maintaining one's own cultural heritage (Portes & Zhou, 1993). For instance, in Europe, children of migrants are nowadays generally performing better in the education system and on the labour market, and are showing signs of upward mobility (Crul & Heering, 2008; de Graaf & van Zenderen, 2009; Thomson & Crul, 2007). Heath et al. (2008) argue that the debate on segmented assimilation is not the same in Europe as in the US. In particular, as far as downward assimilation is concerned, because many guest workers entered at the bottom of European societies there was no way to go - but up. Most children from first generation migrants in Europe are upwardly mobile and the existence of a new underclass among this group is doubtful. However, it is clear that there is also a group in European societies for whom marginalization is also an option (de Graaf & van Zenderen, 2009; Heath et al., 2008; Thomson & Crul, 2007). Furthermore, segmented assimilation theory states that upward mobility can be reinforced by having strong bonds with the co-ethnic community and culture. This path of selective acculturation is questioned by authors who found the opposite. For example Crul and Vermeulen (2003) found that although in the Netherlands Moroccan migrants are having a less cohesive ethnic community than Turkish migrants, they tend to perform better in the educational system.

Having formulated these four reservations and questions, we now present the main questions to be addressed by this chapter: How do young people of migrant origin

experience life in their country of residence and what problems do they encounter? Some of them are illegal residents, which means they are entitled to only minimum support, such as basic schooling and assistance with life-threatening situations. However, social citizenship, with all the concomitant diverse meanings of being a (social) citizen, is, in principle, available for the majority.

In addition to political citizenship, social citizenship affords, in theory, the opportunity to participate fully in life in the country of residence, for instance in education and on the labour market, to gain an appropriate standard of living (Marshall & Bottomore, 1992), and to be fully accepted without specific hindrance, such as discrimination because of, for example, a migrant origin. Moreover, social rights mean equal entitlement to education, healthcare and the labour market, and to support in cases of illness, unemployment and old age. These rights are to be found in all European countries, though not necessarily in the same way or to the same degree. Moreover, over the past twenty years or so, all European countries have drastically transformed their welfare systems, resulting in some similarities but also numerous differences.

Despite all the obvious differences, there are two distinct and related trends in the changes made to the welfare systems throughout Europe. Firstly, all the countries are involved in the current globalization process and in European integration, and they experience, to some extent, similar constraints, such as, for example, the loss of national independence to define social policy supported by monetary or fiscal policy. Moreover, the rapid increase in the trade of manufactured goods, and their production in low wage countries, such as China, has serious consequences for labour markets in Europe. Much more could, of course, be said about the influence of globalization, but that is beyond the scope of this chapter.

In response to the effects of globalization, the European Union has defined a program to secure the strength of European economies in the coming years, under the slogan that European countries must become "knowledge and service societies". The Lisbon Agenda formulated a raft of aims in the hope of turning this slogan into reality, such as, for example, more people in higher education, fewer educational dropouts, increased labour market participation, particularly among young people, women and the older population. In line with the Lisbon Agenda, active labour market policies, lifelong learning, and a change from welfare to workfare have all been introduced.

The second trend, linked to the first one, can be seen in the ongoing changes to the welfare systems in European countries. The reasoning is as follows: as globalization entails increased flexibility and mobility, new risks emerge, such as the risk of losing one's job. Buchholz et al. (2009) argue that globalization increases the risks of unemployment. Young adults in particular are the "losers" of globalization, and education and class determine the extent to which individuals face increased labour market risks. They state that "globalization triggers a strengthening of existing social inequality structures". Rosholm, Scott and Husted (2006) have shown that migrants without the appropriate skills have considerable difficulty on the labour market in Scandinavia.

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However, these risks can be tackled, to a certain extent, by individuals themselves, provided that they are responsible citizens to begin with. This responsibility not only calls for the pursuit of a good education and the acquisition of general competences in order to be employable, it also means that one should anticipate various life events and avoid being overwhelmed by them. In addition to emphasizing the necessity of long-term sustainability, all the changes to welfare systems in European countries put the accent on personal responsibility in order to either prevent or be prepared for the new risks. The terminology used to describe these changes includes "social investment policy" or "activation policy" (Jenson, 2009).

These two convergent trends should not hide the fact that globalization affects different countries in different ways, and national institutions filter the increasing uncertainty resulting from globalization in a specific way, and most countries have different forms of labour market flexibilization, changing life courses and social inequality structures (Buchholz et al., 2009). In most of the countries involved we perceive a limited application of these new social policy lines, and of their relevance for migrant participation on the labour market (Feld, 2005). However, these new policy lines certainly apply to dropouts and to young people involved in the transition from education to work. As far as young people are concerned, some authors identify a tendency for social citizenship to become more fragile (Castel, 2009; Somers, 2008); others (Bradley & van Hoof, 2005; Buchholz et al. 2009) consider the situation of young people in Europe to be problematic. We discuss this point more specifically in the conclusion.

We can now formulate the general hypothesis of this chapter. Our contention is that the effects of globalization and of the new social policies have their repercussion on the experiences and future expectations of young people with a migrant background in European countries. The reason for this is twofold: globalization leads to more insecurity on the labour market. To cope with this insecurity there is an increased demand for skills, flexibility and mobility. Secondly, within the new social policies the accent increasingly lies on personal responsibility of constructing one's own potentials in terms of acquiring sufficient educational qualifications and employability. In view of their disadvantaged societal positions -low educational levels, youth unemployed, living in segregated neighbourhoods- we expect migrant youngsters to having difficulties coping with these developments and to express negative experiences and future expectations. However, one cannot presume that the increased uncertainties and risks directly affect the experiences of all young people with a migrant background. Our hypothesis is more subtle: our target group will be affected in diverse ways by these developments, and that this diversity of reactions has implications for understanding the situation of these populations.

After a section describing the studies of the European TRESEGY research project, we go on to present and discuss the results pertinent for the issues in this chapter. In the conclusion we interpret these results in the light of the formulated hypothesis.

6.2 Method

The EU research project TRESEGY was a sixth framework program, under the priority theme "Citizens and governance in a knowledge-based society", entitled: "Factors of economic, social and cultural in- and exclusion of second-generation migrants in Europe", and ran from June 2006 through May 2009. Six countries participated in the project: Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, Germany and the Netherlands, and nine cities were selected to be research locations: Rome and Genoa in Italy, Lisbon and Porto in Portugal, Madrid and Barcelona in Spain, Metz in France, Berlin in Germany and Utrecht in the Netherlands. Ethnic segregation is widespread in European cities and even on the increase and many migrants live in segregated neighbourhoods (Semyonov & Glikman, 2008). Therefore, for our study we decided to select one or more neighbourhoods with a significant number of migrant inhabitants in each of these cities.

The research project was conducted in three stages: 1) an investigation into national and local situations and policies on migrants; including interviews and group discussions held with key informants like social workers, policy makers, police officers to better understand the local issues of the youth, the associations and the neighbourhood. 2) an extensive ethnographic study, involving participant observations, interviews and biographical interviews, etc. Case studies were set up in various local settings e.g. the street, schools, community centers and young people's workshops. For the purpose of this chapter the results of the ethnographic study form the main base of our analysis. In the Dutch context we particularly focussed on the inclusion of (migrant) youngsters in (vocational) education and their transition to the labour market. We will also use some quotes from interviewees from the Dutch context. 3) a quantitative study of about 600 respondents in each research location (in general about 50 per cent young migrants and 50 per cent young natives). The surveys were mostly conducted in schools. Some descriptive results will be used to illustrative the results of the ethnographic study. Finally, a transnational comparison was made to conclude the project. As expected, different migrant groups were investigated in the various research locations. See table 6-1 for more detailed information on the various migrant groups and local settings by city and the methods used.

Table 6-1 *Overview of local contexts, populations and methods*

Cities & neighbourhoods	(Main) Populations	Research sites & methods used
Genoa: West Bank of Genoa	Ecuadorians, Moroccans (age 14 to 23)	Participant observation in self managed community centre (by Ecuadorians) In-depth interviews with 30 youngsters, 15 boys, 15 girls
Rome: Municipality I (Piazzo Vittorio square) and VI (Rampa Pre-nestina)	Ukrainian, Philippine, Romanian, Peruvian, Ecuadorian, Bulgarian, Moldavian, Somali, Cape Verdean, Polish, Kosovian, Belarusian, Italian (age 15-32)	Participant observations in a vocational school (101 youngsters involved, 66 boys, 35 girls, five classes)and on a square where youngsters meet and during a workshop (16 youngsters involved, 5 boys, 11 girls) Interviews and focus groups
Lisbon: Vale de Amoreira	Angolan, Cape-Verdean, Guinea Bissauan, São Toméan, Portuguese (age 15-27)	Participant observation in summer workshop for youngsters (creating dance, hip hop, video, graffiti) Discourse analysis of produced rap lyrics 21 in-depth interviews (13 girls 8 boys)
Porto: Greater Metropolitan Area (no residential concentration of migrants)	Chinese, Ukrainian, Russian, Mozambican, Angolan (age 15-25)	Interviews in public spaces like bars and malls, online interviews (Messenger, Skype) 49 interviews with a total of 24 individuals
Barcelona: Torrassa, Florida and Pubilla Cases	Latin American, Ecuadorian, Castilian (age 15-25)	Participant observation in street, school, during activities or rituals of "Latin Kings" (60 youngsters involved, 51 boys, 9 girls) Biographical interviews, group discussions
Madrid	Latin American (mainly Ecuadorian), Moroccan (age 16-24)	Participant observation in school, street, bars, shops and tea houses Biographical interviews with 13 youngsters (5 boys, 8 girls)
Metz: Talange and Metz-Borny	Italian, Algerian, Turkish (age 15-24)	12 in-depth interviews (6 boys, 6 girls)
Berlin: Kreuzberg	Turkish (majority), Chilean, Korean, Bolivian, Polish, German (age 14-26)	Participant observations took place in a school, in the street, in a Mosque 25 in-depth interviews, group discussions
Utrecht: Kanaleneiland and Overvecht	Moroccan, Turkish, Surinamese, Antillean, Dutch (age 14-23)	Interviews en participant observation in a vocational school, community centre, activation projects, workshops (100 migrant and 30 native youngsters involved)

6.3 Results

6.3.1 Ethnographic studies

The TRESEGY research project conducted intensive ethnographic studies in the nine research locations. The objective was to explore the experiences of the youngsters with a migrant background. In addition to participant observations in all the research locations, extensive interviews were held with the respondents to explore the biographical aspects and the future expectations of the interviewees. However, as ethnographic methodology has to be adapted to local circumstances which vary widely, comparing the results has its limitations. For this reason we only present here the results that are most pertinent to the present discussion and which show similar processes in the different national contexts. Furthermore, there was one important limitation: in many cases contact was established with the young people with the help of certain institutions, and this influenced the interaction, how the researchers were perceived by the young people and how they reacted to them. For instance, when working together with a school, the migrant students associated the members of the Dutch team with this institution and saw them in the beginning as teachers. An overview of the results can be found in the summary report of the ethnographic studies (TRESEGY, 2009).

The most interesting and in a sense a somewhat pedestrian result of the ethnographic studies is that the great majority of young migrants situate themselves clearly in the country of residence, with the exception of Rome and to some extent Lisbon. The reason for this is that in Rome, young 'migrants' arrived only recently and were more or less 'forced' to migrate by their parents. In Lisbon, the informants are long-term migrants from Africa, living in difficult circumstances and who have experienced a considerable amount of discrimination. Generally speaking the perception of young people with a migrant background is: this is where we live, it is here that we want to develop a future, and it is here that we experience our hopes and our difficulties. Almost none of them talk about re-emigrating to their country of origin. Quite a few explicitly state that when they spend some time in their country of origin, they have to go through a phase of "integration" in the original culture, which is far from easy for them.

The fact that the young migrants situate themselves in the country of residence becomes evident through a number of outcomes. Firstly, all acknowledge that an education and good work experience is a precondition for realizing a suitable professional and personal life in the country of residence which implies that they see their future in this country. Other reasons that support this statement can be found in the results that for example young Moroccan boys in Utrecht defend 'their' neighbourhood, 'their' meeting places and 'their' rights. They are in general rather proud of their neighbourhood, and even the groups that official institutions e.g. police or municipality consider to be problem groups, defend the name and the character of their neighbourhood; they are not happy if the media, the police, or local or national politicians speak ill of their neighbourhood. The same applies to Metz. Critical voices

about their behaviour or about their forming associations, either as a family, a community or a group of friends, are sharply and sometimes even violently rejected. This rejection also implies the fact that they see their roots in their country of residence, and that they defend their right to organize themselves as they want.

A second general result of the ethnographic studies, which is an extension of the former point, is that the young migrants are, in general, rather optimistic about their future opportunities in their country of residence. All respondents expect to be better off in their future life than their parents are. This again points to a strong wish for upward mobility and to the expectation that this is something that is achievable. They explicitly acknowledge (or implicitly in the case of failure) that they are in a situation that enables them to develop interesting future perspectives, either through education or through the opportunities to set up an independent business or small workshop. And they all know of other migrants who have indeed achieved this. However, in general, their hopes are not always realistic or in line with their present education or work experience. Moreover, some of them qualify their optimism by mentioning forms of discrimination or a lack of resources. For instance, discrimination and limited access to proper jobs and education mean that the youth of African descent in Lisbon feel deprived and pessimistic about their future prospects (see table 6-2). However, in general, it is not only society in the country of residence that is seen as a constraint to achieving their expectations, but also their families and their community. This result is, in a way, paradoxical, because in all other discussions they all vehemently defend their community and their way of life.

This brings us to a third general result. This result is particularly interesting because it reveals a profound dilemma among the young migrants. We have already indicated that they situate themselves in general in their country of residence. However, they do seem to see themselves very much as a group, and also in their behaviour they associate almost exclusively with members of their own community. They do not 'sit' or 'work' with 'native' youngsters at school neither during lessons nor during breaks. And in the street, young migrant boys in particular associate almost exclusively with members of the same community of origin. They also compare themselves with their parents and not with other residents of the country of residence. And when speaking about future spouses, the great majority state they want a partner from the same community. The young migrants from the ethnographic studies do not see this perception and attitude as a dilemma. However, on the other hand, they see the family and the community as a constraining force either by obliging them to migrate or by imposing certain norms and forms of conduct. Family expectations can, for instance, constrain young migrants in Lisbon: girls have care responsibilities, often at home, and boys are expected to work and earn money for the family. However, in the case of girls it also shows that mothers often encourage them to finish their education.

A fourth result involves discrimination. Young migrant populations draw a distinction between two forms of discrimination. Firstly, some of them feel they are viewed as 'different' by the native populations, either because of their skin colour (as in Lisbon),

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or because of their ambiguous status i.e. as having no or only a limited residence permit. Secondly, all the young migrants experience a different kind of discrimination that can best be described as cultural. In the street and particularly when looking for work, they sense prejudice from the native population because of their names, or their limited language proficiency, or their living conditions, or religious habits. This prejudice generally involves their supposed "ethnic" characteristics.

The young migrants do quite frequently mention discrimination, and when specifically asked they all say they have been the victim of discrimination or that they expect discrimination might play a role when trying to find a suitable job. For example, a number of young Muslim women anticipate that wearing a headscarf might lead to problems when looking for work. However, discrimination is not perceived as a serious hindrance and the majority of the migrant are optimistic to find a job. They have a meritocratic perspective of equal chances and opportunities, as long a you do your best and try hard you have opportunities, in spite of existing discrimination as shown in the following example of a Dutch migrant youngster:

Migrant male 17: 'If you just have a good diploma, it will not give problems. I think every company will hire you, regardless of your background and I never feel background counts.'

This last point brings us to some of the variations that our case studies revealed. Whereas young migrants in education or work are somewhat defensive about using the terminology of discrimination, the marginal migrants (in terms of schooling or work) are much more explicit about discrimination: they feel harassed by the police, by CCTV, and by being depicted in a negative way in the press. Communication with them seems restricted to a kind of collective "self-defence" against presumed, and certainly partly real, instances of harassment and discrimination. For this reason it was impossible to interview individuals in this group, because of their apprehension of prejudices we as researchers might share with the police, the media, etc. Agreeing to be interviewed individually would be seen as letting down or betraying the group.

All the other groups investigated affirm a strong attachment to family and community. However, there are evident differences: Chinese migrants in Porto, for example, who tend to be reasonably highly educated, have much more contact outside their own community. Families and communities are a strong point of reference, for identification purposes and for forming networks, but they are also seen, to some extent, as constraining the opportunities of the younger ones.

This outcome partially conflicts with the general desire to construct a future in the country of residence, which is the case for the greater majority of investigated youngsters with a migrant background. They are aware that they will have to get a 'good' education and put effort into achieving their future expectations. However, because they tend to be involved mainly in networks with members of their own community, with the concomitant norms and habits of these communities, they are to some extent at odds with the norms and values of the host society, dominated by a different family

system, with a more equal distribution of gender roles and power relations, based on negotiation. This is particularly true for young migrant girls.

6.3.2 Survey

We present some relevant results from the quantitative study, based on a questionnaire used in the nine research locations (TRESEGY, 2008). The questionnaire posed some sixty questions on topics related to experiences of social, economic and cultural inclusion and exclusion such as education, identification and discrimination. The questions ask about origin, education and parents' income, their own education and work perspectives, their experience with discrimination, and their outlook on their future life.

As stated above, the participating groups were widely diverse. In principle, the surveys were carried out among some of the same respondents involved in the ethnographic study.

Young immigrants arriving after their birth in the host country constituted the majority of respondents in Barcelona, Madrid, Genoa and Rome, whereas the majority of the respondents were born in the country of residence in the other locations.

The highest level of education completed and the occupational status of the parents of the young respondents with a migrant background are significantly lower than the level and occupational status of the parents of their native counterparts.

The young respondents recognize that there are many social problems in the neighbourhood in which they live. These results are fully in line with the outcomes of previous research on migrants' living conditions (OECD, 2007).

As far as friendship and meeting places are concerned, the results show clear segregation patterns between "native" and "migrant" youth. One difference is that native youth tend to have only native friends, whereas the majority of friends of youth with a migrant background are from the same ethnic group, but some also have friends from the group of "natives", because of the school they attend. Gender differences also show an interesting result: generally speaking, boys meet their friends outside the home, whereas girls of immigrant origin meet their friends at home.

Young people with a migrant background present a different pattern: a foreign identity is common, followed by local, national and European. A similar difference is evident for the spaces of identification: for "native" youth the identification levels were the neighbourhood, followed by country, city or Europe, whereas for young people with a migrant background the country of their parents is given first, followed by the neighbourhood.

The TRESEGY survey also includes questions on perceived discrimination. "Native" youth more often indicate than their migrant counterparts that racism does exist; there is, however, consensus on the existence of discrimination. The majority of respondents affirm that there is "some" racism (40 per cent "migrants" and 50 per cent "natives") or "a lot" of racism (20 per cent and 25 per cent respectively).

Table 6-2 *Perceived discrimination (%)*

	Migrants				Natives			
	None	a little	some	a lot	None	a little	some	a lot
Barcelona	2,8	30,2	34,8	30,2	1,3	36,4	49,7	11,7
Berlin	2,1	11	40,3	46,3	1,4	6,3	36,8	55,6
Genoa	3	21,3	49	25,3	3,3	11,3	49,7	34,7
Lisbon	7	22,2	50,2	27	8	17,4	57,6	24,2
Madrid	8	51,8	29,8	10,4	3,3	17,3	50,7	28,7
Metz	5,2	7,3	38,7	44,3	4,4	7,9	39,6	45,9
Porto	11,3	31	40,8	16,9	1,4	17,7	65,3	15,6
Rome	0,7	13,6	53,4	31,6	1,3	11,4	48	38,6
Utrecht	13,5	9,5	44,6	32,4	8,5	9,9	31	50,7

Source: final report on transnational comparison of the youth survey (TRESEGY, 2008)

'Native' youth give age and clothing style as the main reasons for discrimination, and young 'migrants' always specify origin, skin colour and religion. "Migrant" youngsters feel more often discriminated against than "native" youngsters. Both groups generally feel that most discrimination is to be found in school. Migrants also feel discriminated against on public transport, in shops and bars and in their own neighbourhood.

The questionnaire posed a question about satisfaction with living in the country of residence (see table 6-3). The figures were high for young 'migrants' (between 50 per cent and 60 per cent) and even higher for 'native' youngsters (between 60 per cent and 70 per cent), and quite a significant proportion is 'reasonably satisfied' (30 per cent and 20 per cent). Only a tiny minority of 4 to 5 per cent say they are not satisfied. Lisbon is the one exception to this general trend: here the neighbourhood and social prospects where the respondents live are seen as a problem.

Table 6-3 *Satisfaction with living in country of residence (%)*

	Migrants			Natives		
	Yes	No	More or less	Yes	No	More or less
Barcelona	52,9	4,6	40,3	82,4	2,9	14,1
Berlin	54,1	6,6	39,3	41,4	8,3	50,3
Genoa	57,3	1,7	39,3	72,3	4	23
Lisbon	48,6	48,3	3,1	52,1	42,6	5,3
Madrid	64	7	29	85	2	13
Metz	59,6	6,3	29,6	72,8	4,1	21,8
Porto	54,5	2,1	42,8	75,8	2,7	20,8
Rome	49,3	5,8	44,2	77,8	2	19,9
Utrecht	56	5,3	38,7	64,8	11,3	23,9

Source: final report on transnational comparison of the youth survey (TRESEGY, 2008)

Finally, when asked whether they are satisfied with their life, the majority of respondents indicated that they are 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied'. The answer 'not satisfied with life' was only given by a very few respondents.

These results correspond with those in earlier studies. To some extent, this large study does indicate a number of new and interesting points. As stated above, the respondents are from a wide variety of different groups, and also live in countries with divergent systems of social and citizenship policies. These results should therefore be interpreted with caution.

There are two categories of results that are very similar, which seems to justify considering these results as truly significant for young populations of very different origins living in very different regions of Europe. These are results from both the quantitative and the qualitative study. The first category of results shows that the great majority of all young people are satisfied with their life, and that they are also satisfied with their living conditions in their country of residence. Only a tiny minority is not satisfied. They also aspire to upward mobility: they all feel that that their situation in the future will be better than that of their parents. This general result can be interpreted as an evident sign of strength and resilience among young people of all origins, even in a situation where all of them recognize the existence of obvious discrimination, which is the second category of results that is very similar for all respondents.

In addition to the results that confirm the disadvantages of populations with a migrant background, such as the parents' education level and their occupational status, there are a number of interesting results that are more difficult to interpret. The majority of young 'migrants' also see their parents' country of origin as a significant place of identification. These results could be explained in many ways, but one explanation might possibly be that the majority of the populations with a migrant background tend to manifest a sense of belonging to a specific community more than the young 'natives' do, though this does not exclude the possibility of identifying with other young people on matters relating to their style of living and clothing, etc.

Another interesting result concerns living conditions. Generally speaking, young people with a migrant background tend to live in segregated, deprived neighbourhoods characterized by a lack of financial and social resources (Semyonov & Glikman, 2008). We conducted most of our research in such neighbourhoods and the young people living there often report that violence, delinquency, drug abuse and theft are rife. However, when asked, the majority do state that they like living in their neighbourhood and do not want to move (between 65 and 90 per cent). They are even happier or more satisfied with the neighbourhood than the natives are. Furthermore, the neighbourhood is also an important reference point for their sense of identity. The ethnographic studies revealed that the young people act and react quite defensively when they feel their district or neighbourhood is negatively depicted in the media or by the police.

6.4 Conclusion and discussion

Notwithstanding their many differences, all European countries are active participants in the globalization process, a consequence of which is a new international division of labour and increased flows of goods, capital and services throughout the world.

The globalization process also entails new risks, and a raft of 'risk' literature has emerged, starting with the publication of 'Risk Society' in 1992 (Beck, 1992), followed by many others (Beck, 2000; Giddens, Diamond, & Liddle, 2006; Giddens, 2007). The conviction is that these new risks can, to some extent, be anticipated and prevented by individual members of European societies, through a new responsibility of constructing one's own potentialities, for example through education and by being prepared for flexible employment. The EU has explicitly confronted these challenges, on the one hand by the goals formulated in the Lisbon Agenda, and on the other hand by formulating new social policy based on activation. The concepts of this new social policy, referred to as 'social investment policy' or 'activation policy', have been elaborated upon, but they have not yet been translated systematically into policy practice in the same way throughout Europe. However, policy measures for young people have been adopted in all EU countries.

We now examine the new risks facing our target group in more detail. We make a distinction between three different kinds of risks, introduced by Castel (2003). Firstly - the social risks. These are risks identified and taken into account, mainly through guaranteed assurance schemes (Ewald, 1986) by the construction of welfare states, roughly during the last century, such as work accident, illness, etc. Unemployment falls into this category. The globalization process has, without doubt, modified the configuration of this family of social risk.

The second family of risk identified by Castel is the discursive and political construction of the concept of 'groups at risk', in other words, groups of people identified as a social group sharing certain characteristics that threaten to push these groups into a marginal, somewhat excluded position. This group includes for example the 'young', the 'lower educated', 'single-parent families' (mostly women), 'older males' (often alcoholics, in danger of losing their job and family ties) and also 'migrant populations'. In all these cases, risk factors have been identified that facilitate anticipating a significant event in the future, which is highly likely due to the combination of certain factors. Therefore, it seems necessary to supervise and check constantly whether or not the serious event is going to happen. This kind of procedure can be effective because there is certainly nothing wrong with prevention. However, it is possible that social groups are objectified in this way, with the corresponding consequences that this would entail. This seems to be the case with migrant populations. Before discussing this question, we only mention the third family of risks distinguished by Castel, which comprises the awkward and problematic consequences of the unwanted effects of scientific and technical developments and from the exploitation of natural resources of the planet earth.

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Over the past few decades migrant populations have been identified as an 'at-risk group' in European societies as a result of several, quite distinct categories of risk factors. The first category, mentioned in the introduction, is the disadvantages migrants have in terms of education, language proficiency, participation in the labour market, etc. Numerous studies have corroborated these disadvantages, but it is worth mentioning that these disadvantages generally decrease with time. Moreover, these disadvantages differ considerably for the various groups of migrants as becomes clear in the debate on segmented assimilation. Youngsters in general have also been formulated as an at-risk group, which turns youngsters with a migrant background into a group with a double risk.

A second category of risk factors has been identified as the 'traditional' culture of the majority of migrant groups, with, in general, a deficit of emancipation of women among these populations. Social and integration policies in the EU focus mainly on the emancipation of women. This second category of risk factors is sometimes referred to as a 'cultural' one, denoting the cultural distance between migrant groups and the host society. This category includes the supposed or real differences between norms and values, and in particular the norms surrounding socialization and bringing up children, which many countries consider insufficient for preparing young children in a suitable way for primary education. Another example is the conviction that young migrants, due to their cultural or ethnic background, lack the appropriate social skills for entering the labour market successfully.

A third category of factors that has been identified is the disproportionately high percentage of migrants, and in particular of young migrants, among offenders, coming into contact with the police and appearing in court. In popular terms, these include public order disturbances, theft, drug dealing, and other criminal activities. Finally, terrorism is the fourth risk category. There have indeed been terrorist attacks in various European countries, such as Spain, the UK, Germany, the Netherlands, and also some apparently serious attempts to carry out acts of terrorism. The generally young terrorists are predominantly Muslims. This last risk factor is certainly present, and some have referred to it as 'home-grown terrorism' (Buijs, Demant, & Hamdy, 2006).

These four categories of risk factors, which are quite heterogeneous, have been combined over the last two decades to construct this new 'at-risk group'. The power of this construction should not be underestimated, because it has been translated and widely used in public space and in policy debate. Moreover, it is, often in exaggerated ways, a central part of the discourse used by new right-wing and populist political parties and movements in European countries.

Scientifically speaking, combining these four categories of risk factors can easily be rejected. Indeed, these four categories are first of all quite heterogeneous, and there is no inherent linkage between the four categories. Secondly, some of these categories apply, and then only in part, to specific groups of migrant populations. Thirdly, another category, the threat of terrorism, while real, only applies to a tiny fraction of

young people with a migrant background. Finally, a number of people with a migrant background cannot be subsumed under any of these four categories of risk factors.

Nonetheless, it appears that the TRESEGY research project has established that disadvantages do exist, and that in many cases the youngsters with a migrant background live in families that do not conform to the new normative model of post modern families promoted in Europe. It seems that quite a number of the families of people with a migrant background live in family systems and communities that are at some distance from the host society culture and traditional gender roles are more present among migrant families. This became evident from the reported impression that young people feel that constraints are placed upon them by their families and community. However, this statement remains a general affirmation, because much more detailed research on specific issues is needed to detail the situation of the households of people with a migrant background.

It is time to summarize and discuss this chapter's general hypothesis. Three developments affect the conditions under which groups with a migrant background in European societies live, and the experiences and perceptions of youngsters among them in particular. Firstly, globalization has brought about significant changes to the European labour markets in general, and has in particular diminished opportunities for lower educated groups. However, because our target group is disadvantaged, it is a group that will be more affected by this development. Secondly, new social policy is being developed, with a definite accent on personal responsibility for one's own life course in terms of employability and financial resources. This new social policy has to date only been partly implemented, but it clearly affects young people at the margin who have dropped out of the system. As such this new social policy is interesting, though it does assume the existence of robust, guaranteed social support for individuals to be able to take on these new responsibilities. The question is whether this is in fact the case with our target group, and this is debatable because this new social policy means that the support it offers is conditional and threatens to erode the substantial character of social support that was formerly guaranteed. This is why Somers (2009) sees social citizenship becoming more fragile. Thirdly, 'migrant populations' have been constructed as an at-risk group, which has had numerous consequences, and means that this at-risk group will be monitored and supervised more thoroughly than in the past. All in all, these three developments mean that the life and working conditions for our target group are deteriorating. Given these developments, the fear is that European societies are undergoing increased 'dualization' (Davidsson a& Naczyk, 2009) and that indeed globalization tends to intensify social inequality structures in modern societies (Buchholz et al., 2009). This seems to be justified when one takes account of the fact that entry positions (where there is an 'entry') to the labour market have durable effects on further careers, particularly in Germany and Italy.

It is quite astonishing that the results of our research show a widely shared optimism among youngsters with a migrant background. The majority are reasonably satisfied with the conditions of life in their country of residence, they see their future in

this country. Their choice of life is clearly inspired by what can be called a multicultural perspective, or in other words, they recognize the need to adapt to the host country (e.g. education and the criteria for labour market participation), while at the same time they defend, to some extent, the lifestyle of their community.

These results show that transformations of the general conditions of life and of social citizenship do not directly affect the experiences and expectations of our target group. On the contrary, our target group manifests a high degree of resilience and optimism. This is evidenced by the fact that the members of our target group compare themselves in the first place with their parents and other members of their community. And in all probability they are right: their future is brighter than that of their parents, and their conditions of life are far better than the conditions to be found in their parents' country of origin. However, we can also conclude that they do not fully appreciate the consequences of the present changes to the conditions of life and social citizenship, like a teacher in the Netherlands said about migrant secondary vocational students: "They have unrealistic future perspectives (becoming a doctor or lawyer), but you cannot take away their dreams, their wishes and demotivate them". Expectations are therefore that the tension between the changed conditions and their optimism will lead to a multitude of different reactions and life experiences among youngsters from a migrant background. This confrontation offers support for the thesis of segmented assimilation.

The thesis of segmented assimilation means that the situation of youngsters with a migrant background is polarized: the situation some groups of migrant youngsters find themselves in is indeed not improving or it is even getting worse, e.g. for dropouts and the unemployed, but instead of overall downward mobility the situation is clearly improving for most migrant youngsters. This is reflected in the optimistic and motivated attitude of many youngsters in the TRESEGY study. The results correspond to what is referred to in a recent American study as 'the second generation advantage' (Kasinitz, Mollenkopf, Waters, & Holdaway, 2008). Second generation migrants display considerable ambition and a desire for upward mobility, which they hope to establish by integrating into the (host) society through education or work and at the same they strive to maintain their own culture. This means that more of them will end up in middle class society.

Moreover, they can benefit from living in two (cultural) worlds. This entails (cultural) creativity and enables them to cope with different and sometimes conflicting norms and expectations. For instance, the TRESEGY study showed that some young migrant girls with less access to the public sphere, such as the street and neighbourhood, spend more time at home and are more focused on educational achievement. Another example is migrant youth of African descent in Lisbon. On the one hand their skin colour is sufficient reason for native groups to exclude them because they are clearly African and are therefore outsiders. On the other hand, their African characteristics are important for identification and bonding with other young migrants which is expressed through clothing, food, music and dance.

In short, migrant youngsters follow a diversity of life paths, and their resilience and optimism can in many cases help them overcome the tension they face in their every-day lives.

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Chapter 7

New governance: pitfalls of activation policies for young migrant dropouts in the Netherlands

Abstract:

Migrant youth are at a disadvantage in the Netherlands when it comes to schooling and work: many drop out of school and are unemployed. We will use concepts of new governance to discusses the complexities surrounding the execution of policies to reintegrate dropouts back into school or the labour market from the perspectives of professionals (street level bureaucrats) working in activation programmes. The results show that cooperation is difficult. The most difficult youngsters are beyond the reach of most policy initiatives. Furthermore, many professionals perceive educational requirements as unrealistic for some youngsters. Finally, new requirements for employ-ability may stigmatize youngsters as unwilling and unmotivated.

7.1 Introduction

The transition towards a knowledge/service based society and its implications for disadvantaged groups have caught the attention of various scholars (Esping-Andersen, 2000; Giddens, 2007). This transition brings with it an increased emphasis on skills and competences. Knowledge societies are accompanied by a risk of social division and exclusion because skills-based labour market distinctions increase polarization among people who are able to meet certain requirements and those who are not. Some scholars even identify an increasingly larger underclass of excluded 'superfluous' people who have difficulty coping with the demands of this knowledge/service based economy (Bude, 2008; Wilson, 1999). This growth of (skill) inequality and an emerging group of 'outsiders' or 'disadvantaged' in post-industrial societies is often referred to as dualization (Davidson & Nacyk, 2009). One particular group that is affected is that of young migrants with disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds and inadequate educational and social resources (Bude, 2008). Increased requirements in terms of skills and competences will make it even harder for this group to participate fully in modern society.

Current figures on the position of young migrants in the Netherlands do indeed indicate that migrant youth are at a disadvantage in the educational and professional spheres compared with their Dutch counterparts. They are overrepresented in the lower segments of education and often leave school before graduation (almost twice as often) (Ministry of Education [Min. OCW], 2007a). On the labour market they are concentrated in the lower segments and show structurally high levels of unemployment (Statistics Netherlands [CBS], 2008). Of special concern are what are referred to as non-participants i.e. young people who do not attend school, who are not active jobseekers, and who are without a regular income. It is expected that these young people will face long term unemployment and end up in marginalized positions (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment [Min. SZW], 2007a).

There are a number of different explanations for this state of affairs among young migrants on the labour market: a low educational level, early school leaving, language deficiency, disconnected migrant networks, and employers' search strategies and discrimination (Regioplan Beleidsonderzoek , 2005; Council for Work and Income [RWI], 2006; Min. SZW, 2005; Social and Economic Council [SER], 2007).

Many social policies and measures to improve the position of young migrants in the Netherlands have been developed in order to help them cope with their disadvantaged position. These measures originated mainly from two policy lines. Firstly, there is a more activating approach towards unemployment which resulted in the Active Labour Market Policy (ALMP) (Eichhorst, Kaufmann & Konle-Seidl, 2008). This pertains to recent transitions from a 'passive' to an 'active' welfare state in which activation to work has increasingly taken precedence over social security provision (van Oorschot, 2004) and in which social security functions as a reintegration tool, an incentive to activate/stimulate the 'inactive' unemployed or benefit recipients to work (van Berkel & Borghi, 2008). The goal of these policies is to improve economic self-reliance and to reach social integration of these groups since their status is often associated with poverty and social exclusion (Eichhorst et al., 2008).

Secondly, a number of policies that aim to combat school dropout rates fit in with the ALMP context and have an activating character. In line with the European aspiration to become a knowledge economy (European Council, 2000), the aim is to prevent youngsters from leaving school early, to educate young people as much as possible so in the future they will have more opportunities on the labour market, and to reintegrate dropouts back into school and onto the labour market.

Policies on early school leaving and youth unemployment are developed and coordinated on national and European levels, but policy implementation and activation programmes are decentralized. Municipalities, employment offices (in the Netherlands, Centre for Work and Income [CWI]) and schools are all responsible for achieving the national and European goals. This study examines the execution of policies to reduce school dropout levels and to activate young migrants to work in the local context of the city of Utrecht. We first outline these two policy fields and how policies are translated into local practice. We are interested in how official policies take shape in the institutions and organisations responsible for policy execution. We are also interested in what this implies for the young migrant dropouts involved. The central questions of our study are: how are policies concerning early school leaving and youth unemployment executed in the local context (the city of Utrecht) and what are the consequences for the migrant youngsters involved?

To answer our research questions our study consists of three different parts. The first part treats the theoretical field of policy execution focussing on new governance and street level bureaucracy. We also offer an overview of the main European national and local policies to combat early school leaving and youth unemployment. Together this serves as the (theoretical) background for the second and third part. In the second part we examine how these policies are executed, or how official policy takes shape in

the local context along the lines of activation and new governance. Therefore we did an extensive case study research in the regional context of the city of Utrecht. The implementation of activation policies are decentralised and organised by municipalities, therefore the municipality is most suitable for studying the execution of activation policies. Utrecht is one of the four largest cities in the Netherlands (in policy terms the Big 4) where the dropout and youth unemployment rates are the highest (Min. OCW, 2007a; CBS, 2008). The dropout rate in Utrecht in particular does not seem to be declining much at all (Min. OCW, 2009). This situation makes of Utrecht an interesting case for the current study. The third part deals with the consequences of the policy execution for the young migrant dropouts and we examine in what ways the policies work out beneficially or obstructive. In the past, reintegration policies were studied in a more general way but not in combination with measures to reduce early school leaving and certainly not specifically for young migrants.

7.2 New governance and street level bureaucracy in activation

Central in the implementation and execution of activation policies are forms of new governance (van Berkel & Borghi, 2008; Lindsay & McQuaid, 2009). New governance entails that to address complex social problems like disadvantaged youngsters with multiple problems new models for provision of activation must be employed: welfare provision is less organized on a state level and instead responsibilities for providing services are decentralized to locally responsive multi-agency partnerships which consist of multiple stakeholders with specific expertise (van Berkel & Borghi, 2008; Daly, 2003; Lindsay & McQuaid, 2009). This is accompanied by defining social interventions and policies for specific target groups.

In his studies van Berkel (2005, 2008) distinguishes key concepts typical of new governance in implementing activation policies. We will use these key concepts to examine how activation policies for youngsters take shape in the local context. First, *decentralisation*: The transition from passive to active welfare states was coupled with a new distribution of centralised and decentralised policies and policy implementations. In active welfare states local governments are more and more responsible for the implementation of national policies and the provision of social services. Another key concept of new governance in the activation area is *marketization*. With the transition from passive to active welfare states, (semi) privatized reintegration markets were created in order to make activation services more efficient and of better quality (van Berkel & van der Aa, 2005; Lindsay & McQuaid, 2009; Struyven & Steurs, 2002;). This means providing welfare services is (partly) contracted out to private reintegration or activation companies (providers) by governmental institutions like employment offices, who act as purchasers of these services. This competitive climate should stimulate private companies to promote more individually focussed and responsive service provision with more choice for the individual consumer or client. A last important characteristic of new governance in the activation field is the promotion of

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interagency cooperation. On the local level one-stop shops have been introduced with the aim to have a more effective cooperation between organisations responsible for income provision and activation and to serve tailor made services for the unemployed. These partnerships are between old providers of these services, but also with new (contracted out) commercial partners.

Several studies highlight some difficulties or tensions in delivering services by means of new governance. Firstly regarding interagency cooperation: differences between (local) partners in professional and organisational values, cultures and interests can hamper successful interagency cooperation and integration of services in one stop-shops (Axelsson & Axelsson, 2006; Glendinning, 2003; Vangen & Huxham, 2003). Power differences and struggles between partner organisations over who's in charge of the partnership, fear of losing one organisational territory and interest can obstruct trust-building between partners (Glendinning, 2003). National policy agreements can also impose constraints for integrating services when partnerships have to join-up contrasting or conflicting services and schemes which are clearly separated on a national governmental level (Vangen & Huxham, 2003). Contracting out activation services can hinder 'genuine partnership' because it entails unequal power relationships between purchaser and provider. This can limit the exchange of shared knowledge and experience which are vital for partnerships (Lindsay & McQuaid, 2008). Furthermore, instead of delivering individualized tailor made services contracting out seems to lead to private activation services applying standardized approaches (Lindsay & McQuaid, 2009). Van Berkel and van der Aa (2005) point to several disincentives for private companies to offer more tailor made services: for instance they only have to meet a success rate (job placements) of around 50 per cent, and there is a lack of quality control and monitoring by the purchasers of the services offered to the clients. Lastly, the way in which private activation services are financed, by outflow in job placements, can lead to 'creaming' in which difficult clients are excluded from programs or 'parking' in long term trajectories in which hardly any job counselling or job training takes place (van Berkel & van der Aa, 2005; Struyven & Steurs, 2002).

To examine our second question whether the social policies have unintended, consequences for the target group, young migrant dropouts, we will examine how the supply of social services for young migrant drop-outs is affected by the principles of new governance: marketization and interagency cooperation. However, the delivery of social services is not only determined by formal and operational organisation, but also by the way professionals adopt these policies and put them in practice. Therefore we also use street-level bureaucracy theory which states that the street-level workers in organisations ultimately decide what kind of services and benefits clients receive. Consequently, according to Lipsky, they do not just deliver but in fact make policy (Evans & Harris, 2004; Lipsky, 1980; Winter, 2002, 2003). The street-level bureaucracy theory consists of two key concepts: discretion and coping behaviour. Discretion is the freedom professionals or street-level bureaucrats have when deciding what action to take. They use their discretion to apply various coping behaviours which are the

informal practice strategies professionals apply to handle complex work situations and work pressure, such as an enormous workload and limited resources. One important coping strategy is 'creaming' where professionals tend to focus on 'workable' clients at the expense of the more difficult ones. In this present study we explore whether discretion and coping behaviours on the part of professionals in reintegration organisations in Utrecht have positive or questionable consequences for young migrant dropouts.

7.3 Methods and overview of the local field of activation

Our case study was firstly part of the comparative European research project (TRESEGY). The project ran from June 2006-2009 and focussed on: "Factors of in- and exclusion of second-generation migrants in Europe". We studied how young migrants experience their life in their country of residence, what problems they face and what kind of support from social policy they receive. Six European countries with nine cities as research locations participated in the TRESEGY project. The project realized extensive quantitative and qualitative ethnographic studies involving youth surveys, participant observations and interviews in various local settings like on the street, schools, community centres and activation programmes for young people. In the Dutch case we particularly focussed on migrant early school leavers and their transition to the labour market. In this chapter we are discussing the findings for the Dutch context. Secondly, this study is part of the 'Pathways to Work Research Program'. This project elaborates on the TRESEGY project and pays specific attention to the school-work transition of the marginalized group of young migrants, who dropped out of school or who are unemployed. It approaches their transition problems from different interrelated environments (Sol, Knijn & Frings-Dresen, 2007). In the institutional environment it explores and evaluates national and local policies and initiatives that aim to tackle early school leaving and youth unemployment in order to get a better understanding of good practice. The dropouts' social environment is investigated for the policy implications and also for the availability of social resources.

We first provide an overview of the national and local activation policies on early school leaving and youth unemployment. For this we use existing data such as official policy documents and other studies that evaluate activation and reintegration policies.

For the qualitative field study on policy execution, we conducted a case study and interviewed 27 professionals which are key figures in public and private organisations involved in the activation of young dropouts and the young unemployed in Utrecht. A case study design is particular suitable for doing research in this field since the researcher has little control over the events and the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context (Yin, 1994).

The picture below (7-1) provides a schematic overview of the local field of activation and its main levels and actors. We also included the different trajectories dropouts can take. We selected our respondents so that they form a balanced representation of

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the different actors and its initiatives available in the field. From each level or actor we therefore choose one or more projects or representatives. By doing so we included comparative components which enhance the possibility for analytical generalization (Yin, 1994). Moreover, other cities in the Netherlands are similarly organized so this picture resembles the situation of activation of early school leavers in major Dutch cities. The programmes and policies target youngsters in the 13-27 age range who are at risk of dropping out of school, who have already dropped out, and who may also be unemployed. This is also the group we refer to in this study as dropouts. Furthermore part of this group is characterized by multi-problems, which can be a combination of psychological health problems like mental illness or addiction, financial or juridical issues, which make it difficult for them to perform well or even attend school.

In the city of Utrecht, there is a large migrant community. Because many migrant youngsters in Utrecht are in a disadvantaged position, the presented local activation initiatives often involve this group.

7-1 *local field of activation*
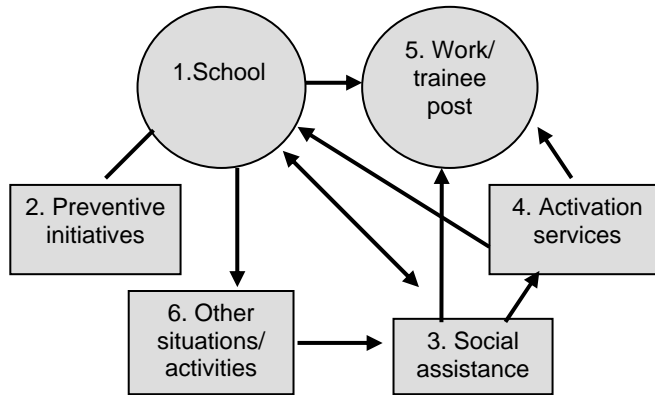
The following main levels/actors are involved in the field of activating dropouts: first schools (Regional training centres) which house care and advice teams and rebound facilities for youngsters who face dropping out. Secondly, in Utrecht there are several dropout prevention projects which collaborate with schools and are executed in classrooms like buddy projects, a self employment project and a migrant empowerment association. Third, social assistance organized around municipality institutions entailing one-stop-offices like the youth office, and the study-work office. Other important players on this level are the school attendance office and the Department of Education responsible for executing educational policies. Fourth are private activation and rehabilitation services. Fifth are work and trainee posts. Work and trainee posts are joined in this figure because trainee posts are considered to be necessarily stepping-stones for being employed. Also initiatives which try to find employers and to match them to employees like the employers office belong here. Finally, youngsters can be in

other activities or situations like care tasks, black work, psychological or psychiatric services, juridical circuit etc. Within this field dropouts can take the several trajectories (indicated by the arrows): for instance, dropping out and entering directly the labour market, or not finding/searching work and not applying for social benefit, or dropouts applying for social benefit, and from social assistance back into school, work or trainee posts (e.g. work-first projects) or into rehabilitation/reintegration services. It should be clear that there are more possibilities and that these trajectories can be repeated in variable ways several times. For example, when youngsters lose their job or drop out of school once more, a new cycle can start again.

Between February and May 2007, and September 2008 and April 2009 we visited fifteen organisations and projects and held in depth-interviews with twenty-seven key figures that are representatives from these organisations for over an hour (see table 7-2 below). We selected our respondents so that they form a balanced representation of our case study (Yin, 1994). Our respondents are in most cases professionals who are often programme coordinators or policymakers and also staff who actually carry out the work, in order to establish a broad local overview of the policies and their implementation in the city of Utrecht. Moreover, all the coordinators were, in addition to their managerial tasks, actually working with the youngsters. As a result, we established a valuable network of informants during data collection. The in-depth interviews were semi-structured. The topics were derived from the concepts of our theoretical framework and covered the following: to grasp the outcome of the policy implementation we asked about the content of the project/policies, the aim of the project/policies and strengths and weaknesses of the project/policies. Interagency cooperation was covered by asking for experiences with collaboration within and between different actors and programmes as shown in the overview of the local field. To grasp possible unintended outcomes/consequences for migrant youngsters we talked about success and failures factors for this particular group and also more indirectly by asking about motivation and social skills of the youngsters involved.

We complemented the interview data with participant observations of actual policy execution in the field. For five days we observed in a garage that has work-study programmes for young dropouts. We interviewed the training staff, the owner and several migrant youngsters and observed how educational goals were merged with practical training in a real life work situation. Furthermore, we attended a rebound class for youngsters who face dropping out and interviewed several youngsters and the coordinating teacher. This combination of different types of data collection provided us with a considerable amount of information on activation programmes and the general field of dropouts from numerous different perspectives. The observations were written out in field reports and the interviews were recorded and transcribed. We analysed the data using the MAXQDA07 software package, which enabled us to perform an accurate and systematic analysis of our qualitative data. Segments from the transcripts were coded with the help of our theoretical concepts. Coding was organised in three stages: open, axial, and selective coding (Boeije, 2010). In open coding,

transcripts were read several times and then divided into fragments with the use of our theoretical principles. In the phase of axial coding data were put back together in new ways by making connections between categories. This allowed for the organisation of similar ideas into conceptual categories. Finally, in selective coding core concepts were identified as overarching themes of the study and the conceptual categories were organised in relation to these concepts. In the end we were able to get results based on theoretical themes which were constructed with the coded fragments of our analysis.

Table 7-2 *Organisations and informants:*

Organisation:	Public or private?	Informant:
1. Study-Work Office	Public	Coordinator
2. Garage	Private	Owner, Advisor, Teacher/foreman 1, Teacher/foreman 2
3. Rehabilitation Project	Private	Coordinator 1, Coordinator 2
4. Employers Office	Public	Coordinator
5. Municipality: Department of Education	Public	Policymaker 1, Policymaker 2
6. Youth Office	Public	Coordinator
7. Rebound Facility	Public	Coordinator
8. Regional Training Centre 1	Public	Policymaker, Coordinator Internships, Career Counsellor, Coordinator Basic Vocational training (level 2), Intercultural Coach
9. Reintegration service	Private	Coordinator
10. Buddy Project	Public	Coordinator
11. Regional Training Centre 2	Public	Policymaker Coordinator
12. Self Employment Project	Private	Coordinator
13. School attendance office	Public	School attendance officer 1, School attendance officer 2
14. Empowerment initiative	Private	Coordinator
15. Migrant network	Private	Coordinator

7.4 Results

7.4.1 Overview of the national and local policy context for young migrant dropouts

We now give a brief overview of the main national and local policies to reduce the number of dropouts and to promote labour market participation of young migrant people. Covering all the different policies and measures is beyond the scope of this chapter. We therefore focus here on the main policies that pertain to young migrant dropouts. Ethnic minorities are often seen as a group that need extra attention in order

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to improve their educational level or to encourage their labour market participation (SER, 2006). The Integration Memorandum 2007-2011 specifically states that young migrants need to improve their competences, both professional competences and social or *soft skills* (Ministry of Housing, Spatial planning and the Environment [Min. VROM], 2007). However, there are no formal education and labour market policies that specifically target migrant youth in both the national and the local context. The problems of migrant youth are dealt with in the more general framework of achieving a sufficient educational level and consequently improving labour market participation. Nevertheless, since migrant youngsters are well represented in dropout and youth unemployment rates, these policies implicitly target this group. This can also be observed in the reintegration programmes which are generally to be found in migrant neighbourhoods and where clients with a migrant background are overrepresented.

7.4.2 National context

Policies on early school leaving stem from the early 1990s with reforms in vocational education. In 1994, the basic qualification was introduced as a way of establishing a minimum level of vocational training which would ensure labour market access (Houtkoop, 2004). Obtaining the basic qualification entails completing at least the second level of secondary vocational education. Without a basic qualification, sustainable labour market options are assumed to be limited and the definition of 'dropouts' in the Netherlands therefore actually refers to all youngsters who do not obtain this basic qualification. This is a very broad definition and leads to problems of overestimating and exaggerating the number and problems of early school leavers. For instance many dropouts are in fact employed and by using this basic qualification criterion the situation of these youngsters is without need made more difficult (de Graaf & van Zenderen, 2009). Furthermore, since 1994, the Netherlands has been divided into Regional Report and Coordination Points (RMC regions) to facilitate tackling the problem of school dropouts and to register the number of early school leavers.

The recent boom in Dutch policies to prevent young people from dropping out and to return dropouts to school is heavily influenced by the Lisbon Agreements. The European council set the goal to become one of the most competitive and dynamic knowledge economies and therefore one important aim is to reduce the number of people in the 18-24 age group who only completed the lower level of secondary education by half (European Council, 2000). In this intensified attack on reducing dropout, a new law was introduced in 2001 that required municipalities and schools to report the number of dropouts to the RMCs. Since this obligation to report was introduced, the EU objective was complemented with the national goal to reduce the number of new dropouts in the 12-22 age group by 50 per cent between 2002 and 2012 (Min. OCW, 2007b).

In 2006 the Dutch government launched an action plan entitled 'Attack on Dropping Out' because the number of dropouts remained high and it was feared the Lisbon targets were out of reach (Min. OCW, 2006). This plan entailed, for instance, to create

more trainee places and one-stop-shops for young people with questions relating to education and employment. Another important measure was to extend the compulsory school leaving age from 17 to 18 and introduce a 'qualification obligation' (Min. OCW, 2007b). This means that all youngsters between 16 and 18 who have not attained a basic qualification level should attend school until they turn 18. Young people in the 17-18 age range form the largest share of the new dropouts (Min. OCW, 2007a).

The policies give priority to education rather than to employment. The goal for young unemployed people is for them to achieve the basic qualification through additional education or to award them qualifications for skills obtained through work experience (Min. OCW, 2003, 2006). The latter means that practical acquired skills are the equivalent of the basic qualification. The current government also proposed a more compulsory approach to reintegration of unemployed youth which focuses on obtaining the basic qualification (Ministry of General Affairs [Min. Algemene Zaken], 2007).

The primary responsibility for executing labour market policies lies with the municipalities and their social-service departments. The local social security provision is based on two acts. First, under the Unemployment Insurance Act (WW) people who lose their jobs are entitled to receive benefit from the Social Security Agency (UWV). Secondly, as of 2004, responsibility for providing social benefit is tied by the new Social Assistance Act (WWB) (Min. SZW, 2003), which provides municipalities with their own budget to implement social assistance policies at local level. The aim of both acts is to limit the inflow of people into social security and to stimulate the outflow into work. Since these activation policies were implemented, a process of privatization has taken place and local reintegration markets have been created (van Berkel & van der Aa, 2005; Struyven & Steurs, 2002). The municipalities and the Social Security Agency contract out private reintegration companies that are responsible for providing reintegration programmes for benefit recipients.

The aims to improve both the qualification level and the labour market position of young people converge in the current Dutch government plans to extend the compulsory school leaving age with a study-work obligation to the age of 27 (Min. Algemene Zaken, 2007). If young people refuse this offer to learn or work they may no longer be entitled to benefit (Min. SZW, 2007b). Social policies in Dutch municipalities already focus on this principal: all youngsters applying for social benefit are referred to work programmes or sent back to school, or to a combination of work and study. The proposal for a work-study obligation is the subject of debate. In a joint statement addressed to parliament, several organisations, including the Dutch Trade Union (FNV/ FNV Jong) and the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG) have indicated a number of problems with implementation. For example, young people up to the age of 27 who voluntarily apply for social benefit can lose their entitlements to social benefit and therefore to their social safety net. This will have a negative effect, particularly on the most difficult group, i.e. youngsters with the most problems who

are often also in debt. The assumption is that these youngsters will no longer report and will be unreachable (FNV/ FNV Jong/ VNG/ DIVOSA, 2008). Furthermore, the Dutch government acknowledges that depriving young people of social benefit is not desirable (it is even in breach of the constitution) and the bill does guarantee an income provision (Min. SZW, 2009). Therefore, in the end the real burden is imposed on the municipalities who are obliged to provide work-study opportunities without receiving any new instruments.

7.4.3 Local context: prevention and activation in Utrecht

The city of Utrecht is strongly influenced by national policies. However, as stated above, the implementation of these policies is decentralized at local level. In Utrecht, there is integrated cooperation, i.e. a 'comprehensive approach', between different organisations - schools, youth care, social work, the municipality and employment offices and also private initiatives which run different kinds of preventive and curative programmes are all involved in the field of activating young dropouts (see model 1).

When it comes to young school dropouts, Utrecht adopted the aim of the Lisbon and national agreements to halve the number of school dropouts. The municipality also created a covenant scheme together with the Ministry of Education and the local training centres for secondary vocational education (ROCs) to reduce the number of dropouts. While nationally the RMC regions showed a 10 per cent decline in the past two years, this figure is just 3 per cent in Utrecht (Min. OCW, 2009). Utrecht already concentrates on implementing the forthcoming obligation to work and study up to the age of 27. This is in line with the existing Work First approach that municipalities apply, which obliges youngsters who apply for benefit to accept a job offer. However, only 8 per cent of dropouts in Utrecht apply for social assistance or register with the employment office (Administrative Information Municipality of Utrecht, 2008). The municipality opened a youth office in January 2009 with a view to reaching more dropouts. This is a front office where young Utrecht residents between 18 and 27 years of age can go with their questions on school, work and income. The youth office refers dropouts to the most suitable institutions that will help them return to school or find employment on the labour market. The results of 2008 show that some of the remaining youngsters who were not yet registered with the employment office did actually found their way to the new youth office.

This overview of current policies is the background against which we studied the local execution of measures to combat dropping out and to enhance reintegration. To further answer our research questions 'how are the policies executed and what does this imply for the young migrants' we concentrate on matters related to new governance in activation and the role of front line workers or the street level bureaucrats. First, interagency cooperation and marketization (contracting out, tailor made approach) are treated: how does cooperation between organisations work and how do organisations approach and admit young people. Our analysis points to an interaction between marketization and the coping actions of street levels bureaucrats. Secondly, issues

surrounding obtaining sufficient educational qualifications and new requirements for employability that affect young migrants are discussed. These appeared as core categories from our analysis and imply important implications for the execution of official activation policies and the position of young migrant dropouts.

7.4.4 Interagency cooperation

As said, the local government in Utrecht adopted a comprehensive approach. Central to this approach is inter-agency cooperation in which the different and multiple social problems of youngsters are taken care of. There are three different levels of cooperation. Firstly, different municipal departments (education, welfare, social affairs and employment) are all involved in the policies surrounding early school leaving and youth unemployment. The municipality is also involved in various cooperation initiatives, or one stop shops such as the youth office, a work-study office, and an employer's office. All aim to put the unemployed or dropouts in contact with the right institutions, or to put employers in touch with the unemployed. When talking of these kinds of initiatives, a phrase that was often heard was: 'they work like a spider in a web'. For the young dropouts the youth office is the most relevant. The youth office is located in the Public Employment Service building (CWI) in Utrecht, and partners from secondary vocational schools, social work, employment offices, employers, school attendance officers and social affairs cooperate in the office. The main objective of the cooperation is to present dropouts with a tailor-made programme in which various aspects of their particular situation are taken care of. This tailor-made or individual approach entails a considerable amount of discretion on the part of the youth office professionals, because they are the people who decide what care will be given and which organisation a youngster will be referred to.

Secondly, preventing students from leaving school early also involves collaboration between the municipality and schools. Vocational schools in Utrecht work together with the school attendance officer from the municipality and professional care institutions. The attendance officer helps the school to tackle truancy issues, which are recognized by several interviewees as a sign something is wrong with a pupil's personal situation. Schools, in turn, work together with the business community for internships and help with the transition of their pupils to the labour market. Cooperation between primary vocational education and senior secondary vocational education was recently intensified to offer support and guidance to pupils to help them make the right decision and to prepare them for future education and to reduce the risk of dropping out when making this 'risky' transition. Nationwide, every year about 6000 children drop out during this transition period (Scientific Council for Government Policy [WWR], 2009).

Thirdly, as a result of marketization in the field of employment services, the municipality contracted out the reintegration tasks to commercial organisations, and this also demands cooperation with the commercial partners. The youth office, for instance, put out the reintegration services, which means that youngsters who need to

be reintegrated into the labour market are referred to a private reintegration company. These organisations work together with official partners such as youth care, employment offices, the police and judicial authorities and some are also connected to the youth office. If some kind of professional care or help is not possible in one organisation, other parties are contacted and clients referred to them.

There has been a recent move to increase cooperation with professional youth care institutions. For example, schools and reintegration projects cooperate with professional care, in order to provide support for youngsters with their personal and psychological problems. Activation programmes provide social care themselves through psychologists or cooperate with different professional care organisations. Since some students drop out because they have personal problems, secondary vocational schools set up special needs advisory teams to refer pupils to social work and mental health care when necessary. One of the problems that came to light during the interviews is that in the past schools or teachers often tried to take care of these pupils themselves, without the intervention of professional care whereas their primary expertise lies, in fact, in providing education and not care. Schools are also obliged to report truancy cases to the school attendance officer. However, this is not necessarily always done systematically or accurately. Schools have a considerable amount of discretion, and a teacher can decide whether or not to contact someone from professional care or the school attendance officer.

7.4.5 Complexities of interagency cooperation

The interviewees explained that most of the dropouts have numerous personal problems, including mental health issues, addiction, debt, or care responsibilities. This means that in many cases numerous parties are involved and this makes working together more complex. In the past it used to be possible for different organisations to work independently of each other on a youngster's various problems, for example a housing organisation and debt aid operated separately without even being aware of the other's involvement. Despite it is considered to be complex there is a lot of willingness to make the cooperation succeed:

'It is easy to say we work integrated right? However, it is not easy to collaborate with all these parties, it is very complex. People who talk easily about it do not know what it means in practice. It is really something…. nevertheless you should at least try to do it.'
(Policymaker 2 P5 Municipality Department of Education)

Furthermore, registration of young dropouts and their problems was difficult in the past and a newly introduced computer system to which all involved organisations and institutions are linked should now make it easier to share and collect information and provide tailor-made programmes for youngsters. However, so far the effectiveness of the new computer system is not clear and expectations are that implementing the new system may also encounter a number of difficulties since all the parties involved need

to get used to this new way of working. Staff members using the system already run into some privacy issues: not all partners are allowed to use the system and officially youngsters need to be informed about the existence of the system, which is not always done.

Another difficulty informants mentioned is that, despite intensive cooperation, different organisations and institutions continue to work in their own interest; first and foremost they are part of the organisation they work for, and cooperation takes second place. Therefore, despite the aim of interagency cooperation there is still a lot of discretionary space left for individual organisations to operate in their own interest as the coordinator of the youth office explains:

'What is complicated to such a one-stop office, it is of course a multi-disciplinary office in which enthusiastic employees of the various organizations are working but they remain part of their own mother organization. So the project manager of the office is just a functional executive so to say. All interests of the parties involved remain of importance. That makes it very complicated.'
(Coordinator P6 Youth office)

The interviewees informed us also that cooperation between social and commercial actors can be difficult. Because of marketization, the youth office is compelled to refer youngsters to commercial partners because the municipality has contractual agreements with reintegration services. Social partners and commercial partners sometimes conflict because the commercial partners also have a commercial interest in activating dropouts. Commercial parties, in turn, sometimes feel excluded by the social partners who feel more affiliation with each other.

Another example of organisations having different interests is that social affairs of the municipality attempts to place people in sustainable labour market positions, while the public employment service (CWI) sometimes tends to 'push' people into short term positions simply to meet placement targets as formulated by the coordinator of the employer's office:

'And well, the public employment service (CWI) is solely targeted at placements and do not care if they are still there the next day, so to speak, while for the municipality that is a primary goal, we want establish sustainable placements as we call it within the municipality.'
(Coordinator P4 Employers office)

7.4.6 The 'lost' group – the youngsters who are not reached

Some of the policies on early school leaving or youth unemployment will not reach all youngsters. For example, when youngsters become 18 and beyond the scope of compulsory education, it is difficult for schools and the municipality to intervene in

someone's personal situation. The municipality states that it tries to have in view all youngsters in the 18 year old and younger age group:

'We do say that we have all the youngsters in view. And officially that is true and that is what we try in reality too. We really do visit them at home if we cannot reach them.'
(Policymaker 2 P5 Municipality Department of Education)

However, when dropouts older than 18 are not in trouble with the law or the police and if they do not apply for social benefit, they are invisible. Some in this group will be active on the labour market, but others are not. And there is currently no official activation instrument for youngsters older than 18 to oblige them to participate in a study or work programme. The forthcoming work-study obligation is supposed to take care of this group. However, the informants from the municipality expect that the work-study obligation will result in even fewer applications for social assistance from this group. Working in a work centre for people on social assistance simply to have a legal income for the health insurance or tax administration is not favoured by this group, particularly if they have an income from other sources such as, for example, from being involved in criminal activities. This could mean that more youngsters from this group will remain invisible. The informants from the municipality wish to see the work-study obligation as an obligation for the youngsters too, and not only as an obligation for the municipality to provide education or work opportunities.

In addition to the group of invisible youngsters who are not reached by policies and measures and who do not apply themselves for activation programmes, there is also a group of 'difficult' youngsters. This group embarks on the programmes, but they are often rejected and passed on or not really taken care of. In fact there are no suitable programmes for the most difficult group of youngsters. One informant said that there is a lack of personally oriented programmes aimed specifically at the needs of this group.

Our interviewees define the most difficult group as a group of youngsters who are not motivated to finish the programme successfully or who have (psychological) problems that are too complex to deal with. An unmotivated group is, in fact, a lost group because the youngsters themselves no longer put in an appearance. There is, in this case, nothing that the professionals can do to make the youngsters stay in the programme - participation is voluntary and motivation is crucial as reflected in the following statements from the coordinators of a rehabilitation project:

'It happens that someone does not show up for the intake and eventually you have to stop quite soon. You just cannot reach all of them. We also have a group we can not reach'
(Coordinators P3 Rehabilitation project)

In some cases unmotivated youngsters are not accepted and some programmes first run a special course to make sure participating youngsters are motivated. Programmes generally have certain intake procedures to ascertain whether dropouts have the necessary requirements to conclude the activation programme successfully. 'Difficult' groups are then rejected.

The organisations and their professionals use discretional power and apply coping behaviours in order not to get involved with the most difficult youngsters. It is therefore very easy for organisations to apply their own admission requirements.

One explanation for these practices may possibly lie in the marketization of the reintegration services. Commercial reintegration services only accept 'workable' customers, who, they are sure, will be reintegrated into school or work within a certain timeframe. Most programmes have a fixed schedule and have to meet the targets set by the municipality in order to receive financial support. This might indicate a strategy of creaming in which only workable clients are admitted (van Berkel & van der Aa, 2005; Struyven & Steurs, 2002; Winter, 2003). As stated above, creaming strategies are coping behaviours of professionals to handle work and time pressure in order to meet their targets.

'One group is left over, and we take care of part of that group. And still, there are many who first need something else before they can start here or who are not suitable for our programme at all.'
(Coordinator 1 P3 Rehabilitation project)

We noticed that reintegration programmes focus increasingly more on mental care whereby youngsters are stimulated to deal with their personal problems before being activated for study or the labour market. Mental care provision generally takes longer than activation programmes and reintegration to the labour market is not the main goal. We recognised this process as a possible parking strategy in which difficult clients are 'parked' in long-term psychological programmes (van Berkel & van der Aa, 2005). 'Parking' is another example of coping behaviour, in which difficult clients are not really taken care of because the risk of them failing the programme is high, while at the same time they can officially report to the municipality that the youngsters have, in fact, been admitted. The following example shows how clients who according to the social affairs intake are considered to be 'easier to activate' (belonging in category 1-2 programmes) are send to a private activation company to be activated and then are being re-categorized:

'We noticed that social affairs presented many clients for programmes 1 and 2 whereas their problematic situation was one in fact that belongs to programme 5 –the psychological programme- where you have more time to get to the essence of the matter.'
(Coordinator P9 Reintegration service)

7.4.7 Basic qualification requirement

One interesting point relating to the demand for sufficient qualification arises from the interviews with professionals from schools and reintegration companies. In line with national activation policy, returning to education often takes precedence over work as far as possible (Min. SZW, 2007b). This means that the youngsters are encouraged to reach the minimum required qualification and therefore obtain the basic qualification through additional education or by returning to school.

However, the opposite picture emerged during the interviews. On the one hand this need for sufficient education and the emphasis on the basic qualification is often stated to be an important official goal of the programme. On the other hand, for several reasons many professionals in the field reject the need for these youngsters to obtain the basic qualification. First, they feel this standard is too high for some groups and too much is asked of these youngsters. Even when youngsters did their best and managed to obtain a certificate at primary vocational level or the lowest level of the secondary vocational education, it is from the official standpoint not considered to be sufficient. This practice is held to be unfair and undesirable.

Secondly, the officials consider that making older youngsters in particular (over 23, the age above which they are no longer officially deemed to be a dropout) attend school is unrealistic. They are too old and will certainly not be motivated to attend school together with 16 and 17 year olds. Instead, many youngsters are actually better off when they have a good place to work. Furthermore, the basic qualification level is not necessarily required in order to find and keep a job. Interviewees state that many lower-educated people are successful on the labour market. Many professionals in the field thus do not agree with the official goals to improve qualifications and they focus instead on the transition to work. They use their discretional power and often support youngsters to find a job instead of helping them get back to school if they think someone would be better off on the labour market. Doing so they give their own twist to official activation policies which prioritize education. They often say that it is more important for a person to be motivated and remain employed than for them to obtain a basic qualification. The following quote from an educational policymaker summarizes some of the basic qualification issues:

'Early school leaving involves youngsters without a basic qualification who drop out. So all the youngsters who reach level 1 and for whom we do our utmost to get them to develop, well, this is something that is not rewarded. They leave school with a level 1 certificate and go straight to the labour market where they perform fine but they do not have a basic qualification and are still perceived as being a dropout - this is actually a bit strange.'
(Policymaker P8 Regional Training Centre 1)

This demand for the basic qualification level also has repercussions on the young people. Youngsters are clearly aware of the qualification norm that is imposed on them and adjust their future expectations in line with this norm. Many professionals report

that these youngsters have a too high expectation of their future career and many dropouts participating in activation programmes find it difficult to accept their 'too low' qualification. This hampers their reintegration process for the simple reason that youngsters are not willing to accept a lower level education or job, and this process of acceptance often takes a long time.

7.4.8 The supposed lack of employability

An important element in the activation programmes focuses on the transition to work. In these programmes, professionals instil in the young people that it is their personal responsibility to make themselves suitable to enter the labour market; they must improve their employability. This relates to the characteristics of activation policies and ALMPs, where welfare entitlements, such as to social benefit, are made more conditional on individual action and effort (van Berkel & van der Aa, 2005; Eichhorst et al., 2008). In this employability approach that dropouts are perceived in a certain way. Many professionals in the field indicate problems with attitude towards working and in particular with 'employee skills', which are seen to be needed in order to be 'employable'. Skills explicitly mentioned during our interviews included: being on time, accepting authority, being at the workplace, informing your work if you are ill, a correct communication style, being polite when approaching others, presenting yourself well, cooperating, not stealing from the boss, accepting orders, and getting along with colleagues. It is assumed that many young dropouts, and migrants in particular, do not have these skills. Therefore, the primary task of the reintegration programmes is to help dropouts get used to a daily work routine, and to practice the above skills to enable them to perform as expected at work. A coordinator of one of the projects in Utrecht makes clear why it is important to focus on learning employee or social skills to young migrant dropouts:

'They are being prepared here for the labour market, so how exactly does that work and what is important?'
'All the skills needed to be able to perform as required. So, being on time, keeping appointments, decent communication, no shouting, no getting angry and throwing things around and then walking away. But it won't always work, but you have to try because they just don't know.'
'Is that really a deficiency or a problem of this group?'
'Yes, yes, with migrant youth it's just that they're not used to it, they're just not used to it. It's also ignorance. It's not that they are unwilling, it's often sheer ignorance.'
(Coordinator P9 Reintegration service)

Professionals generally link the problems with employee skills to street culture where youngsters lose their sense of what the accepted norms and values are in society. Street culture is symbolised by their clothing or 'street wear'. This attire is not considered appropriate for a future working life, and their hats, caps and large jackets have

therefore to be removed when participating in the programmes. The interviewees also indicated that the particular problems with migrants' employee skills can also be explained by their having insufficient (parental) guidance, or structure at home and school. This makes it difficult for them to conform to the prescribed nine to five pattern of work and to keep appointments.

7.5 Conclusion

The first objective of this study was to ascertain how policies on early school leaving and activation to labour market integration are achieved in local practice. Secondly, we were interested in the outcomes this policy implementation had on the young migrant dropouts. We used principles of new governance to outline how policy reforms were executed in the local context of the city of Utrecht. In addition we employed the two key concepts of the street-level bureaucracy theory, discretion and coping behaviour, to look more closely at how professionals influence the implementation of official policies and showed how these interact with interagency cooperation and marketization. Tensions and difficulties became apparent during the analysis, which we discuss below. These are in line with existing literature and relate to the following issues: successful implementation requires new cooperation structures and working methods. Moreover, high demands -in the sense of qualification and professional skills- resulting from the activation policies are placed on the youngsters.

Concerning generalizing these results we are aware of the limitations of our study: a relatively small sample and the specificity of a certain local situation, enforced due to decentralization of policy execution. However, we also feel our findings regarding activation policy execution are suitable for generalizing with respect to content (Baarda, de Goede & Teunissen, 2005) which means results are 'transferable' to comparable or similar situations, in our case other large cities in the Netherlands. They are valuable for other major cities for two reasons: the comparable magnitude and continuing urgency of the dropout and youth unemployment problem in Utrecht and the resemblance of activation policy execution to other cities, for instance the contracting out of services to private companies and interagency initiatives like the youth office. Moreover, our case study findings confirm the theoretical assumptions regarding new governance and street level bureaucracy which justifies analytical generalization (Yin, 1994). Moreover, we offer an innovative theoretical contribution by combining the insights of new governance and street level bureaucracy.

Social policies on dropouts are implemented along the national policy lines of the forthcoming work-study obligation and the basic qualification requirement. The policies that oblige youngsters to study or to work have to be achieved through a comprehensive approach strategy involving different parties cooperating in a joint structure to support and guide the dropout. A recent example of this strategy is the founding of the Utrecht youth office. All informants are convinced of the necessity and

added value of this interagency cooperation and they are all keen to see it established. However, the informants also made it clear that cooperation is difficult - the more parties have to work together, the more complex the cooperation. Different organisations or institutions remain responsible for their own target groups and have their own objectives and targets to meet, and therefore continue to work from their own perspectives and agendas as also shown in other studies (see for instance Glendinning, 2003). This points to discretion, because the organisations' targets often conflict with the aims of cooperation, and street level bureaucrats ultimately decide how far cooperation goes.

Another focus of the comprehensive approach was a more customer-oriented style, in particular in the privatized reintegration market, where reintegration programmes are contracted out to commercial organisations. Despite the aims for a more individualised approach, reintegration services continue to offer standard reintegration programmes, which, as other scholars (van Berkel & van der Aa, 2005; Lindsay & McQuaid, 2008) have pointed out, is more (cost) effective for them. The problem with this is that it results in 'creaming' practices i.e. only admitting 'workable' clients. Some cases also showed instances of 'parking' strategies, where 'difficult' groups are 'parked' in long-term projects that mainly focus on psychological support. Applying street-level bureaucracy theory, creaming and parking strategies can also be seen as coping behaviours that professionals deploy in order to handle time constraints and to meet imposed targets. In general, we observed a more psychological approach to at-risk youngsters or dropouts, both in policies, as in schools and also in the various programmes.

Moreover, all the professionals from the various organisations indicate that there is a 'lost' group. It is generally accepted that this group cannot be helped. Organisations are free to reject certain clients, and sometimes youngsters are passed on to other organisations or are beyond reach which again indicates 'creaming practices'. The respondents claim some problems are too complex to deal with or that some youngsters are simply not motivated enough to participate in the programmes successfully. Other studies show that negative perceptions of the motives of the target group can enforce coping practices such as creaming (Winter, 2002). The discretionary power of professionals is important in these situations because professionals can decide whether a young person is admitted to the programme or not. There is also some doubt as to whether the customer-oriented approach is suitable for this group: their expectations of education and a future professional career are often seen by the professionals as unrealistic and impossible to fulfil.

In general, the activation policies give precedence to study rather than employment. However, we found that professionals acknowledge that obtaining a basic qualification is simply not realistic for some youngsters who would be better off on the labour market. This imposed qualification norm stigmatizes dropouts who are, in fact, successfully employed and it makes it more difficult for young people participating in the programmes to accept their lower educational level. The central premise of the street-level bureaucracy theory, which says that professionals ultimately decide how official policies are implemented, becomes clear in this case; despite the official

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educational policy goals, many professionals focus more on labour market participation. Discretion makes it possible for professionals to act independently when making their own decisions about the best programme for a youngster.

Finally, we would like to indicate how young migrant dropouts are perceived – they are not employable and lack the appropriate employee skills. The professionals see this lack of (social) skills as a problem among young dropouts. However they do feel that obtaining these skills is an important aim of preventive and reintegration projects. Respondents believe the lack of competences has to do with street culture and not having the right structure and guidance at home and school. However, by focusing on their lack of social competences the professionals can unintentionally contribute towards stigmatizing them as unmotivated and unwilling. Well-intended interventions that try to improve the social skills can in this way also lead to further stigmatization and even exclusion of young migrant dropouts in particular. A number of studies confirm this statement and show that the presumed lack of social skills is used by some employers as an excuse for not hiring young migrants. This is defined as a subtle form of discrimination (Moss & Tilly, 1995, 2001; Schaafsma, 2006).

All the current activation policies and measures can be seen in the light of the general trend in European welfare states to make a transition to a knowledge/service based economy. This kind of economy requires young people to be educated as much as possible to ensure successful labour market participation. However, the danger is that vulnerable groups, such as migrant youngsters, will have problems meeting the new requirements and will end up as 'losers' in the knowledge economy (Bude, 2009; Esping-Andersen, 2000; Giddens, 2007). Indeed, what the professionals in our study say confirms the fact that some young migrants in the Netherlands have problems meeting the requirements of today's society in terms of integration, professional and social skills. This is in line with figures on educational and professional positions which show young migrants to be at a considerable disadvantage. Moreover, our evaluation of activation policies in the local context showed that measures which aim to improve these skills can hinder instead of support these youngsters.

In addition the Dutch political and public discourse focuses on the assimilation of migrants which we feel enforces the hindrance to young migrants. According to several authors there is a lack of an acculturation fit between migrants and the host society which widens ethnic distance: natives feel that migrants should fully adapt while young migrants in turn want to adapt but also strive for cultural maintenance, particularly in the private sphere (Entzinger & Dourleijn, 2008; Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002). In this context young migrant dropouts are often constructed by the dominant native group as being unwilling to integrate and as not having the necessary cultural habits and practices to become Dutch (Ghorashi, 2003; WRR, 2007). The Dutch government also feels migrants are deficient in this respect and acquiring these social or 'soft' skills is also part of official policies targeted specifically at young migrants (Min. VROM, 2007; SER, 2007). We recognize this tendency for policy to introduce more

compulsory measures and to impose higher educational requirements, but our results also unveil 'implementation deficits' where professionals in the field (street level bureaucrats) admit to rejecting these (official) demands and to working differently despite the prescribed policies.

This study analysed the activation of young migrant dropouts in a major Dutch city and described the possible tensions, problems and contradictions in the field. This revealed that well-intended policies and reintegration initiatives can contribute to the marginalisation of some young dropouts. Attention should be given to these issues. Although reintegration policies and programmes can be beneficial for a large number of the dropouts, we have to bear in mind that some youngsters will be hampered rather than supported and end up in an even worse position.

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Chapter 8
Conclusions

To the doctoral thesis

Young migrants' transition from school to work
Obstacles and opportunities

8.1 Conclusions

The starting point for the studies conducted in this thesis is the rather unfavourable situation of young migrants in the education system and on the labour market. Despite promising evidence that the educational performance of young migrants is improving, their school-work transition is impeded by early school leaving and (youth) unemployment. The current economic downturn means that the position of migrant youth on the labour market, particularly those at the margin, is deteriorating rapidly, and currently a quarter of all migrant youngsters are unemployed (FORUM, 2010). In response, numerous policy initiatives, measures and projects have been introduced since the last decade in order to deal with the transitional problems encountered by migrant youth. In spite of constant attention to measures to combat school dropout, the persisting high dropout and youth unemployment rates clearly show that the existing policies are unsatisfactory.

The aim of the thesis was to get a better understanding of migrants' school-work transition by first looking at their experiences and position in the vocational education and training (VET) system, and secondly to examine their labour market entry by looking at their experiences with exclusion or discrimination, and at how they prepare to enter the labour market, for instance through internships or combined working/learning experience. Attention is given to the role of the migrant youngsters' social network, do they receive support with school or encounter (social) hindrances such as care responsibilities, and are there important role models who can motivate them to graduate or focus on a career.

The second aim was to look at the contributions of policies that attempt to promote the school-work transition by preventing dropout and/or unemployment, or by activating or reintegrating dropouts or unemployed either back into school or work. To this end, European and national policies and measures and initiatives provided in the young migrants' local context, such as study and working projects and activation or reintegration services, are closely examined for pitfalls and opportunities.

The study conducted mixed methods research consisting of extensive ethnographic (case) studies in VET schools and reintegration projects for youngsters, a youth survey in five VET schools comprising 608 (migrant and native) youngsters, an analysis of existing data (literature, figures) to explore the school-work transition, and the role of early school leaving and unemployment therein, and lastly, a policy document analysis of initiatives and measures to tackle early school leaving and youth unemployment.

8.1.1 Educational careers and school life

The studies conducted among migrant youngsters in the secondary vocational schools exude optimism: one important and recurring result is that most students are motivated to graduate, and when they achieve this the majority state they want to continue their education. For instance, the survey shows that 70 per cent expect to

attain a higher vocational education diploma or higher (compared to 53 per cent of young natives). Furthermore, the study on school satisfaction confirmed existing gender differences which have also been found in several other studies (López, 2002; Rumbaut, 2000; Schmid, 2001; Suárez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004): migrant girls display more satisfaction, motivation and dedication than their male counterparts, and Moroccan girls in particular seem to do well in school.

It emerged that the migrant youngsters' social environment is an important reference point: they compare themselves with the often disadvantaged position of their parents and are driven to achieve more, to obtain a diploma, to have a career and climb socially. This is also strongly encouraged by their parents and family. The majority of the youngsters also believe their future situation will be better than that of their parents. Migrant parents and youngsters clearly have a positive dual frame of reference: they want to benefit from the better educational and professional opportunities, and compare them to the disadvantaged situation 'back home' (Ogbu & Simons, 1998). The findings are also in line with the immigrant optimism hypothesis: migrant parents clearly wish for upward mobility for their children and they therefore hold school in high esteem, and this stimulates the school engagement of their children (Kao & Tienda, 1995; Zhou & Bankston, 2001).

On the other hand high expectations and aspirations can be a pitfall: teachers state that the educational and vocational aspirations and choices are often too high and unrealistic. They indicate that the primary reason for dissatisfaction with school and early school leaving is because youngsters opt for the wrong study or vocation. Motives for opting for a particular study are often vague and related to the status of a profession or the perceived opportunity to make a lot of money. The youngsters themselves confirm these problems by admitting that the reasons for early school leaving include opting for the wrong study, being dissatisfied with the course content, or not liking the profession for which they were studying. Nevertheless, the majority of youngsters who have dropped out or switched courses continue to be positive and confident about their (professional) choices and future outlook.

The European comparison indicated that migrant youngsters sometimes perceive family and community expectations as a constraint: traditional gender roles at home or in the community may cause migrant parents to have lower or different educational expectations for their children and this frustrates the youngsters' school engagement. Traditional gender roles include care responsibilities for migrant girls or pushing them to marry, and boys in their turn can be expected to work and earn money for the family as became apparent from the ethnographic studies in (southern) European cities.

However, the interviews with teachers and migrant girls in the Dutch context also revealed that traditional gender patterns can actually motivate them to perform well at school. They have a double frame of reference (Lee, 2006, 2007; Lopez, 2002) and believe education will give them greater gender equality than experienced by their mothers, who are often not educated at all. Moroccan girls in particular stand out with their high levels of school satisfaction and high educational and professional aspira-

tions. This might be an indication of shifting gender roles in the Moroccan community with increased opportunity to enjoy schooling as shown by another study of the school careers of Turkish and Moroccan youngsters in the Netherlands (Crul & Doomernik, 2003). Furthermore, interviews with teachers and youngsters indicated that being in school offers migrant girls, Moroccan and Turkish girls in particular, a less restricted social space for meeting friends.

However, high expectations and aspirations alone are not sufficient: the qualitative and quantitative studies reveal that actually receiving support with school matters from the social network plays a key role in explaining school success, motivation and satisfaction. For instance, older brothers or sisters can function as important supportive role models for the migrant youngsters who can stimulate and motivate the young people to complete, and later continue their education and focus on a career as also evidenced in other studies (Crul, Pasztor & Lelie, 2008; Stanton-Salazar, 2001). What is important is that family members engage in supportive communication and actively discuss school matters with the youngsters. The regression analysis revealed that communicating with parents or brothers or sisters about school is an important predictor of positive school satisfaction. Migrant girls in particular are expected to benefit from this because the results show that they communicate more with their parents and siblings about school than migrant boys do.

However, when interviewed, professionals from the field (often teachers) point to the absence of school support and role models in the social environment of many migrant youngsters, especially the ones who face dropping out or are unemployed. They explain this lack of support by general integration problems with migrant parents knowing little about how the educational system works, or about vocational opportunities for their children. Moreover, experts state that the absence of certain professional role models makes it more difficult for migrant youngsters to make a well-considered choice about a future profession and a suitable course of study, and results in them having short-sighted ideas about opportunities on the labour market.

There is considerable discrepancy with the migrant youngsters' own perspectives on receiving support from their network: the survey results indicate the great value parents place on education for their children, and show that the majority of migrant youngsters regularly talk about school at home. This might suggest distorted or biased views of both teachers and youngsters: the experiences teachers have with youngsters with problematic school careers and the attention these youngsters require might lead to the idea that the whole class have these problems, as emerged from some of the interviews. Migrant youngsters in turn might not be aware of a lack support as their own network is their main point of reference.

Worthy of note is that having fewer conflicts with teachers appeared for both boys and girls to be the most important contributor to high school satisfaction. This is an important finding for schools and teachers who, as it became apparent during the interviews, felt they had only a modest level of influence on the wellbeing of their

students and instead primarily pointed to deficits in the students or to them not having supportive networks.

Finally, the literature gives negative experiences in society at large as having a potential effect on school careers. If migrant youngsters frequently experience discrimination, they may feel that upward mobility is limited, feel mistreated and may develop negative attitudes towards education, also referred to as oppositional culture (Ogbu & Simons, 1998; Schmid, 2001; Zhou, 1997). Our qualitative results showed some indication of this kind of aversive culture, with youngsters adapting to street culture and not wanting to comply with school rules. However, the majority did want to obtain a diploma, even the dropouts, and they did not reject education entirely so speaking of a truly oppositional culture in the Dutch context cannot really be justified. The regression analysis does make it clear that experiencing discrimination and for girls also a lower life satisfaction significantly contribute to less school satisfaction.

8.1.2 Labour market entry

The interviews with youngsters and the survey data reveal that most migrants are highly motivated to work as evidenced by their clear wish for upward mobility. A company of your own is often seen as ideal because it provides independence and power. In spite of their optimistic perspectives, the studies in the thesis reveal that migrant youngsters do encounter exclusionary obstacles when entering the labour market.

First: discrimination. Political and scientific circles are slowly acknowledging that discrimination is a serious problem for the labour market integration of young migrants in the Netherlands (see for instance the discrimination monitors (SCP, 2007, 2010). However, discrimination is still often trivialized and there is no policy in place to deal with the problem. The European comparison revealed that there is broad consensus among native and migrant youngsters about the existence of discrimination. Many migrants (44 per cent) in the Dutch context report they had experienced discrimination in the past year. The ethnographic (case) studies also showed that migrants believe there is discrimination in the labour market and that they have fewer opportunities on the labour market than their native counterparts. They also give concrete examples of their experiences with discrimination, for instance, a girl not obtaining a trainee post because she was wearing a headscarf. Schools that mediate between employers and students for internships acknowledge that they 'shield' their migrant students from discrimination by deliberately keeping them away from the places where they suspect discrimination exists. Moreover, the regression results also made it clear that perceived discrimination significantly contributes to less school satisfaction.

Worthy of note is that the most marginalized youngsters who are neither in school nor work mention discrimination more than the more successful ones. They feel mistreated by the police, constantly observed by CCTV, and that they are negatively portrayed in the media. Consequently, they display considerable distrust and act and

respond defensively against presumed, and, to some extent, real instances of discrimination.

However, the youngsters do not generally consider discrimination as too serious a hindrance, and the overall majority are optimistic about finding work. The interviews revealed that migrant youngsters have a meritocratic perspective of equal opportunity: they state that a sufficient educational level is essential for being successful on the labour market, and as long you do your best to achieve it there will be opportunities, in spite of discrimination. Their stance can be explained by their positive dual frame of reference: their prospects of good employment and financial success mean that they accept practices of unequal treatment, such as discrimination, more readily (Ogbu & Simons, 1998).

Secondly, more emphasis on learning soft skills, i.e. social communicative competences presumed essential to be employable can be observed in the VET curriculum and activation projects. Professionals frequently explained that it was difficult to integrate in the labour market because it is often thought that young migrants in particular lack the necessary 'soft skills' e.g. presentation, cooperation and communication skills. This is even a theme in official policy notes. On the one hand, attention for soft skills is positive because it helps equip migrant youngsters with some of the skills necessary for entering the labour market. However, it is argued that it can also turn out to be a form of indirect discrimination if employers use the presumed lack of soft skills as a reason for not hiring migrant youngsters (Boscigno, 2007; Moss & Tilly, 2001). For instance, employers state that they are reluctant to hire migrants because they do not fit in with the company culture or there are cultural differences in communication.

This development should be considered in the current integration climate in which sociocultural adaptation is demanded and migrant youngsters are often portrayed as incapable or unwilling to meet integration demands (Ghorashi, 2003; Vasta, 2007). It is also an example of individualization of the problems of migrant youth: by focussing on soft skills, the responsibility for the labour market entry problem is (partly) put with the youngsters without discrimination being referred to.

8.1.3 Failing basic qualification policies

An important means to deal with educational disadvantage and to stimulate the transition to the labour market is for the educational level to be raised by the basic qualification policy. Measures to reduce and prevent youngsters dropping out of school or from being unemployed have obtaining this educational level as their final goal. As said before, dropouts are also defined by their not having the basic qualification. This is a rather broad definition that consequently implies an overestimation and underestimation of the problem of early school leaving.

An overestimation in the sense that a lack of the basic qualification does not always necessarily lead to a problem on the labour market: existing figures show that the majority of the dropouts have a paid job often with a fixed contract. This was confirmed by the interviews with teachers and reintegration coaches, many of whom state

that dropouts do in fact have opportunities on the labour market. It is, however, also a matter of underestimation because only the 'new' dropouts are reported annually and it is not clear what actually happens with the old dropouts. Moreover, unemployment figures make it clear that in times of economic downturn youngsters without a basic qualification are more vulnerable on the labour market (CBS, 2009).

In the debate on segmented assimilation, dropping out is considered to be a fore-runner of downward mobility, long-term unemployment and future marginalization. The above, however, refutes the tendency for overall downward mobility and the majority of the youngsters without a basic qualification should in fact not be considered to be a problem. In this sense the mandatory (basic) qualification norm even stigmatizes the dropouts who are, in fact, successfully employed. It is clear that there is a fairly small group of youngsters, referred to as 'non-participants', who are not in school or employment and who presumably do not fare well. In the policy debate, the non-participating youngsters -in spite of being relatively small in numbers- are put to the fore and are seen to represent the whole group of dropouts. This has a negative impact on how migrant dropouts in particular are represented.

There is also tension between the European and national goals to obtain a basic qualification, and how this policy is implemented in practice. The case studies in the VET schools revealed that teachers openly express doubts about the possibilities of every youngster achieving a basic qualification, particularly those who attend the lower course levels, and the assumption is that older students are better off on the labour market. Furthermore, professionals working in activation or rehabilitation programmes indicate that 'back to school' is an unrealistic path for many dropouts and they focus instead on labour market preparation and mediation. The concept of discretion from street level bureaucracy theory can be used to explain this situation: in spite of the official educational policy goals, which give education precedence over work, discretion makes it possible for professionals to make their own decisions about the best pro-gramme for a youngster.

Another example of this is that the basic qualification policy also requires schools to maintain a strict non-attendance policy to prevent truancy and dropping out. This leads to tension: on the one hand they insist on a strict non-attendance policy (for the record) but on the other hand they cannot be too strict otherwise they fear they will lose students who should always be kept on board. Consequently, the rules for school attendance are, in practice, less stringent: it was obvious during the observations in the classrooms that students were given many opportunities to arrive late or even attend sporadically.

8.1.4 VET issues

To tackle the problem of school failure at VET schools, an extensive care structure, or web, has been set up which attempts to prevent students dropping out by providing them with psychosocial support and career counselling. A tendency to individualize the problems of migrant youth can be observed in this approach: the empirical data show

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that professionals ascribe problems such as truancy and early school leaving to individual or group-related deficits e.g. wrong study choices or serious psychosocial problems. This is reinforced by the youngsters themselves who attribute school failure predominantly to making a wrong study choice. When considering the problems, institutional barriers such as early course selection and ineffective school reforms are barely considered. This process is also referred to as cooling out (Clark, 1960): not blaming the system for school failure but making it a personal responsibility, and simply solving the problem by adjusting or lowering the youngsters' aspirations.

Two structural institutional issues emerged from the empirical data and the existing literature. Firstly, many youngsters report dropping out because they made the wrong study choice (41 per cent) which is understated by the school staff who relate this to wrong or unrealistic educational and professional expectations. The youngsters are, however, not helped by how the organisation of the Dutch education system actually works in practice with its various sorting and selection mechanisms. This starts with early selection at the end of primary school, which means that migrant youngsters generally end up in lower secondary vocational education (Education Council, 2010; OECD, 2010). Students in the VET system have to opt for a certain educational or professional field on a number of occasions. Early selection is the result of the Dutch VET system being rather stratified and vocation specific (Shavit & Müller, 2000) and it can, in addition to a lack of upward mobility, contribute in the end to a low social economic background being reproduced (Brunello & Checci, 2007; Pfeffer, 2008).

Secondly, drastic reforms with new ways of learning and teaching have been introduced in many vocational schools in order to better prepare youngsters for the labour market. These new 'competence-based and new learning' methods aim to improve the link between school and the labour market by training professional social or soft skills in practical lessons either individually or in groups. The extensive ethnographic studies in the classrooms reveal that there are many implementation problems that are reflected in the negative opinions of students and teachers alike. Despite being highly motivated to learn, young migrants feel that the new ways of teaching and learning do not provide sufficient structure, that they actually learn less than they want to, and students and even many teachers miss the more classical teaching methods. Teachers struggle with their role as coaches, and fear the reform leads to students becoming disappointed and dropping out.

8.1.5 Execution of activation policies

Underlying the policies and measures to combat early school leaving and youth unemployment is an activating approach towards (youth) unemployment (Eichhorst, Kaufmann & Konle-Seidl, 2008) which means dropouts are 'actively' stimulated to return to education, training or work instead of just being on the receiving end of social security benefits. The new governance principles (van Berkel & Borghi, 2008) were used in the thesis to examine exactly how the activation policies are implemented.

Decentralisation, the transfer of responsibilities for execution of European or national policies to local governments and/or social service providers and interagency cooperation, social service delivery through local responsive partnerships (e.g. one-stop shops) were clearly present in the local context of the city of Utrecht. This was referred to as striving for a 'comprehensive' approach for dealing with dropouts and youth unemployment i.e. different organizations such as (municipality) social services, schools, the school attendance office and youth care cooperate in a joint chain structure to guide dropouts. Difficulties with interagency cooperation (and integration of services in one-stop shops) can lead to power struggles and differences in professional values, cultures and interests among the (local) partners (Axelsson & Axelsson, 2006; Glendinning, 2003; Vangen & Huxham, 2003). These issues all came to light in the problems that emerged when the youth office was set up. The results show, for instance, that interagency cooperation is complicated by 'partners' who continue to work in line with their own interest which led to (communication) problems and a lack of transparency between private and public partners.

An important aim was also for a more customer-oriented style. This refers to the creation of a privatized reintegration market, where reintegration tasks are contracted out to commercial organizations. The hope is that this will lead to high quality tailor-made services. However, the results reveal that, in practice, reintegration services continue to provide standardized reintegration programmes because it is more cost effective for them to do so, as other authors have also confirmed (van Berkel & van der Aa, 2005; Lindsay & McQuaid, 2009). Professionals also feel the customer-oriented approach is not really suitable for dropouts: their educational and professional expectations are often considered as unrealistic, and therefore as difficult to fulfil.

Furthermore, the results also show that since participation is voluntary, the most difficult group of dropouts is not reached. Youngsters remain out of the picture if they do not sign on for benefit. Similarly, youngsters remain out of the picture if the more workable youngsters are creamed off, and the other remaining youngsters are simply parked in lengthy (psychological) programmes that give scant attention to labour market preparation and mediation.

The results point to an interplay between features of new governance with street level bureaucracy theory. Contracting out reintegration activities to private companies and financing by work placement outflow tends to result in practices of creaming where only the 'easier' or 'workable' clients are admitted because this is more cost effective (van Berkel & van der Aa, 2005). It is also beneficial for its employees, the street level bureaucrats, for whom coping mechanisms such as creaming and parking make it easier to deal with high case loads, time pressure and difficult clients (Lipsky, 1980; Winter, 2003).

8.1.6 Good practices

The results discussed above indicate a number of bad practices that cause connection problems between school and the labour market. These might involve the migrant youngsters' social environment such as a lack of role models or parental support with school issues. Or practices of discrimination that obstruct successful labour market entry. Bad practices can also be related to wrong policy principles or malfunctioning policy implementation or instruments. For instance, the aim for every youngster to obtain a basic qualification is unrealistic and stigmatizes dropouts who are successful. The exclusive practices of a partly privatized activation market point to problems with policy execution.

In spite of this somewhat negative picture, interviews with professionals and youngsters also revealed some good practices to support dropouts and stimulate their school-work transition. A first good practice, which is also widely recognized in other studies, is what are called buddy or mentor projects in which adults or young migrants are trained to stimulate the participation of other young migrants who are in danger of dropping out (see for instance a recent study on the success factors of mentoring by MOVISIE, 2010). They can respond to the lack of support or role models in the dropout's social network and enhance their network and self-confidence. One case study closely examines an initiative in two schools in which peers act as buddies. These projects are called 'promotion teams' in which native and migrant students together organize activities to support and stimulate fellow students to find a trainee post and make their way onto the labour market. This initiative attempts to link students and employers. The participating buddies attended a training programme in which they learned how to present themselves and how to apply for jobs. However, the advantages of the teams are primarily for the team members: it contributes to their empowerment and they obtain useful contacts and can broaden their labour market network. Besides, the promotion team members can also function as role models for their fellow students.

A buddy project coordinator stated that youngsters might, when appointed a mentor, get the feeling that something is wrong with them and refuse to participate. Participants in these projects are implicitly labelled as 'disadvantaged' and can get the idea something is wrong with them that needs to be changed (Piper & Piper, 2000). Moreover, for both mentor and mentee the project has to have a clear goal and task, for instance, support with study or professional choices, otherwise both parties feel it is useless and pull out.

A second good practice are trainee posts or work experience places that are offered by schools and several reintegration or activation programmes. Teachers pointed to several advantages for young migrants: they feel responsible, feel that they really do learn something and get a good picture of what their future profession entails. Youngsters can also practice soft or social skills and are better equipped to enter the 'real' labour market. Moreover, the survey results show that the overall majority

(88 per cent) are satisfied or even very satisfied with their trainee post experience. Furthermore, trainee posts are an important way of getting onto the labour market: several youngsters who had completed a (successful) trainee post reported that they were offered a steady job.

8.2 Final chord: upward or downward mobility?

The figures presented throughout the thesis raise serious concerns about the position migrant youngsters occupy in education and on the labour market. However, the situation and developments are not universally bleak, and as the debate on segmented assimilation reveals there are clear differences in and among different ethnic or cultural groups. The current situation does, in fact, show that there is polarization: the situation for the majority of migrant youngsters is improving slowly but surely. Some people point to an increasing group of migrant youngsters who are successful in higher education and form a cultural and political elite in their community (Crul et al., 2008). On the other hand there are also youngsters who are neither at school nor employed or in training, and they show clear signs of marginalization. As the discussion on the dropout rate indicated, the definitions and therefore estimates of the size of this last non-participating or NEET group differ considerably.

According to the Unemployment Task Force (2006) there are approximately 38 thousand youngsters, many of whom with a migrant background, with insufficient education and a problematic distance from the labour market, whereas the WRR (2009) and Ministry of Social Affairs (Min. SZW) speak of 16 thousand overburdened youngsters. Higher estimations report 66 thousand youngsters who have no basic qualifications and do not want to work. In view of these figures, the at-risk or non-participating youngsters can be considered to be a constant but relatively small group. Moreover, the nature of their 'problematic' status is far from clear: reasons for non-participation include care tasks, attending non-regular education, planning to start their education, or being unable to work (CBS, 2009; TNO, 2010). The problem is that concerns for this group tend to dominate the debate on early school leaving and on integration in general: these youngsters tend to represent the whole group of young migrants and this has an effect on how more successful youngsters are represented.

The question remains as to why, despite the generally improving situation, some migrant youngsters fail to make a successful transition to work and experience downward rather than upward mobility. The introduction to this thesis presented the debate on segmented assimilation which considers the adaptation and integration of migrants and the possible social mobility outcomes thereof. This was used as an overarching framework to look at the young migrants' school-work transition in which, with the help of existing literature and theories, different success factors and constraints for the school-work transition could be placed.

It is now possible to complement this framework with the main results of this thesis and to better understand the upward or downward tendencies. The results of this thesis

point to an interplay between factors which either constrain or promote young migrants' school-work transition. These factors are embedded in different interrelated environments (Sol, Knijn & Frings-Dresen, 2007): in the institutional environment such as the organisation of the VET system and labour market discrimination, and in the young migrants' social environment such as an availability of bonding capital i.e. support from parents and siblings and also a disadvantaged socioeconomic background. Together these factors can be considered as a school-work opportunity structure, a framework for incorporating migrant youngsters in education and on the labour market (see figure 8-1 schematic overview). In this structure migrant youngsters can take several routes with different social mobility outcomes (shown by the thick arrows in figure 8-1). The downward route entails, for instance, dropping out of school before graduating and either entering the lower segments of the labour market straightaway, or not finding or even looking for work and ending up unemployed. Some of the main factors that influence these social mobility routes are examined briefly below.

Despite the fact that migrant youngsters situate themselves strongly in the Netherlands, the results of both the survey and the case study reveal that they perceive themselves very strongly as a group and associate themselves almost exclusively with members of their own group. When asked about this, they indicated that it is more or less evident that they are among members of their own ethnic or cultural group. This strong focus on their own group or community has several positive and negative implications. Firstly, young migrants can clearly benefit from their cohesive social environment or network: it is an important frame of reference that stimulates and motivates them to achieve more, to perform well at school and focus on a career. Many also receive support with schoolwork and talk regularly with their family about school matters. Older brothers and sisters can be key figures in this support. Being in one's own community can also provide access to self-employed jobs, although the results of the survey show the opportunities for receiving a trainee post through their own network are limited: migrant youngsters mostly obtained an internship through school (44 per cent) and less often (18 per cent) through family, friends or acquaintances.

Besides these advantages, migrant youngsters do, at the same time, report that their family or community can also restrict their educational and professional development. This is understandable since the results show that youngsters can experience conflicting pressures and expectations (cultural social demands) from their parents, community, and themselves. Girls might have care responsibilities or be expected to marry and have children at a young age, and boys may be expected to quit school and work to support their family. Furthermore, many youngsters, particularly those who dropped out or who are unemployed, are also not supported with school matters or they lack significant supportive role models. Professionals in the field indicated that an important

8.1 Schematic overview of the school-work opportunity structure for young migrants in the Netherlands
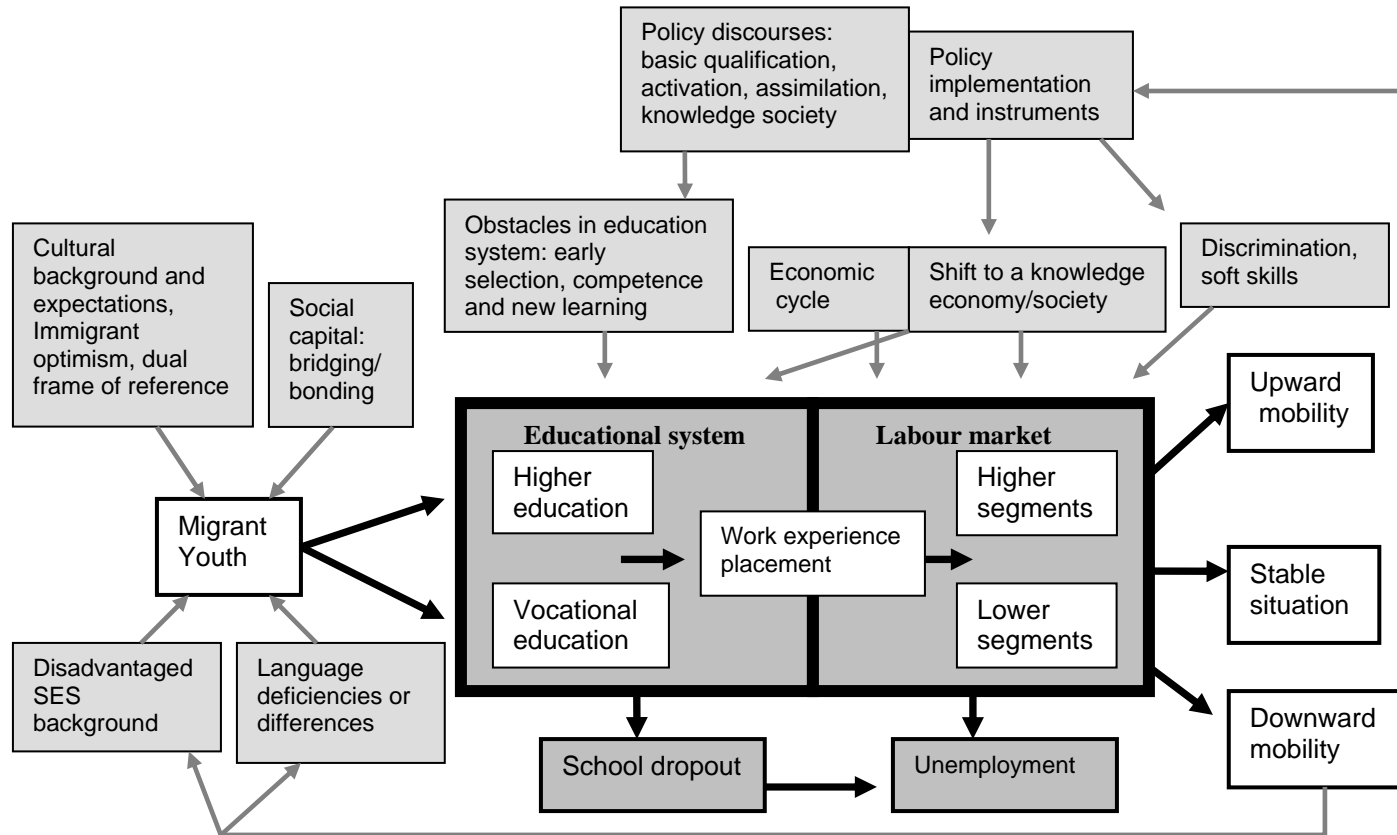
reason for this is that parents do not have the knowledge to inform and support their youngsters with their educational careers.

This last issue interacts with an important structural institutional characteristic of the Dutch education system i.e. it is stratified and vocation specific. As a result, educational opportunities are sorted by tracks that correspond to professional outcomes for which youngsters are selected early in their educational career. They are also trained to practice specific occupations rather than learn general competences. To cope with the range of opportunities this system offers and the decisions that need to be taken, youngsters need to be able to rely on a supportive network, i.e. parents or siblings who can navigate them through the system. Another study reveals that the importance of parents managing the educational career and creating opportunities for their children in the educational labyrinth, increases the more stratified and differentiated the educational system is (Pfeffer, 2008). According to professionals migrant parents lack this strategic knowledge: they are low educated and unfamiliar with the opportunities in education and therefore they are unable to assist their children. A lack of professional role models also makes it harder for migrant youngsters to make the right educational and professional choices. It is clear that many migrant youngsters fall victim to their disadvantaged socioeconomic background. This can already be seen in the transition from primary to secondary education when young migrants tend to end up in the lower segments of the VET system because of their language and learning disadvantages, and upward mobility from this position is very difficult.

Another structural issue that hampers their labour market entry is discrimination on the labour market. The results of this study reveal that many migrant youngsters perceive discrimination particularly when looking for a job or trainee post. These negative experiences can be added to the general changes on the labour market as a result of globalization, which creates more job insecurity and an increased demand for educational and professional skills. It is questionable whether youngsters who dropped out and are marginalized are able to cope with these demands.

There are a number of influential policy lines or discourses that not only affect policy instruments and execution but also general feelings of mutual acceptance or even generate feelings of exclusion. What is important is the rather problematic policy discourse on the integration of young migrants created in the Netherlands in the past few years. As described above, it leads to acculturation friction: on the one hand migrants are expected to fully adopt the dominant Dutch cultural codes and conduct, whereas young migrants, in turn, opt for more selective adaptation i.e. integration through education and work without relinquishing their own cultural customs. The result is a rather gloomy debate that focuses on young migrants' failure to integrate and in which they are constructed as either unwilling or incapable of adapting to Dutch norms and values. This debate is also characterized by new realism, in which opponents of a multicultural perspective, the new realists, continuously point to the failures of integration and they promulgate speaking the truth and breaking through the taboo of not being critical of the multicultural society (Prins, 2010). The assimilistic and new

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realistic discourses are counterproductive: they fail to tackle the real structural problems of migrant youth, such as unemployment and discrimination, and focus too much on cultural barriers thereby indirectly blaming the young migrants themselves for their own disadvantage. Another issue is that among migrants it evokes feelings of not being accepted and this reinforces the existing segregation, they retreat to their own ethnic or cultural networks. As said before, this segregation implies a lack of bridging capital, of overlapping networks to access the labour market.

A second powerful discourse is the aim to become a knowledge economy or society. This is the European response to counter the effects of globalization, and changing conditions on the labour market i.e. more job insecurity and increased demand for educational credentials and employee skills. This discourse strongly reinforced and intensified the execution of the existing basic qualification policies: the lower education level of young migrants is increasingly seen as detrimental to their future labour market perspectives. As the results of this thesis revealed, the use of the basic qualification requirement leads to the dropout problem being overestimated, it also does not fit the reality of youngsters who are successfully employed and stigmatizes youngsters who are unable to meet educational demands. Professionals in the field also point to several issues surrounding the realization of basic qualification policies in practice e.g. expecting every single youngster to get basic qualifications is unrealistic, and it is better to prepare youngsters for the labour market.

The ideas of young migrants lacking the skills to enter the labour market successfully are reflected by the popular assumption that young migrants are perceived as not having the necessary 'soft skills' or employee skills required for employability, such as decent ways to communicate, cooperate or present oneself. The results showed that the VET curriculum and activation projects pay considerable attention to these skills. It is argued that the presumed lack of social skills can be discriminatory when employers give this as a reason or excuse for not hiring young migrants. The focus on these skills functions as an easy way to exclude young migrants from the labour market without actually calling it discrimination.

A third policy discourse is the focus on activation i.e. actively, with the help of stringent and compulsory measures, stimulating dropouts to return to education or the labour market instead of simply providing care or social benefits. The ultimate aim of activation policies is often for migrant youngsters to obtain basic qualifications. These policies can therefore also be considered to be an instrument for raising the educational level of youngsters as part of becoming a knowledge economy. This thesis examined the implementation of activation policies that deal with early school leaving and youth unemployment and focussed on the consequences for migrant youngsters. What it revealed was that well-intentioned policies and initiatives can hamper rather than support some of the young dropouts. Creaming and parking practices in combination with discriminatory practices can obstruct the labour market entry of migrant dropouts. The failure of public and private partners to reach a comprehensive interagency approach to guide dropouts and the actions of the employees, the street bureaucrats,

acting in their own interests are also indicative of friction between policy aims and implementation.

Since the hindrances and challenges facing young migrants when attempting to make a proper school-work transition are clear, the expectation would be that they might express a rather negative outlook or perspective. However, the results revealed that as far as their current situation and future expectations are concerned, young migrants can in fact be considered rather positive. The majority of them have a clear wish for upward mobility and are optimistic about their prospects. They expect that compared with their parents, their own future perspectives are better as, for instance, reported by 73 per cent of the young migrants in the survey (compared with just 4 per cent who feel it will get worse). Another clear indication of their optimism is that the overall majority (84 per cent) are satisfied or very contented with their current life. It appeared from the interviews that the youngsters see a good education and work experience as essential for achieving a good professional and personal life. They see some constraints from Dutch society, such as discrimination, or point to their family or community as a constraining force. However, they do not see these constraints as insurmountable.

Their stance is, to some extent, understandable since their unfavourable position, for instance in education, is actually improving, and it is expected that their situation will in the future be better than that of their parents, or the situation in their country of origin (their frame of reference). However, generally speaking, their expectations are not always realistic or correspond with their present education or work situation. Moreover, they seem not to be fully aware of some of the structural or social obstacles that hinder their school-work transition to which this thesis pays attention, such as forms of labour market discrimination, pressure from family or community, and maladapted education policies or systems. These findings suggest an immigrant satisfaction paradox (Bălţătescu, 2007): despite less favourable societal conditions, European migrants display higher satisfaction with the socio-economic environment than natives. As said before, migrant youngsters make a positive comparison of their educational and professional opportunities with their parents' situation or with what they have heard about the conditions in their country of origin.

However, in light of their improved educational achievement, the outlook for most migrant youngsters is promising, and their optimism and resilience together with supportive networks, both in their own community or created through successful trainee posts, help many of them to overcome the barriers. Even the ones that do not manage to obtain the basic qualification level are in majority able to secure employment. This also calls for readjustment of the somewhat negative representation of the situation of young migrants, and justifies speaking of advancement for many young second generation migrants (Kasinitz et al., 2008) rather than of second generation decline (Gans, 1993). The second generation advantage means that young, second generation migrants are ambitious and optimistic and strive for upward mobility,

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which they hope to accomplish through education or work whilst at the same they maintain their own culture.

8.3 Reflections

A number of reflections can be made on the methodology process. There were a few bottlenecks when conducting the research projects: the youth survey was hindered by 'research tiredness' which meant schools and teachers were reluctant to participate in the youth survey. Schools get too many requests for research (especially surveys, sometimes several a week!), have had bad experiences with surveys in the past, and generally lack time. This applies in particular to schools in the major cities where many migrants live. Considerable effort was required to establish contact and make clear arrangements with several vocational schools. However, in the end the number of respondents was satisfactory.

Furthermore, an online survey was designed for students to fill out in class. The experience of the first participating school was that students are more willing to complete the survey if they can use a computer instead of a written questionnaire. However, it became clear schools did not have enough computers available for the students which hampered the organization of the youth survey. It was therefore decided with the other schools to use written questionnaires instead of an online version. These problems, especially survey tiredness, raise serious doubts about surveys in school as a viable and effective research instrument.

Despite the successful yield of the ethnographic case studies, there were a number of significant limitations. It proved difficult in some cases to approach and interview youngsters who participated in the projects. The organizations were often reluctant to let us contact youngsters. Peer group pressure among some youngsters at the start also meant they were not willing to participate in interviews. This was tackled by investing more time in participant observation, for instance in the classroom. This meant that the youngsters got used to a researcher being present and in a later phase interviews could be planned on locations outside class. Some young people, however, did not feel comfortable in a more formal interview setting and it was better to speak with them during observations in their own, safe classroom environment.

Furthermore, contacts with the youngsters were established with the help of the school and social workers. This influenced the youngsters' perception of the researchers and the interactions with them. For instance, due to the collaboration with the school, the researchers were associated with this institution and were perceived at the start to be (assistant) teachers. Intensive visits and observations resulted, in the end, in this barrier being overcome. The migrant youngsters generally saw the researchers as sympathetic representatives of the Dutch Establishment with whom it was possible to speak safely about their school-work experience. However, the content of these conversations was restricted to these subjects.

The agreements with the institutions made it possible to set up case studies and interview or observe young migrant people. At the same time it showed that some of the institutions used the presence of the researcher and the involvement of the (European) project to boost their own status and image. This was particularly the case with one school head who could now inform other schools that the implementation of significant school reforms in their department was being studied. Another example was a recently started reintegration project that wanted to use the researcher's attendance to show that they were doing important work.

Secondly, there are a number of gaps in the data and results. To begin with, it was difficult to study and interview at-risk youth, the marginal and sometimes slightly criminal youngsters. As said, the researchers were associated with the institutions. In the case study of a community centre which was regularly attended by these youngsters, the researcher was seen by them as a representative of the community centre or even worse of the police. These youngsters also feel mistreated by society and frequently state that as a group they are the butt of discrimination. Their distrust made it almost impossible to approach and interview them. However, intensive participant observation was beneficial. Future research could adopt such a strategy to shed more light on the perspective of these 'problematic' youngsters and how this relates to their educational and labour market integration.

Another group that is difficult to reach, which came to light in the interviews, are girls who have fallen into the hands of young male pimps. Teachers and employees of activation or reintegration services frequently mentioned this problem, and they gave examples of girls who were in this kind of relationship who often skipped school and eventually dropped out. Future studies could pay more attention to this group because as the interviews reveal it is more than just a media phenomenon. Professionals expressed serious concerns about these girls and are looking for ways to respond to this issue.

The results primarily focus on the school-work experience of young migrants and the picture of other aspects of their (private) daily lives such as leisure time, interaction at home, gender roles, friendships is less clear. Consequently, the lives of female migrants (at home), who are less visible in the public sphere, remain something of an unknown quantity. The qualitative data do indicate that care responsibilities, e.g. younger siblings, can mean that girls are less engaged in school. Unfortunately the survey did not include questions on gender patterns at home. More research still needs to be conducted into the role played by gender patterns (at home) and educational and labour market participation. The qualitative study did also show that some schools deliberately attempt to respond to the care responsibilities of migrant girls: one school experiments with allowing girls to start school later in the morning to enable them to combine school with care tasks, and another school which deals with teenage pregnancies has special pregnancy contracts in which they make special arrangements for skipping (early morning) school or trainee-post hours. It would be interesting to study how the institutional environment such as school and workplace relate or respond to

migrant girls trying to combine care with making an educational and professional career.

It is important to note that some ethnic or cultural groups are somewhat underrepresented. The survey represents the largest ethnic groups in the Netherlands: Moroccan, Turkish, Surinamese and Antillean youngsters, but the latter two groups were not covered in the ethnographic studies. Therefore the results apply primarily to Turkish and Moroccan youngsters. This explains, for instance, the experiences or perceived discrimination related to wearing headscarves or (Islamic) religion and traditional expectations of parents or the community regarding care responsibilities and labour market participation. The survey indicated that the Surinamese and Antillean group have some distinguishing characteristics: more often than the other groups they live alone or without one of their parents (71 per cent live without their father), and boys in particular communicate little about school with their parents. Girls are quite often confronted by discrimination (46 per cent), often because of their skin colour. Despite the rates of having children being low (just 5 per cent) it is predominantly the Surinamese or Antillean girls who have a child. Additional qualitative, studies could reveal more about how these matters affect the school-work transition.

There were also no structural arrangements made with employer associations or with migrant associations. Therefore, there were no ethnographic studies in places where young migrants work. As the results show, many youngsters not only perceive discrimination when entering the labour market but also during their work. Future research should also cover this topic and study whether it affects their upward mobility or dropping out from the labour market. In spite of this, work places that combine learning and work were part of the ethnographic studies and led to valuable insight into the young migrants' labour market preparation, for instance on the strong focus on training soft or social skills.

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Samenvatting in het Nederlands

Van het proefschrift:
De overgang van school naar werk van migrantenjongeren
Obstakels en mogelijkheden

Nederlandse samenvatting

Deze thesis richt zich op de zorgen over de sociaaleconomische integratie van migranten jongeren[5], dat wil zeggen op hun ongunstige onderwijs- en arbeidsmarktpositie. Centraal staat de overgang van school naar werk die gehinderd wordt door achterblijvende onderwijsprestaties, en hun oververtegenwoordiging in de cijfers van het voortijdig schoolverlaten en jeugdwerkloosheid. Ook zijn ze oververtegenwoordigd in de groep non-participanten: dit zijn jongeren die niet op school zitten, niet werken, en die moeilijk bereikbaar voor hulpverleningsinstanties zijn.

Met name schooluitval wordt gezien als een grote boosdoener voor een soepele overgang van school naar werk omdat het een duurzame arbeidsmarktpositie ernstig in de weg kan staan (Min. OCW, 2007). De vrees is dat veel migrantenjongeren die stoppen met hun opleiding, achterblijven en in gemarginaliseerde situaties zoals (jeugd) werkloosheid en criminaliteit terechtkomen. Er bestaat daarom veel (beleids)aandacht voor het terugdringen en opvangen van voortijdig schoolverlaters. Dit brengt een enorme groei van maatregelen en projecten teweeg, vaak stringent van toon en karakter. Een voorbeeld hiervan is de recentelijk ingevoerde leerwerkplicht die ongekwalificeerde jongeren tot 27 verplicht om een leer- of werkaanbod van de gemeente te accepteren voor behoud van een inkomensvoorziening. Hoewel migranten jongeren in beleidskringen worden neergezet als aandachtsgroep worden hun problemen vooral binnen dit algemene onderwijs- en arbeidsmarktbeleid aangepakt. De aanhoudende hoge werkloosheid- en schooluitval cijfers duiden echter op onbevredigende resultaten.

De vraag en doelstelling van de thesis zijn tweeledig: in de eerste plaats gaat het om meer inzicht te verwerven in de school-werk transitie van migrantenjongeren door te kijken naar hun schoolloopbanen en ervaringen met het (MBO) onderwijs, en naar de voorbereiding en intreding in de arbeidsmarkt (via stagelopen). Ook zal hierbij specifieke aandacht worden besteed aan de rol van hun sociale netwerk.

Ten tweede plaats vindt er een verkenning plaats van de (beleids)mogelijkheden voor re-integratie van allochtone drop-outs, de vraag is hoe kunnen ze het beste terug

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[5] De term 'migrantenjongeren' refereert in het algemeen aan de kinderen van migranten, de tweede generatie, geboren in Nederland. Het kunnen echter ook kinderen van migranten zijn die zelf in het buitenland zijn geboren (eerste generatie). Verder gaat het om jongeren die in Nederland gecategoriseerd worden als niet-westers. Dit betekent dat zij of tenminste één van hun ouders afkomstig zijn uit Turkije, Afrika, Latijns-Amerika en Azië met uitzondering van Indonesië en Japan. Daarbij gaat het vooral om Turkse, Marokkaanse, Surinaamse en Antilliaanse jongeren. Deze groepen zijn ook oververtegenwoordigd in de cijfers van voortijdig schoolverlaten en jeugdwerkloosheid.

naar school of naar de arbeidsmarkt worden gebracht, en welke preventiemaatregelen effectief zijn: hoe kunnen jongeren die dreigen uit te vallen op school worden gehouden. Dit omvat een evaluatief onderzoek naar beleid, projecten en initiatieven aangeboden in de lokale context van de jongeren

Methoden

De inhoud en resultaten van de thesis zijn gebaseerd op onderzoekopzet met gemixte methoden.

1. Kwalitatief onderzoek bestaande uit interviews en etnografisch onderzoek op scholen in twee wijken in Utrecht waar veel migrantenjongeren wonen en bij projecten die zich bezighouden met het voorkomen van schooluitval, het opvangen van drop-outs of het begeleiden van jongeren naar werk zoals re-integratieprojecten en leerwerkplaatsen. Er is o.a. geobserveerd in klaslokalen, een buurthuis en een leerwerkbedrijf en er zijn interviews gehouden met jongeren en met professionele sleutelfiguren zoals docenten en beleidsmakers.

2. Kwantitatief: er is een enquêteonderzoek (schriftelijk en online) gehouden onder MBO leerlingen (n=605) afkomstig van vijf verschillende scholen in Utrecht en Amsterdam bestaande uit 164 autochtonen en 441 jonge allochtonen. De enquête heeft betrekking op de thema's onderwijs en arbeidsmarkt en vraagt onder andere naar schoolbeleving, schooluitval, rol van het sociale netwerk, discriminatie en arbeidsoriëntatie. Aanvankelijk vormde enquêtemoeheid een probleem om medewerking van scholen en docenten te krijgen.

3. Analyse van bestaande gegevens (literatuur en data) over de (nationale en lokale) situatie van migranten jongeren en over voortijdig schoolverlaten en jeugdwerkloosheid.

4. Een analyse van beleidsdocumenten van initiatieven die beogen om voortijdig schoolverlaten en jeugdwerkloosheid aan te pakken.

Het onderzoek in de thesis is ten eerste onderdeel van een Europees vergelijkend onderzoek genaamd TRESEGY waarin ervaringen van de tweede generatie migrantenjongeren met economische, culturele en sociale processen van in- en uitsluiting zijn onderzocht in negen steden in zes Europese landen. In aansluiting en als aanvulling op dit onderzoek wordt in het Re-integratie Verbeteronderzoek (SIG/RVO) specifiek aandacht besteed aan de re-integratie van uitgevallen of werkloze jongeren terug naar school of naar de arbeidsmarkt om zo meer inzicht te krijgen in vormen van good and bad practices. Vanuit verschillende aan elkaar gerelateerde omgevingen waarin de uitvallers en hun problemen zich bevinden, zoals de sociale of familieomgeving en de

institutionele of beleidsomgeving, wordt gezocht naar factoren die een soepele over-
gang van school naar werk stimuleren (Sol, Knijn, Frings-Dresen, 2007).

Theoretisch kader

De thesis maakt gebruik van de theorie van gesegmenteerde assimilatie die laat zien dat
de aanpassing van migranten aan de ontvangende samenleving verschillende routes met
verschillende uitkomsten kent die zijn verbonden zijn de bestaande sociale stratificatie
of klassen (Portes & Zhou, 1993). Het klassieke idee is een route van opwaartse
mobiliteit, doormiddel van een geleidelijke integratie en aanpassing van migranten aan
de bestaande middenklasse. Tegenwoordig wordt echter ook gewezen op de mogelijk-
heid van alternatieve routes: van opwaartse mobiliteit via het eigen netwerk zonder
culturele aanpassing of een tegenovergestelde, neerwaartse route, jonge migranten die
in een sociale onderklasse positie terechtkomen (Gans, 1993; Zhou 1997). Deze
verschillende routes van integratie zijn het gevolg van een interactie tussen institutione-
le of structurele factoren als de organisatie van het onderwijssysteem, herstructurering
van de arbeidsmarkt (d.w.z. de-industrialisatie), het wonen in achterstandwijken,
ervaringen met arbeidsmarktdiscriminatie, het integratiebeleid en eigen sociale hulp-
bronnen (Gans 1993; Portes, Fernandez-Kelly, & Haller, 2005).

In de thesis wordt de theorie van gesegmenteerde assimilatie als overkoepelend
theoretisch raamwerk gebruikt om naar de school-werk transitie van jonge migranten
te kijken. Vanuit de literatuur is een aantal belangrijke factoren aan te wijzen die de op-
of neerwaartse mobiliteit beïnvloeden. Ten eerste speelt ondersteuning vanuit het
sociale netwerk een sleutelrol in het slagen en falen in het onderwijs en bij het zoeken
naar werk. Migrantenouders hebben vaak een sterke drang om sociaal te stijgen en zijn
optimistisch over hun kansen waardoor ze hun kinderen stimuleren om hun best te
doen op school (Kao & Tienda, 1995; Zhou & Bankston, 2001). Zowel ouders als
kinderen vergelijken de onderwijs- en carrièrekansen met de vaak achtergestelde situatie
in hun land van herkomst wat maakt dat ze zich sterk op werk en scholing gaan richten
als route naar economisch succes (Ogbu & Simons, 1998). Verder hebben oudere
broers of zussen vaak veel verantwoordelijkheden binnen migrantengezinnen en
kunnen ze als belangrijke ondersteunende rolmodellen fungeren voor hun jongere
boers of zussen (Stanton-Salazar, 2001).

Ten tweede is de organisatie van het onderwijssysteem van belang voor de moge-
lijkheden op de arbeidsmarkt (Pfeffer, 2008; Shavit & Müller, 2000). Het Nederlandse
onderwijssysteem kenmerkt zich door een hoge mate van stratificatie wat betekent dat
jongeren al op jonge leeftijd worden geselecteerd voor onderwijsrichtingen en niveaus
met bepaalde beroepsuitkomsten als gevolg. Daarnaast worden specifieke beroepsvaar-

digheden in plaats van algemene competenties aangeleerd. Het gevolg is tweezijdig: aan de ene kant is er een gebrek aan mobiliteit tussen de opleidingsniveaus wat de kansen om een hogere opleiding of baan te krijgen vermindert. Maar aan de andere kant vergroot de sterke koppeling van opleiding aan beroepsgroep en het leren van specifieke beroepsvaardigheden wel de kans op het vinden van werk.

Doordat de netwerken van migrantenjongeren niet overlappen met die van werkgevers kunnen zij moeilijker aan een baan komen (RWI, 2006). Ze beschikken niet over voldoende overbruggend sociaal kapitaal, d.w.z. over onvoldoende contacten met baaninformatie buiten hun eigen kring. Verder toont divers onderzoek aan dat discriminatie aan de poort een serieus obstakel is voor de intreding in de arbeidsmarkt (SCP, 2010).

Tot slot is de beleidscontext van belang, hierbij gaat het zowel om de toon van het beleidsdebat als de manier waarop het beleid wordt uitgevoerd. Van belang is allereerst het integratiebeleid: er wordt steeds meer van migranten verwacht dat zij zich volledig sociaal-cultureel aanpassen of te wel assimileren (Ghorashi, 2003). Migranten op hun beurt verkiezen integratie met behoud van hun culturele eigenheid boven assimilatie. Er is dus sprake van botsende wensen en eisen ten aanzien van integratie met als gevolg distantie of segregatie tussen autochtonen en allochtonen. Van allochtone groepen wordt gedacht dat ze zich niet willen of kunnen aanpassen en hun (culturele) gewoonten worden geridiculiseerd of geabnormaliseerd d.w.z. als niet passend of geschikt voor het functioneren in de samenleving beschouwd (Ghorashi, 2003; Verkuyten, 2001; WRR, 2007). Hiermee samenhangend is er een tendens van individualisering van de problemen van migrantenjongeren wat inhoudt dat achterstanden worden toegeschreven aan tekorten in het individu of zijn of haar sociale omgeving en minder aan structurele problemen zoals arbeidsmarktdiscriminatie en sociaaleconomische achterstand (Holmqvist, 2007).

Verder kenmerkt het beleid ter bestrijding van voortijdig schoolverlaten en (jeugd)werkloosheid zich door een activerende aanpak: de 'inactieve' uitvallers worden actief toegeleid naar schooling of werk, waarbij het recht op een uitkering of inkomensvoorziening als stimulans fungeert (van Berkel & Borghi, 2008). Dit gaat gepaard met nieuwe vormen van beleidsaansturing en organisatie die vallen onder de noemer 'new governance'. De verantwoordelijkheid voor het uitvoeren (en ook deels vormgeven) van nationaal beleid wordt gedecentraliseerd of te wel doorgeven aan gemeentes die doormiddel van het aangaan van lokale partnerschappen met deels private zorgaanbieders streven om re-integratie of zorg op maat aan te kunnen bieden (ketensamenwerking). Beleid wordt echter niet simpelweg van bovenaf ingevoerd en klakkeloos overgenomen: de theorie van street level bureaucracy (Lypsky, 1980) laat zien dat niet beleidsmakers maar de uitvoerende professionals (via hun discretionaire

ruimte) bepalen hoe het beleid wordt uitgevoerd en wat voor diensten en voordelen hun cliënten krijgen.

Resultaten

School carrières en het sociale netwerk

De resultaten van het onderzoek op de scholen schetsen een positief beeld: jongeren zijn gemotiveerd om hun best te doen op school, diploma's te halen en willen graag carrière maken. Zo denkt de meerderheid (70%) een HBO opleiding of hoger af te ronden. De sociale omgeving is hierbij een belangrijk referentiepunt voor de migrantenjongeren: ze vergelijken zich met de vaak achtergestelde positie van hun ouders of de mogelijkheden in hun land van herkomst en hebben daardoor een sterke drang, om verder te komen, om sociaal te stijgen. Ouders en familieleden moedigen dit ook sterk aan. Met name allochtone meisjes springen er uit met een positieve schoolbeleving en motivatie die deels is ingeven door een streven naar emancipatie (zie ook Lee, 2006) en deels omdat school hun een vrije sociale ruimte biedt.

Hoge verwachtingen kunnen wel een valkuil zijn: docenten geven aan dat de onderwijswensen en beroepsbeelden niet altijd haalbaar zijn of berusten op geld of status motieven wat uitval tot gevolg kan hebben. De belangrijkste reden voor schooluitval is dan ook een verkeerde studiekeuze (41%). Verder komt uit de interviews naar voren dat verwachtingen van ouders of de gemeenschap ten aanzien van zorgverplichtingen voor broertjes of zusjes of vroeg trouwen de schoolcarrières van meisjes in de weg kunnen staan.

Hoge verwachtingen alleen blijken echter niet afdoende: belangrijker is het daadwerkelijk ontvangen van steun bij schoolzaken uit het sociale netwerk. Frequent praten over school met ouders en broers of zussen, bijvoorbeeld over huiswerk of cijfers, blijken belangrijke voorspellers te zijn voor een positieve schoolbeleving. Veel migrantenjongeren, vooral de uitgevallen werkloze jongeren, krijgen echter vaak geen steun bij schoolkwesties. Uit het kwalitatieve onderzoek blijkt dat deze jongeren vaak belangrijke rolmodellen missen, zoals oudere broers of zussen, die ze motiveren om een opleiding af te maken of werk te zoeken. Uit het enquêteonderzoek blijkt dat veel jongeren vaak niemand hebben die ze helpt bij praktische zaken als school en financiën maar ook niemand hebben om mee te praten wanneer ze zorgen hebben. Docenten geven in interviews aan dat allochtone ouders onbekend zijn met het schoolsysteem en hun kinderen daardoor niet kunnen bijstaan. Door het ontbreken van rolmodellen in hun omgeving is het ook lastiger om een goede opleiding- of beroepskeuze te maken.

Organisatie MBO onderwijs

Zoals gezegd is dé reden voor schooluitval, volgens docenten en jongeren, het maken van een verkeerde studiekeuze. Jongeren worden hierbij echter niet geholpen door de organisatie van het Nederlandse onderwijssysteem (sterk gestratificeerd en beroepsgericht) met z'n verschillende selectie- en sorteringmechanismen. Op vroege leeftijd direct na de basisschool komen migrantenjongeren veelal in de lagere leerwegen van het vmbo terecht (OECD, 2010; Education Council, 2010). Vervolgens moeten ze op verschillende momenten binnen het vmbo en mbo kiezen voor een bepaalde beroepsrichting. De vroege selectie- en sorteringmechanismes kunnen opwaartse mobiliteit binnen het onderwijssysteem beperken en bijdragen aan de reproductie van sociaaleconomische achterstand (Brunello & Checci, 2007; Pfeffer, 2008).

Verder komt uit het etnografische onderzoek komt naar voren dat er problemen zijn met de invoering van het competentiegericht onderwijs dat als doel heeft om het onderwijs beter te laten aansluiten op de arbeidsmarkt. Naast het aanleren van hardskills, vaardigheden die nodig zijn om het technische aspect van een vak uit te kunnen oefenen, wordt ook verwacht dat leerlingen soft skills aanleren die vooral gericht zijn op de omgang met collega's en klanten. Hier wordt in praktijklessen mee geoefend door leerlingen bijvoorbeeld rollenspellen te laten doen. Het blijkt echter lastig om de competenties te vertalen naar toetsbare vaardigheden. Verder geven zowel leerlingen als docenten aan dat de nieuwe manier van leren niet genoeg structuur biedt, dat ze te weinig leren en de klassieke vorm van lesgeven missen.

Het onderzoek naar de zorgstructuur en de aanpak van voortijdig schoolverlaten binnen het MBO wijst op een tendens van individualisering van de problemen van migrantenjongeren: professionals schrijven schoolfalen voornamelijk toe aan individuele problemen als verkeerde studiekeuzes of ernstige psychosociale problematiek. De institutionele belemmeringen als de vroege selectiemomenten, een overdaad aan studiekeuzemogelijkheden of serieuze problemen met de invoering van het competentiegericht leren blijven hierbij buiten de beschouwing.

Overgang naar de arbeidsmarkt

De interviews met de jongeren en het enquêteonderzoek laten zien dat de meeste migrantenjongeren sociaal willen stijgen en dus gemotiveerd zijn om te werken en carrière willen maken. Een eigen bedrijf vormt vanwege het hebben van onafhankelijkheid en invloed voor een deel van de jongeren hierbij het ideaal.

Discriminatie kan echter een serieus probleem vormen voor arbeidsmarktintegratie van migrantenjongeren (zie ook SCP, 2010). Uit de survey bleek dat de helft van de migranten zich het afgelopen jaar weleens gediscrimineerd heeft gevoeld. Jongeren voelen zich vaak gediscrimineerd op straat (42%), bij het zoeken naar werk (28%) of

op het werk (27%) en op school (21%). Ook uit het etnografische onderzoek blijkt dat jongeren ervaringen hebben met discriminatie bijvoorbeeld vanwege het dragen van een hoofddoek bij het zoeken naar een stageplaats. Ook blijkt dat scholen de leerlingen bewust weghouden bij stageplekken waar gediscrimineerd wordt. Uit de kwantitatieve analyses bleek verder dat discriminatie bijdraagt aan een negatieve schoolbeleving.

Daarnaast blijkt dat er binnen het mbo onderwijs en re-integratieprojecten een steeds grotere nadruk wordt gelegd op het trainen van zogenaamde 'soft' skills die jongeren employable tot een goede werknemer moeten maken. Hierbij gaat het om vaardigheden als goed communiceren, samenwerken, jezelf presenteren, gemotiveerd zijn. Over migrantenjongeren bestaat het beeld dat zij deze onvoldoende zouden beheersen waardoor hun overgang naar de arbeidsmarkt wordt bemoeilijkt. Aan de ene kant is de aandacht voor soft-skills in onderwijsprogramma's op zijn plaats en kan dit migrantenjongeren beter toerusten voor de arbeidsmarkt, maar tegelijk zijn er ook signalen dat dit als een vorm van discriminatie kan uitwerken wanneer werkgevers het vermeende gebrek aan soft-skills gebruiken als motivatie om migrantenjongeren niet aan te nemen (zie Moss & Tilly, 2001).

Startkwalificatiebeleid

Een belangrijk middel om onderwijsachterstand aan te pakken en de overgang naar de arbeidsmarkt soepeler te laten verlopen is het verhogen van het opleidingsniveau doormiddel van het startkwalificatiebeleid. De startkwalificatie is de minimale opleidingseis voor succesvolle toetreding op de arbeidsmarkt en komt neer op het behalen van MBO niveau 2. De definitie van een voortijdig schoolverlater is ook gekoppeld aan het niet hebben van de startkwalificatie.

Deze definitie is erg breed waardoor er sprake is van een overschatting van het probleem van voortijdig schoolverlaten in de zin dat een gebrek aan een startkwalificatie niet altijd tot problemen op de arbeidsmarkt hoeft te leiden. De meerderheid van de uitvallers heeft immers een betaalde baan vaak met een vast contract. Dit wordt bevestigd door docenten en werkcoaches die aangeven dat veel ongekwalificeerde jongeren wel degelijk kansen hebben op de arbeidsmarkt. Er is echter ook sprake van onderschatting omdat jaarlijks alleen de nieuwe drop-outs worden gerapporteerd en de status van veel oude drop-outs onbekend is. Verder maakt de huidige economische crisis duidelijk dat jongeren zonder startkwalificatie extra kwetsbaar zijn.

Daarnaast is er een spanning zichtbaar tussen de Europese en nationale doelstellingen om voortijdig schoolverlaters een starkwalificatie te laten behalen en de uitvoering van dit beleid in praktijk. Docenten twijfelen openlijk aan de haalbaarheid van een startkwalificatie voor iedere leerling. Een deel van leerlingen, van vooral de lagere niveaus of de oudere groep, zou beter af zijn op de arbeidsmarkt. De te hoge eisen

kunnen tot frustratie en uitval van leerlingen leiden. Volgens medewerkers van re-integratieprogramma's is 'terug naar school' voor veel jongeren niet realistisch en lijkt de nadruk in re-integratieprogramma's dus vooral op het voorbereiden van arbeidsparticipatie te liggen. Een andere spanning is dat scholen op papier vaak een streng verzuimbeleid voeren om spijbelen en uitval te voorkomen. Ze kunnen of willen de aanwezigheidsverplichting echter niet te streng hanteren omdat ze dan juist leerlingen verliezen.

Activeringsbeleid

Er is sprake van decentralisatie waardoor op lokaal niveau gemeentes, scholen (ROC's) en commerciële re-integratiebureaus samen verantwoordelijk zijn voor de uitvoering van het beleid. Hierbij wordt zoveel mogelijk een sluitende aanpak nagestreefd d.w.z. dat verschillende organisaties via een gezamenlijke ketenstructuur werken om uitvallers te begeleiden (jongerenloket). Dit zou tot kostenbesparing, meer efficiëntie en individueel maatwerk moeten leiden. Samenwerken en een sluitende aanpak blijken echter lastig te realiseren: verschillende organisaties zijn verantwoordelijk voor hun eigen doelgroep en hebben hun eigen agenda's wat leidt tot communicatieproblemen en een gebrek aan transparantie tussen publieke en private partners. Bovendien heeft de onverwacht grote aanloop van jongeren (o.a. door de economische crisis) geleid tot hoge case loads en gebrek aan overzicht in de dienstverlening. Verder leidt de uitbesteding van re-integratie diensten aan commerciële partners niet tot individueel maatwerk maar worden gestandaardiseerde programma's gebruikt.

Ten slotte blijft een deel van de jongeren door vrijwillige deelname aan de programma's buiten bereik (bijvoorbeeld wanneer zij zich niet melden voor een uitkering). Ook worden jongeren met veel problemen vaak uitgesloten van deelname aan programma's door praktijken van 'creaming' waarbij alleen de potentieel succesvolle jongeren worden toegelaten (en de uitstoom cijfers hoger zijn) of worden ze 'geparkeerd' in langdurige trajecten waar ze veel psychologische begeleiding krijgen en waar nauwelijks iets aan arbeidsbemiddeling of voorbereiding gedaan wordt.

Good practices

Uit de interviews met jongeren en professionals komen een aantal goede praktijken voor de school-werk transitie naar voren: ten eerste kunnen buddy of mentor projecten inspelen op het ontbreken van steun of rolmodellen, risicojongeren bereiken, hun netwerk vergroten en ze meer zelfvertrouwen geven. Ook worden steeds vaker leeftijdsgenoten of medeleerlingen ingezet als mentor of buddy. Maar toewijzing van een mentor kan ook leiden tot stigmatisering en daarmee tot afhaken van de doelgroep. Breed uitzetten (niet alleen onder risicoleerlingen) en een duidelijke doelstelling (zoals

begeleiding bij de keuze voor een opleiding en een beroep) is van belang anders haken beide partijen af.

Positief zijn jongeren en professionals ook over stages. Tijdens hun stage voelen ze zich verantwoordelijk, hebben ze het gevoel echt iets te leren en krijgen ze een goed beeld van wat hun toekomstige beroep inhoudt. Bovendien kan een succesvolle stageplaats vaak tot een vaste baan leiden. Ook kunnen jongeren tijdens hun stage beter dan op school oefenen met soft skills.

Conclusie en discussie: opwaartse of neerwaartse mobiliteit?

Uitgangspunt van de thesis was de zorg over de ongunstige onderwijs- en arbeidsmarkt positie van migrantenjongeren. Met name schooluitval wordt als signaal voor mogelijke neerwaartse mobiliteit beschouwd omdat dit een duurzame arbeidsmarktpositie ernstig in de weg zou staan. Duidelijk wordt dat over het geheel genomen de situatie niet negatief is en dat er eerder sprake is van polarisatie: bestaande cijfers laten zien dat voor de meerderheid van de migrantenjongeren de situatie verbetert (zie bijv. de sterke toename deelname hoger onderwijs). Ook de meerderheid van de jongeren zonder startkwalificatie doen het wel degelijk goed op de arbeidmarkt. Tegelijkertijd is ook een groep die niet goed meekomt, die niet op school zit en ook niet aan het werk is. De groep non participanten is echter relatief klein er is geen sprake van algehele neerwaart- se mobiliteit. De meerderheid van de uitvallers zouden dus ook niet als probleemgeval beschouwd moeten worden. De groep non-participanten wordt echter wel als exempla- risch voor de gehele groep voortijdig schoolverlaters gezien wat de beeldvorming rondom migranten drop-outs in het bijzonder negatief beïnvloed.

De vraag resteert waarom sommige jongeren er niet in slagen om een soepele of duurzame school-werk transitie te maken. Door de besproken resultaten van de thesis samen te beschouwen ontstaat er een kansenstructuur (zie schema 8.1) met daarin verschillende institutionele of sociale factoren die (in interactie) de routes van op- of neerwaartse sociale mobiliteit beïnvloeden. Zo pakt het gebrek aan steun bij schoolza- ken of rolmodellen negatief uit in samenhang met de organisatie van het Nederlandse beroepsonderwijs. Dat vraagt dat er op meerdere momenten belangrijke keuzes ten aanzien van opleiding en beroep moeten worden gemaakt. Het Nederlandse onderwijs- systeem is gestratificeerd en gedifferentieerd en daarom is het extra belangrijk dat ouders actief de opleiding van hun kinderen steunen en managen (Pfeffer, 2008). Daarnaast wijzen de resultaten uit dat migrantenjongeren arbeidsmarktdiscriminatie ervaren. Het kan echter ook om minder duidelijke of openlijke vormen van uitsluiting gaan wanneer migrantenjongeren vanwege een vermeend (etnisch of cultureel) gebrek aan soft skills worden uitgesloten van arbeidsdeelname.

Ook is er een aantal invloedrijke beleidslijnen of discoursen die niet alleen beleids-instrumenten beïnvloeden maar ook gevoelens van wederzijdse acceptatie. Zoals gezegd impliceert het huidige integratiedebat een frictie tussen de eisen voor integratie die aan de jongeren gesteld worden (volledige assimilatie) en de wensen van de jongeren zelf (integratie met behoud van culturele eigenheid). Dit zorgt voor etnische distantie en een klimaat waarin problemen in het onderwijs en op de arbeidsmarkt vaak op het conto van de migrantenjongeren zelf geschreven worden. Culturele barrières komen zo op de voorgrond in plaats van structurele of institutionele factoren als werkloosheid of arbeidsmarktdiscriminatie. Een voorbeeld hiervan is de discussie over het vermeende gebrek aan soft skills waarbij problemen met het intreden in de arbeidsmarkt worden toegeschreven aan een veronderstelde problematische culturele of etnische achtergrond.

Ondanks deze obstakels wijzen de resultaten uit dat migrantenjongeren veel veerkracht tonen en erg optimistisch zijn over hun kansen in het onderwijs en op de arbeidsmarkt. Deze houding komt echter niet altijd overeen met hun huidige opleiding- of werksituatie en ze lijken zich ook niet echt bewust van de besproken obstakels. Ze vergelijken zich in de eerste plaats met de vaak achtergestelde positie van hun ouders (referentiepunt) of met (de verhalen over) de situatie in hun land van herkomst en verwachten dat zij het beter krijgen. Gezien de huidige ontwikkelingen is deze optimistische houding gerechtvaardigd: er vindt een duidelijk verbetering van hun onderwijspositie plaats en achterstand wordt langzaam maar structureel ingelopen. Hun optimisme en veerkracht, ondersteuning uit hun eigen netwerk of een succesvolle stage kunnen samen helpen bij het overkomen van de aangewezen problemen. De meerderheid van de ongekwalificeerde jongeren weet een arbeidsmarktpositie veilig te stellen. Dit rechtvaardigt om te spreken van vooruitgang in plaats van achteruitgang.

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Curriculum vitae

Kaj van Zenderen (1977), graduated in 1995 from secondary school (Havo, St. Bonifatius College in Utrecht). After this he made a (round) trip to the Middle East where he lived and worked on a Kibbutz. In 1997 he did a foundation course social work at the College of Higher Professional Education Utrecht. In the same year he started studying Interdisciplinary Social Science at Utrecht University where he received his Master of Science degree in 2003 with a thesis on social contact through the internet. In 2004 he made a trip through Asia. After his trip in 2005 he started working as a socio therapist, first in a relief centre with addicted homeless people (de Singel in Utrecht), and secondly in a forensic psychiatric centre (TBS clinic) (van der Hoeve Clinic in Utrecht). The work was satisfying and inspiring but he wanted to develop himself as a researcher. In 2006 he started to work as a researcher for the comparative European research project TRESEGY and as a teacher in the Department of Interdisciplinary Social Science at Utrecht University. In 2007 he got the opportunity to start his PhD project which combined the TRESEGY with the Pathways to Work Research Programme. His research interests are young people's school-work transition, the organisation of the education system and labour market, and evaluations of policies and measures which aim to prevent or reduce early school leaving and youth unemployment.

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