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ROTTERDAM: A LONG-TIME PORT OF CALL AND HOME TO IMMIGRANTS

By Han Entzinger and Godfried Engbersen

ROTTERDAM

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Executive Summary

Rotterdam has long been a city of immigrants. A port city connecting the Netherlands with major trading partners, Rotterdam is home to migrants from around the globe, yet it has not quite reached Amsterdam's "global city" status. As Rotterdam jostles for a place in the world economy, it will need to overcome a number of critical challenges: developing the skills of its citizens (especially the disadvantaged), attracting and retaining highly skilled workers, and fostering cohesion among increasingly transient communities.

The neighborhoods of Rotterdam and its environs are divided along socioeconomic lines. Most of the housing within city limits is of relatively low quality; those who can afford to live in the suburbs or farther afield. This dynamic in large part explains why Rotterdam's immigrant population is so high—close to half of the city's 610,000 residents were born abroad or have at least one foreign-born parent. While changes to the housing stock (such as the replacement of dilapidated housing with owner-occupied and higher-rent apartments) have reduced segregation, they have not erased it: nonimmigrants are likely to live in the north and east, and along former docks; immigrants are more likely to live in the west and south of the city. In addition, a notable gap in educational and labor market outcomes persists between immigrant and nonimmigrant populations. Recent events such as the global economic crisis and an increase in labor migration from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) have only served to exacerbate these issues.

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Rotterdam has been at the forefront of thinking about how to reduce residential segregation, improve social cohesion, and bolster socioeconomic outcomes for immigrants. Reflecting a trend in the Netherlands at large, city administrators no longer think of integration as a stand-alone issue, but address policies toward all "Rotterdamers" wherever possible. One of the city's recent flagship programs seeks to reduce disparities between the two sides of Rotterdam—the more affluent suburbs and world-famous port on the one hand, and the blighted southern section on the other—by improving residents' educational levels, reducing unemployment, and attracting the middle class back to the city center. Targeted policies, meanwhile, are maintained where deemed necessary—for example, to serve disadvantaged immigrant communities and new arrivals who may require specialized integration assistance.

As Rotterdam transforms into an international city, it will need to continue its efforts to support struggling citizens and transform blighted neighborhoods. Rotterdam's history as a port and transit city is clearly its strength, but also potentially its weakness if communities become ever more transitory. The recent rise in temporary forms of migration presents new challenges for Rotterdam's integration policy, which has traditionally focused on permanent residents. To ensure the successful integration of the city's long-term and temporary migrant populations, Rotterdam will have to improve the quality of its housing and educational offerings, and invest in new industries and jobs. This is a much bigger challenge than simply facilitating immigrant integration.



I. Introduction

As a port city and important transport hub, Rotterdam has long attracted immigrants. As early as 1600, one-quarter of the city's population was born outside the Netherlands.¹ However, it was only when a direct link to the sea was carved through the dunes—after the middle of the 19th century—that Rotterdam became a major gateway and transfer port. Its geographical location in the delta of the Rhine and Meuse rivers made it an important hub for the Netherlands, large parts of Germany, and other countries in Central Europe, to which it was connected via waterways and a rapidly expanding railway network. The port of Rotterdam is now the largest in Europe, and the world's third-largest after Shanghai and Singapore. Along with related industries, including an important transportation sector, the port has long been a magnet for migrants, initially from rural parts of Netherlands, and later from farther afield.

Rotterdam is a large, highly diverse city. Today, it is the second-largest city in the Netherlands (after Amsterdam): the municipality of Rotterdam has a population of over 610,000, and the larger metropolitan area houses about 1.2 million people. The city counts 175 different nationalities among its residents, a level of diversity comparable to Amsterdam, London, and New York.²

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Immigrants arrived for a number of reasons. Chinese sailors worked on Dutch ships in the early 20th century; low-skilled labor migrants (and later their families) came from southern Europe, Turkey, and Morocco from the 1960s onwards. Rotterdam also houses a sizeable Cape Verdean community that, like the Chinese, has a background in shipping. Postcolonial migrants arrived from Indonesia, Suriname, and the Dutch Caribbean. More recently, asylum seekers arrived from the former Yugoslavia (particularly following the conflict of 1992-95), the former Soviet Union, Turkey, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, and Somalia.

Throughout the years, Rotterdam has attracted labor migrants from nearby countries in Europe, such as Germany, Belgium, the United Kingdom, and France. Since the European Union (EU) enlargements of 2004 and 2007, migrants have also been arriving from Central European countries, primarily from Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary (see Table 1).³ Because many of these labor migrants do not register in the municipality, it is difficult to get an accurate picture of their numbers; city experts estimate the number of EU nationals at between 25,000 and 35,000.

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- 1 Jan Lucassen, "Immigranten in Holland 1600-1800: Een kwantitatieve benadering" ["Immigrants in Holland 1600-1800: A Quantitative Approach"] (CGM Working Paper 3, Centrum voor de Geschiedenis van Migranten, Amsterdam, 2002), 28.
 - 2 Steven Vertovec, "Super-Diversity and Its Implications," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 29, no. 6 (2007): 1024-54; Michael Samers, *Migration* (London: Routledge, 2010).
 - 3 Erik Snel, Godfried Engbersen, Maria Ilies, Robbert van der Meij, and Katja Rusinovic, *Arbeidsmigranten uit Bulgarije, Polen en Roemenië in Rotterdam: Sociale leefsituatie, arbeidspositie en toekomstperspectief* (Den Haag: Netherlands Institute for City Innovation Studies, 2010).



Table 1. Number of Registered Migrants from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) in Rotterdam by Nationality, January 1, 1996-2012

Nationality	1996	1998	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012
Bulgaria	34	37	52	76	105	132	630	1,403	2,440
Slovenia	10	11	11	22	21	38	44	80	103
Cyprus	4	2	4	7	7	8	11	13	27
Hungary	79	104	104	122	118	140	205	377	655
Latvia	8		20	24	44	67	75	119	328
Lithuania	14	34	48	68	69	160	190	267	424
Malta	1	3	3	3	4	4	6	8	7
Poland	212	235	236	264	356	787	1,223	2,552	4,041
Romania	101	69	89	136	165	171	283	436	610
Slovakia	15	35	50	54	62	79	107	192	231
Czech Republic	29	38	59	66	81	97	96	119	156
Other	9	7	6	7	7	8	22	39	66
Total CEE migrants	516	584	682	849	1,045	1,704	2,892	5,605	9,088

Source: Authors' compilation of data from the Rotterdam Centre for Research and Statistics (COS).

Rotterdam is also home to a significant number of highly skilled migrants: between 25,000 and 30,000 expatriates are thought to live in the city.⁴ Although Rotterdam lacks the international image of Amsterdam (once described by sociologist Saskia Sassen as the Netherlands' only global city) and of The Hague (the self-proclaimed "legal capital of the world"), it offers many highly skilled jobs in transportation, logistics, and architecture. After Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas decided to locate his Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA) in Rotterdam in 1975, a cluster of innovative architecture firms grew up in the city.⁵ In 2008 the Rotterdam Expat Desk was established, where expatriates can receive information about housing, health care, and education. The provision of such services reflects the increasing competitiveness of the global market for human capital.⁶

Despite this shift toward attracting more skilled workers, Rotterdam's population continues to be relatively low-skilled. Many high-skilled workers commute from the suburbs or from farther afield, in part because the housing stock within city limits is of relatively low quality. For about three-quarters of a century, consecutive social-democratic local governments prioritized building housing for rapidly growing numbers of low-skilled workers, many of them with migrant origins.⁷ It was not until the past decade that the city sought to create neighborhoods that might draw higher-income groups. In some parts of the city, cheap housing is (slowly) being replaced by owner-occupied housing and higher-rent apartments for higher-income households (termed "social mixing") (see Table 2). These changes to the housing stock—coupled with the economic crisis—have slowed the outmigration of the middle class (of all ethnic backgrounds) from the city to the suburbs.

4 Lilian Van der Steen and Natascha Heijstek, *Expatriates Rotterdam* (Rotterdam: Gemeente Rotterdam, 2010), www.stedelijke-economie.nl/dsresource?objectid=200851.

5 Robert Kloosterman and Eva Stegmeijer, "Delirious Rotterdam: The Formation of an Innovative Cluster of Architectural Firms," in *Learning from Clusters: A Critical Assessment from an Economic-Geographical Perspective*, eds. Ron Boschma and Robert Kloosterman (Dordrecht: Springer, 2005), 203–24.

6 Marianne Van Bochove, Katja Rusinovic, and Godfried Engbersen, *On the Red Carpet: Expats in Rotterdam and The Hague* (Rotterdam: Erasmus University, 2010), http://repub.eur.nl/res/pub/33097/metis_176261.pdf.

7 Frans Dieleman and Richard Kloosterman, "Room to Maneuver; Governance, the Post-industrial Economy, and Housing Provision in Rotterdam," in *The Social Sustainability of Cities. Diversity and the Management of Change*, eds. Mario Polèse and Richard Stren (Toronto: Scholarly Publishing Division, University of Toronto, 2000), 175–202.

**Table 2. Characteristics of the Housing Stock in Rotterdam and the Netherlands, 1998 and 2012**

Years	1998		2012	
	Rotterdam	Netherlands	Rotterdam	Netherlands
Type of dwelling (%)				
Single-family dwelling	21	69	25	67
Social-rented housing	59	37	50	31
Owner occupied	24	51	34	56
Purchase and rental prices (%)				
Rent—low	47	26	18	8
Rent—medium	21	17	18	10
Rent—high	8	6	27	22
Purchase—low	9	10	9	7
Purchase—medium	8	18	6	11
Purchase—high	7	23	12	34

Sources: Godfried Engbersen, Erik Snel, and Afke Weltevrede, *Sociale herovering in Amsterdam en Rotterdam: Eén verhaal over twee wijken* [Social Reconquest in Amsterdam and Rotterdam: One story about two neighborhoods] (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2005), 33, www.wrr.nl/fileadmin/nl/publicaties/PDF-verkenningen/Sociale_herovering_in_Amsterdam_en_Rotterdam.pdf; authors' compilation of data from CBS Statline and Rotterdam Centre for Research and Statistics (COS).

Many immigrants are low-income and cannot afford to move out of the lower-quality segments of Rotterdam's housing stock. This fact explains, in large part, why the immigrant share of Rotterdam's population is among the highest in the Netherlands, and substantially higher than in the country as a whole.

II. Rotterdam's Immigrant Population

A. Numbers

In 2010, 27 percent of Rotterdam's population was born outside the Netherlands, far more than the 11 percent average across the country as a whole; a further 21 percent had at least one immigrant parent.⁸ As a result, 48 percent or almost half of all Rotterdammers had an immigrant background. This share is growing, and is expected to reach 56 percent by 2025. In 2010 the largest immigrant communities originated in Suriname (8.8 percent of the total population), Turkey (7.9 percent), Morocco (6.6 percent), and the Dutch Caribbean (3.6 percent). Of the 48 percent of the population with an immigrant background, about half had roots in other Western countries (defined as Europe, North America, and Oceania), and the other half in non-Western countries.

⁸ This section is based on Han Entzinger, "Amsterdam—Rotterdam: Diverse yet Different," *The State of Integration: Rotterdam Amsterdam* (2012): 11–33. Data for this study were collected by the Rotterdam Center for Research and Statistics (COS).



B. Segregation and Housing

Rotterdam is highly segregated and, of all immigrant groups, Turks are the most segregated. Their dissimilarity index stands at 38, which means that almost four out of every ten Turks would have to move to a neighborhood where they are under-represented in order to achieve a fully balanced distribution of the Turkish population across the city. Native Dutch are even more segregated: 45 percent would have to move to achieve a balanced distribution. Persons with an immigrant background, particularly those whose origins lie in non-Western countries, tend to be over-represented in the older neighborhoods to the west and the north of the city center as well as in South Rotterdam, where most of the city's public housing stock, built in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, is located. The native Dutch and immigrants from other Western countries are more likely to live in more expensive neighborhoods to the north and east of the city, as well as in recently constructed housing farther east, in the city center, and in the former docks along the river. Ongoing divisions, however, cannot detract from the remarkable progress toward desegregation made in the past ten years. This is in part an effect of housing and construction policies, and also of the increased upward mobility of second-generation immigrants. By contrast, in the same time period the segregation in Amsterdam only increased.

C. Education

Since newly arrived immigrants tend to be younger on average than the native population, immigration has led to the significant rejuvenation of Rotterdam's population. Of those ages 14 or younger, 61 percent have at least one immigrant parent or are immigrants themselves. This poses a challenge for the city's schools, which must meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population.

While the native-born population in Rotterdam is low-skilled compared to the Dutch average, immigrants are even more likely to be low-skilled. Of the native Dutch population in Rotterdam, 31 percent have a low-level education (primary school or lower-level vocational training), while 30 percent have obtained a tertiary degree. (By comparison, the corresponding figures for Amsterdam are 18 and 48 percent, respectively.) Among immigrants, 49 percent have a low-level education, and only 17 percent are highly educated. But these averages mask considerable variation across groups: highly educated migrant workers are likely to be from Western Europe, while only about 8 percent of all Turks and Moroccans are in this category.

Given the growing demand for highly educated workers, raising the educational level of Rotterdam's population is a top priority. Some success has been achieved in this regard. The percentage of low-educated Rotterdammers has decreased by ten points in the past decade. However, this is true for both immigrants and nonimmigrants, so the gap between these two categories has not shrunk. On a positive note, the school dropout rates of immigrant youth have decreased, while the number of second-generation immigrants participating in higher education (particularly advanced vocational training) has increased to a level on par with their native-born peers.

D. Labor Force Participation

Labor force participation is generally considered another major indicator of integration. Here, as in the case of education, immigrants in Rotterdam are at a disadvantage. While the labor force participation of both immigrants and nonimmigrants rose prior to 2008, the economic crisis marked a drop in immigrant employment. The gap between immigrants and nonimmigrants has widened in subsequent years.⁹

There is considerable variation across different groups of immigrants. Those with a Western background

⁹ Willem Huijnk, Mérove Gijsberts, and Jaco Dagevos, *Jaarrapport Integratie 2013 [Annual Report on integration]* (The Hague: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau/Netherlands Institute for Social Research, 2014), 39.



have a labor force participation rate that is very similar to that of nonimmigrants. In recent years, there has been a rapid increase in migrants from other EU countries, particularly from Poland, most of whom have come in search of work. Among the older immigrant groups, those from Suriname and Cape Verde are faring well, with levels of participation similar to those of nonimmigrants. In comparison, Turks and Moroccans show especially poor outcomes, particularly among women and youth. About half of all Turkish and Moroccan women between the ages of 25 and 34 in Rotterdam are not active in the labor market, compared to less than one in ten for native-born women. For the older generations, that gap is even wider. While some of these women may be working in the informal economy, these high nonparticipation rates appear to reflect barriers to their full integration into local society.

E. Challenges for City Authorities

Attempts to raise immigrant levels of education and employment have posed major challenges to local policymakers in Rotterdam for quite some time now, a situation that is likely to persist. But there is hope. In the future, well-educated, economically active immigrants are likely to earn higher incomes than they do today. Their upward mobility will give them greater freedom to choose where they live, speeding up the process of desegregation that is already in motion, and likely decreasing their reliance on social security.

Yet, for the time being, the challenges are pressing. In 2008, 25 percent of first-generation immigrants in Rotterdam between the ages of 23 and 64 years were dependent on some form of social security. Notably, this fell to 12 percent among second-generation immigrants—2 percent lower than the nonimmigrant population. However, these figures have risen since the economic crisis sparked a relatively steep rise in immigrant unemployment.

Attempts to raise immigrant levels of education and employment have posed major challenges to local policymakers in Rotterdam for quite some time now.

Bridging the socioeconomic gap between natives and immigrants is also important for its potential impact on immigrants' well-being. Immigrants' self-reported health is not as good, on average, as that of the native born; mental health issues are of particular concern in Rotterdam's Turk and Moroccan communities. Yet there is no significant difference in the number of doctor's visits reported by immigrants and the native born.

Crime poses an even more serious, if controversial, challenge to city administrators. While overall crime rates have decreased by about 20 percent in the past decade, they are particularly high among youth of Moroccan and Caribbean descent. These groups are overrepresented among those arrested for criminal offenses, even when the numbers are controlled for age and educational level.

A number of obstacles will have to be removed before Rotterdammers of immigrant origin will be participating in city life on the same footing as the native-born population. Yet they report a tremendous loyalty to their home. In a 2010 representative survey among the population of Rotterdam 74 percent of respondents declared themselves attached or strongly attached to the city. The highest score was for people of Moroccan descent—82 percent—while nonimmigrants scored a more modest 73 percent. Immigrants are also more confident in their local government: 56 percent of Moroccan respondents and 47 percent of Turks reported a high level of confidence in the authorities, compared to 36 percent of the nonimmigrant population.¹⁰ These signs point to some policy successes in the handling of the city's growing diversity.

¹⁰ All data in this paragraph stem from: Municipality of Rotterdam, *Rotterdam Sociaal Gemeten 2010* [Rotterdam, Measured Socially 2010] (Rotterdam: Municipality of Rotterdam, 2010).



III. Politics and Policies in Rotterdam

A. Integration Policies in Rotterdam, Both Targeted and Universal

Dutch integration policies have undergone three distinct phases, each with a different focus. During the first phase, in the 1970s and 1980s, the emphasis was on the cultural dimension, which included supporting the migrants' self-organization. For example, the government provided education in minorities' own languages, and financed special arrangements, such as social work and community development activities specifically for Muslim and Hindus. This approach came under criticism during the second phase, in the 1990s. Multiculturalism was still considered important, but more attention was given to reducing unemployment and welfare dependence. During the third and current phase (from 2002 onward), integration policies have moved toward a model of assimilation, by emphasizing cultural adaptation while introducing more selective immigration policies.¹¹ A symbolic measure of the latest phase was the repeal by the Dutch Parliament of the *Minorities Policies (Consultation) Act (Wet Overleg Minderhedenbeleid, WOM)*, which had been in place for 16 years. This ended the central government's consultation with national minority organizations on integration policy, as provided for by law. The law's repeal, in 2013, marked a shift in focus from targeting policies (i.e., specific to particular minorities and ethnic groups) to addressing them to anyone living in the Netherlands.

These national changes were reflected in Rotterdam's policies. The 2002 elections—in which Pim Fortuyn's new local party "Livable Rotterdam" became the largest party in the Rotterdam City Council—changed the face of local multicultural policies on integration. As a result of rising public anxiety about safety, immigration, and declining livability, the new right-wing coalition launched an ambitious program, with integration as one of its top priorities.¹² This initiative highlighted problems such as the concentration of low-skilled and residentially segregated inhabitants in so-called "problem neighborhoods," describing these areas as having reached their "absorptive capacity" to incorporate newcomers.¹³ These neighborhoods were targeted through programs such as "Mensen maken de stad" ("People Make the City"), an initiative that promoted urban citizenship as a way to increase the social and cultural integration of native-Dutch and immigrant ethnic communities. More controversially, the municipality implemented the newly introduced *Major Cities (Exceptional Measures) Act*, often referred to as the "Rotterdam Act."¹⁴ This act enabled local authorities to restrict the inflow of new, vulnerable residents into "problem neighborhoods."¹⁵

11 Masja van Meeteren et al., "Destination Netherlands: History of Immigration and Immigration Policy in the Netherlands," in *Immigration in the 21st Century: Political, Social and Economic Issue*, ed. Judy Ho (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2013), 113–70.

12 Coalitieakkoord Rotterdam. *Het nieuwe elan van Rotterdam [Coalition Agreement Rotterdam. The New Spirit of Rotterdam]* (Rotterdam: Municipality of Rotterdam, 2002).

13 Coalitieakkoord Rotterdam, *Rotterdam zet door: Op weg naar een stad in balans [Coalition Agreement Rotterdam, Rotterdam Persists. The Road to a Balanced City]* (Rotterdam: Municipality of Rotterdam, 2010).

14 The policy paper *Rotterdam Persists* (2003) states that the city would wish to control the "inflow of deprived groups into the region, city and borough. Anyone wishing to settle in certain problematic parts of the city would have to apply for a 'settlement permit.'" Eligibility for such a permit would be based on income from regular employment. This requirement should not apply to Rotterdam residents, but only to individuals and families wishing to move into these neighborhoods from outside Rotterdam. This formulation of the selective settlement policy carefully avoided mentioning ethnic origin as the criterion for admittance to the city, because that would be discriminatory. Nevertheless, Rotterdam's selective settlement policy was found to be incompatible with existing Dutch legislation. In December 2005 the Dutch government announced the *Major Cities (Exceptional Measures) Act*, which was subsequently adopted by the municipality of Rotterdam.

15 See Municipality of Rotterdam, *Beleidsregel burgerschapsbeleid en participatie [Policy Rule Citizenship Policy and Participation]* (Rotterdam: Municipality of Rotterdam, 2011). Parliamentary Documents II, 2010-2011, 29 407; and Parliamentary Documents II 2011-2012, 29 407. See also Erik Snel and Godfried Engbersen, "Changing Urban Policies in the City of Rotterdam," in *Between the Social and the Spatial*, eds. Katrien de Boyser, Caroline Dewilde, Danielle Dierckx, and Jürgen Friedrichs (Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2009), 149–66.



Eight years later, in 2010, “citizenship” became the key concept in local integration policy.¹⁶ A new coalition (consisting of Social Democrats, Christian Democrats, Conservative Liberals, and Social Liberals) launched a program entitled “Ruimte voor talent en ondernemen” (Room for Talent and Innovation).¹⁷ The term *allochtoon* (i.e. an immigrant or someone with at least one immigrant parent) was notably absent from the entire coalition program, while the terms “integration,” “problem neighborhood,” and “migration” occurred only once each. The program marked a shift away from targeting disadvantaged, ethnically segregated communities, toward a more generally inclusive model that emphasized the socioeconomic participation of all local citizens through work, education, sports, and culture.

In recent years the city has placed great importance on the role of immigrant organizations and citizen initiatives.

This process of inserting immigrant integration policies into broader social inclusion policies aimed at the general population is often referred to as “mainstreaming.” Integration policy is no longer set apart and promoted by a separate policy department; it is instead the responsibility of many different municipal departments, the private sector, and civil-society actors.¹⁸ Moreover, private-sector and civil-society actors—housing associations, employers, educational institutions, health organizations, and citizen associations—play a more dominant role in the design and implementation of integration policy. For example, in Rotterdam, educational institutions that offer higher-level vocational courses coordinate with employers to develop practical education programs that guarantee work.

In recent years the city has placed great importance on the role of immigrant organizations and citizen initiatives, allowing these initiatives to develop while helping to maintain open channels of communication. The program “Mee(R) doen, Rotterdammers in actie” (“Do More, People of Rotterdam in Action”) illustrates this dual approach.¹⁹ The city convened meetings with Caribbean, Moroccan, Turkish, and Pakistani associations to discuss issues around parenting, obesity, school completion, and work. This program illustrates that Rotterdam maintains some targeted efforts despite its broadly mainstreamed approach.

B. General Integration Policies

Rotterdam’s approach to mainstreaming involves general policy programs that aim to improve the capacities and opportunities of all Rotterdam residents. These programs are often simpler to implement and have more popular support than do targeted policies. This new approach to integration is visible in the ambitious National Program South Rotterdam (NPRZ) and the Rotterdam anti-poverty program. No specific target groups, ethnic or otherwise, are identified in advance for these two programs, although migrant groups do benefit significantly from them. South Rotterdam has a sizeable migrant population, and many migrant households live on social assistance.

NPRZ starts from the premise that many European cities have dual identities, as hosts to both buzzing economic activity and serious urban deprivation. Rotterdam has a world-famous harbor and affluent

16 “Citizenship” should not be understood here in its legal meaning, but rather as a sociological concept. It reflects the ties that link a person to the (local) community, no matter whether he or she is a Dutch national.

17 Coalitieakkoord 2010-2014, *Ruimte voor talent en ondernemen* (Rotterdam: Coalitieakkoord 2010-2014 Rotterdam, 2010), www.rotterdam.nl/Griffie/Document/2010-1227%20Coalitieakkoord%20Ruimte%20voor%20Talent%20en%20Ondernemen.pdf.

18 See Elizabeth Collett, Milica Petrovic, and Peter Scholten, *Experiences of Mainstreaming Migrant Integration in Europe: Lessons for the Netherlands* (Brussels: Migration Policy Institute Europe, 2013).

19 Municipality of Rotterdam. *Mee(R)doen, Rotterdammers in actie [Do More, People of Rotterdam in Action]* (Rotterdam: Municipality of Rotterdam, 2011).



neighborhoods, even as the low-skilled, ethnically diverse population of its southern neighborhoods grapples with large-scale poverty and unemployment. Since 2012 NPRZ has been active in the most deprived, ethnically diverse neighborhoods of South Rotterdam, which have a combined population of 77,000 residents, about one-third of the total population of that part of the city, which is situated south of the river Meuse (Maas) that splits the city in two. NPRZ is founded on three pillars: education, work, and housing. First, the program aims to improve the educational level of young people from the area—for example, by reducing school dropouts, and encouraging disadvantaged youth to choose promising fields of study that prepare them for technical or caring professions. It also aims to reduce unemployment and stimulate labor market participation, by providing job guarantees for youth and other jobseekers from the area. Last, the program aims to modernize 35,000 dwellings, which is one-third of the housing stock in South Rotterdam, in hopes that better-quality housing will help retain the upwardly mobile and attract middle-class households to this part of the city. It is too early to evaluate the outcomes of this program, which started in 2012. While it seems promising, the initiative has been beset by financial problems due to the global economic crisis and a lack of funding.

The Rotterdam anti-poverty program “Activerend armoedebeleid” (“Activating Poverty Policy”) targets all poor Rotterdam citizens. In addition to individual social assistance benefits, Rotterdam provides a state pension allowance and a dependent child allowance, and contributes to collective health insurance for poor households. There is also an income supplement for Rotterdam citizens who have lived on a low income for over five years. The municipality subsidizes organizations that promote the participation of children from poor families in sports and cultural activities.

C. Targeted Integration Policies

Rotterdam’s anti-poverty program demonstrates that even a “mainstreamed” approach may target beneficiaries, for example, children or people suffering from chronic disease. At the same time, the city of Rotterdam continues to develop policies that target specific migrant groups, especially those with longstanding disadvantages, recently arrived labor migrants (in particular from Central and Eastern Europe), and highly skilled expats.

One such targeted program, already mentioned, is “Do More, People of Rotterdam in Action.” This program seeks to address social issues such as crime, unemployment among youth and women, early school-leaving, and obesity—all of which are prevalent in certain immigrant communities, including Caribbean, Moroccan, and Turkish enclaves. Other projects focus on providing specific services designed to foster identity and belonging among these communities, through measures such as presenting successful role models to school classes and increasing parents’ participation in schools.²⁰ These targeted programs often take the form of pilot projects, training sessions, or forums to encourage ideas and feedback from citizen groups.²¹

Rotterdam’s policy on labor migrants from CEE is one of the most important and hotly debated in the past few years. While most new labor migrants integrate smoothly into urban society and contribute to the regional economy, the labor mobility triggered by the EU enlargements of 2004 and 2007 has challenged civic integration.²² Problems include nonregistration and irregular work (for example, arising from “moonlighting” or fraudulent employment agencies), poor-quality housing and homelessness, and educational issues such as not enrolling or withdrawing children from school. Almost all of these social problems are felt most keenly at the local level.²³ Moreover, they illustrate the limitations of distinguishing

20 See Marianne van Bochove, *Een rolmodel, ik? Vijftien Rotterdamse vrouwen over succes, inspiratie en mentoring* (Rotterdam: Sociaal Platform Rotterdam, 2008).

21 See Municipality of Rotterdam, *Mee(R)doen, Rotterdammers in actie [Do More, People of Rotterdam in Action]* (Rotterdam: Municipality of Rotterdam, 2011).

22 See Godfried Engbersen, “Labour Migration from Central and Eastern Europe and the Implications for Integration Policy,” in Jan Willem Holtslag, Monique Kremer, and Erik Schrijvers, eds., *Making Migration Work: The Future of Labour Migration in the European Union* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2013): 104–21.

23 See Snel, Engbersen, Iliès, van der Meij, and Rusinovic, *Arbeidsmigranten uit Bulgarije, Polen en Roemenië in Rotterdam*.



between non-EU migrants and mobile EU citizens for the purposes of integration policy—as per the EU framework on free movement policy—since EU migrants may also need to learn the language and become familiar with Dutch society. The city of Rotterdam was among the first to publicly address CEE labor migration. Along with The Hague, Rotterdam organized a summit on Polish migration in 2007 that was attended by 40 Dutch municipalities. Both cities have since continued to draw attention to the integration challenges of CEE labor migrants, prompting the Dutch Parliament to initiate a large-scale parliamentary inquiry into “Lessons Concerning Recent Labor Migration” in 2011.²⁴ Following consultations with Rotterdam and other cities, the national government prepared a series of specific policy measures, mainly in the areas of registration, work and enforcement of labor regulations, social provisions, housing, civic integration, and repatriation.²⁵

The “expatriate policy” is a third example of a targeted policy. Rotterdam has developed specific services, such as an Expat Desk, to facilitate the integration of new immigrant groups (many of them highly skilled temporary migrants) in Rotterdam. Cities like Rotterdam must not only attract the highly skilled, but help them to feel at home and facilitate their integration process. Research has indicated that highly skilled immigrants are integrated in Rotterdam society to a limited extent, and that some of them would like more integration.²⁶ National and local integration policies have traditionally focused on migrants who settle permanently. Increasingly, however, Rotterdam is a temporary home (three to five years) for a transient workforce. Highly skilled labor migration in particular represents a new challenge for Rotterdam.

IV. Conclusion

Rotterdam’s past and present have been shaped by migration. But despite political shifts in response to changing demographics, Rotterdam’s policies have remained remarkably constant in a number of respects.

First, the city has exhibited concern over dense spatial concentrations of vulnerable groups since the early 1970s, culminating in the so-called “Rotterdam Act.” Second, the city leadership has always taken a pragmatic approach to fostering communication with immigrant communities and their associations, even when this appears to be incompatible with principles such as the separation of church and state. Third, Rotterdam’s pioneering development of the idea of “urban citizenship” can still be observed in the most recent (2010-14) local government program, which emphasizes active citizenship and participation. And, finally, the city has been aware for some time now that not all urban problems can be solved at the local level alone. Some issues require public policy interventions at the national or even supranational level.

Looking ahead, Rotterdam will continue to attract immigrants—but with important differences. While the city will likely continue to be a destination of choice, it will need to avoid simply becoming a “way station” or transit point.²⁷ There are two major factors at play. One is that migrants will continue to settle within city limits, where housing is relatively cheap and they can be close to their families or networks. As some of these new arrivals settle, they may become upwardly mobile and leave the city for the suburbs. This pattern is now becoming clearly visible among the children of those immigrants who settled a few decades ago.

24 Temporary Parliamentary Commission, *Eindrapport Arbeidsmigratie in goede banen (Final Report, Managing Labour Migration)*, *Parliamentary Documents Netherlands* 32 680, 2011-12.

25 Parliamentary Documents II, 2010-2011, 29 407; and Parliamentary Documents II 2011-2012, 29 407. See also Godfried Engbersen, Peter Scholten, and Erik Snel, “In Pursuit of Multi-level Governance. Urban Responses to the New Labour Migration from Central and Eastern Europe” (paper presented at the 20th International Conference of Europeanists, Crisis and Contingency: States of (In)stability, Amsterdam, June 25-27, 2013).

26 Marianne van Bochove and Godfried Engbersen, “Beyond Cosmopolitanism and Expat Bubbles: Challenging Dominant Representations of Knowledge Workers and Trailing Spouses,” *Population, Space and Place* (published online, December 10, 2013); and van Bochove, Rusinovic, and Engbersen, *On the Red Carpet*.

27 See Doug Saunders, *Arrival City: How the Largest Migration in History Is Reshaping Our World* (New York: Pantheon, 2011).



However, not everyone will be so lucky: the less successful are likely to stay behind, and some may remain highly disadvantaged. Moreover, as more successful immigrants vacate their homes, these properties may become occupied once more by newcomers—many of them labor migrants (including unauthorized workers) who may have traveled from Eastern Europe or farther afield without their families and with no intention to settle down for any prolonged period. Many such temporary residents are likely to end up in the least attractive parts of the city. Consequently, these areas may become more like a way station, with all of the attendant risks: housing neglect, lack of social cohesion, deprivation, public health risks, and crime. It is very important, therefore, to invest the resources needed to improve city housing and residents' overall living environment, ensure that rules are enforced, invest in schools and health care, and build sports facilities and otherwise promote the participation of area residents in community life.

If the city were to become more of a way station, the problems would be most obvious at lower socioeconomic levels but would also be felt at the higher end of the income spectrum. If they see their stay as temporary, high-skilled workers may not take the trouble to learn Dutch or familiarize themselves with the local community. This may in turn affect the city's social fabric. While the needs of high-skilled workers may call for less attention than those of the socioeconomically disadvantaged, they too require the focus of city policymakers. Some temporary high-skilled workers may demand special educational facilities for their children, or need encouragement to leave their mark on local associations and community life.

Immigrant integration, both in the short and long term, is intimately intertwined with other urban processes.

Rotterdam will certainly develop into an even more international city than it is now. But its position as a typical postindustrial city, characterized by one dominant attribute—its port—leaves the city's economy vulnerable. Many of the low-skilled jobs once available can be moved elsewhere. In thriving global cities, such as Amsterdam, many low-skilled jobs have been moved to the service sector (e.g., domestic work, cleaning, or catering), where they are more directly linked to the high-skilled sectors. To compete in the global economy, the city of Rotterdam will have to invest in retaining low-skilled jobs—and workers across the skills spectrum—and raising the educational levels of its entire population, as well as improving the quality of its housing and cultural offerings.

Rotterdam has been an innovator in the formulation of integration policies. The urban citizenship approach, an ongoing dialogue with immigrant communities, the so-called "Rotterdam Act," and current policies to regulate new labor migration from CEE have served as examples for other Dutch and European cities. Yet the impacts of its innovations are as yet unclear. Skeptics argue that "mainstreaming" integration policy leaves fewer resources for the people most in need of them, while others argue that it will force powerful municipal departments (in the policy domains of education, housing, economic development, and finance) to pay more attention to how their work affects integration. Yet one point may be agreed upon: integration policy can never address only immigrants, whether as individuals or as communities. Immigrant integration, both in the short and long term, is intimately intertwined with other urban processes. As such, integration policies do not stand alone, but should be designed in concert with broader local, national, and transnational policy initiatives.



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