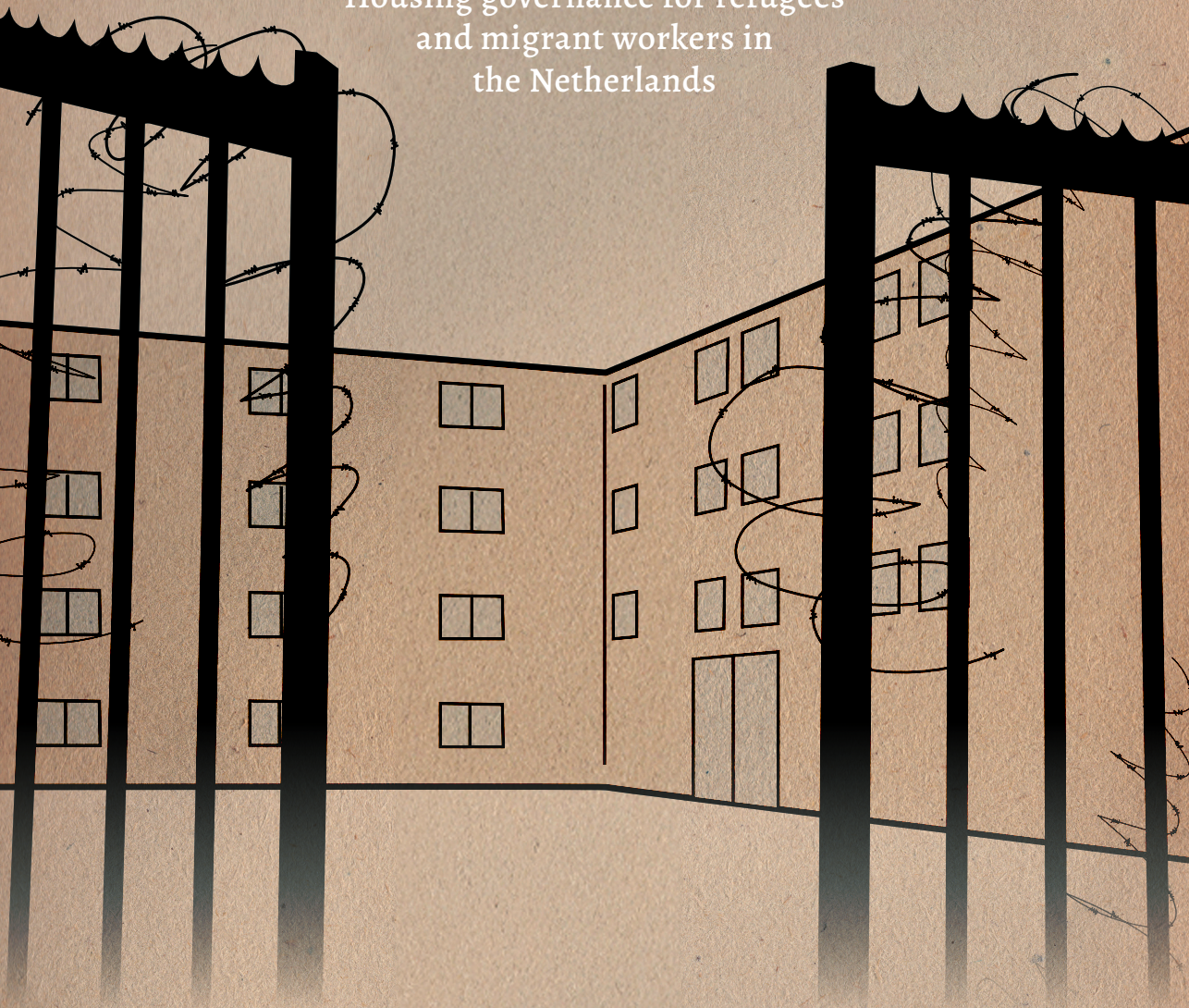


“IF IT REMAINS OUT OF SIGHT”

Housing governance for refugees
and migrant workers in
the Netherlands



Ids Baalbergen

“If it remains out of sight”

Ids Baalbergen

Colofon

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“If it remains out of sight”

Housing governance for refugees and migrant workers in the Netherlands

“Als we er niets van merken”

De huisvesting van vluchtelingen en arbeidsmigranten in Nederland
(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)

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1

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Since the beginning of this research project, the provision of housing for immigrants has become an increasingly debated topic in Dutch society. In the past year, the previous cabinet collapsed over the right to family reunification for refugees. During the subsequent elections, immigration and the housing market formed two of the most prominent political issues (IPSOS, 2023). The elections resulted in the first victory of a radical-right wing party in Dutch history and the formation of a right-wing cabinet. This recently formed cabinet aims for “the strictest asylum admission regime and the most comprehensive migration control package ever” (PVV, VVD, NSC, & BBB, 2024). The parties argue that immigration controls are needed because immigration puts pressure on the already overburdened housing market. Shortages in the housing market form an important driver of political debates about the inflow of immigrants (Robinson, 2010).

Housing is not only an important driver of political debates, it also plays a critical role at the individual level as adequate housing is a means to many other ends (Kimhur, 2020). Housing can impact one's capabilities to find employment, attend education, and be part of a social community. Despite increasing diversity in immigration patterns, previous research has mainly focused on housing for “classical” migrant groups originating from a limited number of countries such as Turkey, Morocco, or the former colonies (e.g. Bolt, Van Kempen & Van Ham, 2008; Boschman, Kleinhans & Van Ham, 2017; Zorlu, Mulder & Van Gaalen, 2014). However, members of different migrant groups face varying challenges in the housing market. This is caused by the characteristics of individual migrants, such as income, family composition and intended length of stay in the Netherlands, and is also a result of the structural conditions faced by different migrant groups. Migrants belong to various “entry categories” and this leads to the entitlement to or denial of certain rights.

In the Netherlands, debates about the inflow of immigrants particularly focus on refugees and Central and Eastern European migrant workers. Refugees are initially placed in asylum seeker accommodation, and after receiving a residence permit, they are emplaced in social housing. This emplacement occurs on the basis of a so-called “dispersal” policy, which means that refugees are dispersed over municipalities across the country. In contrast, migrant workers are free to enter the country and frequently arrive through private employment agencies. These agencies often offer migrant workers “package deal” contracts consisting of a place to work, lodging, healthcare insurance, and transport to and from work (Szytniewski & Van Der Haar, 2022).

Despite these differences, both groups encounter significant challenges in the Netherlands. Previous research suggests that reception and dispersal policies can have a disruptive effect on the refugees' lives by depriving them of access to supportive social networks (Van Liempt & Miellet, 2021; Zill, 2023) and have a detrimental effect on their employment outcomes (Fasani, Frattini & Minale 2022; Hainmueller, Hangartner & Lawrence, 2016). This is especially concerning in the Netherlands, where refugees are more often unemployed compared to refugees in other European countries (Buimer, Elah-Madadzadeh, Schols & Odé, 2020). Whereas refugees face difficulties in the labor market, migrant workers face significant challenges in the housing market. A recent report by the European Policy Institute (2020) concluded that substandard living conditions have become a structural feature among migrant workers in Europe.

The aim of this dissertation is to shed light on the governance of housing for refugees and migrant workers in the Netherlands, and to uncover how housing governance defines their opportunities to build a living in the first years after arrival. In pursuit of this aim, a governance network perspective is developed to illuminate decision-making processes underlying the provision of housing for migrant workers. Understanding these decision-making processes can help to explain the persistence of substandard living conditions among migrant workers. Developing a network perspective is especially fitting in the provision of housing for migrant workers because it involves interdependencies between public stakeholders on various levels of governance, multiple types of private stakeholders, as well as civil stakeholders. In addition, network perspectives are able to provide insight into the diverging interests and perceptions among involved stakeholders (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016; Mullins & Rhodes, 2007), as well as the underlying power relations, that play a crucial role in the persistence of policy impasses. The networked provision of housing to migrant workers is in stark contrast to the strictly streamlined housing situation of refugees who are initially placed in asylum reception centers and subsequently in social housing.

After gaining an understanding of the governance of housing for migrant workers, attention is shifted to the potential consequences of housing governance by looking into the effects of dispersal policies and reception procedures on the lives of refugees. Because the housing situation of refugees is strongly streamlined, it provides an ideal setting to investigate the consequences of housing governance on the lives of individuals. By studying the governance of housing, as well as the outcomes of housing policies, the dissertation emphasizes the role of the receiving society in the reception of both groups. Existing work has often attributed the disadvantaged position of migrants to explanations on the individual level. As a result, these studies run the risk of perceiving "integration" as an individual-level trait, and consequentially, as

an individual responsibility (Schinkel, 2018). However, the opportunities of migrants are dependent upon contextual factors in the social, political, and economic domain (Phillimore, 2021). This dissertation emphasizes the crucial role of housing governance.

The remainder of the introduction is structured as follows. In the next section, a short background on the position of migrant workers and refugees in the Netherlands is given. After that, the main theoretical underpinnings of the dissertation will be discussed. Then, the used methods are described. Finally, an overview of the chapters in the thesis will be given.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 Immigration patterns to the Netherlands in the 21st century

Over the past decades, migration patterns to the Netherlands have become increasingly diverse in terms of where people come from, how long they stay, and what motivates them to migrate (Engbersen, Bovens, Bokhorst & Jenissen, 2020). Five types of migration motives are commonly distinguished. Work is the most common migration motive and people who come to the Netherlands with this motivation are often subdivided in (1) migrant workers who work in manual occupations, and (2) knowledge workers who are employed in white-collar occupations. The third group are family-reunification migrants who migrate to live with a partner or family. The fourth group are study migrants who migrate to enroll in education. The last group are asylum migrants, who fled to the Netherlands fearing armed conflicts or persecution.

The largest group is made up of migrants who come to the Netherlands from other European countries in order to work. Citizens of the European Union can work in any European country under the Freedom of Workers Directive. There has been a rapid increase in labor mobility from Central and Eastern European countries such as Romania, Poland, and Bulgaria to Western European countries such as Germany, France, and the Netherlands since the gradual enlargement of the European Union after 2003 (European Commission, 2022).

Although refugees have been the smallest category in absolute numbers over the past decades (Statistics Netherlands, 2024), they are the most discussed group in the public debate. Due to persisting unrest in Middle Eastern and Eastern African countries such as Syria, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Iran, and Iraq, people have been forced to flee these countries. The vast majority of people fled to neighboring countries, a smaller group applied for asylum in European countries such as the Netherlands.

1.2.2 The reception of migrant workers

The majority (60%) of Central and Eastern European migrants who come to the Netherlands are employed through employment agencies (Booster Team Migrant Workers, 2020). These workers are primarily employed in sectors that require manual labor, such as horticulture, logistics, and food processing. More than two-thirds of this group earn minimum wages (SEO, 2022). Employment agencies often recruit migrant workers in their country of origin and offer them so-called “package deals”, consisting of housing, daily transport to and from the workplace, and healthcare insurance. For these services, the law allows employers to withhold up to a maximum of 25 percent of the minimum wage (Booster Team Migrant Workers, 2020).

Lodging is predominantly arranged in the existing housing stock. In most cases, a private property owner sublets housing to an employment agency, which then sublets it to several migrant workers (SNE, 2022). Because of housing shortages in the Netherlands, employment agencies are increasingly organizing accommodation outside the regular housing stock in holiday parks, temporary container dwellings, or specially developed campus-like residential buildings (Booster Team Migrant Workers 2020). In the Netherlands, the Housing Act makes a distinction in the minimum standards for housing depending on whether the unit is defined as having a lodging or residential zoning designation. Units with a lodging function face less restrictive requirements because lodging is perceived as temporary. Through collective labor negotiations, two specific quality marks for lodging for migrant workers exist (SNF / AKF) (Government of the Netherlands, 2021). The current requirements for the SNF label state that the minimum size of the bedroom should be at least 3.5 square meters per person, that there should be at least one shower and one toilet for every eight people, and that hygiene should not pose a risk to public health (SNE, 2024). These requirements fall short of the International Labor Organization's (1961) Global Housing Guidelines for Migrant Workers, which call for a minimum of 7.5 square meters for a two-person bedroom, and one shower and toilet for every six people.

1.2.3 The reception of refugees

Refugees who arrive in the Netherlands need to go through an asylum procedure to obtain a residence permit. During this procedure, their application is examined and they are kept in asylum reception until a decision is made. Applications are assessed by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (IND). Commissioned by the Ministry of Justice and Security, the Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA) is responsible for the reception of asylum seekers. Asylum seekers are placed in different types of asylum seeker centers depending upon the stage of an individuals' asylum procedure. Directly after arrival, people stay in the national Central reception

center (COL) for approximately one week where they undergo a medical intake and have a first application interview. After this, people are assigned to a Process reception center (POL) where they go through the general asylum procedure. When there is no space in a POL, people have to wait in a pre-POL center before being transferred to a POL. After leaving the POL, people are placed in a general asylum reception center. National regulations dictate that opportunities for personal development – such as Dutch language classes – are limited until entering regular asylum reception. If a positive decision is made on one's asylum application, people are allocated to social housing in a particular municipality. Social housing is often not directly available, so people who have been granted a residence permit often wait for available social housing in a reception center. The general principle underlying current asylum reception policies is that the reception of asylum seekers should be “austere but humane” (Advisory Council on Migration, 2013). Policies aim for austerity with the intention of discouraging immigration to the Netherlands (Rijken, De Lange, Besselsen & Rahouti, 2017).

After leaving asylum reception, refugees are placed in social housing somewhere in the country following a dispersal policy. In proportion to the number of inhabitants, every municipality in the Netherlands is obliged to facilitate accommodation for refugees. Until 2017, the allocation of refugees to municipalities did not take peoples' work history or education into account (Sax, Walz, and Engelen, 2019). This dispersal policy is motivated by three rationales. First, dispersal is seen as a method to prevent concentrations of refugees in particular places. Concentrations are perceived as undesirable because they might be detrimental to the “integration” of refugees. Second, it is argued that dispersal helps to ensure public support for receiving refugees, as concentrations in certain areas are expected to draw more opposition. Last, dispersal is a means that helps to “spread the burden” on social services such as the social housing stock (Robinson, Andersson & Musterd 2003).

1.3 Theory

1.3.1 Governance networks and housing for migrant workers

Over the past decades, the role of national governments in the governance of housing has shifted across Europe. The governance of housing has increasingly been decentralized to other layers of government (Van Bortel, 2009). In addition, there has been a shift towards privatization, where the role of the government has changed from creating blueprints to facilitating the construction of housing by private stakeholders (Verhage, 2003). The decentralization and privatization of

housing governance has increased the number and diversity of involved stakeholders. Currently, housing governance for migrant workers involves public stakeholders on the national, provincial, regional, and municipal level, different types of private stakeholders such as employment agencies, developers, and land owners, as well as civil stakeholders such as non-governmental organizations and trade unions. Related to this, Klijn and Koppenjan (2016) use the term “governance networks” to refer to patterns of enduring social relations between actors involved in addressing a particular issue. Such networks involve cooperation between interdependent actors (Mullins & Rhodes, 2007). While this perspective is increasingly used in the public administration domain, it has so far remained underdeveloped in housing research. However, by looking into the patterns of social relations among involved stakeholders, an understanding of the underlying interdependencies, diverging interests, and perceptions can be acquired.

Following Klijn and Koppenjan (2016), the current thesis studies the consequences and interrelationships between three types of complexity within governance networks, namely institutional complexity, substantive complexity, and strategic complexity. Institutional complexity is a consequence of the divergent institutional backgrounds of stakeholders involved in governance networks. Institutional backgrounds come with particular sets of rules which can be defined as “fixed and generalizable procedures for interaction” (Klijn and Koppenjan 2016, p. 105). Institutional complexity occurs when stakeholders adhere to conflicting rules. The second type of complexity, substantive complexity, stems from disagreement between stakeholders regarding the nature, causes, and solutions to a particular policy problem. The last complexity type, strategic complexity, is a result of the diverging interests of involved stakeholders and the corresponding strategic actions of stakeholders.

The governance of housing for migrant workers involves significant levels of institutional, substantive, and strategic complexity. Public stakeholders at various levels of governance, as well as different types of private parties evaluate decisions on different criteria (Rhodes, 2007). While decision-makers at the level of the European Union emphasize the economic benefits of the free movement of labor, local governments emphasize the social consequences (Engbersen, Leerkes, Scholten & Snel, 2017). Despite these diverging evaluation criteria, actors within governance networks are interdependent and consequently, stakeholders have an interest in developing particular strategies to influence the decision-making process in their favor (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016).

1.3.2 Arrival infrastructures and the social mobility of refugees

In contrast to the governance of housing for migrant workers, the governance of housing for refugees is strictly regulated. After refugees arrive in the Netherlands, they are emplaced in asylum reception centers, and once they receive a residence permit, they are dispersed and allocated to social housing throughout the country. These policies restrict the freedom of refugees to choose their place of residence. However, the allocated place of residence can have a significant impact on the lives of refugees because localities offer access to dissimilar arrival infrastructures. The concept of arrival infrastructures refers to the geographical context in which newcomers arrive and these arrival infrastructures influence the opportunities that newcomers have for social mobility (Meeus, Arnaut & Van Heur, 2019).

While quantitative research has often emphasized the negative consequences of prolonged periods of asylum reception (e.g., Hainmueller, Hangartner & Lawrence, 2016), recent qualitative literature emphasizes that the geography of asylum reception matters as well. The spatial, material, and institutional context of asylum reception can influence the opportunities of refugees to have contact with local residents (Zill, Van Liempt, Spierings & Hooimeijer, 2020). Asylum seekers who live in larger centers may not be seen as individuals by local residents but as a depersonalized mass (Zill, Van Liempt & Spierings, 2021). At the same time, the context of asylum reception can also influence refugees' opportunities to accumulate human capital while waiting. Refugees who live in more remotely located centers are confined from semi-public urban amenities such as churches, schools, and libraries (Wessendorf & Phillimore, 2019), and this may have a detrimental effect on their opportunities to learn the Dutch language (Kox & Van Liempt, 2022).

The location to which a refugee is dispersed after leaving asylum reception may similarly affect opportunities for social mobility. People who are emplaced in areas which offer access to fewer arrival infrastructures may encounter more difficulties with finding employment, attending education, and learning the Dutch language. The accessibility of suitable employment can form a crucial economic arrival infrastructure in the labor market integration of refugees (Holzer, 1991). Besides the presence of jobs, existing research suggests that long-established migrants can help newcomers with finding their way. People who migrated in the past can form a social arrival infrastructure and are able to share crucial information to newly arrived refugees (Hanhörster & Wessendorf, 2020). Besides personal support, refugees may also receive support from (non-)governmental organizations depending upon the institutional arrival infrastructure (Van Riemsdijk & Axelsson, 2021).

By focusing on the uneven geographies of asylum reception and the arrival infrastructures available to refugees after dispersal, the current thesis emphasizes the role of housing governance in the social mobility of refugees.

1.4 Research approach

The current thesis focuses on decision-making processes in the provision of housing for migrant workers, as well as the relationship between housing governance and the social mobility of refugees. To obtain an understanding of decision-making processes within the provision of housing for migrant workers, a qualitative perspective on the positions of actors within the governance network is developed. The consequences of housing governance on the social mobility of refugees are studied using full-population register data. This mixed methods approach allows the study of both the creation and consequences of housing governance. By studying both migrant workers and refugees, the thesis allows for the drawing of parallels between the two most prominently discussed groups in public governance.

1.4.1 Governance networks in housing for migrant workers

An understanding of housing governance for migrant workers was obtained through an analysis of the governance network involved in the provision of housing to migrant workers in the Rotterdam / The Hague region. The thesis focuses on the Rotterdam / The Hague region to enable an investigation of the role of public stakeholders on the local, regional, provincial, and national level, as well as different types of private and civil stakeholders. Figure 1.1 shows a map of the study region which is located in the province of South Holland. The Housing Region Rotterdam and the Housing Region The Hague are separate authorities. The Housing Region Rotterdam consists of the municipality of Rotterdam and thirteen surrounding municipalities. The Housing Region The Hague consists of The Hague and eight surrounding regions.

The thesis combines an analysis of policy materials with semi-structured interviews. A wide array of policy materials published by different types of public, private, and civil stakeholders is analyzed to obtain an understanding of the decision-making processes within the governance network. Based on the analyzed material, twenty-one stakeholders were interviewed representative of the governance network.

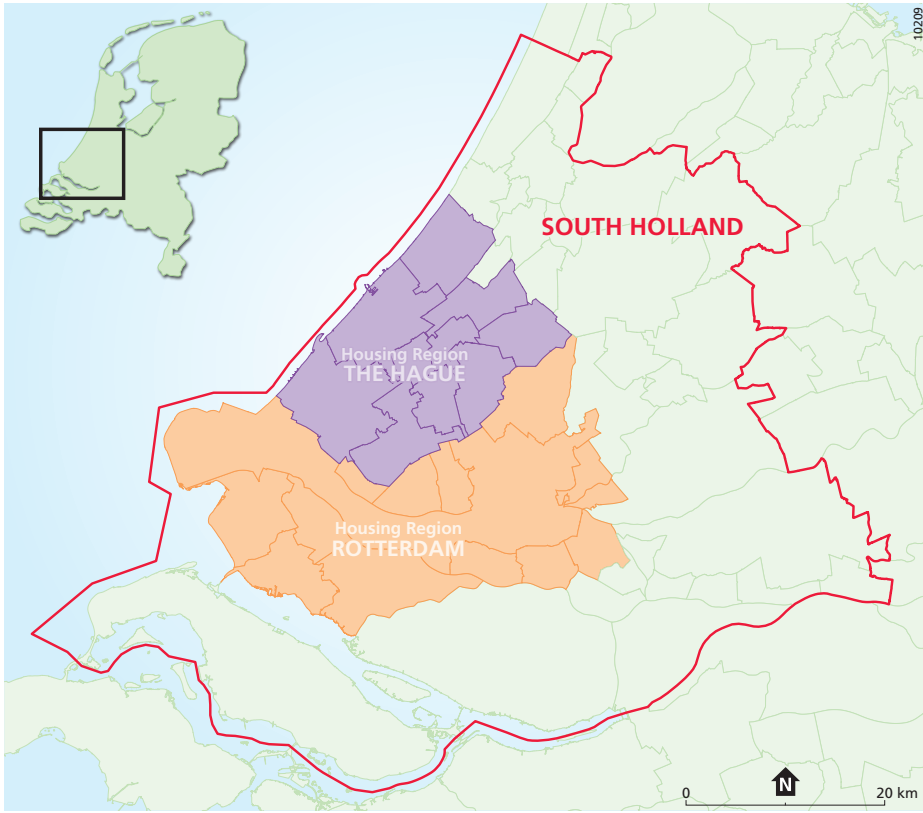


Figure 1.1. Map of the Rotterdam / The Hague region

1.4.2 Housing policies and social mobility outcomes among refugees

The relationship between housing governance for refugees and social mobility outcomes is studied using register data from Statistics Netherlands. This dataset covers all registered persons in the Netherlands and allows for the tracking of individuals over time. The register data consist of administrative information from various public institutions such as municipal governments, the Tax Department, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (IND), the Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA), and the Education Implementation Service (DUO). Because the dataset contains longitudinal information about the place of residence and the residential mobility of individual refugees, it enables a detailed investigation of the sociospatial context in which refugees reside. In addition, the dataset contains information about a variety of social mobility outcomes such as a persons' position on the labor market, enrolment in education, and Dutch language attainment.

1.5 Thesis outline

In chapters two and three of this thesis, decision-making processes among stakeholders involved in the provision of housing for Central and Eastern European migrant workers are analyzed. This is done by studying institutional, substantive, and strategic complexities within the governance network. Chapter two, entitled *Governance networks and accountability patterns in the provision of housing for migrants: the case of Central and Eastern European workers in the Netherlands* focuses on institutional and strategic complexities. It concludes that the interrelationship between a loosely defined institutional setting and the varying interests of public, private, and civil stakeholders on multiple levels of governance has led to a policy impasse that is difficult to breach. In the absence of clearly defined accountability patterns, stakeholders are able to avoid responsibility and place blame on each other instead. Chapter three has the title “*If it remains out of sight*”: *governance networks and power disparities in housing for migrant workers*. The chapter takes a critical perspective through a combined focus on substantive and strategic complexities. It argues that a disjuncture between policy rhetoric and practice exists. While stakeholders involved in the governance network emphasize that migrant workers should not be treated as second-class citizens, housing policies often implicitly aim at keeping them out of sight of the rest of the population.

In chapters four, five, and six, the attention is shifted to the relation between housing governance for refugees and their opportunities for social mobility. This is achieved by focusing on the geographies of asylum reception, as well as the arrival infrastructures available to refugees after moving into their first independent dwelling. Chapter four is entitled *Uneven geographies of asylum reception and the social mobility of refugees*. In the chapter, the relation between the spatial, material, and institutional context of asylum reception and the social mobility of refugees is studied. The chapter shows that more remote reception locations, reception locations further away from the first independent dwelling, and prolonged stays in irregular centers are associated with delays in Dutch language acquisition, enrollment in education, and employment. Chapters five and six focus on the arrival infrastructures available to refugees after dispersal. In the fifth chapter, *Quantifying the role of arrival infrastructures in the labor market integration of refugees*, it is shown that economic, social, and institutional arrival infrastructures matter in the opportunities that refugees have in the labor market. Chapter six - *Arrival infrastructures and the host country educational attainment of refugees* - emphasizes that arrival infrastructures can also affect refugees’ opportunities to enroll in higher education in the Netherlands. The accessibility of education,

the municipal political climate, and regional economic conditions influence the likelihood of enrolment in higher education.

In chapter seven, the overarching conclusion is drawn that housing policies for migrant workers and refugees primarily aim at keeping them out of sight. This conclusion is reached through a discussion of the preceding chapters. At the end of the thesis, a reflection is given on avenues for future research, and the theoretical and societal implications are discussed.

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2

Chapter 2

Governance networks and accountability patterns in the provision of housing for migrants: the case of Central and Eastern European workers in the Netherlands

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Abstract

Sub-standard living conditions among migrant workers have become a structural feature all over Europe. Although this has attracted the attention of many scholars, there is a lack of studies on the complex relations between various stakeholders in governing housing. This study fills this gap by analysing this housing issue from a governance network perspective. Through an analysis of policy documents and interviews with twenty-one stakeholders, we investigated institutional and strategic complexities. The results show that decision-making is complicated by unclear institutional accountability patterns and the diverging strategic interests of various stakeholders. The interrelationship between the loosely defined institutional setting (structure) and the varying interests of involved actors (agency) has led to a policy impasse that is difficult to breach. We argue that a reconsideration of existing accountability patterns is needed to reduce sub-standard housing conditions among migrant workers in the Netherlands.

Keywords: Housing, labor migration, migrant workers, governance network, accountability patterns, the Netherlands.

2.1 Introduction

Since the gradual expansion of the European Union (EU) to Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries after 2003, annual intra-EU mobility has steadily increased. Despite the advantages of intra-EU mobility (European Commission, 2021), the increasing demand for CEE labor migration has been accompanied by increasing reports of sub-standard housing conditions in multiple receiving countries, and the European Policy Institute (2020) even concluded that sub-standard living conditions among migrant workers have become a structural feature all over Europe. The Netherlands faced the largest relative increase in intra-EU mobility (9%) between 2017 and 2018 in the EU (European Commission, 2021), and annual intra-EU inflows have increased from just over 25,000 in 2004 to almost 125,000 in 2019 (Statistics Netherlands, 2021a). To meet labor demands, Statistics Netherlands expects this trend to continue. However, like in other receiving countries, a recent report commissioned by the Dutch government concluded that CEE migrant workers¹ in the Netherlands often live in precarious housing conditions (Booster Team Migrant Workers, 2020). The report proposed fifty recommendations to improve the living conditions of migrant workers. Yet, a decade before this publication, similar recommendations were put forward by another parliamentary committee in the Netherlands (Committee lessons from recent labor migration, 2011). Therefore, a significant policy impasse has arisen (Susskind & Cruikshank, 1987).

Previous studies that explored complications in the provision of housing for particular target groups have mostly done so by studying the development of housing systems. Kemeny (2001) argues that housing systems are shaped within particular welfare regimes. These regimes are a result of economic, political, social, and ideological power balances and it is assumed that the interplay between these power balances determines how housing is organized (Stephens, 2020). Consequentially, cross-country differences in power balances offer an explanation for diverging housing systems (Kemeny, 2006). Yet, the housing systems perspective disregards the diverging interests and perceptions among involved actors within countries that make the current policy problem especially “wicked” (Poppelaars & Scholten, 2008). However, this is becoming more and more relevant in the housing domain due to increasing interdependencies between public, private, and civil stakeholders (Mullins & Rhodes, 2007). In addition, the provision of housing for migrant workers involves interdependencies between actors across multiple regimes, such as the welfare regime (Esping-Andersen, 1990), migration regime (Sainsbury, 2006), and housing

1. For the sake of readability, the term “migrant workers” will be used in the remainder of this paper.

regime (Kemeny, 2001). Since the housing systems perspective overlooks these interdependencies, it is unable to identify the causes of the policy impasse.

As an alternative, this study develops a governance network perspective to gain more insight into the interaction process in which the provision of housing for migrant workers is negotiated. By focusing on the social relations among involved actors, this perspective enables us to shed light on the interdependencies and the diverging interests and perceptions among involved stakeholders (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016). Moreover, it enables us to study the duality of structure; institutional arrangements (structure) set the framework in which stakeholders pursue their strategic interests, while this pursuit (agency) subsequently transforms institutional arrangements (Giddens, 1984). Institutional arrangements in the provision of housing for migrant workers are investigated by looking into accountability patterns. Within the field of public administration, accountability patterns have been considered as a crucial institutional arrangement affecting the actions of decision makers (Bovens, 2010; Papadopoulos, 2007; Yang, 2012). The agency of stakeholders is investigated by studying the strategic interests and corresponding strategies of involved actors (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016). By explicitly paying attention to the interconnection between structure and agency within the governance network, we try to shed light on the mechanisms underlying the current policy impasse.

While the suitability of network perspectives in the field of housing has been underlined earlier, they have not yet emerged as a widely used theoretical approach (Mullins & Rhodes, 2007). We aim to contribute to the application of network approaches in the housing domain by developing a governance network perspective that takes the interrelationship between the institutional setting and the strategic interests of stakeholders into account. In doing so, we also aim to contribute to the existing governance network literature by perceiving accountability as an endogenous phenomenon (Yang, 2012); accountability structures constitute the institutional setting in which actors make decisions, while concurrently, the actions of actors (agency) transform the accountability structure. Therefore, we build on earlier frameworks that studied institutional and strategic complexities separately (e.g., Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016). Through our framework, we intend to identify points of intervention to reduce housing precarity among migrant workers in the Netherlands, as well as the wider EU. Recent studies have analyzed the institutional factors underlying the vulnerable working conditions of migrant workers across the EU (Berntsen & Skowronek, 2021; Lombard, 2023; Palumbo, Corrado & Triandafyllidou, 2022) and the factors underlying the insecure housing trajectories of individual migrant workers (Manting, Kleinpier & Lennartz, 2022; Szytniewski &

Van Der Haar, 2022; Ulceluse, Bock & Haartsen, 2022). We build on these studies by studying housing precarity among migrant workers through a governance network perspective.

The framework is applied to the Rotterdam / The Hague Region in the province of South Holland. The province of South Holland hosts the largest number of migrant workers in the Netherlands and most of them reside in the Rotterdam / The Hague Region (Statistics Netherlands, 2021b). They are mainly employed in labor-intensive industries such as the horticultural, logistics, meat processing, and construction sector. While these industries are mostly situated in the less urbanized areas of the region, migrant workers mainly find housing in urban areas due to the supply of private housing (PBLQ, 2020). Therefore, the facilitation of housing for migrant workers is a regional policy issue. The governance network was studied through an analysis of policy documents and debates, by attending public conferences, and by conducting twenty-one interviews with involved stakeholders between September 2021 and January 2022.

2.2 Stakeholders involved in the provision of housing for migrant workers in the Rotterdam / The Hague region

The majority of migrant workers (60%) coming to the Netherlands find employment through an employment agency. In some sectors, such as the horticultural sector, this percentage is higher (90%). These employment agencies often offer “package deals” to migrant workers, consisting of a place to work, lodging, healthcare, and transport to and from work (Booster Team Migrant Workers, 2020). Most migrant workers are lodged in the existing housing stock (SNF, 2022). Often employment agencies rent a dwelling from a private proprietor and subsequently sublet it to multiple migrant workers. Migrant workers without a package-deal contract may also directly find lodging from a private proprietor. Due to the increasing scarcity in the housing market, lodging for migrant workers is increasingly developed outside the regular housing stock. Employment agencies may arrange housing in holiday parks, temporary container dwellings, or specifically developed campus-like residential buildings (Booster Team Migrant Workers, 2020). They can develop such sites themselves or rent a site from a specialized company.

Private stakeholders that want to develop housing for migrant workers or that want to arrange housing in the existing stock are bound to regulations. These regulations are determined by public stakeholders on multiple levels of governance, namely, the

national government, the province of South Holland, the housing regions Rotterdam and The Hague, and individual municipalities in the region. The development of housing has to a large extent been decentralized in the Netherlands. Through the development of laws and regulations, the national government determines the capabilities and juridical instruments of actors at other levels of governance. While the previous cabinet argued that governmental intervention in the housing market was no longer necessary², the current government has firm ambitions regarding the development of housing for vulnerable groups such as migrant workers. Next to stimulating municipalities financially to accelerate the development of housing, the government has plans for obligatory regional visions on the provision of housing for vulnerable groups. In these visions, municipalities would need to map the housing demand of migrant workers in the region and make binding performance agreements (Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, 2022).

Similar to the national government, the province influences the provision of housing by setting specific regulations that municipalities need to follow. For example, the province determines in which areas the development of housing is allowed (Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, 2021). In exceptional cases, the province has the opportunity to actively steer municipal decision making but such instruments are avoided as much as possible. Instead, the province tries to reach agreements with municipalities through deliberation (Randstad audit office, 2019). At the regional level, municipalities collaborate in regional housing partnerships. The area that is studied consists of two housing regions, the Rotterdam region, consisting of the municipality of Rotterdam and thirteen surrounding municipalities, and the The Hague region, consisting of The Hague and eight surrounding municipalities (see figure 2.1). The national government sees regional cooperation as essential in the provision of housing for migrant workers because their daily urban systems transcend municipal borders; they may live in a particular municipality due to the accessibility of housing while working elsewhere in the region due to the availability of work. Additionally, a lack of cooperation may lead to spill over effects. If one municipality allows the development of housing for migrant workers while other municipalities in the region do not, that municipality may attract migrant workers from all over the region. Housing regions are less formalized than other levels of governance and are not directly elected but composed of municipally elected representatives. Decisions within the housing regions need formal ratification by the councils of individual municipalities. Within the framework set by higher levels of governance, municipalities decide where, when, and how housing for migrant workers is facilitated. Municipalities can set enforceable

2. In 2017, the minister responsible for housing stated that the housing market was “fixed” and that governmental intervention was no longer warranted.

guidelines about the development of new housing sites for migrant workers and can regulate their housing stock by implementing rules on subletting (Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, 2021).

Since migrant workers often find housing through package deals with employment agencies, trade unions are involved as civil stakeholders. Through collective labor agreements, they negotiate with employer organizations about the requirements of migrant worker housing quality marks such as the notice period after which someone has to leave employer-provided housing, the number of square meters per person, and the number of persons per bedroom (Federation of Dutch Trade Unions, 2020). Public stakeholders are unable to intervene in these negotiations (Government of the Netherlands, 2021).

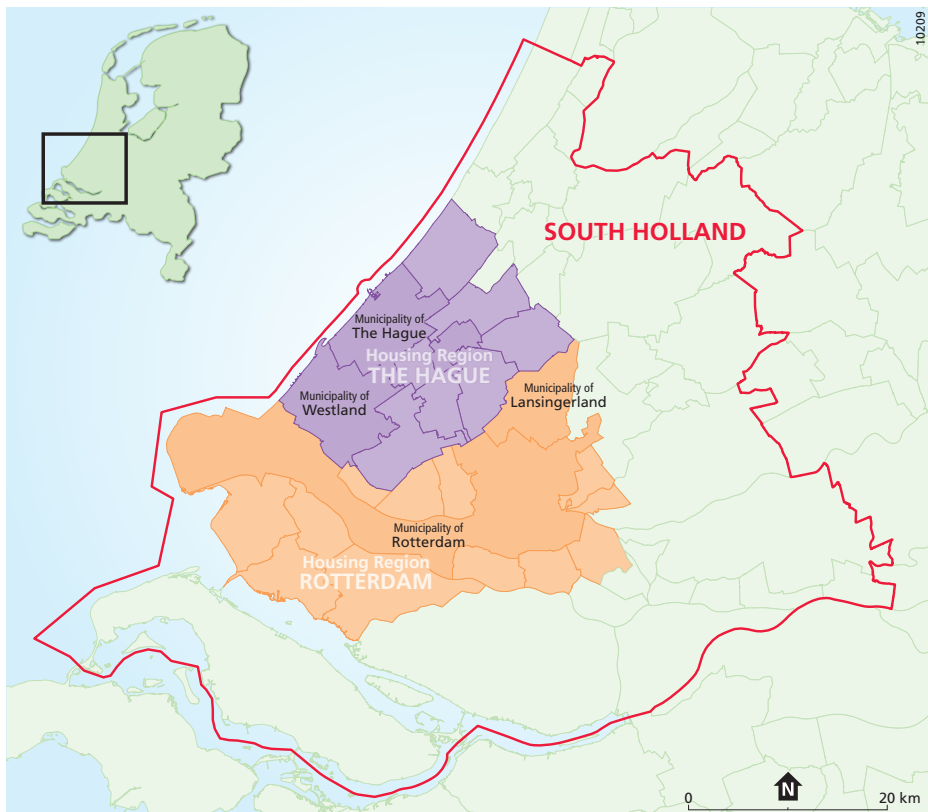


Figure 2.1. Map of the Rotterdam / The Hague region

2.3 Theoretical background

The current study investigates the provision of housing for migrant workers through a network governance perspective. Klijn and Koppenjan (2016) distinguish between four dominant meanings of the term “governance” across the literature. The term has been used to describe (1) a properly functioning government; (2) a form of governing where the role of the government is to steer rather than to row (new public management); (3) a form of governing that involves interaction across actors at various levels of government (multi-level government); and (4) a form of governing that takes place in networks of various public, private, and civil actors (network governance).

The current study is in line with the fourth conceptualization of governance. We believe this is apt as throughout Europe, the role of central governments in the provision of housing has decreased. This has involved the decentralization of tasks and responsibilities to other layers of government (Doherty, 2004; Van Bortel, 2009). In addition, the relation between public and private stakeholders has changed since the 1980s. There used to be a hierarchical relation between public and private stakeholders; public stakeholders developed blueprints that private stakeholders implemented. Currently, the provision of housing occurs in an interactive policy network with collaboration and contracts between public and private stakeholders (Verhage, 2003). Additionally, local governments are increasingly dependent upon private investments because of decreasing generic government budgets (Kokx & Van Kempen, 2010).

This shift towards governance has resulted in increasingly complex interaction processes between public, private, and civil actors with diverging interests and perceptions (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016). These interaction processes occur in governance networks which have been conceptualized variously across the literature, but conceptualizations generally emphasize the involvement of public, private, and civil stakeholders in decision making processes (see, for example, Blanco, Lowndes & Pratchett, 2011; Sørensen & Torfing, 2016). We broadly define governance networks as “networks of enduring patterns of social relations between actors involved in dealing with a problem, policy, or public service” (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016, 4). Other scholars have contrasted decision making within governance networks with decision making through hierarchical steering and competitive market dynamics (Sørensen & Torfing, 2005). Our conception is not confined to networked forms of governance as they build on rather than replace other forms of governance (Driessen, Dieperink, Van Laerhoven, Runhaar & Vermeulen, 2012). Yet, as described in the previous section, the involved stakeholders are to a large extent interdependent. Because of these

interdependencies, cooperation is required to enable collective action (Van Bueren, Klijn & Koppenjan, 2003). Klijn and Koppenjan (2016) argue that the absence of collective action can be explained by different types of complexity within governance networks. The current study focuses on conflicts within the institutional and strategic domain and on the interrelationship between the two domains.

2.3.1 Institutional dimension

Institutions can be defined as “systems of rules that structure the course of actions that a set of actors may choose” (Scharpf, 1997). Within these institutions, rules are perceived as “fixed and generalizable procedures for interaction” (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016). Due to the diversity of involved actors in governance networks, they originate from different institutional backgrounds. Consequentially, actors within a governance network may adhere to a diverging set of rules and this may result in institutional complexity (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016).

We study the institutional dimension by investigating accountability patterns. Accountability is defined as: “a relationship between an actor and a forum, in which the actor has an obligation to explain and to justify his or her conduct, the forum can pose questions and pass judgment, and the actor may face consequences” (Bovens, 2007). Since institutions form a system of rules that structure interactions processes, institutions define the roles and responsibilities of the actors. Because accountability means being held responsible, accountability patterns can reveal both the written and unwritten rules within a particular institutional setting. Accountability patterns are seen as a mechanism affecting the behavior of stakeholders within the governance network that ensure that decision-makers behave responsively anticipating the costs of unresponsive behavior (Bovens, 2010; Papadopoulos, 2007). Our definition of accountability contrasts with conceptualizations of accountability as a virtue that is to be evaluated (Bovens, 2010). This latter conceptualization of accountability has received considerable attention within the literature and many studies have emphasized tensions between networked forms of governance and the ideal of “democratic accountability” (e.g., Aarsæther, Bjørnå, Fotel & Sørensen, 2009; Esmark, 2007; Klijn & Koppenjan, 2012; Sørensen & Torfing, 2005). However, this normative discussion falls outside of the scope of the current study.

Issues within the institutional dimension may arise due to accountability excesses or deficits. Accountability excesses occur when a dysfunctional mixture of accountability mechanisms is in place. An actor may, for example, be expected to justify their conduct to multiple forums that use conflicting criteria to evaluate conduct. In contrast, accountability deficits occur when accountability arrangements are lacking. This occurs when an actor has no obligation to explain and justify conduct

or when a forum is unable to pass judgment (Bovens, 2007). Because accountability mechanisms affect the behavior of stakeholders, they can help in illuminating the mechanisms underlying the current policy impasse.

A distinction can be made between three accountability patterns, namely, vertical, horizontal, and public-private (Kang & Groetelaers, 2018). In a vertical accountability pattern, the forum wields formal power over the actor (Bovens, 2007). This is the case when there is a hierarchical relationship between an actor and a forum, which may exist between governments at different vertical layers. An example of such a hierarchical relationship is the ability of provinces to intervene in municipal decision making if municipalities are neglecting their responsibilities (Randstad audit office, 2019). Such a relation resembles the notion of “government” as a formalized approach to steering the public domain (Edelenbos & Teisman, 2008). Increased decentralization and privatization have led to a decrease in vertical accountability patterns and an increase in horizontal and public-private accountability patterns.

The second pattern is horizontal accountability. In contrast to vertical accountability, horizontal accountability refers to a situation where the accountee is not hierarchically superior to the accountor (Schillemans, 2011). This is the situation when public stakeholders at the same level of governance account to each other. In such situations, formal obligations to render account are often missing and accounting occurs voluntarily; it is rendered due to a morally felt obligation (Bovens, 2007). This notion of accountability is more fluid and stakeholders negotiate with each other on the subject of accountability (Kang & Groetelaers, 2018). Inter-municipal agreements regarding the provision of housing in a region are an example of a horizontal accountability pattern in the Netherlands. These agreements are reached through deliberation (Klok, Denters, Boogers & Sanders, 2018; Levelt & Metze, 2014). Municipalities can pass judgment on each other but are unable to implement formal penalization.

Lastly, accountability patterns exist between public and private stakeholders. With the shift from a providing state to an enabling state, the relationship between public and private stakeholders has changed. These developments have resulted in increasingly reciprocal accountability patterns. On the one hand, public parties induce private parties to behave in a socially desirable way (Kang & Groetelaers, 2018). Municipalities can, for example, compel developers to follow particular regulations in the development of housing for migrant workers and municipalities may penalize developers that violate these regulations. On the other hand, private parties can urge public stakeholders to provide a “good business climate” by threatening them with the prospect that they will otherwise take their investments elsewhere (Harvey, 1989).

Employer organizations may, for example, put pressure on public stakeholders to implement particular policy measures through media campaigns (Jacobs, Kemeny & Manzi, 2003). Although public parties are formally accountable to their voters, the increasing dependency of public parties on the resources of private parties may have changed this situation (Papadopoulos, 2010). Figure 2.2 gives a schematic overview of the three types of accountability patterns in the current study. Since public-private accountability may involve both vertical and horizontal patterns of accountability, it is displayed as a diagonal pattern.

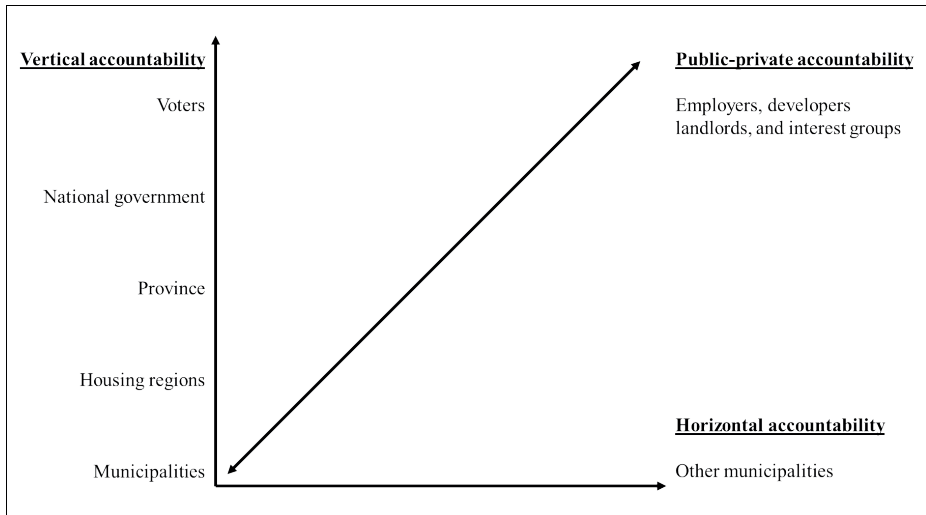


Figure 2.2. Accountability patterns in the provision of housing for migrant workers

2.3.2 Strategic dimension

Decreasing hierarchical accountability patterns in the provision of housing for migrant workers have led to increasing space for negotiation within the governance network (Haffner & Elsinga, 2009). However, stakeholders have diverging perceived strategic interests which they base on “the beliefs, images, and opinions that they have of their environment, the problems and opportunities within it, the other actors involved, and their dependencies upon them” (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016). Rhodes (2007) argues that public, private, and civil stakeholders evaluate their environment based on different criteria. While economic considerations form an important decision factor for developers, socio-political pressures may be decisive for public stakeholders. Related to this, public stakeholders on different levels of governance can have conflicting interests and tensions may arise when nationally set policies do not align with local interests (Kokx & Van Kempen, 2010). Previous research found major

differences of opinion among European, national, and local governments regarding the economic and socio-political consequences of CEE migration (Engbersen, Leerkes, Scholten & Snel, 2017). Within the field of migration studies, there has been an increasing interest in the local dimension of migration and diversity. This “local turn” involves the acknowledgement that governance challenges associated with migration usually manifest themselves at the local level (Caponio, Scholten & Zapata-Barrero, 2019; Myrberg, 2017; Schiller & Çağlar, 2009). In addition, it is underlined that the challenges that local governments face are dependent upon local specifics, and because of that, local governments have their own agendas (Zapata-Barrero, Caponio & Scholten, 2017). For example, Money (1997) argues that rapid increases in the number of immigrants may cause local opposition, whereas local demand for immigrant labor may lead to local support for immigration.

Despite diverging interests, actors within a governance network are interdependent. For this reason, stakeholders employ strategies in pursuit of their interests (Rhodes, 2007). Strategies can be targeted at three components of the decision-making process (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016). First, they can be aimed at influencing the perceptions and behavior of other actors in the network. Through lobbying, private parties may try to influence public decision-making (Van Bueren, Klijn & Koppenjan, 2003). Second, strategies can be aimed at the content of problem formulations and the solutions considered within the network. For instance, municipalities in the Rotterdam / The Hague region organized a summit in 2011 to raise public awareness and attention to the local consequences of CEE migration (Snel, Ostaijen & T Hart, 2019). Third, strategies may be aimed at the interaction process in which a particular issue is discussed. As an example, stakeholders that are dissatisfied with current policies may search for another setting to present alternative policy proposals. Pralle (2003) refers to this as “venue shopping”. Local governments that are unable to achieve certain policy preferences at their own level can try to move the discussion to another level of government (Scholten, Engbersen, Ostaijen & Snel, 2018). Another way to influence the interaction process is to stall decision-making. Within a regional government, particular municipalities may have an interest in waiting for better opportunities or in being excluded from decision-making. Particular stakeholders may have an interest in maintaining the status quo (Haffner & Elsinga, 2009; Levelt & Metze, 2014).

2.3.3 The interrelationship between the institutional and strategic dimension

Following the previous, the provision of housing for migrant workers is negotiated within a governance network that involves multiple types of accountability patterns and stakeholders with diverging interests and strategies. However, the institutional

and strategic dimension are not independent but mutually impact each other (Yang, 2012). In line with structuration theory (Giddens, 1984), accountability patterns within the institutional dimension affect the behavior of actors as they base their decisions on the institutional setting they acknowledge (Bovens, 2010; Healey & Barrett, 1990). Simultaneously, stakeholders acknowledge particular accountability patterns while disregarding others and this process transforms the existing accountability structure. A schematic overview of the interrelationship between agency and structure is shown in figure 2.3.

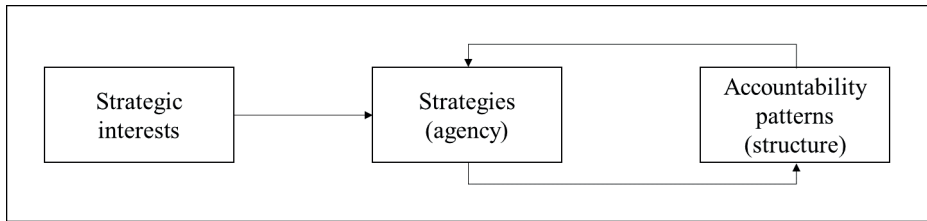


Figure 2.3. Accountability and the duality of structure

Due to the interrelationship, accountability should not be treated as an exogenous factor but as an endogenous phenomenon. By perceiving it as an endogenous phenomenon, it can be investigated how accountability is produced and reproduced by stakeholders (Yang, 2012). The production of accountability can be seen as an ongoing political process where stakeholders pressure each other and where power plays a vital role. Particular stakeholders gain the right to hold other stakeholders to account while other stakeholders do not gain this right (Etzioni, 1975). According to Torfing, Peters, Pierre, and Sørensen (2012), governance networks are ridden with power struggles. Yet, the perspective that the conception of accountability structures can also be conceived as a power struggle has only received scant attention across the literature (Yang, 2012). However, the production and reproduction of particular accountability structures may be an important means to exert power.

2.4 Methods

The current study is based on a combination of desk research and semi-structured interviews with involved stakeholders. Relevant documents, debates, and conferences were identified by searching for keywords in databases of the national government, the province of South Holland, and municipalities in the region³. Subsequently, these

3. National government: <https://www.tweedekamer.nl/zoeken>, Province of South Holland: <https://pzh.notubiz.nl/zoeken>, Municipalities: <https://zoek.openraadsinformatie.nl/>

data were used to identify relevant publications by private and civil stakeholders. In total, 155 policy materials were consulted and an overview of twenty principal materials can be found in appendix A. We analyzed the data by linking it to issues relating to our theoretical framework.

Concurrently, interview participants were identified based on the used material. Actors who were involved in public discussions about the topic were personally invited for an interview. We strived for a selection of public, private, and civil stakeholders representational of the governance network. Public stakeholders at the national, provincial, regional, and municipal level were included. We included rural (Lansingerland and Westland) and urban (Rotterdam and The Hague) municipalities from both regions and the position of other municipalities was discussed with stakeholders at the regional level. On the private level, we conducted interviews with representatives of employer organizations and a large employment agency, as these two stakeholder types form the basis of the migration industry (McCollum & Findlay, 2018). On the civil level, we interviewed a representative of a local grassroots organisation in The Hague, as well as a trade union with a national campaign for the improvement of the position of migrant workers in the Netherlands. Table 2.1 gives an overview of all participants⁴, a total of twenty-one stakeholders were interviewed between September 2021 and January 2022. The interviews lasted for approximately one hour and were conducted both offline and online due to COVID-19 regulations.

Interviews were structured based on the developed theoretical framework, but each interview guide was tailored to individual stakeholders on the grounds of desk research and earlier interviews. At the beginning, the institutional dimension was discussed with stakeholders. They were asked in which arenas they discuss the provision of housing for migrant workers, what sorts of decisions are made in these arenas, and whether they believe other stakeholders are currently taking sufficient responsibility. After discussing the institutional dimension, the focus of the interview shifted to the strategic dimension. In this part of the interview, stakeholders were asked about their strategic interests and the strategies they employ to influence other actors.

Interview data were initially coded based on the institutional and strategic dimension. After that, codes in the institutional dimension were subdivided into three types of accountability patterns based on earlier research (Kang & Groetelaers, 2018): vertical, horizontal, and public-private. In the strategic dimension, a distinction was made

4. The identities of participants in public positions have not been anonymized to enable us to present the statements of respondents in the right context. We obtained explicit oral or written permission beforehand.

between three types of interests: economic interests, socio-political interests, and interests in the status quo (Haffner & Elsinga, 2009; Kokx & van Kempen, 2010; Levelt & Metze, 2014; Rhodes, 2007). These strategic interests became apparent through an abductive inquiry that involved an analysis of the empirical data and existing literature (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2013). In other words, the three types of interests were identified by going back and forth between the empirical data and the existing literature. To enhance the validity of our findings, preliminary results of the analysis were shared with two experts in the field⁵ (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Table 2.1. Overview of interview participants

Type of stakeholder	Affiliation	Role	#
National government	Booster Team Protection Migrant Workers	Chair	1
	Socialist Party	Member of Parliament	2
Regional government	Province of South Holland	Policy expert	3
	Province of South Holland	Policy expert	4
	Province of North Brabant	Former commissioner	5
	Housing partnership Rotterdam region	Chair	6
	Housing partnership Rotterdam region	Policy expert	7
Local government	Municipality of The Hague	Policy expert	8
	Municipality of Rotterdam	Policy expert	9
	Municipality of Rotterdam	Policy expert	10
	Municipality of Westland	Alderman	11
	Municipality of Westland	Policy expert	12
	Municipality of Lansingerland	Alderman	13
Private	OTTO-workforce & Kafa Housing	CEO	14
	Greenports Nederland	Policy expert	15
	Aedes	Policy expert	16
	Consultancy agency	Consultant	17
	Consultancy agency	Consultant	18
	LTO	Chairman	19
Civil	IDHEM-Xtra	Coordinator	20
	FNV	Coordinator	21

5. Findings were shared with the chairman of the Booster Team Migrant Workers (Emile Roemer) and an expert in wicked policy problems (Prof. Wim van de Donk) who was previously involved in the provision of housing for migrant workers in North Brabant as provincial governor.

2.5 Results

2.5.1 Institutional dimension: public and private accountability deficits

During the interviews, it became clear that stakeholders mostly agreed on a particular set of recommendations to improve the housing conditions of migrant workers put forward by the Booster Team Migrant Workers (2020). While the stakeholders to a substantial extent agreed on potential solutions, they had conflicting perceptions about the desirability of different accountability arrangements. These conflicting perceptions are illustrated through the three earlier described accountability patterns.

2.5.1.1 Horizontal public accountability

In the Netherlands, municipalities are responsible for their own housing stock. However, leaving the facilitation of sufficient housing for migrant workers as a local responsibility has led to an unfair situation according to stakeholders in Rotterdam and The Hague. Due to the supply of affordable private housing in the two cities, investors have bought up housing in inner-city neighborhoods. A policy expert in Rotterdam (R10) argued: *“The problem is that only 21% of the migrant workers living in Rotterdam work within municipal boundaries (...) it would be nice if the municipalities where they work take responsibility for housing”*.

Westland and Lansingerland are the two municipalities in the region where the largest number of migrant workers work. Aldermen in both municipalities agree that they have a responsibility in the provision of housing for migrant workers (R11, R13). However, the Lansingerland alderman sees the provision of sufficient housing for migrant workers as a responsibility for all municipalities in the region. The jobs that migrant workers fill contribute to the provision of services in the region. For example, most supermarkets in the region are supplied by distribution centers in Lansingerland (R13). Due to the high number of migrant workers working in Lansingerland they cannot facilitate housing for all of them, and she noted that: *“there are also a lot of municipalities [in the region] that simply do not want to facilitate housing at all”* (R13). Thus, municipalities negotiate about the horizontal accountability structure (Kang & Groetelaers, 2018); while Rotterdam and The Hague argue that Westland and Lansingerland should do more, Lansingerland argues that other municipalities in the region should do more.

2.5.1.2 Vertical public accountability

Actors in Rotterdam, The Hague, and Lansingerland agree that coordination from higher levels of government is necessary. A policy expert in The Hague (R8) pled for more coordination from the province and argued that in her opinion *“the province*

acts too reserved about this". While stakeholders in Rotterdam (R10) and Lansingerland (R13) pled for discussing the issue within their housing region: *"We are now working on putting this on the agenda at the regional tables and we want to organize discussions about the topic there. Unfortunately, this has not yet succeeded"* (R10).

Stakeholders at the province were not willing to take a coordinative role and argued that: *"we believe that every municipality has a responsibility and that it should be discussed within a region"* (R4). To stimulate regional cooperation, they have asked all housing regions to develop a vision for the provision of housing for migrant workers (R4, R7).

Hence, the province sees a major role for the housing regions, however, the chair of the housing region Rotterdam (R6) has reacted with restraint to this task: *"At a certain point we said: 'We really cannot take it anymore'. Partly also because it is not a problem for the entire region and for every city."* Similarly, a policy expert (R7) at the housing region Rotterdam argued that it is not their responsibility to make decisions about the distribution of migrant workers: *"We have a voluntary partnership; you shouldn't push such a mandatory distribution discussion to it"*. Consequently, in their regional housing vision, they stated that their *"ambition is the sum of what the municipalities themselves think is necessary."* According to R7, municipalities within the region are unable to reach an agreement because *"if you want to force something down someone's throat, but he keeps his mouth shut, the discussion stops"*. In line with this, a policy expert in The Hague said: *"if you talk about numbers, you will not reach an agreement"* (R8). For that reason, the municipalities in The Hague housing region decided to turn to an external consultancy agency.

While multiple municipalities in the Rotterdam / The Hague region have pled for increased vertical coordination, it remains difficult to reach regional agreements. Neither the province nor the two housing regions seem to be capable or willing to take a coordinative role, this has resulted in an absence of vertical accountability patterns (Bovens, 2007).

2.1.5.3 Public-private accountability

Public stakeholders did agree on another solution to increase the provision of housing for migrant workers. According to them, employers that hire migrant workers *"also have a responsibility in organizing proper housing"* (R13). Public stakeholders argued that employers are currently not taking sufficient responsibility. In addition, R7 and R13 argued that employers deliberately leave the provision of housing to municipalities.

Despite agreement among public stakeholders that private stakeholders should take more responsibility, they are not legally obliged to facilitate housing. Therefore,

municipalities can only induce them to behave in a socially desirable way (Kang & Groetelaers, 2018) through moral appeals. An issue for Rotterdam and The Hague is that they do not have an overview of local employers that employ migrant workers (R8, R9). Moreover, most migrant workers living in Rotterdam and The Hague work in other municipalities, a policy expert in Rotterdam (R9) argued that this “*makes it difficult to conduct a one-on-one conversation*” with a specific employer.

Another factor that complicates private accountability is that approximately 60% of the migrant workers working in the Netherlands work via employment agencies (Booster Team Migrant Workers, 2020). Moreover, companies sometimes outsource activities to other companies. The largest e-commerce company in the Netherlands has, for example, outsourced distribution to a specialized company. When R2 addressed the e-commerce company about the housing conditions of migrant workers working for their company, they said that they were not the employer of these migrant workers and that they should not be addressed. When the company specialized in logistics was addressed, they said that they were not responsible because the migrant workers were employed by an employment agency. Therefore, it is difficult to link housing demand to a specific company.

While public stakeholders agreed that private stakeholders should take more responsibility for facilitating sufficient housing for migrant workers, private stakeholders point in the opposite direction. They argue that municipalities are responsible for housing shortages for migrant workers. According to them, municipalities are often unwilling to facilitate housing for migrant workers, and this hinders development (R14, R15, R19). For private developers, it is often unclear which demands migrant worker housing should meet and this makes it difficult to obtain a permit (R4, R15). Consequentially, only 10-15% of the new housing initiatives for migrant workers are currently realized according to a study by Greenports Nederland (R15).

2.5.2 Strategic dimension: clashing interests

Due to the lack of functioning accountability mechanisms, stakeholders can pass housing responsibilities onto others. This accountability deficit enables stakeholders to pursue their strategic interests by employing particular strategies. By going back and forth between the existing literature (Haffner & Elsinga, 2009; Kokx & van Kempen, 2010; Levelt & Metze, 2014; Rhodes, 2007) and the empirical data, we made a distinction between three main types of interests, namely economic interests, socio-political interests, and interests in the status quo.

2.5.2.1 Economic interests

Multiple stakeholders have economic interests in the provision of housing for migrant workers. Housing is a prerequisite for employers and employment agencies to attract migrant workers (R11, R14, R15). A shortage of housing in the Netherlands may be a cause for migrant workers to choose another country (R14, R17).

To prevent expanding labor shortages, the development of housing for migrant workers is in the interest of private parties. They employ multiple strategies to pursue this interest. One strategy is to raise the urgency of the matter. R15 said that the primary concern of Greenports Netherlands is that *“that the issue remains in the spotlight”*. This can be achieved by emphasizing the importance of labor migration. During the interviews, multiple stakeholders underlined that migrant workers are essential for the Dutch economy (R14, R15, R17, R18, R19). Another approach to raise the urgency is to emphasize current housing shortages. For example, one private foundation estimated the housing shortage for migrant workers at 120.000-150.000 (Expertise center flexible living, 2019).

An alternative strategy that private stakeholders employ is to lobby for their solutions at public stakeholders. The development of housing sites for migrant workers is hindered by the lack of municipal regulations (R15). In Westland and Lansingerland, a policy framework for the development of migrant worker housing was formulated after a plea from the horticultural sector and employment agencies (R13, R17). Relatedly, multiple private parties have pled for an obligation for all municipalities to facilitate housing for a particular number of migrant workers because not all municipalities are willing to facilitate housing. In their view, the national government and the province should maintain this municipal obligation (R14, R15, R19). Private parties publicly plea for this solution by publishing white papers (Greenports Nederland, 2021; Otto Work Force, 2021) and by speaking with national politicians (Committee of Social Affairs and Employment, 2021).

Next to private stakeholders, particular public stakeholders also have an economic interest in the facilitation of housing for migrant workers. The local economies of Westland and Lansingerland depend upon labor migration (R11, R13). For these municipalities, it is becoming increasingly important to facilitate housing for migrant workers, because housing shortages may stimulate them to choose another country of destination (R13) or to remain in their country of origin (R11).

Both municipalities are actively stimulating the development of housing for migrant workers. According to the former mayor of Westland, many plans were not realized

in the past due to local resistance (R19). However, the current alderman said that they *“are really making progress, especially since last year”* (R11). One aspect that contributed to this is that Westland and Lansingerland are increasingly granting permission to develop housing for migrant workers via the use of temporary permits. These permits are easier to issue and can be granted directly by the executive board of a municipality and do not require voting in the municipal council (R11). Another strategy to prevent local resistance has been to facilitate the development of housing for migrant workers outside the built environment (R4, R13). So, the local labor demand has resulted in political support for immigration (Money, 1997).

2.5.2.2 Socio-political interests

In contrast to municipalities that underline economic interests, the municipalities of Rotterdam and The Hague emphasize two types of externalities resulting from labor migration. The first externality that both cities emphasize is that the provision of housing for migrant workers has detrimental effects on particular neighborhoods. Due to the comparatively large and affordable private housing stock in the two cities, investors buy single-family dwellings in these neighborhoods and sublet them to migrant workers, causing pressure on the local housing market (Municipality of Rotterdam, 2021a; Municipality of The Hague, 2020; R6). In addition, it is argued that the influx of migrant workers damages the social cohesion of already vulnerable neighborhoods (R8). Another issue for the two cities is that migrant workers are increasingly found to be living in overcrowded dwellings, resulting in unsafe situations and local nuisances such as noise disturbances (R8, R9). Lastly, commuting migrant workers cause traffic congestion in inner-city neighborhoods (Municipality of The Hague, 2020). The second externality the two cities draw attention to are the precarious housing conditions of migrant workers. The Municipality of Rotterdam (2021) has, for example, developed a policy program named *“Working on a dignified existence”*. The goal of the program is to improve the living conditions of migrant workers in Rotterdam. These two externalities have put the topic on the local political agenda. In recent debates in the municipal councils of Rotterdam and The Hague, multiple resolutions have been proposed to improve the societal position of migrant workers (Municipality of Rotterdam, 2021b; Municipality of The Hague, 2021).

Hence, the two cities have an interest in reducing perceived neighborhood nuisances and improving the housing conditions of migrant workers. This has resulted in two types of strategies. First, they are actively trying to regulate their housing stock by restricting investors from buying up and subletting new dwellings, increasing the capacity of departments enforcing regulations, and lobbying at the national government for more regulatory instruments (Municipality of The Hague, 2020;

Municipality of Rotterdam, 2021a). Second, the municipalities point at surrounding municipalities by arguing that they are confronted with the burdens of labor migration, while the economies of surrounding municipalities reap the benefits. The two cities have explicitly included lobbying for a “fair” distribution of migrant workers over the region in their public policy (Municipality of The Hague, 2019; Municipality of Rotterdam, 2021). Another strategy through which The Hague strives for a “fair” distribution is by lobbying for a policy change at the provincial level that would make it obligatory for municipalities in the region to make plans about the provision of housing for migrant workers before the settlement of a new company (Municipality of The Hague, 2021). The latter two strategies show that the cities search for solutions at other levels of government (Pralle, 2003).

2.5.2.3 Interest in the status quo

Whereas municipalities with economic and socio-political interests have an interest in changing the current state of affairs, this is less pertinent for other municipalities in the region. A consultant that is trying to reach an agreement concerning a fair distribution on behalf of the housing region The Hague (R17) argued that “[municipality x] has no interest whatsoever in committing itself to this. Why would they? Yes, potentially the feeling that they might be better off when negotiating about a different topic in their relationship with [municipality y], but [municipality x] has no interest in the subject itself.” Therefore, particular municipalities have an interest in maintaining the status quo. This is in line with earlier findings in the Netherlands (Haffner & Elsinga 2009; Levelt & Metze 2014). Municipalities may prefer to stay uninvolved in the matter fearing increased pressure on the local housing market (R6, R10), traffic congestions (R6), or social upheaval due to the political sensitivity surrounding the topic (R8, R14, R15, R17, R18).

Municipalities want to base regional agreements about the dispersion of migrant workers on the current distribution of migrant workers working and living in the region. The underlying idea is that municipalities with economies that depend on migrant workers should facilitate housing, while other municipalities have a smaller responsibility. For this reason, the province has commissioned a consultancy office to investigate the current distribution (PBLQ, 2020). Despite the study, municipalities disagree about the numbers⁶ (R3). During a council meeting at the municipality of Rotterdam, the alderman argued “We also do not know the exact numbers due to a lack of registration. But those estimates of ours are – we think – fairly accurate, so we are

6. It is difficult to estimate the precise number of migrant workers in municipalities due to incomplete municipal registers. The registers are incomplete because migrant workers who are planning to stay for less than four months are not legally obliged to register their address (PBLQ, 2020).

sticking to our numbers” (Municipality of Rotterdam, 2021c). While R8 stated: *“There are also municipalities in the region that say, ‘I have no migrant workers at all’”*. Hence, municipalities try to use data suiting their interests. In addition, discussions about the numbers can be used to delay decision-making (R7, R17).

Next to public stakeholders, particular private stakeholders have an interest in the status quo. As discussed earlier, the majority of migrant workers in the Netherlands are employed via employment agencies. Multiple stakeholders argued that employers hiring migrant workers through employment agencies purposively pass the issue of arranging housing onto employment agencies and prefer to remain uninvolved (R1, R6, R7, R17). Employers assume that housing is arranged well (R15), but in the case of housing abuses, there is no “supply chain responsibility” in place, which means that employers cannot be held accountable for abuses in housing arranged by employment agencies (R2).

Private stakeholders are able to protect this status quo by lobbying for their interests. The chair of the Booster Team Migrant Workers (R1) admitted that implementing additional demands for migrant worker housing will result in additional costs for employers. Consequentially, the chair of the Agricultural and Horticultural Association (R19) fears that these changes will affect the business models of farmers and horticulturalists and said: *“it would absolutely be too far-reaching to add these costs. (...) we are not going to do this and will resist this.”* Next to resisting legal changes, another option for private stakeholders to protect the status quo is to agree to non-binding agreements. For example, a decade ago multiple stakeholders, among which large employer organizations, came to a declaration of intent to improve the housing conditions of migrant workers (Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations 2012). R1 criticized this declaration arguing that *“intentions and self-regulation are all neoliberal words that in practice mean; nice then we don't have to do anything”*.

Besides lobbying, private stakeholders can exert influence through negotiations about collective labor agreements. In these collective labor agreements, employer organizations and unions negotiate specific housing-related requirements. However, the employer organizations and unions are currently not able to reach an agreement (R1, R21).

2.6 Conclusion

Precarious housing conditions among migrant workers in the Netherlands have been a policy issue since the expansion of the EU in 2004 (Booster Team Migrant Workers, 2020; Committee lessons from recent labor migration, 2011). The current

study has investigated this policy impasse through a governance network perspective (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016). We found that a major explanation for the persistence of the impasse is the interrelationship between the loosely defined institutional setting and the pursuit of strategic interests by involved actors. Since accountability structures are not clearly defined, public and private actors have the agency to pursue their interests. Concurrently, this pursuit produces and reproduces particular accountability structures that align with their interests (Yang, 2012). The lack of willingness among municipalities in the Rotterdam region to discuss the provision of housing for migrant workers and the fact that an external consultancy agency was needed in the The Hague region exemplifies this. By leaving the topic undiscussed, municipalities in the two regions protect the status quo and reproduce existing accountability deficits.

The findings of the current study demonstrate the value of network approaches within the housing domain. Following Mullins and Rhodes (2007), network perspectives are crucial in understanding decision-making within the housing domain due to the diversity of involved public, private, and civil stakeholders and the interdependencies among them. While we agree with Stephens (2020) that housing systems are the result of economic, political, social, and ideological power balances, our approach enabled us to shed light on the mechanisms underlying these power balances. In line with earlier research that employed network perspectives, we found that stakeholders use various strategies to exert influence on each other in pursuit of their interests (Rhodes, 2007; Scholten et al., 2018). Our work expands on this by demonstrating the empirical value of perceiving accountability as an endogenous phenomenon that evolves through a struggle for power. This becomes apparent by the pleas of Rotterdam and The Hague for regional accountability structures that would, in their opinion, distribute the burdens and benefits of labor migration more fairly. Another example are employers that lobby for municipal obligations to facilitate the development of housing for migrant workers.

Consistent with earlier research on the local turn in migration studies, our findings demonstrate that challenges surrounding the provision of housing for migrant workers manifest themselves at the local level (Caponio et al., 2019; Schiller & Çağlar, 2009). The results also align with earlier work that emphasized that political support for immigration is dependent upon the local setting (Money, 1997). A potential limitation of the current study is the focus on the Rotterdam / The Hague region whereas precarious housing conditions among migrant workers are a policy problem across the Netherlands and the EU (Booster Team Migrant Workers, 2020; European Policy Institute, 2020). Yet, we believe our findings are relevant in a wider context

as they provide a framework to study policy impasses in the provision of housing in other settings. In addition, our findings demonstrate that while local governments have increasingly gained responsibility in the governance of housing and migration (Doherty, 2004; Zapata-Barrero et al., 2017), they are not always able to deal with issues that have been delegated to them from above.

The conclusions of the current study give little reason to believe that the policy impasse will soon be resolved. Yet, the national government has recently proposed a plan to stimulate municipalities to facilitate housing suitable for migrant workers. In the coming years, municipalities will become obligated to map the local migrant worker housing demand and develop regional visions on the facilitation of housing for migrant workers. Provinces will become responsible for overseeing these regional visions (Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, 2022). Based on our findings, it is to be expected that this plan will only be successful if formal accountability patterns are implemented that include means of enforcement in the case of neglected responsibilities. The fact that this has not happened in the past, despite the persistence of housing precarity among migrant workers, shows that accountability structures are inflexible and arise through a struggle for power.

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Appendix A. Overview of a selection of the analyzed material

	Organization	Title	Year	Type
National government	Booster Team Protection Migrant Workers	No second-class citizens, Recommendations to combat abuses among migrant workers in the Netherlands	2020	Advice report
	Committee on Social Affairs and Employment	Committee debate on labor migration 19-05-2022	2022	Debate
	Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations	Guide to housing for migrant workers	2021	Public policy
	Inter-administrative working group on strengthening housing policy for special attention groups	A home for everyone	2021	Advice report
	Interdepartmental Project Team Migrant Workers	Annual report migrant workers 2021	2021	Public policy
Regional government	Province of South Holland	Housing migrant workers program	2019	Public policy
	Province of South Holland	Parliamentary Meeting of Spatial Planning, Housing and Economy 26-05-2021	2021	Debate
	Housing region Rotterdam	Regional housing vision for the Rotterdam region 2021-2040	2021	Public policy
	Housing region The Hague	Housing vision housing region The Hague 2017-2021	2016	Public policy
Local government	Municipality of The Hague	Work discussion housing migrant workers 26-09 2019	2019	Round table
	Municipality of Rotterdam	Working towards a dignified existence. Action program EU migrant workers 2021-2025	2021	Public policy
	Municipality of Lansingerland	Housing policy migrant workers Lansingerland	2019	Public policy
	Municipality of Lansingerland	Meeting spatial planning committee 14-09-2021	2021	Debate
	Municipality of Westland	Framework for the development of housing for migrant workers 2018	2018	Public policy
	Municipality of Pijnacker-Nootdorp	Housing vision Pijnacker-Nootdorp 2020-2030	2020	Public policy

	Organization	Title	Year	Type
Private	LTO	Inspiration book temporary accommodation for international employees	2022	White paper
	Charlie Works	Position paper roundtable discussion committee SZW 28-06-2021	2021	White paper
	Taskforce Housing Migrant Workers	2022 Election Manifesto	2021	White paper
	Expertise center flexible living	Roadmap to good housing for EU migrant workers	2019	White paper
Civil	FNV	Position paper round table discussion Labor Migration 16-05-2022	2022	White paper

3

Chapter 3

"If it remains out of sight": governance networks and power disparities in housing for migrant workers

This chapter is currently under review at an international journal.

Abstract

Sub-standard living conditions among migrant workers have become a structural feature all over Europe. In the Netherlands, this policy problem has persisted for over a decade despite much political attention. We investigate this issue by combining a governance network perspective with a critical discourse analysis. The study builds on an analysis of existing materials and interviews with stakeholders. The results reveal a disjuncture between policy rhetoric and practice; while it is often stated that migrant workers should not be seen as second-class citizens, housing policies have the implicit aim of keeping them out of sight of the rest of the population. Our findings show that housing policy for migrant workers prioritizes the social reproduction of labor and the interests of the general population instead of the rights of migrant workers. This contribution adds to the growing literature on governance networks in housing studies by refuting the assumption of consensus-seeking in deliberation and highlighting the significance of power disparities.

Keywords: Governance, migration, critical discourse analysis, migrant workers, labor migration, the Netherlands.

3.1 Introduction

Over the past two decades, annual intra-EU migrant inflows to the Netherlands have increased from just over 25,000 in 2004 to almost 125,000 in 2019 (Statistics Netherlands, 2021a). This increase has been accompanied by multiple stories in the Dutch media about the precarious living conditions of migrant workers in the Netherlands. In one extreme example, it was found that 58 Romanian migrant workers were accommodated in an outdated, polluted, neglected, and unsafe shed (Limburg, 2021). While these extremely precarious housing conditions are exceptional, the European Policy Institute (2020) states that housing precarity among migrant workers has become widespread across the EU. Relatedly, a research committee concluded that migrant workers in the Netherlands are being treated as "second-class citizens" (Booster Team Migrant Workers, 2020). However, these issues are not a recent development, and over a decade ago a parliamentary inquiry committee noted that they were "shocked" by the housing conditions of Central and Eastern European [CEE] migrant workers (Committee lessons from recent labor migration, 2011, p. 7).

This raises the question of how this policy issue has persisted and expanded for over a decade. While many housing problems are endemic, they do not receive continuous political attention (Jacobs, Kemeny & Manzi, 2003). The current article argues that the absence of improvement can be explained through the manner by which the problem has been socially constructed by powerful groups (Jacobs et al., 2003). Within the provision of housing for migrant workers, various public, private, and civil actors with diverging and conflicting interests and perceptions are involved. This makes it an especially "wicked policy problem" that involves a high degree of substantive complexity (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016). Conflicting interests become apparent in the growing shortages in the housing market; whereas employers increasingly depend upon migrant workers to meet labor demands (Statistics Netherlands, 2021a), this simultaneously leads to additional pressure on the housing market. Precarious housing conditions among migrant workers are often portrayed as incidents caused by standalone malicious parties. However, LeBaron and Phillips (2019) argue that public stakeholders should not be conceptualized as agents who simply respond to problems of exploitation, but to recognize the role that they play in the creation of these conditions. Related to this, Siegmann, Quaedvlieg, and Williams (2022) argue that migrant workers in the Netherlands are treated in "regulated" precarity.

Housing precarity is discussed within particular discourses which decide whether a situation is perceived as a political problem or not (Hajer et al., 1993). One particularly dominant belief concerns the temporality of CEE migrant workers in the Netherlands

(Strockmeijer, De Beer & Dagevos 2019). It is often assumed that they move to the Netherlands for a comparatively brief period after which they return to their country of origin. Consequentially, this temporality rationalizes lower standards for migrant worker housing. However, recent analyses of Dutch register data provide evidence that many CEE migrant workers stay for extended periods (Manting, Kleinepier & Lennartz, 2022).

In the Netherlands, the development of housing was strongly regulated by the central government in the past (Verhage, 2003). Yet, even more than other pillars of the welfare state, the provision of housing has increasingly shifted towards more networked forms of governance (Kemeny, 2006). Because of these developments, previous research has pled for the application of network perspectives in the housing domain (Mullins & Rhodes, 2007). Network perspectives are well equipped to shed light on decision-making processes within governance networks because they enable taking the diverging interests and perceptions among actors into account, as well as interdependencies among stakeholders (Baalbergen, Bolt, Lin & Hooimeijer, 2023; Mullins & Rhodes, 2007; Poppelaars & Scholten, 2008). However, one major shortcoming of these perspectives is that they frequently disregard power issues (Torfing, Peters, Pierre & Sørensen, 2012). Policymaking within governance networks is often presented as a process of interdependent stakeholders that are jointly searching for compromise, goal intertwinement, and a common frame of reference (Van Bueren, Klijn & Koppenjan, 2003). Since stakeholders are interdependent, it is assumed that they are unable to exert hierarchical control over each other (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016; Sørensen & Torfing, 2007) and this idea has stimulated the view that decisions within governance networks are made based on rational deliberative processes (Habermas, 1981). However, governance networks are ridden with power struggles and according to Torfing et al. (2012), the power to control the political agenda and the perceptions of other stakeholders play a crucial role within governance networks.

Over the past years, an increasing number of topics related to the housing conditions of migrant workers have been studied. Research has been conducted about the housing experiences of migrant workers (Lombard, 2023; Szytniewski & Van Der Haar, 2022; Uceluse, Bock & Haartsen, 2022), their residential mobility patterns (Loomans, 2023; Manting, Kleinepier & Lennartz, 2022), and the institutional complexities that hinder the provision of housing for migrant workers (Baalbergen et al., 2023). The current study contributes to the existing literature on housing for migrant workers by shedding light on the role of discourse and power disparities within the governance network. By taking power disparities into account, we specifically aim to unravel: how

the provision of housing for migrant workers is constructed as a political problem by various public, private, and civil stakeholders; the power relations underlying these constructions, and the impact of these constructions on migrant workers in the Netherlands. The study is based on a critical discourse analysis of policy documents, political debates, and publicly organized conferences surrounding the topic. This critical discourse analysis was complemented by twenty-one interviews with public, private, and civil stakeholders. Our findings highlight that despite the widespread policy rhetoric that migrant workers should no longer be treated as second class-citizens, housing policy is prioritizing the interests of the general population and the social reproduction of labor relations.

3.2 Background: the position of CEE migrant workers in the Netherlands

Citizens of the EU are free to work in any European country through the freedom of workers directive. Since the gradual expansion of the EU after 2003, there has been a rapid increase in labor mobility from CEE countries, such as Romania, Poland, and Bulgaria, to Western European countries, such as Germany, France, and the Netherlands (European Commission, 2022; Favell, 2008). Similar to the situation in other Western European countries, most CEE migrant workers in the Netherlands find employment through an employment agency (60%) (Booster Team Migrant Workers, 2020; European Policy Institute, 2020). In 2019, 70% of the migrant workers employed by an employment agency earned the minimum wage. These workers are mainly occupied in sectors requiring manual labor, such as horticulture, logistics, and food-processing (SEO, 2022). Agencies often recruit people in their country of origin by offering “package deals” consisting of a place to work, lodging, healthcare, and transport to and from work (Szytniewski & Van Der Haar, 2022). By law, employment agencies are allowed to deduct the minimum wage by 25% to offer such services (Booster Team Migrant Workers, 2020).

The majority of migrant workers find accommodation in the existing housing stock. In most cases, a private property-owner rents a dwelling to an employment agency which subsequently sublets it to multiple migrant workers (SNF, 2022). Migrant workers without a package deal contract may also directly rent a dwelling through a private property-owner. Due to increasing scarcity in the housing market, employment agencies increasingly organize lodging outside the regular housing stock in holiday parks, temporary container dwellings, or specifically developed campus-like residential buildings (Booster Team Migrant Workers 2020).

The arrangement of housing in the existing housing stock and the development of housing are bound to regulations set by public stakeholders at multiple levels of governance (Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations 2021). Through laws and regulations, the national government determines the capabilities and juridical instruments of actors at other levels of governance. Similarly, provincial governments set regulations which municipalities must follow, such as master plans that stipulate where housing development is allowed. Ultimately, municipalities decide where, when, and how housing for migrant workers is facilitated within the framework set by higher levels of governance. Hence, they can set guidelines about the development of housing for migrant workers and are able to control their housing stock through regulations on subletting. Municipalities have implemented diverse policies regarding the provision of housing for migrant workers and existing research has argued that these differences can partially be explained by diverging interests (Baalbergen et al., 2023).

In addition to public stakeholders, trade unions and employers' organizations set regulations regarding the provision of housing to migrant workers if housing is part of a package deal contract. Through collective labor agreement negotiations, specific quality marks for migrant worker housing are determined (Government of the Netherlands, 2021). Among other conditions, current requirements for quality marks denote that the minimum size of the bedroom needs to be at least 2.7 square meters per person, that there should be at least one shower and toilet per eight persons, and that hygiene should not constitute a public health risk (SNF, 2023). These requirements are below the global guidelines on housing for migrant workers of the International Labour Organisation (1961) that prescribe at least 7.5 square meters for a two-person bedroom, and one shower and toilet per six persons.

In line with other parts of the housing market, the provision of housing for migrant workers is increasingly involving the decentralization of responsibilities to lower levels of government, privatization (Van Bortel, 2009), and collaboration between public and private stakeholders (Verhage, 2003). These developments have been typified as a shift from government to governance where the role of the state has shifted from a provider to an enabler (da Cruz et al., 2019; Doherty, 2004). This shift to governance has made the provision of housing for migrant workers a complex policy problem that involves the presence of various interdependent actors with diverging interests and perceptions.

3.3 Theory: conflicting perceptions within governance networks

Since housing is increasingly organized in a more "networked" form, decision-making increasingly requires cooperation between interdependent actors (Mullins & Rhodes, 2007). Klijn and Koppenjan (2016) use the term "network governance" to describe networks of enduring social relations between public, private, and civil stakeholders involved in dealing with a problem, policy, or public service. According to Sørensen and Torfing (2007), a defining characteristic of governance networks is that actors are operationally autonomous and are not part of a hierarchical chain of command. Due to the lack of a hierarchical chain of command, it is often assumed that stakeholders cannot exercise hierarchical control over each other. Following from this assumption, researchers studying governance networks have tended to ignore power disparities within governance networks. Yet, despite the lack of hierarchical control within governance networks, they involve significant power conflicts (Torfing et al., 2012). The current study builds on earlier work by analyzing how power disparities affect the discourse surrounding the provision of housing for migrant workers. In doing so, we highlight the significance of indirect power within governance networks.

3.3.1 Wicked policy problems and substantive complexity

Rittel and Webber (1973) were the first to use the notion of wicked policy problems. According to them, studying policy problems is inherently different from studying natural scientific questions. This is the case because policy problems cannot be definitively described, there is no objective definition of equity, and because there are no "solutions" or definitive answers to them. Hence, different parties will judge policy proposals in various ways. Building on this, Klijn and Koppenjan (2015) use the term substantive complexity to refer to disagreement regarding the nature, causes, and solutions to policy problems within governance networks.

Substantive disagreements may be the result of a lack of knowledge concerning a particular situation (Hisschemöller & Hoppe, 1995). For example, in the provision of housing for migrant workers there is much uncertainty about the number of migrant workers that are currently working in the Netherlands and how these numbers will develop in the future (Van Ostaijen & Scholten, 2017). Because of this, there are disagreements within the governance network about the housing need of this group. This is complicated further by the fact that actors are not always focused on finding the truth, but on being right. Consequentially, stakeholders may "shop around" for evidence supporting their standpoints to discredit opposite standpoints (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016).

Besides disagreements regarding existing knowledge, substantive complexity may arise due to contestation regarding relevant norms and values (Hisschemöller & Hoppe, 1995). This contestation may be caused by the presence of actors with various, potentially conflicting, ideologies. According to Sabatier (1988), actors can be categorized in various advocacy coalitions that share belief systems consisting of a set of basic values, causal assumptions, and problem perceptions. These belief systems are hard to change as they have been internalized through previous experiences, education, and socialization (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016). Examples of diverging belief systems can be found in discussions about labor migration within the European Union. Proponents of labor migration argue that it is a win-win-win scenario as it helps receiving countries to resolve labor shortages, enables migrants to find a job with potentially higher earnings, and provides sending countries with economic remittances (European Commission, 2022). In contrast, opponents fear that increasing levels of labor migration result in a race to the bottom of employment conditions (Favell, 2008) and pressure on an already overburdened housing market. This has made labor migration within the EU “essentially contested” (Engbersen, Leerkes, Scholten & Snel, 2017).

Next to disagreements about existing knowledge and conflicting ideologies, diverging perceptions may be caused by diverging interests and objectives among stakeholders (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016). Within the housing field, these interests are not constrained to housing, but also lay in wider economic and social policy fields (Jacobs et al., 2003). A multitude of private stakeholders acquires financial gains through intra-EU labor migration. In the Netherlands, most migrant workers come through employment agencies that offer package deals consisting of a place to work, accommodation, daily transport to the workplace, and a health insurance (Szytniewski & Van Der Haar, 2022). These agencies earn money by linking migrant workers to employers and through a profit margin on the other parts of the package deal. Employers also have an interest in intra-EU labor migration because it provides a source of labor that is prepared to tolerate insecure and low waged work (Anderson, 2010). Relatedly, it has been argued that labor markets can be divided into a primary segment with favorable employment conditions and a secondary segment with a structural demand for migrant workers due to the unfavorable employment conditions (Piore, 1979). Private stakeholders involved in the “migration industry” (McCollum & Findlay, 2018) have an economic interest in the provision of housing for migrant workers as it ensures the reproduction of a labor force that is willing to accept employment conditions that local workers are not willing to tolerate (Preibisch, 2010). The presence of this labor force can also be used to exert downward pressure on the employment conditions of local workers (Castells, 1975).

Public stakeholders have found themselves in a more ambivalent position towards CEE labor migration. Like parties involved in the migration industry, governments have an apparent economic interest and previous research has even argued that the creation of an edge population consisting of migrant workers is currently instrumental to the functioning of economic systems globally (Palumbo, Corrado & Triandafyllidou, 2022). Public policy tends to present precarious living conditions among migrant workers as a “humanitarian emergency” caused by rogue employers and employment agencies. Through this treatise, exploitation is presented as exceptional and the result of a pathological relationship between an employer and a migrant worker (Palumbo et al., 2022). While this may be true in extreme cases of exploitation, such as forced labor or human trafficking, this is not necessarily the case for less severe instances. Occurrences of exploitation are part of a continuum of experiences characterized by an increasing level of unfair treatment, deprivation of rights, and restriction of personal autonomy (Palumbo, 2022). Earlier research has argued that the role of governments themselves in these conditions should not be ignored. Exploitation is produced within the wider economic, social, and legal context (Lebaron & Phillips, 2019; Palumbo, 2022; Siegmann et al., 2022). Through this point of view, Siegmman et al. (2022) and Palumbo (2022) recently concluded that migrant workers in the Netherlands are working in “regulated precarity” that is the result of particular policy measures. Despite governmental declarations about aiming to protect people in situations of vulnerability, there is a prevailing economic logic underlying policy responding to market needs and pressures (Palumbo, 2022). Besides economic interests, governments have expressed concerns about the social consequences of labor migration and earlier studies found that a paradigm conflict has emerged between stakeholders at varying levels of governance. While the EU and the national government prioritizes the economic gains of labor migration, local governments are more concerned about the social consequences (Engbersen et al., 2017). Within the field of migration studies, it is increasingly recognized that the consequences of migration manifest themselves at the local level (Zapata-Barrero, Caponio & Scholten, 2017). Local opposition towards the presence of migrants may especially arise in regions where immigration is geographically concentrated. Following local opposition, local politicians will implement policies to “control” immigration as these policies can be used to seek political consent (Ambrosini, 2013; Money, 1997).

Trade unions across the EU have responded in ambivalent ways towards labor migration, and their responses can be placed on a continuum ranging from exclusionary to inclusionary (Kahmann, 2006). In some countries, trade unions aimed to protect the interests of their national memberships through exclusionary policies. The economic rationale underlying such policies is that through exclusion,

competition on the labor market and downward pressure on wages can be reduced. In other countries, trade unions have plead for inclusionary policies. Such policies may be perceived as a result of human rights considerations, but they may also have an economic rationale; by protecting the rights of migrant workers, unions are able to prevent the undercutting of working conditions for all workers (Kahmann, 2006; Krings, 2009). Besides economic considerations, the choice for an inclusionary or exclusionary stance may also depend upon the desires of national memberships, and previous research found opposition towards inclusionary policies from Dutch union members (Berntsen, 2015).

3.3.2 Power disparities within governance networks

Despite diverging perceptions about the provision of housing for migrant workers within the governance network, stakeholders are interdependent, and collaboration is required (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016). The way a particular problem is defined determines the direction in which solutions are sought and the policies that are implemented to deal with the problem (Hisschemöller & Hoppe, 1995; Schattschneider, 1960). Consequentially, stakeholders have an interest in establishing a particular version of “reality” that aligns with their perceptions (Jacobs, 1999). For that reason, the definition of a problem can become a site of contestation where public, private, and civil stakeholders aim to define what problems currently exist and how these problems should be addressed. Different social constructions of a problem compete with one another to become the dominant system of meaning (Schrover & Schinkel, 2013). This perspective is in conflict with the work of governance researchers who have assumed that involving actors with diverging perceptions in discussions about policy problems will lead to mutual learning and a mutually agreed upon and well-informed consensus among equal participants (e.g., Habermas, 1981). Assumptions concerning consensus building have led to approaches putting mutual understanding center stage, such as “collaborative planning”, “communicative planning”, and “argumentative planning” (Tewdwr-Jones, Allmendinger, 1998). Studies in this line of research presume that power asymmetries can be designed out of collaborative governance settings to improve the effectiveness of governance (Purdy, 2012; Ran & Qi, 2018).

However, social groups possess various degrees of power and powerful groups have more opportunities in “setting the agenda” than less powerful groups (Jacobs et al., 2003). Although there are various conceptualizations of power (see, for example, Lukes 1974), we confine our study to the conceptualization of power proposed by Van Dijk (2015) who defines power in terms of control; groups have more power if they are able to control the perceptions and actions of other groups. By acquiring media attention, groups can place their problem definition on the wider societal and political

agenda (Hisschemöller & Hoppe, 1995). In doing so, they can exert influence on the perceptions of other actors within the governance network (Torfing et al., 2012). Lukes (1974) defines this form of power as indirect or ideological as the actions of others are influenced through their perceptions. Access to indirect power is dependent upon the position of a group within society. Groups that do not have the power to raise attention for their problem perceptions run the risk of being ignored (Hoppe, 1999).

Multiple authors have highlighted that migrant workers in Europe and the Netherlands form an especially vulnerable group (Anderson, 2010; Palumbo, Corrado & Triandafyllidou, 2022; Scholten & Van Ostaijen, 2018) and Marxist scholars have discussed the mechanisms underlying their vulnerability (Castells, 1975; Money, 1997; Piore, 1979). Castells (1975) argues that migrant workers are vulnerable because they are not protected by labor movements, are deprived of political rights, and are less organized than other workers. Because of this vulnerability, migrant workers have limited opportunities to set the agenda and to influence public policy. Related to this, Anderson (2010) has shown that immigration control policies are often presented as a means to protect migrant workers from exploitation. However, in reality they may undermine their labor protections and produce certain types of workers that are more desirable for employers. By obliging migrant workers to obtain a work permit through an employer, their legal status becomes directly dependent upon employers giving employers an additional mechanism of control. Therefore, immigration control policies can be perceived as a "mold" forming particularly vulnerable workers. In the Netherlands, employers are legally allowed to provide housing to migrant workers while deducing the rent from their salary. While this can be perceived as helpful to migrant workers as they would otherwise have to find housing themselves, it also makes them highly dependent upon their employer and reinforces their vulnerability (Berntsen & Skowronek, 2021).

A schematic overview summarizing the theoretical framework is shown in figure 3.1. Based on the previous, we argue that diverging perceptions are the result of disagreements regarding existing knowledge, contestation regarding norms and values, conflicting interests, and the use of indirect power. These diverging perceptions result in actors that maintain different social constructions of the housing problem. How a housing problem is socially constructed consequently influences the existing knowledge, norms and values, and perceived interests of stakeholders. Ultimately, housing policy is influenced by the dominant social construction of the housing problem.

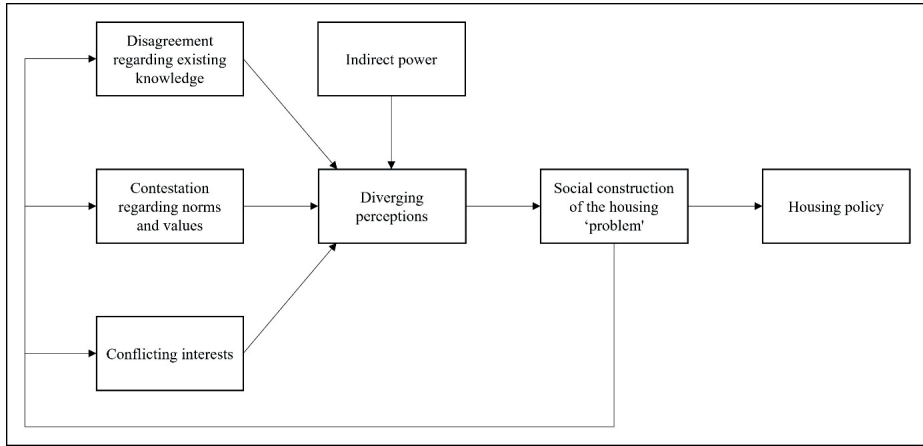


Figure 3.1. Schematic overview of the theoretical framework

3.4 Methods

In the current study, we analyzed the establishment of housing policy for migrant workers by complementing a critical discourse analysis of existing materials with semi-structured interviews. We employed a critical discourse analysis to shed light on dominant social constructions surrounding migrant workers and their housing conditions, and on the power relations underlying these constructions. The term “discourse” has been conceptualized in many ways, but social scientists generally use the term to emphasize the relation between language use and power relations (Jacobs, 2006). A distinction can be made between two types of critical discourse analysis within the field of urban policy research (Lees, 2004). First, there is Foucauldian-inspired research which perceives discourse as “constitutive”. In this view, actors and relations between actors are created through language (Foucault, 1977). Second, there is research that can be positioned within the political economy tradition emanating from Marxist writings. This type of research emphasizes the linguistic practices deployed by stakeholders to shape policy agendas and, therefore, it emphasizes the agency of stakeholders in constructing discourses (Jacobs, 2006). The current study aligns with this latter research strand as we aim to unravel how stakeholders use their agency to construct the provision of housing for migrant workers as a political problem. Besides looking at texts as stand-alone discursive practices, we focused on the context in which statements are framed, and the relation of texts within wider power structures and ideology (Fairclough, 1992). In doing so, we seek to trace the power dynamics underlying discourse, and this goal is what distinguishes critical discourse analysis from other policy analyses (Fairclough, 2013). There is no single

methodology in critical discourse analysis, instead it is a research movement that subsumes a variety of approaches, and the precise methodology needs to be adapted to the research question (Jacobs, 2021; Van Dijk, 2011).

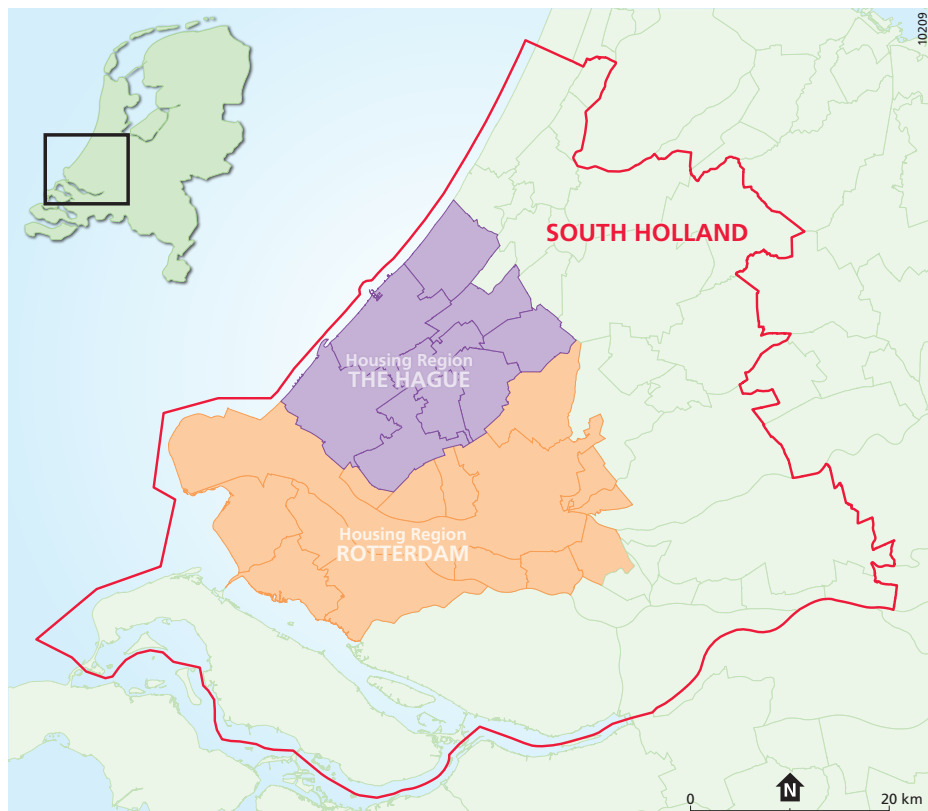


Figure 3.2. Map of the Rotterdam / The Hague region

To capture discourses and policy developments on the national level as well as at other levels of governance, we applied this methodological framework to one area in the Netherlands, namely, the Rotterdam / The Hague region. This region lies within the province of South Holland and administratively consists of the housing region Rotterdam, which contains fourteen municipalities, and the housing region The Hague, which comprises nine municipalities (see figure 3.2). The region hosts the largest number of migrant workers in the Netherlands (Statistics Netherlands, 2021b). The analysis is based on an examination of materials published by public, private, and civil stakeholders. We analyzed public policy, political debates, and public conferences. Relevant materials were found by searching for keywords in databases of the national government, the province of South Holland, and municipalities

in the Rotterdam/The Hague region⁷. In addition to materials originating from public stakeholders, we analyzed publications by private and civil actors. In total, 165 materials that were published between 2011-2023 were consulted.

Following the work of Fairclough (1992), Marston (2002), and Jacobs (2021), we complemented our critical discourse analysis with qualitative interviews. We conducted interviews with twenty-one stakeholders between September 2021 and January 2022. We strived for a selection of interview participants representative of the governance network. Therefore, we included public, private, and civil stakeholders involved in the provision of housing for migrant workers. Because discourses around labor migration vary by spatial scale (Engbersen et al., 2017), we interviewed stakeholders at the national, provincial, regional, and local level. In addition, because of the corporatist tradition in the Netherlands, we spoke with representatives of employers' organizations and trade unions. To include the voices of migrant workers we had an interview with an organization that supports CEE migrants in The Hague. Table 3.1 gives an overview of all participants⁸. The interviews were conducted both offline and online due to COVID-19 regulations and lasted for approximately one hour.

The interviews served to acquire a deeper understanding of the intentions, feelings, purposes, and comprehensions of the stakeholders within the governance network (Cruikshank, 2012). While the critical discourse analysis is built on our examination of policy documents, the interviews allowed us to test whether our interpretations align with statements made by interviewees (Jacobs, 2021). Based on the critical discourse analysis, we tailored interview guides to individual stakeholders. The structure of the interviews followed the structure of the theoretical framework. At the start of the interview, the problem perceptions of stakeholders were investigated through questions about problems within the provision of housing for migrant workers, the causes to these problems, and potential solutions to these problems. Respondents were, for example, asked whether they believed issues surrounding the provision of housing for migrant workers had increased over the past decade. After discussing their own problem perceptions, we asked stakeholders to reflect upon the perceptions of other stakeholders and on other views within the governance network. This enabled us to investigate and identify potential causes of diverging problem perceptions. Among other questions, we asked participants to reflect upon policies proposed by other stakeholders.

7. National government: <https://www.tweedekamer.nl/zoeken>, Province of South Holland: <https://pzh.notubiz.nl/zoeken>, Municipalities: <https://zoek.openraadsinformatie.nl/>

8. The identities of public figures have not been anonymized to provide appropriate context for their statements. We obtained explicit oral or written permission beforehand.

The existing materials and interview subscripts were analyzed through a broad categorization into three codes: discourses about migrant workers in the Netherlands, discourses about unsuitable housing conditions for migrant workers, and discourses about suitable housing conditions for migrant workers. To reduce the risk of overgeneralization, we discussed our preliminary findings with two key experts (Jacobs, 2006) who were also interviewed, namely the chairperson of the Booster Team Protection Migrant Workers, and a professor with expertise in wicked policy problems who formerly worked as a commissioner in the province of North Brabant. After finalizing our fieldwork, we presented and discussed our findings during a meeting with thirteen national policy experts working at involved ministries.

Table 3.1. Overview of interview participants

Type of stakeholder	Affiliation	Role	#
National government	Booster Team Protection Migrant Workers	Chairperson	N1
	Socialist Party	Member of Parliament	N2
Regional government	Province of South Holland	Policy expert	R3
	Province of South Holland	Policy expert	R4
	Province of North Brabant	Former commissioner	R5
	Housing partnership Rotterdam region	Chairperson	R6
	Housing partnership Rotterdam region	Policy expert	R7
Local government	Municipality of The Hague	Policy expert	L8
	Municipality of Rotterdam	Policy expert	L9
	Municipality of Rotterdam	Policy expert	L10
	Municipality of Westland	Council member	L11
	Municipality of Westland	Policy expert	L12
	Municipality of Lansingerland	Council member	L13
Private	OTTO-workforce & Kafra Housing	CEO	P14
	Greenports Nederland	Policy expert	P15
	Aedes	Policy expert	P16
	Consultancy agency	Consultant	P17
	Consultancy agency	Consultant	P18
	LTO	Chairperson	P19
Civil	IDHEM-Xtra	Coordinator	C20
	FNV	Coordinator	C21

3.5 Results

To grasp dominant discourses surrounding the housing conditions of migrant workers, we first discuss the social construction of the “migrant worker” in the Netherlands. After that, we will discuss housing conditions for migrant workers that are portrayed as unsuitable and the policies following from these portrayals. Lastly, discourses about suitable housing conditions for migrant workers are discussed and the policy responses corresponding to these discourses.

3.5.1 The social construction of “migrant workers” in the Netherlands

The increase in the number of CEE migrant workers in the Netherlands has come with prejudice. Examples of these prejudices are expressed by anti-immigration parties in the Netherlands. In 2012, the PVV [Party for Freedom] opened a “hotline” for nuisance caused by people from Central and Eastern Europe. In a more recent debate in the municipal council of The Hague, a local PVV politician stated that the city is “flooded by migrant workers” that “put pressure on the livability and safety of many neighborhoods in the city” (Municipality of The Hague, 2021), while politicians in the national parliament (JA21) argue that “we must stop recruiting people from abroad for our own vacancies” (Committee on social affairs and employment, 2022). Despite these xenophobic statements, the general sentiment towards migrant workers is that they “*must be treated as equal and full members of our society*” (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 2022). This belief has been strengthened by the findings of a research committee commissioned by the national government that concluded that migrant workers are being treated as “*second-class citizens*” (Booster Team Migrant Workers, 2020).

During the interviews, multiple public, private, and civil stakeholders stated that the persistence of prejudice within society is unjustified while highlighting the importance of migrant workers in the Dutch economy. Numerous stakeholders portrayed them as exceptionally hard workers. For example, R7 noted that he once spoke with an employer in horticulture who preferred employing migrant workers over Dutch workers because they “*just work for 8 hours straight. And if you do not say: ‘it is time for a break now’, then they just keep going.*” In addition, stakeholders noted that migrant workers are willing to fill job openings that Dutch people are unwilling to fill because they feel like “*it is below them*” (R6). For that reason, L13 said that it is not fair to say that they are taking our jobs. According to P14, this is especially the case because “*we all want to receive the package that we order today by tomorrow morning [and] we all want fresh tomatoes in the store at the weekend.*” Or as L13 put it “*we want that cucumber at the supermarket as well as an orchid on the windowsill.*” While without migrant workers, horticulturalists may be forced to shred their harvests (P17).

Various stakeholders argued that the development of housing is a prerequisite for the continued recruitment of CEE migrant workers. A council member in Westland (L11), a municipality with a large greenhouse horticulture sector, noted: *"Because that is my firm belief. If as an area, as a municipality, as a sector you are unable to realize your own lodging... Well, then you will suffer a lot from that, production will simply come to a standstill, or you will not be able to harvest [crops]."* Stakeholders expect that this necessity will only become larger since wages are increasing in CEE countries which makes working in the Netherlands less attractive (L11). Relatedly, CEE migrant workers can also find employment in other countries in Western Europe (L13, P17). Therefore, the responsible council member in Lansingerland (L13) argued that she wants to help entrepreneurs by allowing the development of high-quality housing for migrant workers *"to ensure that staff also chooses to come and work in Lansingerland because it [housing] is well organized there, rather than to say: we will stay in Germany because it [housing] is better arranged there."* However, the development of housing for migrant workers is a sensitive topic that often causes commotion among local residents. According to Greenports Netherlands (2021), only 10-15% of the housing initiatives proposed by developers are ultimately realized. One developer of housing for migrant workers (P14) noted that *"there is always someone"* who is trying to stop planned developments. Relatedly, P17 said that while working at a municipality there once was a crowd of 300 people at the municipal council who were *"not amused"* that a housing site for migrant workers was going to be realized.

Therefore, stakeholders in favor of the development of housing for migrant workers try to improve the public perception of migrant workers. Various public and private stakeholders have pled for a change in terminology from "migrant workers" [arbeidsmigranten] to "international employees" [international medewerkers]. The chairperson of the Agricultural and Horticultural Association (P19) argued *"I still think the word 'migrant worker' is a bit problematic, I am a big proponent of the word 'international employee'. Because, according to an economic study⁹, international employees' contribution to the Dutch economy is around ten billion euros. And if you subtract all costs, you generously arrive at an amount of five billion euros."* Another stakeholder (P18) said that the term migrant worker suggests that *"they come to us and that we have to take care of them. But the reframe [international employee] is: we need them and what should we do to pull them to us?"* Therefore, P19 argues that international employees should not be confused with other migrant groups: *"Yes, of course, we do have difficulties with the reception of asylum seekers and that is what this issue is associated with. But these people work from day one and contribute to the economy of the Netherlands. But they also work for their own well-being. So, this is a completely different discussion. We just cannot seem to get that issue in front of, say, the public"*

9. This study was commissioned by the branch association of employment agencies (ABU) and conducted by SEO (2022).

eye.” Due to their contributions to the Dutch economy, migrant workers are deemed to be deserving decent housing (Expertise center flexible living, 2022; LTO Netherlands, 2022). The owner of the employment agency hiring the largest number of CEE migrant workers in the Netherlands (P14) stated: *“But I think those hard-working migrant workers, they also deserve a decent place to live, they deserve a decent life in the Netherlands.”*

Besides changing terminology, particular stakeholders aim to increase the urgency of the matter by gaining attention in the media. The chairperson of the Agricultural and Horticultural Association (P19) noted *“the fact that housing for international employees is also in the interest of Dutch prosperity, is an issue that is highlighted far too little by the government. (...) I want to contribute to that.”* While L13 argued that *“I think it is a joint responsibility to put the public image of migrant workers in a different light.”* P14 noted that he is not only invited by media outlets but that he is also actively seeking media attention.

Another outlet through which employers and employment agencies try to improve the public perception of migrant workers in the Netherlands is the campaign “labor migration works” [arbeidsmigratie werkt]. This campaign is organized by the “Foundation Meet the Migrant Worker” [Stichting Ontmoet de Arbeidsmigrant] which is sponsored by large employment agencies and developers of housing for migrant workers. This campaign has been developed to show that *“Migrant workers are people like you and me: people with their own story, with dreams and ambitions”* (Labor migration works, 2022). During a public congress, one of the initiators of the campaign explained that employment agencies financing the campaign are provided with a toolkit consisting of media materials that can be used during local meetings with residents about the development of new housing sites for migrant workers (Interdepartmental migrant worker project team, 2022).

These examples show that there is an economic rationale underlying attempts to improve the public perception of migrant workers. Migrant workers are praised because they work exceptionally hard, resolve labor shortages, and contribute to the Dutch economy. The realization of housing for migrant workers can be seen as an essential factor in the social reproduction of current labor relations (Castells, 1975). Through indirect power and agenda setting (Jacobs et al., 2003; Hisschemöller & Hoppe, 1995; Van Dijk, 2015), stakeholders are actively trying to influence the perceptions of parties opposing the development of housing for migrant workers.

3.5.2 Dominant discourses about unsuitable housing conditions for migrant workers

Within the public discourse surrounding the provision of housing to migrant workers, two often interlinked dimensions of unsuitability exist. Housing conditions may be

portrayed as unsuitable because they do not meet the needs of migrant workers, or because they are not in line with the demands of the public.

During the interviews multiple conditions were discussed which contribute to housing precarity among migrant workers. These conditions are in line with general definitions of housing precarity which can be described as either unsuitable, insecure, unaffordable, or unsafe (Bolt & Czirfusz, 2022). Multiple stakeholders noted that migrant workers often live in overcrowded dwellings (N1, L8, L9, C20). These conditions are especially unsuitable when it results in unsafe situations. L8, for example, referred to a large fire in a block of apartments in which CEE migrant workers were living in overcrowded conditions. Furthermore, overcrowding may go together with disproportional rents: *"Then you often hear that people live in a really small room with two or three people and they still pay two to three hundred euros per week"* (C20). However, it is often difficult for migrant workers to get out of these unsuitable conditions because employment and housing contracts are linked. This makes *"people afraid to speak out"* as they know that they *"may be put on the street tomorrow"* (C20).

Besides the argument that migrant workers that live in single-family dwellings in residential areas often live in precarious conditions, this type of housing is also portrayed as conflicting with the needs of the public. This view is supported by multiple discourses. Firstly, it is argued that single-family dwellings are meant for the general population and that migrant workers cause competition in the housing market (L8, L12, P14, P15). P14, for example, said that we must *"prevent that more and more houses are being bought that are for our people entering the housing market and our youth, and the price-increasing effect of slum property-owners buying up of these houses."* Similarly, L8 stated: *"an enormous stock of affordable housing for our own residents is lost."* Secondly, it is argued that migrant workers living within inner city neighborhoods are damaging social cohesion (L8, P15). Lastly, migrant workers that live in inner city neighborhoods are portrayed as causing nuisance. R6 said that *"It is in particular those rapidly mutating groups that cause nuisance that we absolutely have to do something about, for the local residents who have been living there for 30 or 40 years."* Examples of nuisance that came up during the interviews were people drinking beer on the street (R6, L8), using drugs in the garden (R6), and commuting by passenger vans (L8). Furthermore, L12 argued that the lifestyles of migrant workers may be in conflict with other neighborhood residents: *"think carefully about what you combine and what you see now is that a single-family home is being bought. Then 4 or 6 migrant workers are deployed there, and they do indeed live next to that family or that elderly couple, well, that does not work."*

Because of these discourses about the incompatibility of accommodating migrant workers in inner city neighborhoods, public policy primarily focuses on regulation.

This is achieved by implementing stricter regulations in the existing housing stock. On the national level, a new law is planned to be implemented that will give municipalities additional instruments to implement regulations if housing is sublet to migrant workers (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 2022). When property-owners sublet housing to migrant workers, they can be obligated to acquire a rental permit. In this rental permit, municipalities can lay down regulations regarding the number of persons a dwelling may be sublet to and the maximum rental price. Awaiting the implementation of this law, multiple municipalities have already implemented stricter regulations to reduce subletting (R6, L8, L9). In addition, municipalities are also increasing the enforcement of existing regulations (L13). Besides implementing and enforcing stricter regulations on the housing market, stricter policies towards employment agencies are being implemented. An image that has become dominant is that notoriously malicious employment agencies, so called “cowboys”, are the cause of unsuitable housing conditions among migrant workers. For example, a policy expert in The Hague (L8) said: *“the problem cases are the free riders, cowboys, and one-man agencies with constantly changing e-mail addresses.”* Relatedly, R7 noted: *“There are just a few ranchers and cowboys on the market, they ruin it for those who try to do it right.”* During a public congress, the chairperson of the largest employer organization (VNO-NCW) argued: *“the problem lies with the cowboys, and then we [as employers] are powerless, enforcement is needed, more inspection”* (Interdepartmental migrant worker project team, 2022). In line with this discourse, the national government is currently developing a mandatory certificate for employment agencies.

While increased regulation is portrayed as a measure to protect migrant workers, it may also have adverse effects. Migrant workers living under conditions that are not in line with existing housing regulations may increasingly run the risk of being evicted. A policy expert at the municipality of Rotterdam noted that they have helped migrant workers who were evicted in excessive situations to find alternative housing, but he also acknowledged that the municipality does not want to be a provider of housing as this is a responsibility of private parties (L9). N2 argued that precarious housing conditions should not be condoned in anticipation of alternative housing because it justifies keeping undesirable conditions in place. This would be especially problematic as he does not believe that alternative housing will become available in the short-term due to the wider housing shortage and because *“[housing] construction is simply absolutely necessary for the local population, the own children.”* The consequence of increased regulations towards subletting and enforcement is that it will become more difficult for migrant workers to find a place to live, especially if alternative housing is not available. Therefore, these policy measures confirm that negative discourses towards the presence of migrants in inner city neighborhoods may result in the implementation of policies

prioritizing the interests of the general population instead of the well-being of migrant workers (Ambrosini, 2013; Engbersen et al., 2017; Money, 1997).

Increasing the regulation of employment agencies may also prove ineffective in resolving housing precarity among migrant workers. While misconduct is often portrayed as the result of especially malicious “cowboys”, the chairperson of the Booster Team Migrant Workers argued that he has also seen wrongdoings at larger employment agencies that currently want to “lead by example” (N1). In addition, a union representative argued that the idea that abusive situations only occur at “cowboys” is too simple and exonerates larger employment agencies too much (C20). According to him, larger employment agencies also “mercilessly put people on the street and simply make them homeless. Which also makes me wonder how do you sleep at night while doing these kinds of things?” These statements are in line with a study that found that certified employment agencies almost equally often breach labor law as non-certified agencies (McGauran, De Haan, Scheele & Winsemius, 2016). Through the discourse that wrongdoings are exceptional and the result of rogue parties, larger private parties are able to distance themselves from these wrongdoings and present themselves as blameless. Consequentially, indirect power puts them in the position to propose solutions instead of being called out on their own exploitative practices or the system of package deal contracts underlying the vulnerability of migrant workers (Berntsen & Skowronek, 2021).

3.5.3 Dominant discourses about housing conditions suitable housing for migrant workers

Subsequent to the discourses about the unsuitability of migrant workers living in inner-city neighborhoods, there are also discourses about housing conditions suitable to both migrant workers and the general population.

In line with Strockmeijer et al. (2019), we found that there is a dominant belief that most migrant workers come to the Netherlands temporarily and aim to save as much money as possible (R7, L11, L13, P16, P17). L13 made an explicit comparison between migrant workers from CEE countries, that “choose to really have a period of half a year, sometimes a year, and at the most 3 years and then they just return”, and migrant workers that came from Morocco and Turkey in the 1970s where “a large share stayed in the Netherlands and whose children are born and stay here.” Because of this discourse, stakeholders argue that migrant workers prioritize affordability. For example, R4 stated: “they go to work early, work hard, and do not want... Not everyone sets very high demands on their housing conditions because they often want to save as much money as possible to bring back to their home country.”

Another consequence of the discourse of temporality is the idea that they do not aspire to be part of Dutch society (L8, L13, P16, C21). For example, P16 argued that *“they have no connection whatsoever with the neighborhood where they live.”* Therefore, it is argued that migrant workers prefer to live *“on the outskirts of the city because they often have to go to industrial areas”* (L8).

Besides assumptions about the desires of migrant workers arising from the temporality discourse, it is also argued that migrant workers should receive support from their employers in finding housing. A policy expert in The Hague (L8) argued: *“There are migrant workers who are new to the Netherlands and who are unable to find housing themselves in this Dutch housing market.”* Relatedly, P15 said that migrant workers run the risk of *“entering a circuit of rogue property-owners and the like”* without the support of their employer or employment agency. This is also underlined by a representative of a civil organization that supports migrant workers (C20): *“Sometimes it is also useful when people only come for two or three months, then it makes no sense to look for a house on the free market.”*

Because of these discourses, it is argued that migrant workers have a distinct housing demand, namely, as inexpensive, and as proximate to their workplace as possible. In practice, this translates to shared housing in large-scale housing sites located at industrial parks or the land of horticulturalists. According to multiple stakeholders, these special sites do not compete with the demand of the general population and, therefore, take pressure off the housing market. The Agricultural and Horticultural Association, for example, emphasizes *“that this accommodation does not have to compete in any way with more regular housing assignments such as, for example, starter homes and single-family homes”* (LTO Netherlands, 2022, p. 6), while the owner of a company that develops such sites argued that development is in the interest of the local population because it prevents single-family dwellings from being bought up and sublet to migrant workers (P14). The fact that these special sites are often realized nearby the workplace of migrant workers is also argued to be in line with the interests of the general population as *“you also get rid of a lot of commuting”* (P15).

Hence, the development of such sites is portrayed as positive for the general population. The interests of the general population play a significant role when the provision of housing for migrant workers is discussed in political discourse. This becomes especially explicit by the title of a booklet funded by the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations: *“We are not noticing anything: Ten inspiring examples of good housing for migrant workers”*¹⁰ (Expertise center flexible living, 2022). This title

10. In Dutch: “We merken er niets van. Tien inspirerende voorbeelden van goede huisvesting voor arbeidsmigranten.”

implies that housing for migrant workers is inspiring and good if it remains out of sight of the general population. This stems from the fear that migrant workers will cause nuisance. In line with this, L11 argued: *“we also have to make it clear to the population that the experience we have with large-scale housing sites, where management has been arranged well, is that there are barely, or no problems.”* To prevent nuisance, multiple stakeholders argued that housing sites for migrant workers should be monitored (R6, L11). This fear for migrant workers is made explicit by a quote of a member of a neighborhood association in the aforementioned booklet: *“It is better to have accommodation concentrated in one place than to have it spread out in a neighborhood without surveillance”* (Expertise center flexible living, 2022, p. 22).

Because of these discourses, public policy at multiple levels of governance increasingly facilitates the development of these sites. The national government has made funds available to stimulate the development of these sites, presented these sites as good examples, and helped municipalities to facilitate the development through policy suggestions (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 2022; Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, 2021). In line with this, the Province of South Holland (2021) has changed its master plan to allow the development of housing for migrant workers on the terrain of horticulturalists. On the local level, particular municipalities provide active support to developers in the realization of housing sites for migrant workers outside residential areas (Municipality of Lansingerland, 2019; Municipality of Westland, 2021).

Since public policy is progressively facilitating the development of such sites, it can be expected that they will increasingly be realized. While these sites are portrayed as desirable for both migrant workers and the general population in the dominant discourse, the former can be questioned. Despite the dominant belief that most migrant workers come to the Netherlands on a temporary basis, recent analyses of register data have shown that a significant share stay for extended periods of time (Manting et al., 2022; Strockmeijer et al., 2019). These results challenge the notion that shared housing is an “in-between phase” for which people choose shortly after coming to the Netherlands in anticipation of more stable housing (Manting et al., 2022). According to a representative of a civil organization supporting CEE migrants (C20) it is common that people initially do not have a fixed idea of staying here temporarily or for an extended period. She noted that *“You also see that a lot of people, that [wanted to stay for] a few years have been here for 20 years, and they are still here you know.”* Consequentially, housing that is presented as temporary is not always temporary in reality. A representative of the union (C21) gave the example of a man who had been living in shared accommodation on a former holiday park for over

three years. Another example are migrant workers who live at multiple “short-stay” housing sites successively (L12, C21). By arguing that migrant workers only stay temporarily, their rights are being hollowed out (C21). This example clearly shows the significance of indirect power in governance networks. Through agenda setting, stakeholders have reinforced the belief that migrant workers are a temporary group, and this discourse is currently determining which housing conditions are suitable for migrant workers. At the same time, the voices of migrant workers have not been heard and C21 noted that *“they were really pushed away and ignored for a long time.”*

Another issue with the temporality discourse is that migrant workers are presented as incapable of finding their own place to live. Through this discourse, the role of employment agencies and employers in their accommodation becomes insurmountable. However, this keeps the dependency relationship in place as migrant workers are under the constant threat of losing their place to live if they would lose their job (Palumbo et al., 2022). Therefore, it can be questioned whether these conditions are actually in the interest of migrant workers in the long term or are mainly in the interest of other social groups.

The dominance of the interests of the general population becomes especially explicit in a document that describes the demands that a housing site for migrant workers must meet in the Municipality of Lansingerland (2020): *“Professional management and supervision must be guaranteed in the form of a signed written statement. In this statement, the developer guarantees, among other things: 24/7 availability for complaints and a registration of complaints and reports, physical presence within 1 hour in case of calamities, daily surveillance, camera surveillance, [and] regulations that show how nuisance and disruptions of public order are dealt with. The topics of drug use, alcohol use, vehicle parking, noise nuisance, and litter must be included.”*

3.6 Conclusion

Housing precarity among migrant workers has become widespread across the EU (European Policy Institute, 2020). In the Netherlands, little progress has been made over the past decade despite a parliamentary inquiry committee noting that they were in “shock” of the housing conditions of CEE migrant workers in 2011 (Committee Lessons from Recent Labor Migration, 2011). We studied this issue through a governance network perspective which enabled us to reveal the diverging interests and perceptions among actors, as well as the interdependencies between them (Baalbergen et al., 2023; Mullins & Rhodes, 2007; Poppelaars & Scholten, 2008). This perspective was complemented with a critical discourse analysis to uncover power and

ideological conflicts (Jacobs, 2006) underlying the housing issue. The combination of these two approaches enabled us to unravel: how housing for migrant workers is constructed as a political problem by various public, private, and civil stakeholders; the power relations underlying these constructions; and the consequences of these constructions for housing migrant workers in the Netherlands.

Despite the national government stating that migrant workers should be treated as equal and full members of Dutch society and not as second-class citizens (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 2022), housing policy is moving in the opposite direction. We found that migrant workers are forced out of the general housing stock through the implementation and enforcement of increasingly strict regulations towards subletting. While these measures are depicted as a solution to end housing precarity among migrant workers, increased regulation decreases the availability of housing for migrant workers. In addition, specialized housing sites are portrayed as a solution to enable migrant workers to find a suitable place to live. Yet, public policy that guides the development of such sites prioritizes control and surveillance over migrant workers instead of the right of migrant workers to find a decent place to live. By pushing migrant workers out of the general housing stock and into strongly monitored housing sites, public policy prioritizes discontent within the general population over the interests of migrant workers.

Besides serving the interests of the general population, housing policy for migrant workers is also motivated by the economic interests of employers and employment agencies. Housing is an essential factor in the social reproduction of a labor force willing to accept employment conditions that the local population does not want to tolerate (Castells, 1975). By allowing the development of strongly controlled large-scale housing sites for migrant workers outside or on the edge of the built environment, employers are able to continue hiring migrant workers.

Our findings highlight the value of a critical discourse analysis of the governance network responsible for housing migrant workers. Decision-making within governance networks has often been presented as a matter of finding consensus in a network of interdependent stakeholders that are operationally autonomous and are not part of a hierarchical chain of command (Habermas, 1981; Mullins & Rhodes, 2007; Sørensen and Torfing, 2007). Consensus finding is argued to be especially complex because stakeholders frequently have disagreements regarding the nature, causes, and solutions to policy problems, which may be explained by disagreements regarding existing knowledge, conflicting ideologies, and diverging interests (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016). Because this perspective assumes that actors are unable to

exercise hierarchical control over each other, it has largely ignored the role of power disparities within governance networks. Since decision-making within the housing field is increasingly taking place in networked forms (Verhage, 2003; Van Bortel, 2009), stakeholders have gained more opportunities to pursue their interests. The current study has shown the discursive practices that stakeholders use in pursuit of their interests and demonstrated that discourse determines the direction in which solutions are sought (Hisschemöller & Hoppe, 1995; Schattschneider, 1960). Because social groups possess various levels of power, they have unequal opportunities to acquire attention for their concerns (Hoppe, 1999; Van Dijk, 2015). Whereas housing policy is currently serving the interests of the general population and the interests of employers, the interests of migrant workers themselves are ignored. Therefore, future research into decision-making within governance networks needs to acknowledge the significance of power disparities across social groups. These power disparities cannot simply be “designed” out of collaborative processes (Purdy, 2012; Ran & Qi, 2018) as they are a result of the position of a group within society (Hoppe, 1999).

Public and private stakeholders have reinforced the idea that migrant workers stay temporarily, and through this discourse they have successfully contended that migrant workers desire inexpensive housing that is preferably located nearby the workplace. However, recent analyses of register data have shown that many migrant workers stay for extended periods of time (Strockmeijer et al., 2019). Moreover, Manting et al. (2022) have shown that migrant workers often live in shared accommodation for prolonged periods. Ethnographic work has found that this has a significant impact on their well-being and opportunities to participate in the Dutch society (Szytniewski & Van Der Haar, 2022; Ulceluse et al., 2022). However, these concerns have not been taken up by public stakeholders. Therefore, we conclude that migrant workers have been unable to influence the political agenda or to define their concerns as a problem meriting substantive policy intervention (Jacobs, 1999). If public stakeholders truly acknowledge that migrant workers should not be treated as second-class citizens, they should stop using housing policy for migrant workers as an instrument to monitor them and treat housing as a fundamental right instead. To achieve this, “if it remains out of sight”¹¹ should be taken for what it really is, a discriminatory practice that excludes migrant workers from Dutch society.

11. This is a reference to a booklet funded by the Dutch government entitled “We are not noticing anything: Ten inspiring examples of good housing for migrant workers” (Expertise center flexible living, 2022).

3.7 References

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4

Chapter 4

Uneven geographies of asylum reception and the social mobility of refugees

This chapter is currently under review at an international journal.

Abstract

Many studies have attributed differences in social mobility outcomes among refugees to explanations on the individual level. However, research is increasingly emphasizing that focusing on individual level characteristics may divert attention from the social, political, and economic conditions in which social mobility takes place. One contextual factor faced by refugees across Europe is obligatory asylum reception after applying for a residence permit. The current study investigates the relationship between reception circumstances and opportunities for social mobility. Building on existing research, we argue that in addition to the length of reception, the spatial, material, and institutional conditions of reception matter because they influence refugees' opportunities to accumulate social and human capital while waiting. Utilizing the Dutch register data, we followed the labor market entry, enrolment in education, and Dutch language acquisition of all refugees who arrived between 2014-2017 for a period of five years using survival analysis. Our findings confirm that waiting time can have a damaging effect on the social mobility of refugees. In addition, our analysis shows that remote reception locations hinder social mobility. A large distance between the reception center and the first independent dwelling also has a negative effect. Finally, we demonstrate that prolonged stays in irregular reception centers can delay social mobility.

Keywords: Asylum reception, refugees, opportunity structures, social mobility, survival analysis, the Netherlands

4.1 Introduction

Refugees are facing significant difficulties in the labor market across Europe and their labor market participation has become a significant concern among policymakers, academics, and the general public. In the first years after arrival, employment rates among refugees remain low when compared to other migrant groups (Bakker, Dagevos & Engbersen, 2017). This disparity in the employment outcomes of refugees has been termed the “refugee employment gap” and can only partially be explained by the demographic composition and educational background of this group. Other factors obstructing the labor market participation of refugees are language deficits and health problems resulting from the experience of fleeing (Brell, Dustmann & Preston, 2020; Connor, 2010).

Existing work has predominantly studied explanations on the individual level for the refugee employment gap. However, opportunities for social mobility also depend on the “opportunity structures” available to refugees after arrival. By focusing on explanations on the individual level, studies run the risk of ignoring the social, political, and economic context in which refugees are integrating (Baalbergen et al., 2024; Phillimore, 2021). Across Europe, asylum seekers are placed in reception centers awaiting a decision on their residence permit. In the aftermath of the refugee crisis in 2015, European regulations and national laws with regards to the reception of refugees have been tightened. Although reception centers appear to be designed to provide assistance and shelter, they simultaneously aim to control and discipline refugees in order to maintain public order. This is evident in the fact that reception centers isolate refugees from the local population and make use of exceptional legal instruments that do not apply to citizens of a state (Kreichauf, 2018). In the Netherlands, existing laws and regulations deliberately keep asylum seekers physically and legally at a distance from the labor market with the intent of discouraging immigration (Rijken, De Lange, Besselsen & Rahouti, 2017).

Despite the widespread use of reception procedures, not much is known about the influence of reception characteristics on the opportunities of refugees later in life. Several studies have shown that a prolonged stay in asylum reception is damaging to the labor market participation of refugees (Hainmueller, Hangartner & Lawrence, 2016; Hvidtfeldt, Schultz-Nielsen, Tekin & Fosgerau, 2018; Kosyakova & Brenzel, 2020). One potential explanation for this pattern is that prolonged stays in asylum reception have a negative effect on mental health (Damen, Dagevos & Huijnk, 2022; Van Der Linden, Weeda & Dagevos, 2023; Walther, Fuchs, Schupp & Von Scheve, 2020), which may subsequently delay labor market participation (Bakker, Dagevos & Engbersen, 2014). While length of stay is an important reception characteristic,

other reception characteristics have largely been ignored in quantitative research. However, qualitative research suggests that there is significant variation between reception centers resulting in “uneven geographies of asylum accommodation.” This variation can be related to spatial, material, and institutional dimensions of asylum reception and can have a significant impact on the opportunities of people living in asylum centers (Zill, Van Liempt, Spierings & Hooimeijer, 2020). The geography of asylum reception matters because it determines the degree of access to urban amenities and social networks (Kreichauf, 2018; Zill, et al., 2020). Consequentially, whereas some places enable refugees to accumulate human and social capital while living in asylum reception (Hvidtfeld et al., 2018), others may not.

This study builds on existing research by positing that the effect of waiting time in asylum reception on social mobility is partially dependent upon other reception characteristics. We go beyond the focus on the temporal dimension by also taking the geographical context into account. Another novel aspect of our study is that we do not only consider the employment outcomes of refugees, but also consider their enrollment in education and language attainment. A focus on employment provides an incomplete image of the options that refugees have after arrival (Miltenburg & Dagevos, 2021). By looking at the effect of reception characteristics on social mobility, we shift attention away from individual refugees and towards the role of the context in which refugees are arriving (Hänhorster & Wessendorf, 2020). This is especially relevant in the Dutch context because the Netherlands has taken particularly restrictive reception measures (Van Riemsdijk & Axelsson, 2021) and because the labor market participation of refugees in the Netherlands is low compared to other European countries (Buimer, Elah-Madadzadeh, Schols & Odé, 2020). In addition, focusing on the Netherlands enables us to investigate the effect of asylum reception characteristics on the social mobility of refugees using extensive register data. This dataset allows us to follow all refugees who entered the Netherlands between 2014-2017 through time and to test our hypotheses using survival analysis.

In the next section we will provide a background of the asylum reception procedure in the Netherlands. After that, our theoretical model will be presented. Building on the theory informing our research, we will discuss the used methods. Finally, we will share our results and conclusions.

4.2 Background: asylum reception in the Netherlands

Refugees who arrive in the Netherlands must go through an asylum procedure in order to obtain a residence permit. During this procedure, their application

is reviewed, and they are placed in an asylum center until a decision is made. Commissioned by the Ministry of Justice and Security, the Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA) is responsible for allocating refugees to a particular center. Asylum centers are dispersed over the country but are more often located in less urbanized areas. The general principle underlying the reception of asylum seekers is that it should be “austere but humane” (Advisory Council on Migration, 2013). Decisions on applications are made by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (IND), and the average time for processing an application is six months (Statistics Netherlands, 2022). However, because of shortages at the IND, there is also a waiting period for starting an asylum procedure which has in exceptional cases amounted to 18 months. During this waiting period and in the first months of the asylum procedure, asylum seekers reside in irregular asylum reception locations that offer few options for personal development (Dutch Council for Refugees, 2019). After being granted a residence permit, refugees are assigned to social housing in the Netherlands. However, the waiting time for allocation ranges from several months to over a year and most status holders remain in asylum accommodation during this period (Rijken et al., 2017).

Current asylum reception policies aim at discouraging migration to the Netherlands and this goal is pursued by restricting access to the labor market, education, and language courses. Asylum seekers were formally barred from Dutch language courses until 2017. With regards to the labor market, asylum seekers were only allowed to work for a maximum of 24 weeks¹² if they had been in the Netherlands for at least six months, were filling jobs which could not be filled with workers in the Dutch labor market, and if they gave up part of their salary in exchange for residing in an asylum seeker center (Rijken et al., 2017). These restrictive policies have been implemented over the past decades. Until 1987, asylum seekers were directly assigned to social housing upon arrival (Ghorashi, 2005).

4.3 Theory

The current study focuses on the role of asylum reception in the social mobility of refugees. Existing research has found that prolonged periods in reception can have a detrimental effect on the social mobility of refugees. Several studies have found lower levels of employment among refugees who were kept in asylum reception for

12. In 2023, the Council of State ruled that setting a limit on the number of weeks during which an asylum seeker is allowed to work is in violation of the Reception Conditions Directive of the European Union. Following this ruling, the 24-week rule has been lifted.

extended periods of time (De Vroome & Van Tubergen, 2010; Hainmueller et al., 2016; Hvidtfeldt et al., 2018). Moreover, recent research found that prolonged reception can also have a negative effect on enrollment in post-migration education and language courses (Kosyakova & Brenzel, 2020; Van Tubergen, 2022).

The negative effects of waiting time on the employment outcomes of refugees have been attributed to three main mechanisms which may also hold for other socioeconomic outcomes. First, waiting time has been found to have an adverse effect on the physical and mental health of refugees (Damen et al., 2022; Van Der Linden et al., 2023; Walther et al., 2020) and research has found that the negative relation between waiting time and labor market outcomes is mediated by health issues (Bakker et al., 2014). Second, economic research suggests that time out of the labor market results in the atrophy of skills. This may reduce the employability of refugees who were restricted access to the labor market while waiting for extended periods (Brell et al., 2020). Third, extended periods of waiting may lead to feelings of disempowerment. As a result, refugees may lose hope and cease to take the initiative (Ghorashi, De Boer & Ten Holder, 2018). Based on the previous, we expect that prolonged residence in asylum reception has a delaying effect on social mobility (Hypothesis 1).

Quantitative research has so far mainly focused on the role of waiting time in asylum procedures. However, temporality is only one aspect of asylum accommodation. Existing qualitative research suggests that spatial, material, and institutional characteristics can influence the way reception is experienced by asylum seekers (Zill et al., 2020). These experiences may subsequently have an effect on the social mobility of refugees after leaving the asylum center. In the remainder of this section, we will propose five hypotheses with regards to the effects of spatial, material, and institutional characteristics of asylum reception on the social mobility of refugees.

4.3.1 The spatial dimension of asylum reception

Reception centers are dispersed over the Netherlands but are more often located in less urbanized areas. Several studies have found that remote asylum reception locations can withhold refugees from accessing supportive social networks (Brell et al., 2020; Kox & Van Liempt, 2022; Witteborn, 2011; Zill, 2023). This can have detrimental effects on the mental health of asylum seekers as it may result in feelings of being separated from the rest of society, which has been found to lead to a sense of despair and a loss of perceived control (Ghorashi et al., 2018). Besides the potential detrimental effects on the mental health of asylum seekers, a lack of supportive social networks may also reduce access to information (Brell et al., 2020). Access to information may be especially important during the initial stages of settlement in

a new country. Wessendorf and Phillimore (2019) have found that the presence of long-established migrants can help newcomers to find their place in society by, for example, offering support in learning the language of the host country. In addition to withholding refugees from supportive social networks, remote locations can also confine them from participating in city life and urban arrival infrastructures such as churches, schools, and libraries (Kox & Van Liempt, 2022; Wessendorf & Phillimore, 2019). This may prevent refugees from enrolling in informal language classes (Zill, 2023). Following from this, we expect that asylum seekers in remote centers have less opportunities to develop human and social capital while waiting in reception. Therefore, we hypothesize that staying in remote asylum centers has a delaying effect on social mobility (Hypothesis 2).

Related to the previous, we expect that relocations between asylum seeker centers have a disruptive effect on the lives of refugees. A relocation to a new center implies that refugees are cut loose from the social networks they developed and the activities they participated in (Damen et al., 2022). Existing research has found that the number of relocations between asylum centers can affect mental health (Goosen, Stronks & Kunst, 2014) and host-country language acquisition (Damen et al., 2022). Therefore, we expect that opportunities to accumulate human and social capital in reception are impaired by relocations and hypothesize that the number of relocations between asylum centers has a delaying effect on social mobility (Hypothesis 3).

A similarly disruptive effect is also expected for refugees who are assigned to social housing at a large distance from their latest place of asylum reception. Reception locations are more frequently located in the rural areas of the Netherlands, but after leaving asylum reception, refugees are dispersed over municipalities proportionally to the number of inhabitants in each municipality. The result of this is that refugees are often emplaced in social housing at a large distance from the place where they lived in asylum accommodation. A recent qualitative study found that refugees who lived in asylum accommodation in Amsterdam and who remained in Amsterdam after being granted a residence permit were able to kickstart their arrival, as they already developed a local network. Other refugees who lived in centers outside of the city had to start all over again (Kox & Van Liempt, 2022). Therefore, we expect that the distance between the location of asylum reception and the first independent dwelling has a delaying effect on social mobility (Hypothesis 4).

4.3.2 The material dimension of asylum reception

Opportunities in asylum accommodation are also dependent upon material conditions. Kreichauf (2018) argues that asylum centers across Europe have been

transformed into camp-like structures with lowered living standards and a closed character. The closed character of asylum accommodation contains asylum seekers in space and thereby excludes them from society. Existing research has found that the size of an asylum center can have an impact on how it is experienced by asylum seekers and local residents. Refugees in larger asylum seeker centers more often experience a lack of privacy and feelings of insecurity, and this can lead to the loss of an individual's sense of self. Simultaneously, local residents more easily perceive refugees in larger asylum centers as a homogenized mass. As a consequence, they may not perceive asylum seekers as neighbors but as an institutionalized population (Zill, Van Liempt & Spierings, 2021). Both processes can have a hampering effect on contact between asylum seekers and local residents. Following from this, we expect that living in larger asylum centers has a delaying effect on social mobility (Hypothesis 5).

4.3.3 The institutional dimension of asylum reception

In addition to spatial and material heterogeneity across asylum centers, there are also institutional differences. In the Netherlands, refugees reside in distinct types of asylum seeker accommodation depending upon the stage of their asylum application. No daytime activities are offered to refugees who are awaiting the start of their asylum procedure in irregular asylum reception (Dutch Council for Refugees, 2019). Those who have received a positive decision on their residence permit and are awaiting allocation to social housing in reception are offered state-provided language courses (Rijken et al., 2017). Hence, opportunities for personal development in asylum reception are dependent upon the institutional regime under which a person falls. Recent research has found that participating in activities in asylum reception has a positive effect on social mobility later in life (Miltenburg & Dagevos, 2021).

The institutional regime under which a refugee falls also affects the perceived agency of an individual. A lack of a legal status can induce feelings of insecurity and anxiety, and such feelings may withhold people from making connections outside asylum accommodation (Bakker et al., 2014; Burridge & Gill, 2017; Ghorashi et al., 2018). Moreover, insecurity regarding one's right to stay may reduce the incentive to invest in human capital specific to the host country (Kosyakova & Brenzel, 2020). Following from the previous, we expect that it matters at which stage in the asylum procedure a refugee is waiting and hypothesize that prolonged stays in irregular asylum reception¹³ have a delaying effect on social mobility (Hypothesis 6).

13. This includes stays in the centralized reception site (centrale opvanglocatie), pre-processing reception sites (pre-procesopvanglocaties), and processing reception sites (procesopvanglocaties).

4.4 Methods

4.4.1 Data and selection

The influence of asylum reception characteristics in the social mobility of refugees is investigated with register data from Statistics Netherlands. The register data consist of a collection of administrative information coming from various governmental agencies such as the Immigration and Naturalization Service (IND), the Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA), the Tax Department (Belastingdienst), and the Education Implementation Service (DUO). The dataset enables us to examine the characteristics of individual asylum procedures and provides information on a wide range of other topics, such as the employment history and educational attainment of refugees.

Using these data, we follow all refugees who applied for asylum between the 1st of January 2014 and the 31st of December 2016 for a period of sixty months after arrival. We restrict our sample to those refugees who obtained asylum through the general asylum procedure because we are interested in the relation between asylum reception characteristics and social mobility. Accordingly, family-reunification migrants are excluded because they have not experienced the entire period of asylum reception. Lastly, we exclude people below 18 and above 55 years old. These selection criteria result in a sample of 34,080 people.

4.4.2 Measurement

In the current study we investigate two dependent variables. Regarding the first dependent variable, we analyze whether people have either found employment or enrolled in education in a particular month. We constructed a combined measure of these outcomes as refugees have multiple paths towards social mobility after arrival (Miltenburg & Dagevos, 2021). Employment is studied by looking into “secure employment,” which is operationalized as six months of subsequent employment. Participation in education is operationalized as enrolment in vocational or higher education. The second dependent variable concerns language acquisition, which is measured by passing a Dutch language exam at level A2 or higher, as measured by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), at a given point in time.

Following our theoretical framework, we investigate multiple independent variables. Since we employ a longitudinal method and follow people for a period of sixty months, we are able to account for variation over time. We do this by computing either sum scores or means of the independent variables for each individual until they leave asylum reception. After an individual leaves asylum, the independent

variables remain constant. The first independent variable is the length of asylum reception, which is operationalized as the number of months in asylum reception until time-point t . The second independent variable measures the remoteness of asylum reception and is operationalized by the average distance to the nearest library by road until time-point t . We use this proxy to measure remoteness because libraries can be an important place for newcomers to form social connections (Glick Schiller & Çağlar, 2016). In addition, libraries are often centrally located in villages or cities, and therefore provide an indication of the accessibility of other amenities and semi-public spaces that provide opportunities for social connection. The third independent variable is the number of relocations between different asylum centers until time-point t . The fourth independent variable is constant over time and concerns the distance between the latest location of asylum reception and the first independent dwelling, which is operationalized by looking at the travel time between the neighborhood in which the asylum center was located and the neighborhood of the first independent dwelling. The fifth independent variable relates to the average size of asylum accommodation until time-point t . The last independent variable is the duration of being kept in irregular reception until time-point t . Irregular reception is defined as the number of months in sober reception where refugees are kept before being assigned to a regular asylum center. Assignment to a regular asylum center takes place after an individual's application has begun to be assessed.

In the analysis we control for age, household size, country of origin, and whether an individual is still living in asylum accommodation at time-point t . We distinguish between the five most common countries of origin (Syria, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iraq, and Iran) during the study period and one “other” category to enable a comparison of cross-country differences.

4.4.3 Analytical strategy

The two socioeconomic outcomes are studied through two survival analysis models. We favor survival analysis because this approach enables us to study the time until experiencing a particular event. Another reason for choosing survival analysis is that it is well-equipped to deal with sample attrition as it allows us to follow people until the time of dropping out. The last reason for choosing survival analysis is that it enables us to include time-varying covariates (Tekle & Vermunt, 2012) and this is crucial because reception conditions vary over time.

We follow people for a period of 60 months starting at the date of arrival in the Netherlands. Our data is interval-censored within months, meaning that events can only occur at discrete points in time. Therefore, we use a discrete-time survival

model. Following Jenkins (2005), the effect of time is modelled through a piece-wise constant baseline hazard clustered by year.

4.5 Results

4.5.1 Descriptive results

Table 4.1 presents a summary of the bivariate descriptive results. Slightly less than half of the sample found secure employment within five years after arrival. The share of people enrolling in vocational or higher education is smaller (21.2%). A slight majority of people either found employment or enrolled in education (53.3%). This implies that there is a significant overlap in the two outcomes. The share of people who successfully passed a language exam at the A2 or higher level within five years is larger (62.1%). Turning now to the timing of these events, it stands out that the first month of secure employment on average occurs earlier than enrolment in education, or the passing of a language exam.

Regarding the independent variables, the average duration of asylum reception is nearly twelve months. Statistics on the 5th and 95th percentile indicate that there is significant variation in the number of months in reception; five percent of the sample is kept in asylum reception for nearly two years. The average distance to the nearest library while residing in asylum reception is approximately three kilometers. Our results suggest that people move on average about twice between reception centers, but this may be a slight underestimate because we only observe each person once per month, so multiple moves within a month are not observed. At more than sixty minutes, the average travel time between the last asylum center and the first independent dwelling is considerable. The mean size of asylum accommodation is also rather large at around 550 persons. On average, asylum seekers live for four months in irregular asylum reception.

Looking at the control variables used in the analysis, it stands out that the mean age is low at just over thirty years old. Another noteworthy point is that men form a clear majority in the sample. This is partly caused by the fact that women are more often family reunification migrants, which cases were not analyzed. In line with migration patterns in the time-period under study, the majority of refugees originates from Syria.

Table 4.1. Descriptive statistics (N = 34,080)

	Mean	SD	5%	95%
Dependent variables				
Secure employment	45.45%			
Education (mbo+)	21.20%			
Employment or education	53.33%			
Language exam (A2+)	62.09%			
Timing of events				
First month secure employment	38.44	10.78	18.00	53.00
First month education (mbo+)	40.09	10.88	22.00	58.00
First month employment or education	38.72	11.19	18.00	54.00
First month language exam (A2+)	44.04	7.33	32.00	56.00
Independent variables				
Months in reception	11.65	4.98	5.00	21.00
Distance nearest library	2.82	1.11	1.29	4.96
Moves between reception centers	2.19	1.24	0.00	4.00
Travel time first independent dwelling	66.60	43.08	11.00	153.00
Size of asylum reception	557.17	283.72	213.00	1071.83
Months until leaving irregular reception	4.10	2.48	1.00	8.00
Control variables				
Age	31.17	8.74	20.00	49.00
Household size	2.61	1.66	1.00	5.77
Gender				
Men	76.43%			
Women	23.57%			
Country of origin				
Syria	61.16%			
Ethiopia	8.94%			
Eritrea	13.31%			
Iran	3.22%			
Iraq	2.83%			
Other	10.53%			

4.5.2 Survival analysis

The results of our two survival analysis models are shown in table 4.2. In the first model, we analyze either secure employment or enrollment in education as the dependent variable. In the second model, we look at successfully passing a language exam. Regarding the timing of these events, the odds of finding employment or enrolling in education in a particular month is highest in the fourth year (t_4). The odds of passing a Dutch language exam is also at its peak in year four (t_3).

Turning to the independent variables, our analysis shows that the number of months in reception has a detrimental effect on both outcomes under study. This leads to a confirmation of the first hypothesis. The odds of finding employment or enrolling in education in a particular month is approximately 10% lower with each additional month of waiting. The effect of waiting time is slightly larger when looking at the decrease in the odds (16.7%) of passing a Dutch language exam in a particular month. In line with the second hypothesis, we find that refugees who lived in more remote reception centers have a lower odds of finding employment or enrolling in education. Each additional kilometer of distance to a library reduces the odds of the first social mobility outcome by 2%. A similar effect was not found in the second model. Turning to the third hypothesis, we surprisingly found no evidence of a negative relationship between the number of moves between asylum reception locations and the social mobility of refugees. We did find evidence for the fourth hypothesis which states that the distance between the location of asylum reception and the first independent dwelling has a delaying effect on social mobility. An additional hour of travel time reduces the odds of finding employment or enrolling in education in a particular month by 3.2%, and the passing of a language exam by 2.7%. In contrast to the fifth hypothesis, we did not find evidence for an effect of the size of asylum accommodation in either of the models. Turning to the last hypothesis, we found a statistically significant relation between the outcomes under study and the number of months in irregular asylum reception. Each additional month in irregular reception reduces the odds of finding employment or enrolling in education in a particular month by 2.6% and the odds of passing a language exam by 7.6%.

Looking at the control variables included in both models, men are more likely to be employed or enrolled in education, and more likely to have passed a language exam. Regarding the effect of country of origin, Syrian refugees have the highest odds of passing a language exam, while the odds of employment or education is higher among people originating from Iraq and Other countries of origin. Younger refugees and people who are part of smaller households have a higher odds of experiencing either of the social mobility outcomes. The odds of experiencing either of the social mobility outcomes was significantly lower for people who still lived in asylum reception at time-point t .

Table 4.2. Outcomes of two survival analysis models with secure employment or enrollment in education, and language attainment as dependent variables (N = 34,080)

	Model 1: Employment or education		Model 2: Language attainment	
	OR	SE	OR	SE
Hazard function (ref = t_1)				
t_2	3.243**	.229	25.747**	2.281
t_3	9.693**	.690	150.771**	13.144
t_4	16.854**	1.198	133.218**	11.686
t_5	10.892**	.786		
Control variables				
Male	2.382**	.050	1.150**	.020
Country of origin (ref = Syria)				
Eritrea	.968	.023	.614**	.017
Ethiopia	.953*	.021	.571**	.014
Iraq	1.138*	.047	.981	.040
Iran	.847*	.041	.610**	.030
Other	1.119**	.027	.881**	.021
Age	.624**	.006	.821**	.008
Age ²	.992	.008	.908**	.007
Household size	.890**	.008	.957**	.008
Living in asylum reception (ref = no)	.440**	.030	.047**	.018
Independent variables				
Waiting time	.904**	.008	.833**	.007
Distance nearest library	.980*	.008	.994	.008
Moves between asylum centers	1.006	.008	1.026*	.008
Distance first dwelling	.968**	.007	.973**	.007
Size of asylum reception	1.004	.009	1.005	.009
Months until leaving irregular reception	.974*	.008	.924**	.008
Model fit				
Number of observations	1810520		1685052	
LR chiz(20)	20530.4		39476.1	
Log likelihood	-104108.5		-93854.0	

Table 4.2. Continued

	Model 1: Employment or education	Model 2: Language attainment
AIC	208259.0	187748.1
BIC	208519.6	187994.8
Pseudo R2	.090	.174

Notes. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$. Results are displayed as odds ratios. Coefficients for continuous variables can be interpreted as the change in the odds given a one standard deviation increase. Since none of the refugees passed a Dutch language exam in the first year after arrival, year one and two are combined in t_1 in the second model for estimation purposes.

4.6 Conclusion

Many studies have shown that refugees face a significant employment gap when compared to other migrant groups (Bakker et al., 2017; Brell et al., 2020; Buimer et al., 2020). Existing research has often attributed this gap to factors on the individual-level such as refugees’ educational background or language proficiency. Another widely studied explanation on the individual level are health issues resulting from the experience of fleeing (Bakker et al., 2017; Connor, 2010; Miltenburg & Dagevos, 2021). Although explanations on the individual level may partially explain the refugee employment gap, it is problematic to perceive integration as an individual responsibility and studies focusing on individual explanations run the risk of ignoring the social, political, and economic context into which individuals are integrating (Phillimore, 2021). In line with this argument, we find evidence that the way in which receiving countries organize asylum reception has an effect on refugees’ opportunities for social mobility.

Consistent with existing research, we found that prolongedly keeping refugees in asylum reception harms social mobility (Bakker et al., 2014; Hainmueller et al., 2016; Hvidtfeldt et al., 2018; Kosyakova & Brenzel, 2020). Going beyond the temporal dimension, we also studied the effect of the spatial, material, and institutional conditions of asylum reception (Zill et al., 2020). With regards to the spatial dimension, our findings show that refugees are less likely to find secure employment or enroll in education when they are emplaced in remote reception centers. This is in line with qualitative findings which indicate that remote reception locations can withhold refugees from accessing beneficial arrival infrastructures and social networks (Kox & Van Liempt, 2022; Wessendorf & Phillimore, 2019; Zill, 2023). In addition, we found that the distance between the latest asylum reception center

and the first independent dwelling can hamper the social mobility of refugees. This confirms that moves over longer distances can have a disruptive effect on the lives of refugees (Kox & Van Liempt, 2022). Our results also reveal that keeping refugees in irregular asylum centers for a longer period of time delays their social mobility. This suggests that the institutional regime of asylum reception matters; keeping refugees in more restrictive asylum centers, with fewer opportunities for self-development and more legal uncertainty about their residence permits, damages future opportunities. In summary, our findings provide quantitative evidence that research should consider not only the duration of asylum reception, but also the conditions in which refugees are kept.

In contrast to the existing literature, we did not find a relation between the material circumstances of reception and social mobility, and we also did not find evidence for a disruptive effect of moves between asylum reception locations. One potential explanation for these results is that the current study focuses on employment, education, and language attainment, whereas qualitative research often focuses on “softer” outcomes such as the depersonalization of individual refugees (Zill et al., 2021) or contact between refugees and local residents (Kox & Van Liempt, 2022). Although we agree that these outcomes are extremely important in the initial stages of arrival, it remains a challenge for future research to measure such outcomes in a quantitative manner and to do so in a sufficiently large and representative sample. Another potential explanation for not finding an effect of the number of moves between reception locations is positive selection. In the Netherlands, refugees are able to request a move to another asylum center to, for example, live closer to family or relatives (Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers, n.d.). Refugees with relatives in the Netherlands might have more opportunities for social mobility because they may be more aware of Dutch institutions, and because relatives are able to provide support to them. A final explanation for the lack of statistical significance is the fact that the number of moves is strongly correlated with waiting time. This raises the question of whether moves are harmful over and above the negative effect of waiting time, or whether a higher number of moves is just a characteristic of a relatively long waiting time.

In conclusion, we find that reception conditions matter and this implies that the refugee employment gap is partially caused by the way in which receiving countries have organized the reception of refugees. Across Europe, countries have implemented restrictive reception policies with the aim of discouraging immigration (Kreichtauf, 2018; Rijken et al., 2017). Although there is little evidence that these policies are actually effective (Gammeltoft-Hansen & Tan, 2017), our findings show that limiting

the opportunities available to refugees upon arrival by keeping them in remote and highly institutionalized centers for extended periods of time delays their social mobility. This is not only detrimental for individual refugees, but also puts pressure on the carrying capacity of society as a whole.

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5

Chapter 5

Quantifying the role of arrival infrastructures in the labor market integration of refugees

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Abstract

Across Europe, refugees face significant difficulties in finding employment. Many studies have attributed the disadvantaged labor market position of refugees to factors on the individual level, such as language barriers or health issues related to the experience of fleeing. While such explanations emphasize individual responsibility, ethnographic studies are increasingly contending that opportunities to integrate in the labor market can be restricted or enabled by arrival infrastructures. We contribute to this discussion by taking a quantitative perspective. Focusing on the Netherlands, we used extensive national register data that allowed us to follow refugees over time and break the concept of arrival infrastructures down into four dimensions, namely job access, neighborhood effects, enclave effects, and the local migration regime. In addition, because the Dutch dispersal policy distributed refugees - to a considerable extent - randomly across municipalities during the period under study, we were able to counteract problems of self-selection and reversed causality. We studied the labor market integration of refugees using competing risks analysis, taking educational enrollment and residential mobility into account. Our findings show that economic, social, and institutional arrival infrastructures manifest themselves at different scales but all matter in the labor market integration of refugees.

Keywords: Arrival infrastructures, dispersal policy, refugees, labor market integration, competing risk analysis

5.1 Introduction

Since the start of the civil war in Syria in 2011, there has been an increase in the number of people fleeing to Europe. In 2015, 1.3 million people applied for asylum in Europe. Due to persisting unrest around the world, a new peak took place in 2022 with nearly one million people applying for asylum (Eurostat, 2023). The increasing number of refugees has reignited discussion about their reception in receiving countries and especially their integration into the labor market has been a significant concern among policymakers, academics, and the general public. Compared to natives and other migrant groups, refugees face significant barriers in the labor market. This disparity in employment outcomes has been termed the “refugee employment gap” and has been attributed to sociodemographic differences between refugees and non-refugees which are aggravated by physical or mental health problems caused by the experience of fleeing (Bakker, Dagevos & Engbersen, 2017; Brell, Dustman & Preston, 2020).

While research often focuses on explanations at the individual level, research has less often explored the role of the socio-spatial context even though opportunities to integrate in the labor market may be beyond the control of individual refugees (Phillimore, 2021). Related to this, ethnographic studies are increasingly emphasizing the role of “arrival infrastructures” (Felder, Stavo-Debaugé, Pattaroni, Trossat & Drevon, 2020; Kox & Van Liempt, 2022; Meeus, Arnaut & Van Heur, 2019). Arrival infrastructures can be defined as “those parts of the urban fabric within which newcomers become entangled on arrival, and where their future local or translocal social mobilities are produced as much as negotiated” (Meeus et al., 2019). These structures arise simultaneously and interdependently from above and from below and are manifested at multiple spatial scales (Meeus, Beeckmans, Van Heur & Arnaut, 2020). They may vary in the extent to which they are “hospitable” to new arrivals (Felder et al., 2020). The concept can contribute to our understanding of the spatial dynamics in the labor market integration of refugees as it enables a multidimensional view of the labor market integration of refugees (Phillimore, 2021). Moreover, the idea of arrival infrastructures also aligns with the call to consider socio-spatial effects at multiple spatial scales (Petrović, Manley & Van Ham, 2020).

Whereas previous studies have used qualitative methods to study arrival infrastructures, we take a quantitative perspective to measure the effect of arrival infrastructures in the labor market integration of status holders. By focusing on the Netherlands, we are able to follow the labor market integration of all refugees that requested asylum between 2010–2016 through time with extensive register data. This

enables us to reach conclusions about the effects of arrival infrastructures on the entire population instead of a selective group of study participants. In addition, the scope of the Dutch registers and the opportunity to link the data with other datasets allows us to operationalize multiple dimensions of arrival infrastructures. Moreover, the Dutch dispersal policy for refugees provides an ideal case because this dispersal has to a substantial extent been random. This grants us the opportunity to study the effect of regional characteristics while countering the issue of self-selection into particular areas. Self-selection may lead to reversed causality, for instance, because moving into a particular residential area may be related to the likelihood of finding employment (Van Ham & Manley, 2012). Due to the dispersal policy, the likelihood of living in a particular place is not dependent upon personal characteristics and this allows us to study the effect of locality on labor market integration. Following from this, the current case can contribute to the wider literature on arrival infrastructures by offering a quantitative perspective. By quantifying arrival infrastructures, we also aim to contribute to the knowledge on factors obstructing the labor market integration of refugees. This is especially relevant as the refugee employment gap is comparatively large in the Netherlands (Buimer, Elah-Madadzadeh, Schols & Odé, 2020).

Many studies have examined the consequences of the socio-spatial context on the employment outcomes of refugees (Andersson, Musterd & Galster, 2019; Åslund, Östh & Zenou, 2010; Bevelander, Mata, Pendakur, 2019; Edin, Frederiksson, Åslund, 2003; Vogiazides & Mondani, 2020). Other studies have looked into residential mobility patterns following dispersal (De Hoon, Vink & Schmeets, 2021; Haberkfeld, Bigier, Lundh & Elldér, 2019) and qualitative work has emphasized the effect of dispersal on the educational enrollment of refugees (Van Liempt & Miellet, 2021). We argue that employment outcomes, residential mobility, and educational enrollment are interrelated and should be considered simultaneously. While educational enrollment may be an important prerequisite for social mobility, it also restricts the opportunities for a refugee to find employment (Miltenburg & Dagevos, 2021). Hence, considering these outcomes separately may lead to an over or underestimation of the role of arrival infrastructures in employment outcomes. We propose to tackle this issue by modeling these outcomes as competing risks (Jenkins, 2005). In doing so, this study contributes to the existing literature on the labor market integration of refugees by taking alternative paths towards social mobility into account.

In the next section, we will shortly introduce the Dutch dispersal policy. After that, we will present our theoretical framework in which we connect existing research to the overarching arrival infrastructures concept. Finally, we will discuss our method and the results and conclusions following from our analyses.

5.2 Background: The Dutch dispersal policy

To receive a residence-permit in the Netherlands, refugees have to go through an asylum procedure. During this procedure, their application is considered, and pending a decision they are placed in an asylum seeker center (“AZC”). These centers are spread over the country and refugees are assigned to a particular location by the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA). Decisions on applications are made by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (IND) and the average processing time is six months (Statistics Netherlands, 2022). After a positive decision, the majority is allocated to social housing, but some choose to opt out of this option to move in with contacts in the Netherlands or to search for housing by themselves. Because of shortages in social housing, allocation may take up to seven months and during this period, refugees stay in the AZC (Ministry of Justice and Safety, 2011).

Allocation to social housing occurs based on a dispersal policy. Each municipality in the Netherlands is obliged to facilitate housing for refugees proportional to the number of inhabitants. Until 2017, refugees were allocated to a particular municipality without taking an individuals’ work history or education into account (Sax, Walz & Engelen, 2019). Three main rationales are underlying this dispersal policy. First, dispersal is seen as a method to counter “segregation” which might be detrimental to the labor market integration of refugees. Second, it is argued that dispersal helps to safeguard public support for receiving refugees by preventing concentration in particular areas. Last, dispersal is seen as a method to “spread the burden” on social services such as the social housing stock (Robinson, Andersson & Musterd, 2003).

5.3 Theoretical background

In the current study, we will investigate regional disparities in the labor market integration of refugees by studying their residential context. The role of the residential context in the social mobility of migrants has long been studied. In the concentric zone model of Park and Burgess (1925), migrants arrived in “urban transition zones” where their social and spatial mobility began. Following this early theory, much has been written on the role of neighborhoods in the labor market integration of migrants (Bolt, Özüekren & Phillips, 2010). Lately, neighborhood effect research has been criticized for its preoccupation with the neighborhood scale (Petrović et al., 2020). Sharkey and Faber (2014) argue that spatial mechanisms may operate at multiple spatial scales and that the spatial scale that is used should be based on the specific mechanism under study.

Related to this, the notion of arrival infrastructure has recently been introduced (Meeus et al., 2019; Saunders, 2011). Arrival infrastructures consist of infrastructures that arise from above and below that simultaneously play a role in the arrival of migrants (Hanhörster & Wessendorf, 2020). While previous studies have emphasized economic, social, and institutional explanations in the labor market integration of refugees, we bring these viewpoints together by breaking the concept of arrival infrastructures down into four dimensions; regional job accessibility, neighborhood effects, enclave effects, and the local migration regime. In the remainder of this section, we will argue how these infrastructures affect the arrival of refugees and will contend that these infrastructures manifest themselves at different spatial scales.

5.3.1 Regional job accessibility

Economic geographers have traditionally argued that regions offer divergent labor market opportunities (Fielding, 1992). A mismatch in the local employment opportunities and skills of a person may have a detrimental effect on labor market integration (Kain, 1968; Holzer 1991). Hence, it is assumed that limited access to suitable jobs will lead to difficulties in the labor market. One explanation for this is that workers are not willing to make lengthy commutes because of the time and financial costs involved (Van Ham, Hooimeijer & Mulder, 2001). An alternative explanation is that workers' search efficiency is lower at larger distances resulting in higher search costs. A last potential mechanism is that employers are not willing to hire distant workers fearing higher absence or lower productivity (Gobillon, Selod & Zenou, 2007).

Previous research has shown that people who can reach a higher number of jobs are more likely to find employment (Bastiaanssen, Johnson & Lucas, 2020; Gobillon et al., 2007; Van Ham, et al, 2001). The supply of jobs is dependent upon the number of jobs in the region as well as transportation structures (Van Ham, et al., 2001). Because refugees often do not possess cars in the first period after arrival, we expect that the accessibility of jobs through public transport is especially relevant (Bastiaanssen, Johnson & Lucas, 2022). In addition, previous research has found that refugees often initially find jobs for which they are overqualified (Van Riemsdijk & Axelsson, 2021). Therefore, we expect that the supply of jobs only matters in economic sectors where refugees often find employment. Consequently, we hypothesize that public transport accessibility to jobs - in sectors where refugees are often employed - has a positive effect on labor market integration (Hypothesis 1).

5.3.2 Neighborhood socioeconomic status

Besides a lack of accessible employment, many studies have argued that living in a socioeconomically disadvantaged neighborhood is harmful to an individuals' labor

market opportunities (Galster, 2011; Musterd & Ostendorf, 2009; Van Ham & Manley, 2012). The socioeconomic status (SES) of the residents within a neighborhood may influence an individuals' opportunities through multiple mechanisms. An example of such a mechanism is that living in a neighborhood with a lower SES may hinder people from meeting individuals who can provide support in finding employment. Another mechanism that has been proposed is that concentrations of unemployed persons may result in a lack of positive role models (Bolt, Van Kempen & Van Ham, 2008). A last example is the "discouraged worker effect", which states that a high rate of unemployment within a neighborhood may discourage people from actively searching for a job (Van Ham, Mulder, Hooimeijer, 2001). In line with the idea of neighborhood effects, previous research has argued that refugees emplaced in neighborhoods with a lower SES may experience more difficulties in the labor market (Damm, 2014; Kristiansen, Maas, Boschman & Vrooman, 2022). Therefore, we hypothesize that neighborhood socioeconomic status has a positive effect on labor market integration (Hypothesis 2).

5.3.3 Enclave effects

According to the enclave hypothesis, newly arrived migrants particularly receive support from long-established migrants (Hanhörster & Wessendorf, 2020). A potential explanation for this is the homophily phenomenon, which emphasizes that people have more contact with people who are similar to them in key demographic characteristics (McPherson, Smith-Lovin & Cook, 2001). Consequentially, it may be easier for refugees to establish social relations with people with a similar migration background. The support that a person receives from other people has been referred to as social capital and consists of (1) the people someone knows; (2) their resources; and (3) their willingness and opportunities to deploy these resources for said individual (Lin, 2001; Pedulla & Pager, 2019). Co-ethnics can kickstart the arrival of refugees in a particular place by providing valuable social capital (Kox & Van Liempt, 2022). Following this, living in a neighborhood with a high share of ethnic minorities, or an ethnic enclave, may provide refugees with more opportunities to obtain social capital (Chimienti & Van Liempt, 2015; Damm, 2014; Kristiansen et al., 2022). Therefore, we hypothesize that the number of people with the same ethnic background within the neighborhood has a positive effect on labor market integration (Hypothesis 3).

A potential shortcoming of looking into the effect of living among co-ethnics is that ethnicity only provides a one-dimensional appreciation of contemporary diversity. The term "super-diversity" has been used to emphasize that there are extensive differences within groups of the same ethnic origin (Vertovec, 2007). One particularly salient difference is that people with a similar national background may belong to different entry categories (e.g., refugees, expats, migrant workers,

or family reunification migrants) and this creates a hierarchical differentiation in their social rights (Sainsbury, 2006). In many European countries, especially refugees face distinctive obligations, and the Netherlands has a very institutionalized and restrictive refugee reception approach (Van Riemsdijk & Axelsson, 2021). This starts in the AZC where refugees are not allowed to work or learn the language (Rast, Younes, Smets & Ghorashi, 2020) and continues after people are granted a temporary residence-permit by the obligation to learn Dutch and to attend civic integration courses (Kox & Van Liempt, 2022). Because of the significance of status in the current context, we argue that it is particularly important to live among refugees who have been granted a residence permit in the past. Similarity based on informal, formal, or ascribed status can be termed “status homophily” (Lazarsfeld & Merton, 1954). Since refugees that came to the Netherlands earlier arrived in the same system, they are aware of existing institutions and possess valuable knowledge.

Consequently, we expect that the number of people with a refugee background in the neighborhood in which a refugee is emplaced has a positive effect on labor market integration (Hypothesis 3b).

5.3.4 Local migration regime

According to the local turn in migration studies, the governance of migration and integration has increasingly shifted to the local scale. Challenges and conflicts regarding migration often manifest themselves at the local level and local governments have a significant degree of autonomy in the way they deal with the governance of migration (Caponio, Scholten & Zapata-Barrero, 2019). Because the reception of refugees is a politically contested issue, there are stark differences in the support local governments provide to refugees and the exclusion of migrants has been used as a tool to seek political consent (Ambrosini, 2013). Local politics set the framework and decide what can be done and what should be avoided with regards to the support that is given to newly arrived migrants (Caponio & Borkert, 2010). Variation in the supply of language courses, educational programs, labor market preparation activities, and financial support have also been reported across Dutch municipalities (De Lange, Berntsen, Hanoeman, & Haidar, 2021; Meijer, Popławska, & Szytniewski, 2023; Van Liempt & Mielle, 2021). An inventory of municipal policies shows that some municipalities declare that they do not have sufficient funds to guide refugees to employment (55%), while other municipalities have implemented specific policies to support refugees in finding employment (18%) (Razenberg & De Gruijter, 2016). The availability of support may have a significant impact on the opportunities refugees have after arrival (Hanhörster & Wessendorf, 2020; Van Riemsdijk & Axelsson, 2021; Kanas & Kosyakova, 2023).

Hence, welcoming local migration regimes can provide access to support structures. Because of political contestation regarding the reception of refugees, we expect that refugees emplaced in municipalities with a lower share of support for far-right parties are more likely to integrate into the labor market (Hypothesis 4). In addition, it can be expected that the number of local initiatives is not only dependent upon the local migration regime, but also on the number of refugees in the area because they determine the demand for supportive organizations (Kanas and Kosyakova, 2023). Moreover, it might be argued that the presence of a larger number of refugees may increase the salience of reception, which may lead to especially restrictive policies in municipalities with more support for far-right parties¹⁴. Therefore, we expect that the municipal migration regime is especially influential in neighborhoods with a higher number of people who have a refugee background (Hypothesis 4b).

5.4 Method

5.4.1 Data and selection

We investigate the role of arrival infrastructures in the labor market integration of refugees with register data from Statistics Netherlands¹⁵. These register data contain administrative information from various public institutions about all persons registered in the Netherlands and are integrated by Statistics Netherlands. Through this dataset, we were able to identify refugees and follow their labor market careers, educational enrollment, residential trajectories, and household situation over time. The register data were enriched with data from the LISA employment register¹⁶ to compute the number of jobs accessible by public transport in every postal code area. We also added data from the Dutch Electoral Council about election results at the municipal level.

Strict selection criteria were used in order to counter issues of reversed causality. Since forced dispersal only applies to people who went through the regular asylum procedure, we dropped people whose first residence was not an AZC¹⁷. In addition, we only examined observations that did not move into an existing household, live in the Netherlands

14. We are grateful to one of the anonymous reviewers of this manuscript for pointing out this argument.

15. All results are based on authors' calculations using non-public microdata from Statistics Netherlands. Under certain conditions, these microdata are accessible for statistical and scientific research. The GDPR basis and purpose of the current research project has been approved by Statistics Netherlands. Further information: microdata@cbs.nl.

16. The LISA data contain detailed information on the number of employees per place of employment.

17. As the location of AZCs is not part of the register data, we assume that people living in "institutional households" are living in AZCs. Although this may potentially be incorrect for people that live in other types of institutional households (e.g., hospitals, health clinics, or jails), we believe this is an apt strategy.

before, and that did move into social housing after leaving the AZC. Due to adjustments in the dispersal policy¹⁸, we focus on people that migrated to the Netherlands between the 1st of January 2010 and the 1st of January 2016. Besides these criteria to ensure the involuntary dispersal of refugees across municipalities, we restricted our sample to refugees originating from the five largest sending countries to enable an investigation of cross-country differences. Lastly, we only studied people who were of working age during the entire observation period (18-55 years old) because we are investigating labor market outcomes. These criteria lead to a final sample of 14,790 people.

5.4.2 Analytical strategy

Competing risk models are a particular type of survival analysis. Survival analysis is used because it enables us to study the duration until a particular event while including cases that did not experience an event. General models do not enable this; people who did not experience an event would need to be excluded or the analysis would need to be limited to a binary distinction between those who did and did not experience an event (Allison, 2010). Related to this, survival analysis is better equipped to deal with respondents who drop out of the sample over time. In a general model, sample attrition may result in bias because the likelihood of dropping out may be related to the dependent variable. An advantage of survival analysis is that it enables us to follow people until the time of dropping out (Tekle & Vermunt, 2012). Lastly, survival analysis allows us to include time-varying independent variables.

Competing risk models are suitable when the risk of experiencing a particular event is hindered or modified by another event (Noordzij et al., 2013). In our case, the outcome of interest is finding secure employment, which is defined as a consecutive employment spell of minimally six months. The likelihood of finding employment is modified by two competing risks, namely, studying and making a residential move. People who attend education have fewer opportunities to work. By perceiving studying as a competing risk, we can control for this. People are defined as studying when they attend government-funded education or receive student loans. Besides studying, making a residential move also modifies the likelihood of finding employment because it changes available arrival infrastructures. Therefore, making a residential move to another COROP region¹⁹ at time-point t is also included as a competing risk.

18. From 2017 onwards, work history and education are on paper considered in the dispersal of status holders (Sax, Walz & Engelen, 2019).

19. COROP regions are functional statistical regions on the European NUTS 3 level that reflect regional labor markets.

Our longitudinal data enable us to study people through time. We follow people for a maximum period of 60 months. People that find employment, enroll in education, make a residential move, or drop out of the sample for any other reason are followed until experiencing that event. The data is not continuous in time but “interval-censored” within months, hence, events can only occur at discrete points in time. Because of this, we employ a discrete-time competing risk model. In line with Jenkins (2005), we model the effect of time through a piece-wise constant baseline hazard clustered by year.

5.4.3 Operationalization

Following our theoretical framework, we investigate the role of arrival infrastructures in the labor market integration of refugees by breaking the concept down into four dimensions; job accessibility, neighborhood effects, enclave effects, and the local migration regime. The effect of job accessibility is studied by measuring the number of jobs that a person can access from their place of residence by public transport. We only look at jobs in the three sectors²⁰ in which status holders most often find employment. The statistic has been calculated with LISA data about the number of jobs in every postal code area and data about public transport travel times between postal code areas. It takes account of average commuting tolerance, that is, the time people are on average willing to travel to their workplace. As a result, jobs that are further away are less heavily weighted than jobs closer by. Further information regarding the measurement of the job accessibility variable can be found in Appendix 2. Since the statistic has only been computed for the year 2017, we use the number of accessible jobs in 2017 as a proxy for the number of available jobs in other years.

The role of neighborhood effects is studied by including a measure of the SES of the neighborhood. Through a multiple correspondence analysis, Statistics Netherlands has computed an index score measuring the SES of all neighborhoods in the Netherlands²¹. The index is based on the prosperity, level of education, and employment history of all residents in the neighborhood. A score of zero indicates a neighborhood with an average SES compared to all other neighborhoods. Positive scores indicate an above average SES, while negative scores indicate a below average SES. The index is annually available from 2014 onwards for each neighborhood and scores for earlier years were extrapolated.

20. Following Statistics Netherlands' standard business classification [SBI codes], the three sectors are: administrative and support service activities; accommodation and food service activities; and wholesale and retail trade.

21. More information can be found here: <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/onze-diensten/methoden/onderzoeksomschrijvingen/korte-onderzoeksomschrijvingen/ses-woa-scores-per-wijk-en-buurt>

Hypothesis 3 and 3b concern the effects of enclaves and are operationalized by looking into the number of co-ethnics and people with a refugee background within the neighborhood. Co-ethnics are defined as first or second-generation immigrants originating from the same country of origin. People that entered the Netherlands with an asylum motive and are no longer living in an AZC are labeled as having a refugee background. Both variables were computed yearly based on the situation on the 1st of January. To account for fluctuations over the study period, we measure the number of people with a co-ethnic background and refugee background relative to the annual average of co-ethnics and refugees across all neighborhoods.

The local migration regime is the last dimension under study. We operationalized this dimension by measuring municipal support for radical right-wing parties²² annually. We calculated the share of radical right voters in each municipality following the general elections in 2010, 2012, 2017, and 2021. Consequentially, we created an index score by dividing these shares by the average national level of support for radical-right wing parties. Values for intermediate years were obtained through extrapolation. Based on this, a dummy variable was computed (1 = above average support for right-wing parties, 0 = below average support for right-wing parties).

Multiple covariates are included in the analysis. We include three personal characteristics, namely, country of origin, age at the time of leaving the AZC, and the number of persons in one's household. In addition, we included a variable about the distance between the AZC and the dwelling to which someone was assigned because previous research has shown that this may have a disruptive effect on the social network of a person (Kox & Van Liempt, 2022). To account for the geographical clustering of refugees within municipalities, we use cluster robust-standard errors on the municipal level. In order to check for potential multicollinearity issues, we computed the VIF scores. The results do not indicate multicollinearity problems (Appendix 1).

5.5 Results

5.5.1 Descriptive results

Table 5.1 gives an overview of the descriptive statistics of the current study. Men form a clear majority in the current sample. This is in line with our expectations, as we confine our sample to those people who arrived in the Netherlands under the “regular” asylum procedure and women more often come to the Netherlands as family reunion migrants.

22. The following three parties are widely classified as radical right: PVV, Forum voor Democratie, and JA21.

The results indicate significant gender differences in the likelihood of secure employment within 60 months. While a majority of men found secure employment (61.14%), a significantly smaller share of women did (15.95%). Due to this finding, we conducted separate competing risk analyses for men and women. Men were also slightly more likely to enroll in education. A minority of men and women moved out of the COROP region in which they were initially placed. Relating to the timing of these events, men found secure employment at an earlier time-point (31.99 months) than women (36.80 months). For both groups, enrolling in education or making a residential move on average occurred earlier than finding secure employment.

Table 5.1. Bivariate descriptive statistics (N = 14,970)

	Men (N = 9,638)		Women (N = 5,152)	
	Mean / %	SD	Mean / %	SD
Dependent variables				
Secure employment	61.14%		15.95%	
Student	26.18%		20.69%	
Residential move	12.13%		12.73%	
Timing of events (months)				
Secure employment	31.99	13.14	36.80	12.84
Student	24.72	14.25	30.82	15.56
Residential move	22.26	14.99	24.91	16.09
Covariates				
Age	31.46	9.01	31.97	9.14
Country of origin				
Syria	56.15%		47.30%	
Eritrea	22.86%		19.00%	
Iran	7.72%		12.07%	
Iraq	7.41%		11.88%	
Afghanistan	5.86%		9.74%	
Household size	1.98	1.63	3.05	1.79
Distance to AZC (km)	69.56	52.30	70.17	52.96
Independent variables				
Job accessibility	35982.69	36394.33	32933.97	33350.43
Neighborhood SES	-.05	.23	-.04	.23
Neighborhood co-ethnics	28.78	57.20	33.00	76.53
Neighborhood refugees	139.55	112.45	133.21	109.64
Municipal radical right support	12.48%	4.28	12.54%	4.44

Regarding the independent variables in the current study, it stands out that the variance in job accessibility is high, which indicates that the chances of finding employment may vary substantially in different geographical locations. Another noteworthy result is that refugees are placed in neighborhoods with a below average SES. Considering the composition of the neighborhoods in which refugees are emplaced, the number of people with a refugee background is higher than the number of people with the same national background. In relation to the last independent variable, the average level of municipal support for radical right-wing parties is approximately 12.50%.

When looking at the other variables that were used in the analysis, three results are worth mentioning. First, the majority of refugees originate from Syria. This is in line with our expectations, since Syria formed the largest sending country in the period under analysis (Eurostat, 2023). Second, women are on average part of larger households (3.05) than men (1.98). Last, the distance between the AZC and the dwelling where people are emplaced is relatively large.

Figure 5.1 shows the share of people who found secure employment, attended education, and moved out of their COROP region by COROP region. Yellow borders indicate the Randstad which is the main urban agglomeration of the Netherlands. The share of people finding employment, attending education, and moving out of their COROP region starkly varies across regions in the country. When looking at the share of people finding employment, it can be seen that refugees more often find employment in COROP regions within and close to the Randstad area and in the southeast of the country. The share of people finding employment seems lower in the less urbanized parts of the country. At the same time, a reversed pattern appears to exist in the likelihood of moving out of the COROP region. The percentage of movers is especially high in the regions where the share of people that found employment is low. These findings show that studying employment in isolation is problematic. People that moved out of their COROP region may be more likely to have found employment after moving to an area with a more hospitable arrival infrastructure. Ignoring this would lead to an underestimation of the role of the initial arrival infrastructure.

The share of people that attended education is highest in five relatively unurbanized northern COROP regions. A potential explanation may be that refugees have more difficulties in finding employment in these regions and choose to attend education first.

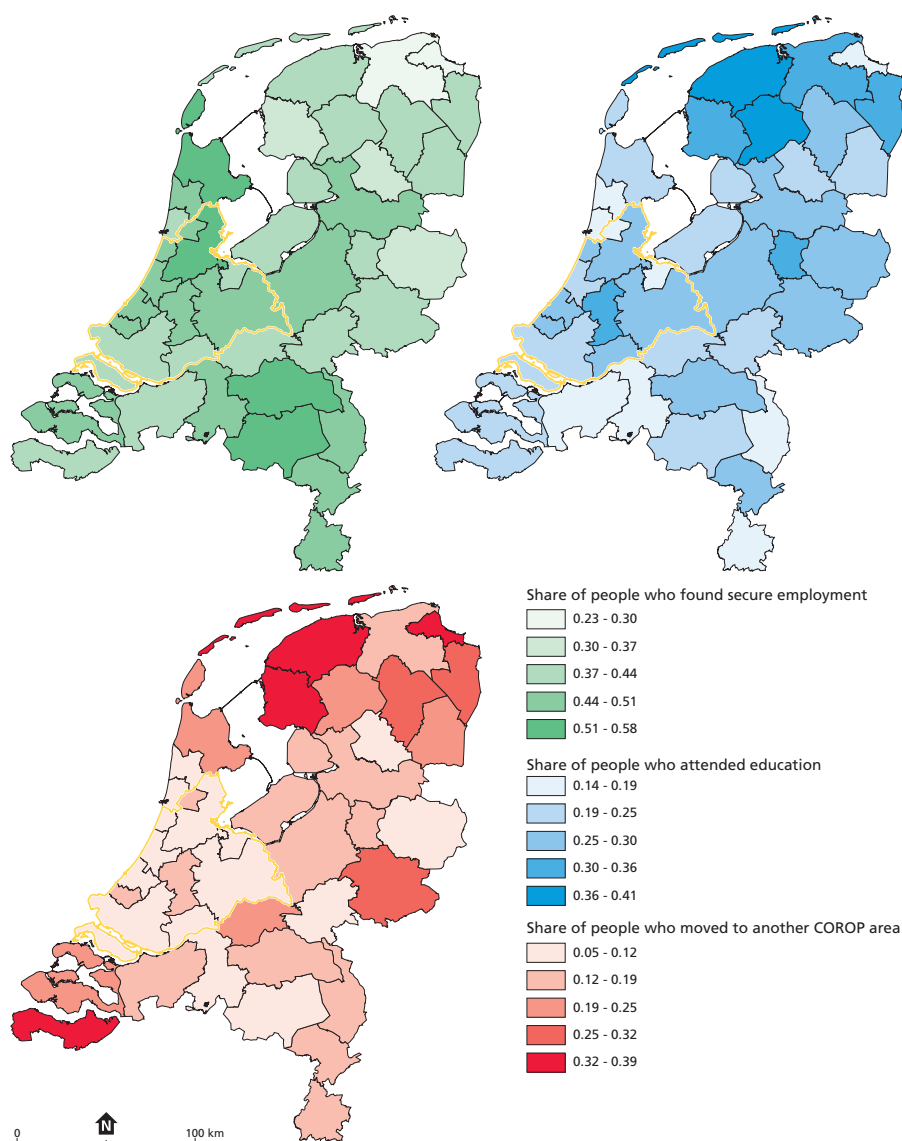


Figure 5.1. Maps of the Netherlands illustrating the share of people who found secure employment, attended education, or moved to another COROP region by COROP region. The Randstad is displayed by yellow borders

5.5.2 Competing risk analysis

Tables 5.2 and 5.3 show the outcomes of the discrete-time competing risk models for men and women. The hazard function indicates that the likelihood of finding secure employment in a particular month is highest at later time-points. In contrast, making a residential move becomes less likely over time. The likelihood of starting a study is highest in intermediate years.

Turning to our independent variables, job accessibility has a positive and statistically significant effect on the likelihood of finding employment for men. One log increase in the number of accessible jobs leads to an increase of 0.07 percentage points in the likelihood of finding employment in a particular month. This finding is in line with the first hypothesis. Regarding the second hypothesis, men are more likely to find employment if they live in neighborhoods with a higher SES. A one level increase on the three-point index results in an increase of 0.65 percentage points in the likelihood of finding employment in a particular month. Job accessibility and neighborhood SES do not have a statistically significant effect on the likelihood of women finding employment. Hypotheses 3 and 3b relate to enclave effects. We did not find evidence for an effect of the number of co-ethnics in the likelihood of men or women finding employment. However, the number of refugees in the neighborhood improved the likelihood of both men and women to find employment. Women living in neighborhoods with double the number of refugees relative to the average number of refugees in neighborhoods in a particular year had 0.05 percentage point higher likelihood of finding employment in a particular month. This effect is slightly larger for men at 0.09 percentage points. Consequentially, we reject hypothesis 3 and find evidence for hypothesis 3b. The last two hypotheses concern the local migration regime. For both groups, the main effect of support for radical right-wing parties is statistically insignificant leading to a rejection of hypothesis 4. Nevertheless, the interaction between radical right-wing support and the number of refugees in the neighborhood is significant for both groups. In line with hypothesis 4b, this means that the local migration regime particularly matters in areas with a higher number of refugees. This shows that the combination of a welcoming migration regime and existing demand for support structures provides an optimal setting for newly arrived refugees.

The findings from the analysis of the two competing risks provide important nuances. Whereas municipal support for radical right-wing parties did not affect the likelihood of finding employment, it did reduce the likelihood of studying. This is in line with qualitative research that found that certain municipalities expect refugees to find employment as soon as possible, while others facilitate studying (Miltenburg & Dagevos, 2021). The likelihood of studying was also higher for women

living in neighborhoods with a higher number of co-ethnics. Regarding residential mobility, women were more likely to make a residential move in neighborhoods with a higher number of people with a refugee background. Men were more likely to make a residential move in neighborhoods with a higher number of co-ethnics and were less likely to make a move in neighborhoods with a higher SES.

The results of the covariates indicate significant differences on the individual level in the likelihood of finding employment, studying, and making a residential move. In line with existing studies in the general population, younger refugees are more likely to experience any of the events. The role of country of origin is more diverse; whereas the likelihood of employment is highest for people from Syria, Iranians and Afghans had a higher likelihood of studying. These findings show that distinct groups of refugees may choose different trajectories towards social mobility. Significant gender differences were found in the role of household size. Whereas women in larger households are less likely to find employment, this is not the case for men. A last noteworthy finding is that the distance to the AZC in which refugees initially lived reduced the likelihood of finding employment for women and made studying less likely for men. This indicates that forced moves over longer distances can complicate the social mobility of refugees.

Table 5.2. Outcomes of the competing risk analysis with secure employment, studying, and residential mobility as dependent variables (9,638 men)

	Secure employment		Student		Residential move	
	dy/dx	SE	dy/dx	SE	dy/dx	SE
Hazard function						
t_2	.959**	.107	.178*	.054	-.021	.022
t_3	1.990**	.158	.571**	.054	-.017	.025
t_4	2.440**	.136	.470**	.046	-.032	.032
t_5	1.701**	.172	.116	.071	-.149**	.042
Covariates						
Age	-.038**	.005	-.107**	.007	-.004*	.001
Country of origin (ref = Syria)						
Eritrea	-.279**	.064	-.028	.033	-.093**	.025
Iran	-.566**	.067	.469**	.089	.119*	.053
Iraq	-.314**	.082	-.110*	.043	.069	.047
Afghanistan	.017	.124	.167*	.081	.122*	.052
Household size	-.010	.013	.020*	.010	-.015*	.006
Log distance to AZC	-.031	.026	-.043*	.016	.009	.015
Independent variables						
Log job accessibility	.066*	.025	-.027	.020	.012	.012
Neighborhood SES	.650**	.145	-.004	.103	-.237**	.065
Neighb. co-ethn.	-.022	.022	-.003	.011	.008**	.002
Neighb. ref.	.091*	.040	.051	.035	-.042	.022
Radical right	.051	.065	-.181**	.041	-.003	.032
Neighb ref* no RR	.212**	.048	.089	.049	-.015	.032
Model fit						
N observations	315,220					
Log pseudolikel.	-32,695.79					
Wald chi2(54)	5,243.81**					
Pseudo R2	.07					

Notes. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$. Results are displayed as marginal effects in percentage points. Marginal effects can be interpreted as the change in the likelihood of experiencing a particular risk (e.g., finding secure employment) relative to experiencing any of the competing risks (student or residential move) or experiencing no event, t_1 is used as reference category to avoid collinearity in the hazard functions (Jenkins, 2005).

Table 5.3. Outcomes of the competing risk analysis with secure employment, studying, and residential mobility as dependent variables (5,152 women)

	Secure employment		Student		Residential move	
	dy/dx	SE	dy/dx	SE	dy/dx	SE
Hazard function						
t_2	.185*	.070	.064	.049	.003	.026
t_3	.337**	.064	.432**	.045	-.004	.029
t_4	.450**	.066	.376**	.052	-.024	.036
t_5	.329**	.066	.294**	.053	-.107*	.040
Covariates						
Age	-.003*	.001	-.069**	.005	-.009**	.002
Country of origin (ref = Syria)						
Eritrea	-.093*	.027	-.062	.033	-.121**	.029
Iran	-.048	.035	.532**	.091	.036	.046
Iraq	-.126**	.034	-.025	.047	.004	.045
Afghanistan	-.167**	.029	.140*	.057	.042	.073
Household size	-.043**	.008	-.060**	.013	-.050**	.010
Log distance to AZC	-.021*	.010	-.012	.015	-.029	.017
Independent variables						
Log job accessibility	.005	.011	-.007	.013	.010	.014
Neighborhood SES	.056	.061	-.009	.075	-.090	.091
Neighb. co-ethn.	-.019	.017	.006*	.002	-.001	.002
Neighb. ref.	.048*	.021	.032	.031	.050*	.024
Radical right	-.010	.023	-.088*	.028	.023	.034
Neighb ref* no RR	.068*	.027	.045	.036	.022	.024
Model fit						
N observations	217,545					
Log pseudolikel.	-10,627.87					
Wald chiz(54)	1,955.10**					
Pseudo R2	.07					

Notes. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$. Results are displayed as marginal effects in percentage points. Marginal effects can be interpreted as the change in the likelihood of experiencing a particular risk (e.g., finding secure employment) relative to experiencing any of the competing risks (student or residential move) or experiencing no event, t_1 is used as reference category to avoid collinearity in the hazard functions (Jenkins, 2005).

5.6 Conclusion

Refugees face significant difficulties in the labor market across European countries (Bakker et al., 2017; Brell et. al, 2020). While previous studies have emphasized explanations on the individual level, our findings show that the labor market success of refugees is also influenced by the socio-spatial context; refugees living in areas with poor arrival infrastructures are less likely to find employment. Our results emphasize that multiple dimensions of arrival infrastructures matter.

Following the literature on job accessibility (Gobillon et al., 2007), limited access to employment opportunities reduces the likelihood of men finding employment. In line with the existing literature on neighborhood effects (Galster, 2011), male refugees emplaced in neighborhoods with a higher SES are more likely to find employment. In contrast to the existing literature on ethnic enclaves (Damm, 2014; Hanhörster & Wessendorf, 2020), living among co-ethnics does not increase the likelihood of finding employment in the current study. However, refugees are more likely to find employment when living in neighborhoods with a larger number of people who fled to the Netherlands. This indicates that similarity in status is more influential than similarity in ethnicity in the current case (Lazarsfeld & Merton, 1954). We also found that the municipal migration regime particularly matters for refugees living in neighborhoods with a higher number of people with a refugee background. This shows that the combination of a demand for support structures and a welcoming migration regime provides an optimal setting for newly arrived refugees.

One of the rationales underlying dispersal policies is the fear for segregation which is assumed to be detrimental to the economic integration of refugees (Robinson et al., 2003). Related to this fear, there is an abundance of studies into the effects of the ethnic composition of the neighborhood on the economic integration of migrants. Our findings indicate that a fixation with the ethnic composition of neighborhoods may divert attention from alternative explanations. In line with ethnographic research, we conclude that arrival infrastructures manifest themselves at multiple spatial scales (Meeus et al., 2020). The accessibility of jobs in the region, co-residents in the neighborhood, and municipal migration regimes all matter in the labor market integration of refugees.

A novel aspect of the current study is that we investigated the labor market integration of refugees through a competing risks framework (Jenkins, 2005). Our results reflect that it is problematic to study the role of the socio-spatial context in the labor market integration of refugees while ignoring residential mobility and enrollment in education because they moderate the likelihood of being in secure employment. By

ignoring residential mobility, existing work runs the risk of underestimating the role of arrival infrastructures. Refugees may move to more hospitable areas because of a lack of opportunities and may subsequently find work in these areas. An alternative approach that has been used is to drop refugees who make a residential move; however, this approach may also induce bias because it can be expected that the likelihood of making a move is related to perceived opportunities in the labor market.

While the primary aim of the competing risks framework was to control for these methodological issues, the outcomes provide interesting avenues for future research. The findings indicate that different dimensions of arrival infrastructures have an impact on the likelihood of working, studying, or moving. For example, while support for radical right-wing parties does not influence the likelihood of finding work or making a residential move, we found that it decreases the likelihood of studying. Future research can investigate differences in the educational enrollment of refugees further by developing specific hypotheses. This is especially relevant as our descriptive results indicate major differences across regions in the share of refugees who enrolled in education. Although quantitative studies have recently looked into residential mobility patterns following refugee dispersal (De Hoon et al., 2021; Haberfeld et al. 2019), these studies have not been linked up with the literature on arrival infrastructures.

The significant gender differences we found in the role of arrival infrastructures are another avenue for future research. Men are more likely to find employment when living in areas with more favorable economic conditions while such effects were not found for women. Following from this, future research should look into individual differences in the effects of arrival infrastructures. The likelihood of finding employment, studying, or making a residential move depends on personal characteristics, arrival infrastructures, as well as the interaction between the two. Although outside of the scope of the current study, other personal characteristics may also moderate the effect of arrival infrastructures. For example, based on research about the labor market integration of highly skilled refugees (Van Riemsdijk & Axelsson, 2021), we could expect that the effects of arrival infrastructures vary between people with different educational backgrounds.

The current study was the first to investigate the role of arrival infrastructures in the labor market integration of refugees quantitatively. We utilized the Dutch dispersal policy to counter endogeneity issues, made use of a longitudinal approach, and took educational enrollment and residential mobility into account through a competing risks analysis. Despite our innovative approach, there are also limitations to the

current study. A potential limitation is the sample of refugees in the current study. To counter endogeneity issues, we focused on refugees who went through the regular asylum procedure. This leaves family reunification migrants and refugees that rejected the dwelling they were assigned to out of the analysis, which may have induced selection bias. Although the sample may not be entirely representative of the population, we believe that studying socio-spatial effects without countering issues of reversed causality is problematic (Van Ham & Manley, 2012). Another limitation of the current study is that we used the municipal political climate as a proxy for a welcoming migration regime. Qualitative studies have convincingly argued that the local migration regime depends not only on the political climate but on a much broader set of actors involved (e.g., Caponio & Borkert, 2010; Zill, Van Liempt, Spierings & Hooimeijer, 2020). Although it is challenging to capture this quantitatively, future research could gain a better understanding of the role of local migration regimes by looking at local policies or the presence of organizations that support refugees.

Returning to the aim that was postulated in the introduction, we conclude that dispersal policies may obstruct the labor market integration of refugees. Dispersal policies have been implemented across Europe to spread the burden on social services and safeguard public support for the reception of refugees (Robinson et al., 2003). However, our study confirms that these short-term political considerations must be weighed against the negative consequences of dispersing refugees into areas with poor arrival infrastructures (Fasani, Frattini & Minale 2022).

5.7 References

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Appendix 5.1. VIF scores

Variable	Male model (N = 9,638)	Female model (N = 5,152)
t_2	1.41	1.54
t_3	1.38	1.52
t_4	1.31	1.50
t_4	1.25	1.48
Age	1.42	1.13
Country of origin (ref = Syria)		
Eritrea	1.25	1.49
Iran	1.10	1.21
Iraq	1.05	1.13
Afghanistan	1.03	1.09
Household size	1.49	1.34
Log distance to AZC	1.07	1.08
Neighborhood SES	1.66	1.64
Job accessibility	1.36	1.32
Neighborhood coethnics	1.41	1.45
Neighborhood refugees	2.29	2.26
Radical right	1.06	1.08
Mean VIF	1.35	1.39

Appendix 5.2. Computation of the job accessibility measure

This study applies a bespoke local-area public transport job accessibility measure for each four digit postcode area in the Netherlands (approximately 4.080 areas of about 2.000 households in each) as developed in Bastiaanssen (2021), based on the widely used gravity model (Hansen, 1959) to account for the decreasing attractiveness of distant jobs. In brief, our accessibility measure can be expressed as follows:

where a_i is the level of accessibility to employment opportunities by industrial sector k in PC4-area i ; reflects the number of jobs by industrial sector k available in destination PC4-area j , and represents a decay function based on travel times between PC4-area i and destination area j .

Public transport job accessibility was estimated using a General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) dataset, which provided a snapshot of 2016 timetable-based public transport journey times, in combination with OpenStreetMap (OSM). The ArcGIS® software package was used to compute optimal routing algorithms for journeys between all population weighted PC4s in the morning peak hours (6:00–9:00 am), when most people travel to work. The metric includes access and waiting time to and at a public transport stop/ station, in-vehicle travel time, transfer time, and egress times to the employment locations (PC4s). Employment data has been derived from the LISA register, which contains a census of all registered enterprises in the Netherlands, including their pc4-location, number and industrial classification of jobs.

The job accessibility measure was then computed based on a gravity model that discounts jobs through an estimated impedance function based on travel time, for which a (best fit) log-logistic function on observed trip travel times of public transport commuters was used from the Dutch National Travel Survey (OVIN, 2017).

	Men (N = 9,638)		Women (N = 5,152)	
	Mean / %	SD	Mean / %	SD
Dependent variables				
Secure employment	61.14%		15.95%	
Student	26.18%		20.69%	
Residential move	12.13%		12.73%	
Timing of events (months)				
Secure employment	31.99	13.14	36.80	12.84
Student	24.72	14.25	30.82	15.56

	Men (N = 9,638)		Women (N = 5,152)	
	Mean / %	SD	Mean / %	SD
Residential move	22.26	14.99	24.91	16.09
Covariates				
Age	31.46	9.01	31.97	9.14
Country of origin				
Syria	56.15%		47.30%	
Eritrea	22.86%		19.00%	
Iran	7.72%		12.07%	
Iraq	7.41%		11.88%	
Afghanistan	5.86%		9.74%	
Household size	1.98	1.63	3.05	1.79
Distance to AZC (km)	69.56	52.30	70.17	52.96
Independent variables				
Job accessibility	35982.69	36394.33	32933.97	33350.43
Neighborhood SES	-.05	.23	-.04	.23
Neighborhood co-ethnics	28.78	57.20	33.00	76.53
Neighborhood refugees	139.55	112.45	133.21	109.64
Municipal radical right support	12.48%	4.28	12.54%	4.44

6

Chapter 6

Arrival infrastructures and refugee enrolment in higher education

This chapter is currently under review at an international journal.

Abstract

Refugees enrolling in host country higher education can improve their position in the laborlabour market. However, little is known about the patterns underlying enrolment, and existing studies have only examined explanations at the individual level. This is problematic because opportunities to enrollenrol in education are also dependent upon structural factors, and by ignoring this, studies run the risk of depicting non-enrolment as a consequence of individual shortcomings. We address this issue through the notion of arrival infrastructures and argue that existing infrastructures at multiple spatial scales may support or discourage enrolment. By focusing on the Netherlands, we were able to follow the enrolment of all registered refugees that arrived between 2014-2017 through time with register data. We find that the accessibility of education, the municipal political climate, and regional economic conditions influence educational enrolment. These findings show that dispersal policies can have detrimental effects on the social mobility of refugees.

Keywords: Arrival infrastructures, dispersal policy, refugees, higher education, competing risk analysis

6.1 Introduction

Across Europe, refugees are facing difficulties in the laborlabour market. In addition to low employment rates among refugees, another significant issue is that those who manage to find employment often do so in positions that do not match their skill set (Brell et al., 2020; Van Riemsdijk & Axelsson, 2021). This leads to an “employment gap” in the labor market outcomes of refugees which can only partially be explained by the demographic composition and educational background of this group (Bakker et al., 2017; Brell et al., 2020). One explanation for this employment disadvantage is that the foreign credentials of refugees are not sufficiently valued in the host country (Brell et al., 2020; Duleep & Regets, 1999). Previous studies have found that obtaining host country credentials can help to overcome this disadvantage (Banerjee & Verma, 2012; Kaida, 2013; Kanas & Van Tubergen, 2009). However, only a small proportion of refugees enroll in higher education (Razenberg & De Gruijter, 2020) and little is known about the patterns underlying enrolment (Van Tubergen, 2022).

Existing work has found evidence of individual differences in the educational attainment of refugees, showing that higher educated, younger, male refugees are particularly likely to enroll in host country education (Damelang & Kosyakova, 2021; Van Tubergen, 2022). However, opportunities to attain education may be beyond the control of individual refugees. By focusing on individual integration outcomes, studies run the risk of ignoring the social, political, and economic context that may restrict their opportunities (Phillimore, 2021). The consideration of both structural and individual factors is needed to understand educational processes (Ainsworth, 2002). Yet, the role of contextual conditions in investments in formal education among refugees has largely been neglected in the literature (Damelang & Kosyakova, 2021). A notable exception is the recent ethnographic literature on the role of arrival infrastructures in the opportunities of refugees (Hanhörster & Wessendorf, 2020; Meeus et al., 2020). Based on the notion of arrival infrastructures, qualitative studies have emphasized the role of the socio-spatial context in the educational attainment of refugees (Van Liempt & Miellet, 2021; Zill, 2023).

In contrast to the few studies on educational attainment of refugees, many studies have considered the influence of the socio-spatial context in employment rates among refugees (Andersson et al., 2019; Edin et al., 2003; Kristiansen et al., 2022). Integration policies are increasingly directed at promoting refugees’ rapid entry into the labor market and this has led to “work-first” programs. Policies have the aim to make refugees self-sufficient and reduce the burden on the welfare state. Furthermore, employment is considered essential to participate and be included

in society (Van Riemsdijk & Axelsson, 2021). However, the focus on immediate employment may have very detrimental effects for refugees (Miltenburg & Dagevos, 2021; Van Liempt & Miellet, 2021). Refugees need time to learn the receiving country's language and familiarize themselves with the labor market. Pressure to enter the labor market immediately may compel them to accept jobs for which they are overqualified or jobs with precarious employment conditions (Van Riemsdijk & Axelsson, 2021). Frustration about structural barriers in the labor market have been put forward as the cause of onward migration among young highly-skilled refugees (De Vroome & Van Tubergen, 2014; Kelly & Hedman, 2016).

The current study aims to shed light on the role of arrival infrastructures in the enrolment of refugees in higher education. In doing so, we go beyond the existing studies that have only looked into the influence of the socio-spatial context on employment rates among refugees. In addition, we build on research by considering the social, economic, and institutional context in the educational attainment of refugees. This allows us to explore the theoretical pathways through which the spatial context impacts the educational opportunities of refugees. Ultimately, this provides insight into factors impeding the social mobility of refugees in the Netherlands, where the refugee employment gap is comparatively large (Buimer et al., 2020).

Research focusing on socio-spatial effects is often plagued by the issue of reversed causality (Van Ham & Manley, 2012). Socio-spatial characteristics may influence enrolment in education, but an intention to pursue education may also affect the choice for a particular residential location. By looking into the educational enrolment of refugees in the Netherlands, this study comprises a natural experiment because refugees were randomly dispersed over the country until 2017. This provides us the opportunity to investigate the role of the socio-spatial context while countering problems of reverse causality. Related to this issue, we study educational enrolment while taking account of residential mobility and employment through a competing risks framework (this author, forthcoming). By looking simultaneously into educational enrolment, residential mobility, and employment, we avoid over or underestimating the effect of the socio-spatial context. This is important because the opportunity to attend education changes when someone makes a residential move or finds employment.

In the next section we will give a short background of the context of the current study. After that, we present our theoretical framework and discuss the methods that were used. Then we will share our results and conclusions, and finally we will discuss potential policy implications.

6.2 Background: dispersal and education in the Netherlands

Refugees that arrive in the Netherlands need to go through an asylum procedure to obtain a residence permit. During the procedure, refugees are placed in an asylum seeker center (AZC). AZC's are located throughout the country and refugees are assigned to a particular center by the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA). Asylum applications are processed by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (IND), and this takes on average six months (Statistics Netherlands, 2022). After receiving a residence permit, refugees are offered social housing in a particular municipality. Every municipality in the Netherlands is obliged to provide housing for refugees in proportion to the number of inhabitants. Within this dispersal policy, the preferences and background characteristics of refugees were not taken into consideration until 2017.

After receiving a temporary residence permit, refugees are bound to strict integration requirements. All refugees need to pass a Dutch language exam on at least the A2 level and are subjected to an exam on Dutch society. Between 2013 and 2022, the responsibility of passing these exams lay with those subject to integration requirements, but municipalities were allowed to offer additional support²³ (CPB, 2020). Refugees who do not meet integration requirements can be given a fine and their (temporary) residence permit may be revoked.

Annual tuition fees of higher education are around two thousand euros. People below 30-years old can apply for student finance. Prior to 2015, this entitled students to a monthly allowance of 250 euro, but this allowance has been replaced by a low-interest loan. Students also have the right to make free use of the public transit system.

6.3 Theoretical background

This study investigates the role of arrival infrastructures in the enrolment of newly arrived refugees in higher education. Previous studies have looked into the educational attainment of refugees with a focus on individual differences (Damelang & Kosyakova, 2021; Van Tubergen, 2022). As a result, educational attainment is regarded as an individual responsibility, and by perceiving it this way, studies run the risk of attributing a failure to participate in education to individual deficiencies (Mozetič, 2021). Through this lens, the wider social, political, and economic opportunity structure is disregarded, while opportunities to attend education could be beyond

23. Municipalities were obliged to offer support to refugees in the period before 2013 and this policy has been reimplemented since 2022.

the control of individuals (Phillimore, 2021). Related to this, ethnographic studies are increasingly contending that arrival infrastructures matter (Saunders, 2011). Arrival infrastructures can be defined as “those parts of the urban fabric within which newcomers become entangled on arrival, and where their future local or translocal social mobilities are produced as much as negotiated” (Meeus et al., 2019). They vary in the degree to which they are hospitable to newcomers (Felder et al., 2020) and can manifest themselves at multiple spatial scales (Meeus et al., 2020).

Existing quantitative work has ignored the role of geography in the social mobility of refugees (Phillimore, 2021; Van Riemsdijk & Axelsson, 2021). We fill this gap while acknowledging the significance of different spatial scales. Recent studies have emphasized that social processes at multiple spatial scales may affect individuals’ opportunities (this author, forthcoming; Sharkey & Faber, 2014). The relevant spatial scale is dependent upon the specific theoretical pathway under study (Petrović et al., 2020). When studying peer group effects in the residential context, it is most sensible to look at people who live in one’s immediate neighborhood, because people are likely to have more contact with neighbors than with people who live farther away. However, when examining the effect of local economic conditions, it is more appropriate to consider the regional scale, as the employment opportunities of people are not only dependent on the job vacancies in the neighborhood. Although the issue of spatial scale has been recognized in the growing literature on arrival infrastructures (e.g., Meeus et al., 2020), data limitations have obstructed a simultaneous investigation of factors at multiple scales. By supplementing extensive register data with additional data sources, we are able to investigate three dimensions of arrival infrastructures; social, institutional, and economic. In what follows, we will use the existing literature to propose five hypotheses regarding the effect of arrival infrastructures in the educational attainment of refugees.

6.3.1 Social arrival infrastructures

Over the past decades, there has been a growing literature on neighborhood effects (Galster, 2012; Van Ham & Manley, 2012). The idea underlying these studies is that living in a disadvantaged neighborhood is harmful to the life’s chances of individuals and many studies have found that neighborhoods influence educational attainment (Nieuwenhuis & Hooimeijer, 2016). While most of the literature has focused on the role of neighborhood effects in the educational attainment of children and adolescents, neighborhood characteristics may also affect the opportunities of adult refugees. Neighborhood characteristics can influence the educational outcomes of its residents through multiple mechanisms (Jencks & Mayer, 1990). The residents of a neighborhood determine to which role models individuals are exposed (Ainsworth, 2002). Living among people who have completed higher education may lead to collective

socialization, where refugees become more motivated to pursue education because they see the payoffs of education around them. Besides collective socialization, the presence of highly educated groups may also provide access to social capital which may support educational attainment (Ainsworth, 2002). Highly educated groups might, for example, aid refugees in learning the host country's language (Kuyvenhoven & Boterman, 2021). A last mechanism through which the presence of highly-educated people can influence the opportunities of refugees are the availability and quality of institutional resources within neighborhoods, such as libraries, community centers, and schools (Kuyvenhoven & Boterman, 2021). Disadvantaged neighborhoods may provide access to less institutional resources, for example, because schools in disadvantaged neighborhoods are unable to attract qualified teachers (Lupton, 2004). Hence, the presence of higher educated people may induce collective socialization, support refugees in obtaining social capital, and provide access to valuable institutional resources. Therefore, we expect that the share of higher educated people in a neighborhood increases educational enrolment (Hypothesis 1).

The literature on enclaves postulates that newly arrived migrants particularly receive support in neighborhoods that host long-established migrants (Hanhörster & Wessendorf, 2020). This may especially be the case in the first stages of arrival, and the effect of living among long-established migrants may change over time (Martén et al., 2019). Three arguments have been put forward in the literature to support a beneficial effect of enclaves. First, the homophily phenomenon underlines that people tend to have more contact with others who are similar to themselves (McPherson et al., 2001). It may be easier for refugees to connect to people with a similar background and receive their support because they speak the same language or share comparable experiences. Second, people with a similar migration background may possess more relevant knowledge than other groups. As discussed in the background section, newly arrived refugees face very restrictive reception measures in the Netherlands (Van Riemsdijk & Axelsson, 2021). People that had to deal with these measures themselves acquired specific knowledge that may be of help to refugees. Third, the presence of people with a refugee background leads to the development of organizations that support refugees, such as community organizations or language schools (Kanas & Kosyakova, 2023; Van Liempt & Miellet, 2021). Based on the previous, we expect that the number of people with a refugee background in a neighborhood increases educational enrolment (Hypothesis 2).

6.3.2 Institutional arrival infrastructures

According to the "local turn" in migration studies, the governance of migration related issues has increasingly shifted towards lower levels of government (Caponio et al., 2019). While national governments set particular goals regarding the

reception of refugees, local governments make decisions about the available means and implement policies (Myrberg, 2017). The reception of refugees has become increasingly politicized over the past decades and the exclusion of migrants has been used as a tool to seek political consent, and local politics determine what can be done and what should be avoided (Ambrosini, 2012; Caponio & Borkert, 2010).

Related to this, municipalities in the Netherlands have a high degree of autonomy in the support they offer to refugees (De Lange et al., 2021; Miltenburg & Dagevos, 2021). In the period under study, municipalities were not obliged to offer any form of social support to refugees (CPB, 2020). Consequentially, municipalities offered diverse levels of counselling to refugees (Razenberg & De Gruijter, 2020). For example, in 2018, half of the municipalities offered financial support to refugees that enrolled in education by continuing social security benefits, while the other half did not. Similarly, some municipalities had civil servants who specifically helped refugees with their educational and professional objectives, while others did not (Razenberg et al., 2018). Earlier research has found that such institutional assistance may be crucial in shaping refugees' educational aspirations (Mozetič, 2021). As a result, municipal policies can help or hinder refugees from enrolling in education (Van Liempt & Miellet, 2021).

Municipal civil servants underline that supporting refugees (financially) to enroll in education is an issue that can be complicated by a lack of political support (Razenberg & De Gruijter, 2020). Because far-right parties are in favor of welfare chauvinism (i.e., restricting governmental support to “natives”) (Golder, 2016), supportive policies are less likely in municipalities with a larger far-right electorate. Following from this, we expect that municipal support for far-right parties decreases educational enrolment (Hypothesis 3).

Another factor that likely affects refugees' opportunities to enroll in schooling is the accessibility of educational institutions. According to time geography, daily mobility paths of individuals are embedded in time and space and are limited by particular constraints (Hägerstrand, 1970). Following from this, enrolling in education may not be feasible if transportation is too time-consuming, and this may especially hold for refugees that are dispersed to remote locations (Zill, 2023). Relatedly, the financial costs of travel may constrain the opportunities of refugees to enroll in education (Zill, 2023). Therefore, we expect that the accessibility of educational institutions increases educational enrolment (Hypothesis 4).

6.3.3 Economic arrival infrastructures

Individual differences in educational enrolment among immigrants have been studied through the Immigrant Human Capital Investment (IHCI) model. This rational choice model postulates that the decision to obtain education is dependent on cost-benefit calculations; refugees will only invest in education if the costs are lower than the expected returns (Duleep & Regets, 1999). Consequentially, attending education may be redundant for refugees who obtained skills in their country of origin that are highly transferable to the host country, while the returns to host country education may be worth the investment for refugees that have less transferable skills (Damelang & Kosyakova, 2021). Besides the transferability of skills, the model proposes that opportunity costs play a role in the decision to invest in education. By making the decision to invest time in education, people are deprived of the income they would have earned if they would have invested time in working. Following from this, investments in education are more appealing if the opportunity costs are smaller. Based on this assumption, a rich literature has found that the demand for education is counter-cyclical (Sievertsen, 2016). At times of high unemployment, immigrants invest more in education than in economically better times (Van Tubergen & Van De Werfhorst, 2007). Related to this, Sievertsen (2016) found that educational enrolment among adolescents is dependent upon the regional unemployment rate. Following from this, we expect that the regional unemployment rate will have a positive effect on educational attainment (Hypothesis 5).

In summary, we expect that arrival infrastructures on multiple spatial scales have an impact on the opportunities of refugees to enroll in education. Therefore, we look beyond social infrastructures on the neighborhood level and also consider, institutional infrastructures on the municipal level, the accessibility of educational institutions, and economic infrastructures on the regional level. In the next section we will present our methodological approach.

6.4 Methods

6.4.1 Data and selection

Our analysis is based on population wide register data²⁴ from Statistics Netherlands which consists of a collection of administrative information from various government agencies about all registered persons in the Netherlands. The register data contain

24. All results are based on authors' calculations using non-public microdata from Statistics Netherlands. Under certain conditions, these microdata are accessible for statistical and scientific research. The GDPR basis and purpose of the current research project has been approved by Statistics Netherlands. Further information: microdata@cbs.nl.

information about several sociodemographic characteristics, migration history, residential mobility, educational attainment, and employment history. These data were complemented with public data from the education implementation service [DUO] about the addresses of educational institutions in the Netherlands. In addition, we included data from the Dutch Electoral Council on election results at the municipal level.

In order to consider the dispersal of refugees across the Netherlands as a natural experiment, we confine our sample according to strict selection criteria. Due to changes in the Dutch dispersal policy and the civic integration act, we focus on refugees who left asylum accommodation between January 2014 and December 2016. In addition, we only study people who had not lived in the Netherlands before and exclude family reunification migrants. Furthermore, we only look at refugees whose first residence was an AZC and who moved into social housing after leaving the AZC. Last, people attending education in the first month after leaving the AZC are excluded because this might have been considered in their allocation to a particular municipality. In addition to the criteria needed to ensure the natural experiment, we confine our sample to refugees originating from the five largest sending countries to enable an investigation of cross-country differences. Because the current study focuses on host-country educational attainment, we only look at people who were of working age during the entire observation period (18-55 years old). This leads to a final sample of 24,169 people.

6.4.2 Analytical strategy

In the current study we follow people through time using survival analysis. This approach is favored over general models for three reasons. First, while general models would only allow us to make a binary distinction between those who did and did not experience an event, survival analysis enables us to study the duration until people experience a particular event while including cases that never experienced it (Allison, 2010). Second, survival analysis allows for the inclusion of time-varying independent variables, and this enables us to capture the effect of changing arrival infrastructures. Third, survival analysis is better equipped to deal with sample attrition because it allows us to follow people until the time of dropping out (Tekle & Vermunt, 2012).

Specifically, we use competing risk modelling, which is a type of survival analysis appropriate when the risk of experiencing a given event may be prevented or modified by another event (Noordzij et al., 2013). In the current case, our main outcome of interest is enrolment in higher education, which is defined as registration in an applied university or general university. Because the likelihood of attending education changes when an individual finds full-time employment or makes a residential move to another municipality, we include these outcomes as competing risks (this author, forthcoming).

People are followed for a maximum period of 60 months. Those who enroll in higher education, find employment, make a residential move, or exit public registers are followed until experiencing that event. Events are interval-censored within months, meaning that they can only occur at discrete points in time. Therefore, we use a discrete-time competing risks model. Following Jenkins (2005), we model the effect of time using a piecewise constant baseline hazard clustered by year. Cluster-robust standard errors at the municipal level are used to account for geographic clustering of refugees within municipalities. To check for potential problems of multicollinearity, we computed VIF values. The results show no problem with multicollinearity.

Following our theoretical framework, we look into social, institutional, and economic arrival infrastructures and measure these at various spatial scales. Social arrival infrastructures are measured on the neighborhood level. This is the lowest statistical spatial scale used in the Netherlands and the country consists of approximately 13,000 neighborhoods with on average about 1,300 inhabitants. We look into two types of social arrival infrastructures, namely the share of people aged between 24-65 years old that finished higher education in the neighborhood, and the number of people with an asylum migration background relative to the average number of people with an asylum migration background across all neighborhoods while excluding people that still live in an AZC.

On the institutional level, we look into support for far-right parties and the accessibility of educational institutions. Support for far-right parties is measured on the municipal level by including a variable on the share of people that voted for far-right parties. We calculated each municipality's radical right voter share after the 2010, 2012, 2017, 2021, and 2023 elections. These shares were then divided by the average support for right-wing parties in the country to produce an index score. Extrapolation was used to obtain values for intermediate years. The accessibility of educational institutions is operationalized by looking into the travel duration²⁵ to the nearest (applied) university.

Lastly, economic arrival infrastructures are studied by including a measure about the share of unemployment among the working population at the labor market region²⁶. The Netherlands consists of thirty-five labor market regions and these regions are composed based on commuting patterns.

25. To compute travel times to the nearest educational institution we made use of a publicly available travel time matrix on the postal code level (Object Vision, 2019).

26. Following the ILO, unemployment is defined based on three criteria: (1) someone is not employed, (2) someone is actively looking for employment, and (3) someone is directly available. Following Statistics Netherlands, the working population is confined to people aged 15-75.

6.5 Results

6.5.1 Descriptive statistics

Table 6.1 summarizes the descriptive statistics of the current study. Regarding the dependent variables, it is noteworthy that there are major differences in the share of men and women who found full-time employment within five years. Gender differences are less pronounced when looking at the share of people making a residential move or enrolling in higher education. There are larger differences in enrolment in higher education between those under thirty and those over 30 years old. Enrolment is about four times higher in the younger age group. When looking at the timing of events, it becomes apparent that residential moves and enrolment in education generally occur slightly earlier than full-time employment.

Concerning the independent variables, it is striking that the share of higher educated people on the neighborhood level is comparatively small at approximately 19%²⁷. Another interesting finding is that people are on average employed in neighborhoods with three times the average number of refugees compared to the average number of refugees in all neighborhoods across the Netherlands. This is likely a result of the concentration of social housing in the Netherlands. The share of people voting for radical right parties is about 15%. At just over 20 minutes, the average travel time to the nearest (applied) university is relatively short. Unemployment within the labor market region is modest (5.4%).

When looking at the other variables that were used in the analysis, it first stands out that most people fled to the Netherlands from Syria. Second, women are on average part of slightly larger households. Last, men form a clear majority in the current sample. This is likely caused by the fact that women are more often family reunification migrants, which cases were excluded from our sample.

27. In 2019, 32.5% of the Dutch population aged between 15-75 years old was higher educated.

Table 6.1. Bivariate descriptive statistics (N = 24,169)

	Men (N = 18,765)			Women (N = 5,404)		
	Mean / %	P5	P95	Mean / %	P5	P95
Dependent variables						
Higher education	4.9%			3.9%		
Full-time employment	48.4%			9.6%		
Residential move (municipality)	14.9%			16.0%		
Timing of events						
First month higher education	31.9	12.0	54.0	34	10	55
First month full-t employment	37.8	17.0	57.0	42.2	22.5	59
First month residential move	31.1	3.0	57.0	29.1	3	57
Age higher education						
< 30 years old	7.8%			5.5%		
> 30 years old	2.0%			1.6%		
Independent variables						
Neighborhood higher educated	19.1%	8.3%	40.4%	18.3%	8.1%	36.9%
Neighborhood refugees	97.5	9.0	325.0	98.1	8	337
Neighborhood refugees (index)	3.2	.3	10.8	3.2	.3	10.9
Municipal radical right	15.3%	8.2%	23.4%	15.7%	8.4%	23.8%
Travel duration education (minutes)	20.9	50	43.0	21.7	5	44
Unemployment labor market region	5.4%	3.9%	7.8%	5.4%	3.9%	7.7%
Control variables						
Age	31.3	20	48.0	30.2	20	50
Household size	1.9	1.0	5.0	2.4	1.0	5
Country of origin						
Syria	72.5%			56.4%		
Ethiopia	10.4%			16.0%		
Eritrea	14.0%			21.7%		
Iraq	1.7%			3.1%		
Iran	1.4%			2.9%		

6.5.2 Competing risks analysis

The results of the competing risks analysis are shown in table 6.2. Looking at the hazard function, it becomes clear that the “risk” of enrolling in higher education is at its peak three years after leaving the asylum-seeking center. This also holds for the risk of making a residential move to another municipality, whereas the likelihood of finding full-time employment is highest after four years.

Moving to the independent variables, we do not find evidence that social arrival infrastructures influence enrolment in higher education. Neither the share of higher educated people at the neighborhood level nor the number of refugees in the neighborhood have a significant effect on enrolment. We do find evidence for the role of institutional arrival infrastructures. Refugees are less likely to enrol in education in municipalities with higher levels of support for radical right-wing parties. Our results also show that travel time to educational institutions may hinder refugees from enrolling in higher education. One log increase in travel time reduces the likelihood of enrolling in a particular month by 0.22 percentage points. In line with the last hypothesis, we find that unfavorable economic arrival infrastructures induce enrolment in higher education. Specifically, a one per cent increase in regional unemployment leads to a 0.18 percentage point increase in the probability of enrolling in education in a given month²⁸.

When looking at the other competing risks used in the analysis, we observe that regional unemployment has a reversed effect on the likelihood of finding full-time employment. A one per cent increase in unemployment reduces the likelihood of full-time employment by 0.310 percentage points. Similarly, we also find a reversed effect in municipal support for radical right-wing parties. Refugees have a higher likelihood of finding full-time employment in municipalities with more support for radical right-wing parties. With regard to the last competing risk in our analysis, we find that refugees are more often disposed to make a residential move if they live in a municipality with support for radical right-wing parties. A residential move is less

28. Using a broader conceptualization of higher education that includes higher vocational education (or “MBO-niveau 4” in the Netherlands) did not change our findings regarding the impact of arrival infrastructure on education. The effect sizes of the independent variables are slightly larger in this alternative model (see Appendix 1). The independent variables also remained significant while running separate competing risk models for people under and over 30, or for men and women (results available upon request).

Table 6.2. Outcomes of the competing risk analysis with enrolment in higher-education, full-time employment, and residential mobility as dependent variables (N = 24,169)

	Higher education		Full-time employment		Residential move	
	dy/dx	SE	dy/dx	SE	dy/dx	SE
Hazard function						
(ref = t_1)						
t_2	.145**	.012	.943**	.069	.054*	.021
t_3	.208**	.014	1.651**	.081	.074*	.023
t_4	.196**	.015	1.817**	.077	.045	.027
t_5	.156**	.014	1.662**	.074	.020	.030
Control variables						
Male	.003	.008	.89**	.020	-.048*	.016
Country of origin (ref = Syria)						
Eritrea	-.113**	.006	.183**	.037	-.133**	.023
Ethiopia	-.111**	.006	.207**	.034	-.145**	.021
Iraq	-.077**	.014	-.190**	.047	-.002	.039
Iran	.096*	.044	.186*	.080	.091	.070
Age	-.009**	.001	-.026**	.002	-.009**	.001
Household size	-.008**	.002	-.091**	.007	-.005	.012
Independent variables						
Neighb. higher e.	.027	.037	.221	.139	-.118	.126
Neighb. refugees	.000	.001	-.005	.004	-.003	.003
Municipal rad. r.	-.027*	.013	.191*	.069	.080*	.040
Travel time educ.	-.022**	.006	-.015	.028	-.088**	.024
Regional unemp.	.018**	.003	-.310**	.022	-.019*	.009
Model fit						
N observations	1093137					
Wald chiz(48)	7858.890**					
Log pseudol.	-67216.357					
Pseudo R2	.086					

Notes. * p < .05, ** p < .001. Results are displayed as marginal effects. Marginal effects can be interpreted as the change in the likelihood of experiencing a particular risk (e.g., enrolling in higher education) relative to experiencing any of the competing risks (full-time employment, residential mobility, or no event).

likely for people living further away from educational institutions and in regions with higher levels of unemployment²⁹.

Turning to our control variables, we find that males are far more likely to find full-time employment than females, while females are more likely to make a residential move. Regarding the country of origin of refugees, we observe that Iranians are the only group who are more likely than Syrians to enroll in higher education or find full-time employment. Perhaps unsurprisingly, younger status holders are more likely to experience any of the outcomes under study. Household size decreases the likelihood of studying and working.

6.6 Conclusion

Refugees across Europe face a significant employment gap in the labor market. Compared to other groups, their unemployment rates are high, and they often work in positions for which they are overqualified (Bakker et al., 2017; Brell et al., 2020). Although many studies have shown that attending education in the host country may help refugees to reduce the employment gap, enrolment in higher education is rare in this group (Razenberg & De Gruijter, 2020; Van Tubergen, 2022). In line with the existing literature, we find significant differences on the individual level with regards to the likelihood of enrolling in higher education (Damelang & Kosyakova, 2021; Van Tubergen, 2022). Yet, these individual level explanations do not tell the entire story as opportunities to attend education are also dependent upon structural factors (Ainsworth, 2002). This especially holds for refugees who face forced dispersal after arrival. Studies that only consider factors on the individual level may attribute a failure to attend education to individual shortcomings (Mozetič, 2021; Phillimore, 2021), but our findings show that arrival infrastructures can influence the opportunities of refugees to enroll in education.

Consistent with time geography (Hägerstrand, 1970), we found that the accessibility of educational institutions increases the likelihood of enrolment in higher education among refugees. This shows that dispersing refugees to areas far from educational opportunities may constrain them from enrolling in higher education. Besides the

29. Including higher vocational education in our conceptualization of higher education led to different results regarding the impact of arrival infrastructure on unemployment and residential mobility (see Appendix 1). In the alternative model, refugees are more likely to find employment in neighborhoods with a larger share of people who finished higher education. In addition, the effects of support for radical right-wing parties and the effect of regional unemployment on residential mobility become insignificant.

accessibility of educational institutions, we also found that refugees emplaced in municipalities with a larger far-right electorate are less likely to enroll in higher education. This suggests that refugees emplaced in municipalities with less welcoming migration regimes have less opportunities to enroll in education. In addition to factors on the institutional level, we also found that economic arrival infrastructures matter. In agreement with the Immigrant Human Capital Investment model (Duleep & Regets, 1999), we show that refugees living in labor market regions with a higher unemployment rate are more likely to enroll in higher education. This indicates that refugees in slack labor markets choose to attend education rather than continuing to search for employment.

Through our competing risks framework, we were able to simultaneously study enrolling in higher education, finding full-time employment, and making a residential move. Studying these events in isolation is problematic because they are interrelated and there are multiple pathways towards social mobility (this author, forthcoming). The added value of this approach becomes especially evident by two of our outcomes. First, while refugees in municipalities with support for far-right parties are less likely to enroll in higher education, they have a higher likelihood of finding full-time employment. One potential explanation for this difference is that municipalities with more support for far-right parties are particularly inclined to promote “work-first” policies to make refugees self-sufficient and reduce the burden on the welfare state (Miltenburg & Dagevos, 2020). Previous studies have argued that such policies may be detrimental in the long-term as they urge refugees to accept jobs that may not match their skillset (Van Riemsdijk & Axelsson, 2021). Second, in line with existing research, we found that refugees emplaced in areas with a higher level of regional unemployment face more difficulties in the labor market (Andersson et al., 2019; Edin et al., 2003; Kristiansen et al., 2022). However, our findings also indicate that refugees in these areas are more likely to enroll in higher education. This shows that despite the challenges refugees face, they should not be perceived as a group without agency. Normalized images often frame refugees as being incompetent and dependent upon state support, but this marginalizes their talents, ambitions, and willingness to contribute to society (Ghorashi, 2020).

Another noteworthy outcome of the current study is that opportunities to attend education are dependent upon factors at multiple scales (this author, forthcoming; Sharkey & Faber, 2014). Hence, we find that the accessibility of educational institutions, regional labor market conditions, and the municipal electorate all influence educational opportunities. This shows that there is a need for studies that look beyond the neighborhood level (Petrović, et al. 2020). The importance of this is

further underscored by the lack of significant findings for our neighborhood-level variables, namely the number of people with a refugee background and the share of people with higher education. While there is an abundance of studies investigating the effect of neighborhood composition on the social mobility of refugees and other migrant groups, the study of arrival infrastructures on multiple spatial scales is still in its infancy. This indicates that the preoccupation of policymakers and researchers with regards to the effects of neighborhood composition and the “mixing” of social groups may divert attention from other - more pressing - socio-spatial effects.

Studying enrolment in higher education in the Dutch context allowed us to make use of register data that enabled us to follow all registered refugees through time and to simultaneously investigate social, institutional, and economic arrival infrastructures. Moreover, the Dutch dispersal policy through which refugees are randomly assigned to municipalities across the country also enabled a natural experimental setting. Nevertheless, our focus on one country reduces the generalizability of our findings. Further research is needed to investigate whether arrival infrastructures work similarly in different countries. For example, it might be the case that arrival infrastructures are relatively homogeneous in the Netherlands due to the size of the country. Another avenue for future research is the study of educational attainment instead of educational enrolment. While the current study shows that arrival infrastructures influence enrolment in higher education, it could also be expected that they have an impact on the success students have. Living further away from an educational institution might, for example, have an adverse effect on study outcomes due to time constraints. Similarly, welcoming municipalities may not only encourage enrolment in higher education but may also offer more support during education.

Getting back to the aim of the current study, we have shown that arrival infrastructures have an impact on the enrolment of refugees in higher education. Besides factors on the individual level, enrolment in higher education is dependent upon institutional and economic arrival infrastructures. While many European countries have implemented dispersal policies and disperse refugees across the country, our findings indicate that this may hamper their educational attainment. The significance of this issue is emphasized by the persistent employment gap among refugees across Europe (Buimer et al., 2020).

6.7 References

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7

Chapter 7

Conclusion

Outline

This dissertation aims to shed light on the governance of housing for refugees and migrant workers in the Netherlands, and to uncover how housing governance defines their opportunities to build a living in the first years after arrival. This conclusion starts with a reflection on the first part of the dissertation which scrutinized decision-making processes within the governance networks involved in the provision of housing of migrant workers. Attention then shifts to the second part of the dissertation, which analyzed the relationship between the social mobility of refugees and policies of reception and dispersal. After that, the chapters will be brought together through the overarching conclusion that the governance of housing for migrant workers and refugees is primarily aimed at keeping them out of sight. In the last three sections of the thesis, the theoretical contributions, the avenues for future research, and the policy recommendations are discussed.

7.1 Governance networks and housing for migrant workers

To obtain an understanding of the governance of housing for migrant workers, the current thesis analyzed the stakeholders involved in the provision of housing for migrant workers by developing a governance network perspective. This perspective enabled an investigation of the diverging interests and perceptions among actors as well as the interdependencies between them (Mullins & Rhodes, 2007; Poppelaars & Scholten, 2008).

In the second chapter, it is argued that the persistence of precarious housing conditions among migrant workers are a result of an interrelationship between a loosely defined institutional setting and the pursuit of strategic interests by involved actors. The article shows that private stakeholders and public officials on multiple levels of governance hold each other responsible for the provision of housing to migrant workers. However, since there are no formalized accountability patterns, stakeholders are unwilling to take responsibility and pursue their own strategic interests instead. Private stakeholders as well as municipalities whose economies depend upon labor migration have an economic interest in the provision of housing for migrant workers. Therefore, they urge other stakeholders to facilitate the development of housing for migrant workers. Yet, other public stakeholders do not have an interest in the provision of housing for migrant workers and, for that reason, prefer to push migrant workers out of the existing housing stock or protect the status quo of not facilitating housing for migrant workers. This shows that accountability patterns are inflexible and arise through a struggle for power. The lack of formalized accountability patterns shows that migrant workers have not been able to put their interests center stage.

Building on the second chapter which emphasized the importance of accountability patterns in the provision of housing for migrant workers, the third chapter focused on discourses about suitable and unsuitable housing conditions for migrant workers. By complementing a governance network perspective with a critical discourse analysis, it uncovers power and ideological conflicts underlying the housing issue. Stakeholders within the governance network frequently emphasize that migrant workers should not be seen as “second-class citizens” but as equal and full members of Dutch society. However, the study shows that housing governance is not in line with these egalitarian statements. Central and Eastern European migrant workers often come to the Netherlands through package-deal contracts arranged by employment agencies. Through these package-deals, employment agencies facilitate employment, lodging, and health care for migrant workers. Lodging is often arranged in the existing housing stock; a landlord sublets a dwelling to an employment agency, which subsequently sublets it to multiple migrant

workers. The chapter shows that this pattern has in recent years increasingly been criticized. According to public and private stakeholders, lodging in the existing housing stock is in conflict with the interests of the general population for three reasons. First, it is argued that the existing housing stock is meant for the general population and that this type of lodging results in competition in the housing market. Second, it is argued that migrant workers have a harmful effect on the social cohesion of neighborhoods. Third, it is argued that migrant workers cause nuisances when they live in inner-city neighborhoods. These three arguments have led to the implementation and enforcement of increasingly strict regulations towards subletting by local governments. As a result of these policies, migrant workers are increasingly kept out of the general housing stock.

Because lodging in the existing housing stock is becoming increasingly opposed, employers and employment agencies have resorted to alternative types of housing. One alternative which is increasingly facilitated by governments are large-scale housing sites for migrant workers. These sites are often remotely located on industrial parks or the land of horticulturalists. In addition, the sites are often strictly monitored. The aim of these policies is to keep migrant workers unnoticed, which is made explicit by a booklet funded by the Dutch government which is entitled “We are not noticing anything: Ten inspiring examples of good housing for migrant workers” (Expertise center flexible living, 2022).

The development of large-scale housing sites ensures that employers and employment agencies which depend upon low-skilled labor are able to continue hiring migrant workers despite housing shortages. At the same time, these sites are developed with the intent of preventing discontent in the general population and this is achieved through remote locations and strict monitoring. Therefore, the study shows that housing policies for migrant workers prioritize the social reproduction of labor and the interests of the general population over the rights of migrant workers.

7.2 Reception policies and the social mobility of refugees

The second part of this dissertation explored the relationship between the social mobility of refugees and policies of reception and dispersal. This was achieved by investigating the geographies of asylum reception and the arrival infrastructures available to refugees following forced dispersal.

Chapter four shows that reception circumstances have an influence on refugees opportunities for social mobility. In line with existing research, the findings show that

prolongedly keeping refugees in asylum reception has a delaying effect on their entry into the labor market, enrolment in education, and acquisition of the Dutch language. In addition, the results of the study show that the conditions in which asylum seekers are kept matter. Keeping refugees in remote reception centers is harmful to their social mobility. Another factor which has a delaying effect on the social mobility of refugees is the distance between the latest reception center and the first independent dwelling. Finally, the results show that prolonged stays in irregular reception centers can delay social mobility. These findings can be explained by the fact that the conditions of asylum reception influence refugees' opportunities to accumulate social and human capital. Refugees who are kept in more remote locations have fewer opportunities to access supportive social networks and to make use of urban arrival infrastructures such as churches, schools, and libraries (Brell, Dustmann & Preston, 2020; Wessendorf & Phillimore, 2019). People who are forced to move over a long distance after leaving asylum reception have to start all over again as they are cut loose from the social networks and the activities they participated in (Kox & Van Liempt, 2022). Refugees have less opportunities to accumulate social and human capital in irregular asylum reception because these locations offer less opportunities for personal development such as language courses (Dutch Council for Refugees, 2019).

Whereas chapter four focused on the consequences of the geography of asylum reception on the social mobility of refugees, chapters five and six demonstrate the effect of forced dispersal. The Dutch dispersal policy distributes refugees who have received a residence permit over municipalities in proportion to the number of inhabitants. Chapter five shows that the arrival infrastructures in the area where a refugee is allocated to has an influence on the likelihood of labor market integration. Emplacing refugees in regions with a lower number of accessible jobs delays their labor market integration. In line with the existing literature, this indicates that local employment opportunities matter (Holzer, 1991). Simultaneously, the thesis finds that refugees who are emplaced in neighborhoods with a higher socioeconomic status have a higher likelihood of finding employment. This pattern suggests that refugees receive more support in these neighborhoods. In addition to the socioeconomic status of the neighborhood, the chapter also finds evidence that the number of people with an asylum background increases the likelihood of labor market integration. People who fled to the Netherlands in the past are aware of the existing institutions and regulations, and may for that reason be an especially relevant source of information and support for newly arrived refugees. Finally, the chapter shows that the presence of people with an asylum background has a larger effect in municipalities with a comparatively low level of support for radical right wing parties. This indicates that the combination of a welcoming political climate and a demand for supportive institutions provides an optimal setting for newly arrived refugees.

The sixth chapter highlights that arrival infrastructures do not only influence the labor market integration of refugees but also their enrolment in higher education. Enabling refugees to enroll in higher education is crucial because foreign credentials are often not sufficiently valued and this has led to a situation where refugees are often working in positions that do not correspond to the skills that they have (Van Riemsdijk & Axelsson, 2021). The results show that refugees placed further away from an institution for higher education were less likely to enroll. This suggests that attending education is not feasible for refugees if transportation is too time-consuming and this effect may be reinforced by the financial costs of travel (Zill, 2023). In addition, the findings demonstrate that refugees emplaced in municipalities with a higher level of support for anti-immigration parties had a lower likelihood of enrolling in higher education. This indicates that municipalities with a less welcoming stance towards the reception of refugees provide less institutional support. Lastly, the chapter finds that refugees more often enroll in higher-education if they are emplaced in a region with a higher level of unemployment. This emphasizes that refugees should not be seen as a group without agency as this marginalizes their talents, ambitions, and willingness to contribute to society (Ghorashi, 2018). Faced with high levels of unemployment, they were capable of opting for an alternative path toward social mobility.

In conclusion, chapters four, five, and six illustrate that reception and dispersal policies limit refugees' participation in society. By restraining them from choosing where they want to live, the access to particular arrival infrastructures is restricted. Consequentially, housing governance plays an important role in the social mobility of refugees.

7.3 The governance and implications of keeping people out of sight

Going back to the aim postulated in the first chapter, this dissertation sought to shed light on the governance of housing for refugees and migrant workers in the Netherlands, and to uncover how housing governance defines their opportunities to build a living in the first years after arrival. Regarding the first part of the aim, the findings of chapter two and three show that the interests of migrant workers are mostly ignored in the governance of housing. Instead, housing governance is driven by the perceived desires of the general population, which in practice translates to pushing migrant workers out of the existing housing stock, stalling the development of housing for migrant workers, and the development of lodging which intends to keep migrant workers out of sight.

Existing research suggests that similar patterns exist in the governance of housing for refugees. Asylum reception centers isolate refugees from the general population and deliberately keep asylum seekers physically and legally at a distance from the labor market (Kreichauff, 2018; Rijken, De Lange, Besselsen & Rahouti, 2017). Within the public discourse, asylum seekers are portrayed as a temporary group that needs to be quarantined to protect national prosperity and security (Witteborn, 2011). After leaving asylum reception, refugees are dispersed over all municipalities in the country. One of the rationales underlying this dispersal policy is preventing concentrations of refugees in particular areas. Among other reasons, it is believed that concentrations of refugees in particular areas would be detrimental to public support for the reception of refugees. By “spreading the burden”, the presence of refugees remains masked; there are not too many people from minority backgrounds on the street and this concurrently halts the development of cultural services such as ethnic supermarkets or religious organizations. Hence, people do not find themselves living in an altered environment as a consequence of immigration. Simultaneously, it is assumed that it is in the interest of the general population and refugees themselves to assimilate and mix (Robinson, Andersson & Musterd, 2003).

Regarding the second part of the aim, chapters four, five, and six have shown that reception and dispersal policies can hinder the social mobility of refugees. Prolongedly keeping refugees in remote and highly institutionalized reception centers has a delaying effect on their labor market entry, enrolment in education, and language acquisition. Assigning refugees to housing in municipalities with poor arrival infrastructures after obtaining a residence permit can delay their social mobility as well. These findings show that housing governance can hamper the integration of refugees.

Previous research suggests that housing policies can have disruptive effects on the lives of migrant workers as well. Ethnographic work has found that large-scale housing sites for migrant workers can have a significant impact on their well-being and opportunities to participate in the Dutch society (Lubberhuizen, 2024; Szytniewski & Van Der Haar, 2022; Ulceluse, Bock & Haartsen, 2022). Similar to reception centers for refugees (Zill, Van Liempt & Spierings, 2021), large-scale housing sites may result in the depersonalization of migrant workers when they are no longer perceived as individual neighbors but as a homogenized mass.

In conclusion, the dissertation shows that both groups are vulnerable in their own way. Migrant workers are dependent upon their employer due to package deal contracts. Refugees are dependent upon the capacity of the Immigration and Naturalization Service to process their asylum application in a timely manner, and

are dependent upon the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers for assigning them to a municipality where they can pursue their own ambitions. The thesis shows that housing governance plays a crucial role in the reception of both groups, despite the very different institutional contexts.

7.4 Contributions to theory

In this section, a reflection will be given on the most important theoretical contributions of the dissertation. The first part of the section discusses the theoretical implications with regards to the development of a governance network perspective in housing research developed in chapter two and three. In the second part, the significance of taking the role of arrival infrastructures in the social mobility of newcomers into account is discussed.

7.4.1 Governance networks and power in housing research

Governance networks have seldomly been studied in housing research. However, network perspectives are increasingly relevant in the housing domain because of growing interdependencies between public, private, and civil stakeholders. This dissertation shows that analyzing decision-making processes within governance networks provides an understanding of the underlying interdependencies, interests, and perceptions among involved stakeholders (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016). The findings emphasize the interrelationship between structure and agency (Giddens, 1984), and the crucial role of power disparities within governance networks.

In chapter two, the role of accountability patterns in decision-making surrounding the provision of housing for migrant workers is studied. Accountability patterns involve a relationship between an actor and a forum, in which the actor is required to explain or justify conduct, and the forum can make a judgment about the actor, including possible consequences for the actor (Bovens, 2007). These patterns form a crucial structure that guide the actions of stakeholders within governance networks and the existence of accountability deficits can result in a policy impasse. The current thesis shows that accountability patterns are not an exogenous phenomenon but arise through interaction between stakeholders. Stakeholders have particular interests and use their agency to influence decision-making with regards to the implementation of particular accountability patterns. Therefore, accountability patterns should be seen as an endogenous phenomenon which arise through a struggle for power. Studying how these patterns evolve can help to understand the power relationships within governing networks. The lack of accountability patterns in reducing housing precarity among migrant workers shows that migrant workers have not been able to

put their interests center stage. Since stakeholders do not have an interest in solving this issue, they keep the accountability deficit in place and protect the status quo.

In the third chapter, attention is shifted to the significance of indirect power within governance networks. Decision-making within governance networks has often been depicted as a matter of finding consensus in a network of interdependent stakeholders which act autonomously and hold no hierarchical power over each other (Habermas, 1981). However, this perspective ignores the fact that decision-making is informed by particular discourses which determine the direction in which solutions are sought (Hisschemöller & Hoppe, 1995). These discourses are shaped through particular discursive practices that are driven by the interests of stakeholders. The ability of a social group to influence discourse is dependent upon the position of the group within society (Van Dijk, 2015). The fact that housing policy is currently not taking the interests of migrant workers into account shows that they have not been able to influence the political agenda.

Chapters two and three both emphasize the duality of structure (Giddens, 1984) in decision-making within governance networks. On the one hand, accountability patterns and discourses shape the structure in which stakeholders make decisions. On the other hand, stakeholders can employ their agency to change existing accountability patterns and discourses. This shows that decision-making in housing governance should not be perceived as free of power, even though it is increasingly taking place in more networked forms where actors have less hierarchical power over each other.

7.4.2 Arrival infrastructures and social mobility

The current thesis shows that arrival infrastructures can either facilitate or delay the social mobility of newcomers. The opportunities of refugees to find employment, enroll in education, and learn the language of their host country are dependent upon different types of arrival infrastructures. This aligns with recent research which argues that integration should not be seen as an individual level trait because newcomers' opportunities are dependent upon contextual factors in the social, political, and economic domain (Phillimore, 2021). The current thesis builds on existing research by showing that geography matters in asylum reception as well as in the period following reception.

Many studies have found evidence that keeping refugees in asylum reception centers for prolonged periods of time can have a detrimental effect on their social mobility (Hainmueller, Hangartner & Lawrence, 2016; Hvidtfeldt, Schultz-Nielsen, Tekin & Fosgerau, 2018; Kosyakova & Brenzel, 2020). The current thesis highlights that temporality is only one aspect of asylum reception. The spatial, material, and

institutional circumstances of asylum reception matter because they influence refugees' opportunities to accumulate social and human capital while waiting.

The influence of contextual factors has received more attention among refugees who have left asylum reception and live in regular housing. However, the majority of studies zoom in on one specific contextual factor. Economic geographers have shown that the economic context matters and that refugees who live in regions with more accessible jobs are more likely to find employment (Åslund, Östh & Zenou 2010). Urban geographers and sociologists have predominantly looked at the role of the neighborhood composition and whether living among people with a similar migration background has a positive or negative effect (Damm, 2014; Kristiansen, Maas, Boschman & Vrooman, 2022). Rather than focusing on one contextual factor, the notion of arrival infrastructures allows for the formation of theory about the influence of and interrelationships between different types of sociospatial factors.

In addition to taking different types of explanations into account simultaneously, the arrival infrastructures concept also allows for the consideration of sociospatial effects on multiple spatial scales. The literature on neighborhood effects has been criticized for its fixation on the neighborhood scale because sociospatial mechanisms manifest themselves at different spatial scales (Petrović, Manley, and Van Ham 2020). In the fourth chapter, it is argued that the social network of a person is mostly influenced by the neighborhood, local policies are developed at the municipal level, and the supply accessible jobs is a regional issue. This shows that spatial scale matters when looking at the influence of contextual factors. The relevant geographical scale is dependent upon the specific social process or mechanism under study (Sharkey & Faber, 2014).

7.5 Limitations and recommendations for future research

In this section, the recommendations for future research are discussed. The section is again divided into two subsections; the first subsection focuses on the recommendations for future research that follow from chapters two and three, and the second subsection relates to the suggestions based on chapters four, five, and six.

7.5.1 Governance networks and housing for migrant workers

The first part of the thesis focuses on decision-making within governance networks in the Rotterdam / The Hague region. By studying one geographical area, the thesis enabled an investigation of the interests and perceptions of public stakeholders on the local, regional, provincial, and national level, while also considering different types of

private and civil stakeholders in the region. This was achieved by scrutinizing public policy, political debates, and public conferences, and by conducting semi-structured interviews with stakeholders representative of the governance network. The focus on a single geographical area enabled the thesis to capture the different types of complexity within the governance of housing for migrant workers. However, future research is needed to verify whether similar patterns hold in other geographical contexts.

A more fundamental issue with the current approach is pinpointing what exactly defines a “migrant worker”. The current study predominantly looks at people from Central and Eastern European countries who work in manual occupations and especially those who came to the Netherlands through employment agencies. This focus was taken because the political debate mostly focuses on this group and because statistics indicate that the majority of CEE migrant workers come through employment agencies (60%) and more than two-thirds of them earn minimum wages (70%) (Booster Team Migrant Workers, 2020; SEO, 2022). Moreover, precarious housing conditions have been an issue for nearly fifteen years within this group (Committee Lessons from Recent Labor Migration, 2011). Nevertheless, the categorization of people comes with the risk of reinforcing stigmatization and a lack of attention for the people who do not live in precarious conditions. Qualitative research has shown that there is a lot of diversity in the lived realities of individual migrant workers and that some people are able to move beyond the ascribed or imposed migrant worker label (Szytniewski & Van Der Haar, 2022). Shedding light on the diversity within this group is essential in countering stigmatization and policies aimed at keeping people out of sight.

Quantitative research could also contribute to this by studying the life-course trajectories of migrant workers. The current thesis has shown that policymakers often assume that migrant workers are a temporary group who stay in the Netherlands for a short period of time and then return to their country of origin. This perceived temporality has rationalized lower standards for migrant worker housing. However, quantitative research on the housing and tenure trajectories of migrant workers shows that many of them stay for extended periods of time (Loomans, 2023; Manting, Kleinepier & Lennartz, 2024). Research along this line can inform discussions within governance networks about the suitability of large and remotely located housing sites for migrant workers. Related to this, quantitative research on the consequences of keeping migrant workers out of sight is needed.

7.5.2 Quantifying arrival infrastructures with register data

In the second part of the thesis, the relationship between arrival infrastructures and the social mobility of refugees is studied quantitatively. To do so, the Dutch register data were utilized. These data enabled the thesis to follow the labor market integration, educational enrolment, language acquisition, and residential mobility of the entire population of refugees through time. Despite the extensive amount of information available in the Dutch registers, the data comes with particular limitations.

Through register data, the current thesis shows that poor arrival infrastructures can delay the social mobility of refugees. This is an important finding because refugees in the Netherlands are often in socioeconomically vulnerable positions (WODC, 2023) and have a particularly vulnerable position on the labor market compared to refugees in other European countries (Buimer, Elah-Madadzadeh, Schols & Odé, 2020). At the same time, the focus on social mobility obscures other types of outcomes. Ethnographic literature on arrival infrastructures directs attention to how and where newcomers find stability to move on (Meeus, Arnaut & Van Heur, 2019). This is not limited to labor market integration, enrolment in education, and learning the language in the host country, but also involves “softer” outcomes such as processes of familiarization (Zill, 2023), home-making (Kox & Van Liempt, 2022), and belonging (Wessendorf & Phillimore, 2019). More research along these lines is crucial to obtain a better understanding of the influence of arrival infrastructures on the lives of refugees. This emphasizes the need for diverse research perspectives and approaches as register data will never be able to capture these outcomes.

Another limitation of the register data is that information about individual background characteristics is scarce. For example, the registers do not contain information about the educational background of refugees in their country of origin or their occupational ambitions. Although this does not change the implications of the finding that poor arrival infrastructures can delay the social mobility of refugees, it can be argued that opportunities for social mobility depend upon personal characteristics, arrival infrastructures, as well as the interaction between the two. The interaction between personal characteristics and contextual factors has so far been underdeveloped in quantitative research (Sharkey & Faber, 2014). One method to enable such a perspective would be to combine register data with survey data.

The combination of register and survey data would also enable research to explicitly test the theoretical mechanisms underlying the role of arrival infrastructures in the social mobility of refugees. Chapter five demonstrates that refugees who

are emplaced in neighborhoods with a larger number of people who fled to the Netherlands in the past have a higher likelihood of finding employment. This suggests that refugees receive support from people with an asylum background. However, it is not possible to test whether this is actually the mechanism underlying the higher employment rate among refugees because the social capital of refugees is not measured. An alternative explanation might be that the presence of people with a refugee background in a neighborhood leads to the development of supportive institutions. By linking the register data with survey data on the social networks of refugees, it is possible to test whether living in a neighborhood with a higher number of people with an asylum background leads to the acquisition of more social capital, and whether this subsequently affects labor market outcomes.

A last avenue for future research aiming to acquire a better understanding of the role of arrival infrastructures in the social mobility of newcomers is to link other data sources to the register data. The current thesis connected data from the Dutch Electoral Council to the register data to investigate the role of institutional arrival infrastructures. Adding information about specific local policies may enable research to shed more light on the influence of the welcoming regime (Caponio & Borkert, 2010; Zill, Van Liempt, Spierings & Hooimeijer, 2020) in the social mobility of refugees. One challenge related to this suggestion for future research is the harmonization of information about local policies.

7.6 Policy recommendations and societal relevance

This thesis has shown that the governance of housing for migrant workers and refugees is primarily aimed at keeping them out of sight. In this last section, three policy recommendations are discussed.

7.6.1 Dispersal policies need to consider available arrival infrastructures instead of the principle of proportionality

In the Netherlands, refugees are distributed equally across municipalities in proportion to the number of inhabitants after receiving a residence permit. This thesis shows that dispersal to areas with poor arrival infrastructures has a delaying effect on the social mobility of refugees. This is harmful to the position of individual refugees in Dutch society, but is also costly for the society as a whole. Emplacing refugees in areas that lack job opportunities has a delaying effect on their economic integration and housing refugees in areas further away from educational institutions reduces their likelihood of enrolling in education. Hence, placing refugees in

areas with poor arrival infrastructures that do not match with their ambitions and aspirations increases their dependency on social services.

Since a policy change in 2017, the work and educational history of refugees can be taken into account in their allocation to a particular municipality. This policy is aimed at matching the background of individual refugees with the opportunities available in the local labor market and at educational institutions (“Kansrijke koppeling”). While this development is promising, existing research shows that allocation is not always in line with the allocation advice because the principle of proportional dispersal receives priority (Sax, Walz & Engelen, 2019). Another problem with the current policy is that refugees with less promising backgrounds risk being assigned to the remaining municipalities, which offer relatively few employment and educational opportunities. This would make it even more difficult for disadvantaged refugees to find their position in Dutch society. These implementation issues can only be solved by letting go of the principle of proportionality and by taking the local opportunity structure into account instead.

One argument underlying the policy goal of proportional dispersal is the prevention of concentrations of refugees in particular places. Concentrations are perceived as undesirable because policy makers assume that they would hinder the integration of refugees. In contrast to these assumptions, this thesis finds that refugees who live in neighborhoods with a larger number of people who also have an asylum background are more likely to find secure employment. This shows that the preoccupation of policymakers with regards to the effects of neighborhood composition and the “mixing” of social groups is unwarranted. This again emphasizes that if policymakers want to prioritize the integration of this group, the availability of arrival infrastructures should be taken into account and not the principle of proportional dispersal.

7.6.2 Stop the long-term detention of asylum seekers in remote and highly institutionalized asylum centers

The current thesis has shown that prolongedly keeping refugees in remote and highly institutionalized reception centers has a delaying effect on their social mobility. Specifically, the thesis finds a delay in refugees’ entry into the labor market, enrolment in education, and language attainment. The government can stimulate the integration of refugees by reducing the duration of asylum reception, facilitating reception in less remote locations, decreasing the distance between the latest asylum reception and the first independent dwelling, and by keeping refugees in less restrictive reception centers. Asylum reception procedures are not set in

stone; receiving societies determine in which way people are received and this has an influence on their opportunities in society. In recent times, this has convincingly been shown by the manner in which Ukrainian refugees have been received. In contrast to other refugee groups, they were not kept in reception centers. Existing work shows that they were ten times more likely to find employment within one year when compared to other refugee groups (Dagevos & Rusinovic, 2024).

At present, asylum seeker centers are dispersed over the country but are predominantly located in rural areas. A recently implemented law might change this situation as the law obliges all municipalities to arrange reception for asylum seekers in proportion to the number of inhabitants within the municipality (Ministry of Justice and Security, 2024). This development prevents refugees from being forced to move over a long distance to the first independent dwelling after leaving asylum reception. As a result, refugees are able to develop a social network in one locality and do not have to start all over again after leaving asylum reception. Chapter six confirms that moves over longer distances can delay employment, enrolment in education, and Dutch language attainment among refugees. Therefore, the implementation of this law can have a positive effect on the integration of refugees, while repealing this law, as proposed in the coalition agreement of the recently installed cabinet (PVV, VVD, NSC, & BBB, 2024), will have an opposite effect.

Restrictive asylum reception policies have been implemented with the intent of discouraging immigration across Europe. In line with this, the recently formed cabinet aims for the “the strictest asylum admission regime and the most comprehensive migration control package ever” (PVV, VVD, NSC, & BBB, 2024). However, reducing asylum migration is not possible without the termination of European treaties (Advisory Council on Migration, 2022). Moreover, while the public debate often focuses on asylum migration, labor migration has been the most common motive to migrate to the Netherlands over the past decades (Statistics Netherlands, 2024). There is a strong relation between shortages in the labor market and the number of labor migrants. Because of the aging of the Dutch workforce, the economy and the provision of public services will partially remain dependent upon labor migration (State Commission on Demographic Developments 2050, 2024). One way to reduce the need for labor migration is to develop policies which welcome refugees and facilitate swift labor market participation.

7.6.3 Stop the policy of keeping migrant workers out of sight

A report commissioned by the national government which stated that migrant workers should no longer be treated as “second-class citizens” received broad appraisal

over the political spectrum (Booster Team Migrant Workers, 2020). However, this thesis has shown that housing policy for migrant workers is moving in the opposite direction. Public and private stakeholders increasingly aim at facilitating lodging for migrant workers on remote and strongly monitored housing sites. The development of these sites shows that public policy is prioritizing discontent within the general population over the interests of migrant workers. In addition, it shows that economic revenues receive priority over the wellbeing of migrant workers.

The recently installed national government explicitly states that employers will become responsible for arranging lodging for migrant workers and states that provinces and municipalities should facilitate the development of lodging on the terrain of the employer (PVV, VVD, NSC, BBB, 2024). This development is problematic for three reasons. First, it reinforces the dependency relationship between employers and migrant workers and this increases the vulnerability of migrant workers. Migrant workers who are dependent upon their employer for housing are under the constant threat of losing their place to live if they would lose their job (Palumbo, Corrado & Triandafyllidou, 2022). Second, living on the terrain of the employer in practice translates to remotely located housing on horticultural sites and industrial parks. These remote locations obstruct participation in Dutch society and can have a significant impact on the well-being of migrant workers (Szytniewski & Van Der Haar, 2022; Ulceluse et al., 2022). Third, there is the assumption that keeping migrant workers out of sight will appease the electorate and will prevent opposition. However, these practices may lead to the depersonalization of a group and this may reduce contact between migrant workers and the general population even further – similar to the situation of refugees in asylum reception (Zill et al., Van Liempt & Spierings, 2021). This depersonalization may reinforce prejudice within society, and therefore, the desire of the electorate to keep people out of sight.

7.7 References

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S

Summary:
"If it remains out of sight"

Introduction

The provision of housing for immigrants has recently become an increasingly debated topic in Dutch society. Last year, the previous cabinet collapsed over the right to family reunification for refugees, and in the elections that followed, immigration and the housing market were two of the most prominent political issues. The elections were won by a radical-right wing party and this led to the formation of a right-wing cabinet. This recently formed cabinet aims for “the strictest asylum admission regime and the most comprehensive migration control package ever”. The parties argue that immigration controls are needed because immigration puts pressure on the already overburdened housing market. Shortages in the housing market form an important driver of political debates about the inflow of immigrants.

Housing is not only a driver of political debates, it also plays a critical role at the individual level as adequate housing is a means to many other ends. Housing can impact one’s capabilities to find employment, attend education, and be part of a social community. Despite increasing diversity in immigration patterns, previous research has mainly focused on housing for “classical” migrant groups originating from a limited number of countries such as Turkey, Morocco, or the former colonies. Less is known about the housing situation of recent migrant groups.

Recently, debates about the influx of immigrants in the Netherlands have predominantly focused on refugees and migrant workers from Central and Eastern Europe. These two groups are received in distinct ways. Refugees are initially placed in asylum seeker accommodation, and after receiving a residence permit, they are emplaced in social housing. This emplacement occurs on the basis of a so-called “dispersal” policy, which means that refugees are dispersed over municipalities across the country. In contrast, migrant workers are free to enter the country and frequently arrive through private employment agencies. These agencies often offer migrant workers “package deal” contracts consisting of a place to work, lodging, healthcare insurance, and transport to and from work.

Despite these differences, both groups encounter significant challenges in the Netherlands. Refugees experience relatively many difficulties in the labor market compared to refugees in other European countries and this may be related to the way they are received in the Netherlands. Since migrant workers usually only come to the Netherlands after signing a contract with an employment agency, they have fewer problems finding work. However, they do face significant challenges in the housing market and a recent report by the European Policy Institute concluded that

substandard living conditions have become a structural feature among migrant workers in Europe.

The aim of this dissertation is to shed light on the governance of housing for refugees and migrant workers in the Netherlands, and to uncover how housing governance defines their opportunities to build a living in the first years after arrival. In pursuit of this aim, a governance network perspective is developed in the first part of the dissertation to illuminate decision-making processes underlying the provision of housing for migrant workers. Understanding these decision-making processes can help to explain the persistence of substandard living conditions among migrant workers. In the second part of the dissertation, the impact of housing governance on the lives of refugees is studied. The thesis specifically investigates the consequences of dispersal policies and reception procedures on the lives of refugees. This is done through the concept of “arrival infrastructures”. The concept refers to the geographical context in which newcomers arrive and these arrival infrastructures influence the opportunities that newcomers have for social mobility.

Empirical chapters

In addition to an introduction (chapter one) and a conclusion (chapter seven), the dissertation consists of five empirical chapters. Chapters two and three focus on decision-making in the housing governance of migrant workers. Chapters four, five and six examine the relationship between reception policies and the social mobility of refugees.

Chapter two investigates who carries responsibility in the provision of housing for migrant workers. Decisions about the provision of housing for migrant workers are made within governance networks that consist of public stakeholders at the local, regional, provincial, and national level, as well as private and civil stakeholders. These stakeholders have divergent interests and this results in different forms of complexity. The chapter shows that there is no clear accountability structure within the governance network. Certain municipalities and private parties have an economic interest in the accommodation of migrant workers and plea for the development of housing. However, other stakeholders have no interest in this and prefer to push migrant workers out of the existing housing stock, or protect the status-quo by not facilitating housing for migrant workers. The chapter shows that accountability patterns are not exogenous but arise through interaction between stakeholders. The

lack of formalized accountability patterns implies that migrant workers have not been able to put their interests center stage.

Building on the second chapter, the third chapter focuses on discourses about suitable and unsuitable housing conditions for migrant workers. The chapter shows that public, private, and civil stakeholders publicly emphasize that migrant workers should not be treated as second-class citizens, but as full members of Dutch society. However, the study shows that housing governance is not in line with these egalitarian statements. According to public and private stakeholders, migrant workers should not live in the existing housing stock because they have a negative impact on the social cohesion of neighborhoods, cause nuisance, and compete with “regular” housing seekers. In line with these ideas, housing policy for migrant workers primarily aims at keeping them out of the existing housing stock. Because housing in the existing housing stock is increasingly opposed, alternative types of accommodation are increasingly realized. One alternative which is increasingly facilitated by governments are large-scale housing sites for migrant workers. These sites are often remotely located on industrial parks or the land of horticulturalists. In addition, the sites are often strictly monitored. This shows that these sites are primarily aimed at keeping migrant workers out of sight and this is made explicit by a booklet funded by the Dutch government which is entitled “We are not noticing anything: Ten inspiring examples of good housing for migrant workers” (Expertise center flexible living, 2022). The development of large-scale housing sites ensures that employers and employment agencies which depend upon low-skilled labor are able to continue hiring migrant workers despite housing shortages. At the same time, these sites are developed with the intent of preventing discontent in the general population and this is achieved through remote locations and strict monitoring. Therefore, the study shows that housing policies for migrant workers prioritize the social reproduction of labor and the interests of the general population over the rights of migrant workers.

Chapters four, five and six examined the extent to which housing governance affects refugees' opportunities to build a living in the first years after arrival. Chapter four shows that reception circumstances have an influence on refugees opportunities for social mobility. In line with existing research, the findings show that prolongedly keeping refugees in asylum reception has a delaying effect on their entry into the labor market, enrolment in education, and acquisition of the Dutch language. In addition, the results of the study show that the conditions in which asylum seekers are kept matter. Keeping refugees in remote reception centers is harmful to their social mobility. Another factor which has a delaying effect on the social mobility of

refugees is the distance between the latest reception center and the first independent dwelling. Finally, the results show that prolonged stays in irregular reception centers can delay social mobility. These findings can be explained by the fact that the conditions of asylum reception influence refugees' opportunities to accumulate social and human capital. Refugees who are kept in more remote locations have fewer opportunities to access supportive social networks and to make use of urban arrival infrastructures such as churches, schools, and libraries. People who are forced to move over a long distance after leaving asylum reception have to start all over again as they are cut loose from the social networks and the activities they participated in. Refugees have less opportunities to accumulate social and human capital in irregular asylum reception because these locations offer less opportunities for personal development such as language courses.

Whereas chapter four focused on the consequences of the geography of asylum reception on the social mobility of refugees, chapters five and six demonstrate the effect of forced dispersal. The Dutch dispersal policy distributes refugees who have received a residence permit over municipalities in proportion to the number of inhabitants. Chapter five shows that the arrival infrastructures in the area where a refugee is allocated to has an influence on the likelihood of labor market integration. Emplacing refugees in regions with a lower number of accessible jobs delays their labor market integration. In line with the existing literature, this indicates that local employment opportunities matter. Simultaneously, the thesis finds that refugees who are emplaced in neighborhoods with a higher socioeconomic status have a higher likelihood of finding employment. This pattern suggests that refugees receive more support in these neighborhoods. In addition to the socioeconomic status of the neighborhood, the chapter also finds evidence that the number of people with an asylum background increases the likelihood of labor market integration. People who fled to the Netherlands in the past are aware of the existing institutions and regulations, and may for that reason be an especially relevant source of information and support for newly arrived refugees. Finally, the chapter shows that the presence of people with an asylum background has a larger effect in municipalities with a comparatively low level of support for radical right wing parties. This indicates that the combination of a welcoming political climate and a demand for supportive institutions provides an optimal setting for newly arrived refugees.

The sixth chapter highlights that arrival infrastructures do not only influence the labor market integration of refugees but also their enrolment in higher education. The results show that refugees placed further away from an institution for higher education were less likely to enroll. This suggests that attending education is not

feasible for refugees if transportation is too time-consuming and this effect may be reinforced by the financial costs of travel. In addition, the findings demonstrate that refugees emplaced in municipalities with a higher level of support for anti-immigration parties had a lower likelihood of enrolling in higher education. This indicates that municipalities with a less welcoming stance towards the reception of refugees provide less institutional support. Lastly, the chapter finds that refugees more often enroll in higher-education if they are emplaced in a region with a higher level of unemployment. This emphasizes that refugees should not be seen as a group without agency as this marginalizes their talents, ambitions, and willingness to contribute to society. Faced with high levels of unemployment, they were capable of opting for an alternative path toward social mobility.

Conclusion

This dissertation aimed to shed light on the governance of housing for refugees and migrant workers in the Netherlands, and to uncover how housing governance defines their opportunities to build a living in the first years after arrival. Regarding the first part of the aim, the findings of chapter two and three show that the interests of migrant workers are mostly ignored in the governance of housing. Instead, housing governance is driven by the perceived desires of the general population, which in practice translates to pushing migrant workers out of the existing housing stock, stalling the development of housing for migrant workers, and the development of lodging which intends to keep migrant workers out of sight. Existing research suggests that similar patterns exist in the governance of housing for refugees. Asylum reception centers isolate refugees from the general population and deliberately keep asylum seekers physically and legally at a distance from the labor market. After leaving asylum reception, refugees are dispersed over all municipalities in the country. One of the rationales underlying this dispersal policy is preventing concentrations of refugees in particular areas. Among other reasons, it is believed that concentrations of refugees in particular areas would be detrimental to public support for the reception of refugees. By “spreading the burden”, the presence of refugees remains masked; there are not too many people from minority backgrounds on the street and this concurrently halts the development of cultural services such as ethnic supermarkets or religious organizations. Hence, people do not find themselves living in an altered environment as a consequence of immigration.

Regarding the second part of the aim, chapters four, five, and six show that reception and dispersal policies can hinder the social mobility of refugees. Prolongedly keeping

refugees in remote and highly institutionalized reception centers has a delaying effect on their labor market entry, enrolment in education, and language acquisition. Assigning refugees to housing in municipalities with poor arrival infrastructures after obtaining a residence permit can delay their social mobility as well. These findings show that housing governance can hamper the integration of refugees. Previous research suggests that housing governance can have disruptive effects on the lives of migrant workers as well. Ethnographic work has found that accommodating migrant workers on large-scale housing sites can have a significant impact on their well-being and opportunities to participate in the Dutch society. Similar to reception centers for refugees, large scale housing sites may result in the depersonalization of migrant workers when they are no longer perceived as individual neighbors but as a homogenized mass. This can fuel prejudice and reduce contact between local residents and migrant workers. As a result, restrictive housing governance can contribute to the electorate's desire not to notice the presence of migrant workers.

Policy recommendations

1. Stop the policy of keeping migrant workers out of sight.
2. Stop the long-term detention of asylum seekers in remote and highly institutionalized asylum centers.
3. Dispersal policies need to consider available arrival infrastructures instead of the principle of proportionality.

S

**Nederlandse samenvatting:
"Als we er niets van merken"**

Introductie

Sinds de start van dit onderzoeksproject zijn de woningmarkt en immigratie twee van de meest besproken politieke thema's geworden. Vorig jaar viel het kabinet over discussies rondom het recht op gezinshereniging van vluchtelingen. De daaropvolgende verkiezingen werden voor het eerst in de Nederlandse geschiedenis gewonnen door een radicaal-rechtse partij en dit leidde tot de formatie van een kabinet dat streeft naar “het strengste toelatingsregime voor asiel en het omvangrijkste pakket voor grip op migratie ooit”. De partijen stellen dat grip op migratie nodig is om de druk op de woningmarkt te verkleinen en daarmee vormen tekorten op de woningmarkt een belangrijke drijfveer in debatten over de instroom van immigranten.

Naast een politiek onderwerp, speelt huisvesting ook een cruciale rol in de mogelijkheden die nieuwkomers hebben om een leven op te bouwen in Nederland. De woonsituatie van een individu heeft invloed op de mogelijkheden die iemand heeft om werk te vinden, onderwijs te volgen en deel uit te maken van een sociale gemeenschap. Bestaand onderzoek richt zich voornamelijk op “klassieke” immigrantengroepen uit Turkije, Marokko en de voormalige koloniën, terwijl er minder bekend is over de huisvesting van recentere migrantengroepen.

De afgelopen tijd richten discussies over de instroom van immigranten zich vooral op vluchtelingen en arbeidsmigranten uit Midden- en Oost-Europa en deze twee groepen worden op uiteenlopende manieren ontvangen. Vluchtelingen worden in eerste instantie in een asielzoekerscentrum geplaatst en nadat ze een verblijfsvergunning hebben gekregen, worden ze toegewezen aan een sociale huurwoning. Dit gebeurt op basis van een zogenaamd “spreidingsbeleid”, wat betekent dat vluchtelingen verspreid worden over gemeenten in het hele land. In tegenstelling tot vluchtelingen kunnen arbeidsmigranten vrij het land binnenkomen en arriveren zij vaak via uitzendbureaus. Deze bureaus bieden arbeidsmigranten “package deal” contracten aan die bestaan uit een werkplek, huisvesting, ziektekostenverzekering en vervoer van en naar het werk.

Ondanks de verschillen ervaren beide groepen moeilijkheden in Nederland. Vluchtelingen ondervinden veel problemen op de arbeidsmarkt en in vergelijking met andere Europese landen blijven zij in Nederland relatief lang werkloos. Mogelijk hangt dit samen met de manier waarop zij in Nederland ontvangen worden. Arbeidsmigranten hebben minder problemen met het vinden van werk aangezien zij over het algemeen pas naar Nederland komen na het tekenen van een contract

bij een uitzendbureau. Een recent rapport van het Aanjaagteam Bescherming Arbeidsmigranten laat echter zien dat zij vaak in ondermaatse woonomstandigheden verblijven en deze omstandigheden werden zeer zichtbaar tijdens de coronacrisis.

Het doel van dit proefschrift is om licht te werpen op de manier waarop huisvesting voor vluchtelingen en arbeidsmigranten tot stand komt en om te onderzoeken hoe bepalend woonomstandigheden zijn in hun mogelijkheden om een bestaan op te bouwen. In navolging van dit doel wordt in het eerste deel van de dissertatie gekeken naar besluitvorming rondom de huisvesting van arbeidsmigranten. Hierbij is gebruik gemaakt van een netwerkperspectief om de verschillende standpunten en belangen van betrokken partijen in kaart te brengen. Deze aanpak biedt inzicht in de oorzaken van de problemen rondom de woonomstandigheden van arbeidsmigranten. Het tweede deel van het proefschrift richt zich op de gevolgen van het opvangbeleid voor vluchtelingen. Specifiek is er gekeken naar de invloed van de woonomgeving op de mogelijkheden die vluchtelingen hebben om werk te vinden, onderwijs te volgen en de Nederlandse taal te leren. Dit is gedaan aan de hand van het concept van “aankomstinfrastructuren”, dit concept verwijst naar de geografische context waarin nieuwkomers aankomen en aankomstinfrastructuren beïnvloeden de kansen die nieuwkomers hebben op sociale mobiliteit.

Empirische hoofdstukken

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Het proefschrift bestaat naast een inleiding (hoofdstuk één) en een conclusie (hoofdstuk zeven) uit vijf empirische hoofdstukken. Hoofdstuk twee en drie richten zich op besluitvorming rondom de huisvesting van arbeidsmigranten. In hoofdstuk vier, vijf en zes wordt de relatie tussen het Nederlandse opvangbeleid en de sociale mobiliteit van vluchtelingen onderzocht.

In hoofdstuk twee is onderzocht wie er verantwoordelijkheid draagt voor de huisvesting van arbeidsmigranten. Beslissingen over de huisvesting van arbeidsmigranten worden gemaakt binnen beleidsnetwerken die bestaan uit publieke overheden op lokaal, regionaal, provinciaal en nationaal niveau, en uit private en maatschappelijke partijen. Deze betrokkenen hebben uiteenlopende belangen en dit zorgt voor verschillende vormen van complexiteit. Het hoofdstuk laat zien dat er binnen het beleidsnetwerk geen duidelijke verantwoordelijkheidsstructuur is. Bepaalde gemeenten en private partijen hebben een economisch belang bij de totstandkoming van huisvesting voor arbeidsmigranten en dringen daarom aan op de ontwikkeling van huisvesting. Andere betrokkenen hebben hier

echter geen belang bij en geven er de voorkeur aan om arbeidsmigranten uit de bestaande woningvoorraad te drukken en om de status-quo te beschermen door geen huisvesting voor arbeidsmigranten te faciliteren. Het hoofdstuk laat zien dat verantwoordelijkheidsstructuren niet exogeen zijn, maar tot stand komen door interactie tussen betrokken partijen. Hierbij speelt macht een belangrijke rol en het gebrek aan geformaliseerde verantwoordingspatronen benadrukt dat arbeidsmigranten hun belangen niet centraal hebben kunnen stellen.

Voortbouwend op het tweede hoofdstuk, richt hoofdstuk drie zich op beleidsdiscoursen over geschikte en ongeschikte huisvesting voor arbeidsmigranten. Het hoofdstuk laat zien dat publieke, private en maatschappelijke partijen eensgezind benadrukken dat arbeidsmigranten niet als tweederangsburgers behandeld moeten worden, maar als volwaardige leden van de Nederlandse samenleving. Huisvestingsbeleid komt echter niet overeen met deze egalitaire uitspraken. Volgens betrokkenen passen arbeidsmigranten niet thuis in de bestaande woningvoorraad omdat zij een negatieve invloed hebben op de sociale cohesie van buurten, overlast veroorzaken en concurreren met “reguliere” woningzoekenden. In lijn met deze ideeën richt lokaal beleid zich vooral op het weren van arbeidsmigranten uit de bestaande woningvoorraad. Als alternatief wordt grootschalige huisvesting voor arbeidsmigranten in toenemende mate ontwikkeld door private partijen en gefaciliteerd door publieke overheden. Deze huisvesting wordt vaak niet in bestaande woonkernen gerealiseerd, maar op bijvoorbeeld industrieterreinen of in de nabijheid van glastuinbouw. Verder worden de woonlocaties sterk gemonitord door middel van camerabewaking. De locaties lijken er daarom vooral op gericht te zijn om arbeidsmigranten buiten het zicht te houden. Dit wordt expliciet gemaakt in een door de overheid gefinancierde brochure met de titel “We merken er niets van. Tien inspirerende voorbeelden van goede huisvesting voor arbeidsmigranten”. De ontwikkeling van grootschalige huisvestingslocaties zorgt ervoor dat werkgevers en uitzendbureaus arbeidsmigranten kunnen blijven inhuren ondanks tekorten op de woningmarkt. Tegelijkertijd worden deze locaties ontwikkeld om weerstand binnen de bevolking te voorkomen. Het hoofdstuk toont aan dat de rechten van arbeidsmigranten ondergeschikt zijn aan de belangen van werkgevers en de wensen binnen de algemene bevolking.

In hoofdstuk vier, vijf en zes is onderzocht in hoeverre huisvestingsbeleid invloed heeft op de mogelijkheden die vluchtelingen hebben om in Nederland een leven op te bouwen. Hoofdstuk vier toont aan dat vluchtelingen die langdurig in een asielzoekerscentrum verblijven minder snel toetreden tot de arbeidsmarkt, onderwijs gaan volgen en de Nederlandse taal leren. Verder toont het onderzoek

aan dat de geografische context waarin iemand verblijft gedurende de asielopvang ertoe doet. Vluchtelingen die in een afgelegen asielzoekerscentrum verbleven hebben een lagere mate van sociale mobiliteit. Een andere factor die een vertragend effect heeft op de sociale mobiliteit van vluchtelingen is de afstand tussen het laatste asielzoekerscentrum en de eerste zelfstandige woning. Ten slotte laten de resultaten zien dat asielzoekers die langer in irreguliere asielopvang moesten wachten tot de start van hun asielprocedure meer problemen ondervonden. Deze bevindingen kunnen verklaard worden door het feit dat de context van asielopvang invloed heeft op de mogelijkheden die iemand heeft om sociaal en menselijk kapitaal te ontwikkelen. Mensen die in een afgelegen asielzoekerscentrum worden geplaatst hebben minder mogelijkheden om toegang te krijgen tot ondersteunende sociale netwerken en om gebruik te maken van voorzieningen zoals kerken, scholen en bibliotheken. Vluchtelingen die over een lange afstand verhuizen na het verlaten van de asielopvang, zijn gedwongen om opnieuw te beginnen met het opbouwen van hun leven in Nederland vanwege de afstand tot de opgebouwde sociale netwerken en de activiteiten waaraan zij deelnamen. Mensen die langer in de irreguliere asielopvang verblijven hebben minder mogelijkheden tot persoonlijke ontwikkeling aangezien deze locaties minder ontwikkelmogelijkheden – zoals taalcursussen – bieden.

Na het bestuderen van de relatie tussen de sociale mobiliteit van vluchtelingen en hun periode in de asielopvang in hoofdstuk vier, richten hoofdstuk vijf en zes zich op de gevolgen van het huisvestingsbeleid voor vluchtelingen nadat zij een verblijfsvergunning hebben verkregen. Na het verlaten van het asielzoekerscentrum worden vluchtelingen geplaatst in een woning in een bepaalde gemeente aan de hand van het spreidingsbeleid. Hierbij hebben zij geen keuzevrijheid en is het uitgangspunt dat vluchtelingen evenredig verspreid worden over alle gemeenten in Nederland. Hoofdstuk vijf laat zien dat de aankomstinfrastructuur in het gebied waar een vluchteling geplaatst wordt invloed heeft op de mogelijkheden die iemand heeft om werk te vinden. Mensen die geplaatst worden in een gebied met weinig bereikbare banen hebben een lagere kans om werk te vinden. Dit laat zien dat lokale mogelijkheden op de arbeidsmarkt ertoe doen. Tegelijkertijd toont de analyse aan dat mensen die geplaatst worden in een buurt met een hogere sociaaleconomische status een grotere kans hebben om werk te vinden. Dit patroon suggereert dat mensen meer ondersteuning krijgen in deze buurten. Naast de sociaaleconomische status, laten de resultaten zien dat het aantal mensen met een asielachtergrond binnen de buurt een positief effect heeft op de arbeidsmarktintegratie van vluchtelingen. Mensen die eerder naar Nederland zijn gevlucht beschikken over kennis over de bestaande instituties en vormen daarom een bijzonder belangrijke bron van informatie voor recent gearriveerde vluchtelingen. Tot slot laat het hoofdstuk zien

dat de aanwezigheid van mensen met een asielachtergrond een groter effect heeft in gemeenten met relatief weinig steun voor radicaal-rechtse partijen. Dit wijst erop dat de combinatie van een gastvrij politiek klimaat en een vraag naar ondersteunende instituties een optimale omgeving biedt voor nieuwkomers.

Hoofdstuk zes laat zien dat het spreidingsbeleid niet alleen invloed heeft op de mogelijkheden die vluchtelingen hebben om werk te vinden, maar ook gevolgen heeft voor de kansen die zij hebben om hoger onderwijs te volgen. Mensen die op een grotere afstand van een instelling voor hoger onderwijs worden geplaatst hebben een kleinere kans om hoger onderwijs te volgen. Dit laat zien dat het volgen van onderwijs niet haalbaar is voor vluchtelingen als de reistijd te lang is en dit effect kan worden versterkt door de financiële kosten bij het reizen over een grotere afstand. Verder tonen de resultaten aan dat vluchtelingen in gemeenten met meer steun voor radicaal-rechtse partijen minder vaak hoger onderwijs volgen. Dit suggereert dat gemeenten met een minder gastvrije houding tegenover de opvang van vluchtelingen minder institutionele steun bieden. Ten slotte laten de resultaten zien dat vluchtelingen in regio's met relatief veel werkloosheid vaker geneigd zijn om hoger onderwijs te volgen. Hieruit blijkt dat vluchtelingen geen passieve groep zijn, maar dat er rekening gehouden moet worden met hun talenten, ambities en wil om bij te dragen aan de maatschappij. Geconfronteerd met hoge werkloosheidscijfers waren zij in staat om een alternatieve weg naar sociale mobiliteit te vinden.

Conclusie

Het doel van dit proefschrift was om licht te werpen op de manier waarop huisvesting voor vluchtelingen en arbeidsmigranten tot stand komt en om te onderzoeken hoe bepalend woonomstandigheden zijn in hun mogelijkheden om een bestaan op te bouwen. Met betrekking tot het eerste deel van dit doel laten hoofdstukken twee en drie zien dat beleid rondom de huisvesting van arbeidsmigranten er vooral op gericht is om weerstand in de bevolking tegen te gaan. Dit vertaalt zich naar het verdringen van arbeidsmigranten uit de bestaande woningvoorraad, het uitstellen van de ontwikkeling van huisvesting voor deze groep en beleid dat erop gericht is om hen uit het zicht te houden. Het laatste patroon kan ook worden waargenomen in beleid rondom de huisvesting van vluchtelingen. Zij worden na aankomst in Nederland in een asielzoekerscentrum geplaatst, waar zij geïsoleerd van de rest van de samenleving wonen. Na het verlaten van het asielzoekerscentrum worden vluchtelingen verspreid over alle gemeenten in Nederland. Dit beleid zorgt ervoor dat de aanwezigheid van vluchtelingen gemaskeerd wordt. Door concentraties van vluchtelingen tegen te gaan

blijft het aantal mensen met een gedeelde migratieachtergrond die zich in een buurt vestigen beperkt. Hierdoor zijn zij minder zichtbaar en wordt de ontwikkeling van culturele diensten zoals etnische supermarkten of religieuze organisaties geremd. Het gevolg hiervan is dat rest van de bevolking kan blijven leven in een omgeving die niet te veel verandert door immigratie.

Kijkend naar het tweede deel van het doel laten hoofdstuk vier, vijf en zes zien dat het opvangbeleid en spreidingsbeleid voor vluchtelingen een remmende werking hebben op de sociale mobiliteit van vluchtelingen. Door vluchtelingen langdurig op te vangen in afgelegen en sterk gereguleerde asielzoekerscentra ervaren zij meer moeilijkheden met het vinden van werk, het volgen van onderwijs en het leren van de Nederlandse taal. Via het spreidingsbeleid worden vluchtelingen geplaatst in gebieden zonder een geschikte aankomstinfrastructuur en dit heeft een vertragend effect op hun sociale mobiliteit. De bevindingen laten zien dat huisvestingsbeleid de integratie van vluchtelingen kan belemmeren. Bestaand onderzoek suggereert dat huisvestingsbeleid ook een verstrend effect kan hebben op de levens van arbeidsmigranten. Door arbeidsmigranten te huisvesten op afgelegen, grootschalige en sterk gemonitorde woonlocaties blijven zij afgezonderd van de rest van de maatschappij. Dit kan serieuze gevolgen hebben voor hun mentale gezondheid. Tegelijkertijd dragen grootschalige woonlocaties eraan bij dat omwonenden arbeidsmigranten niet als individuele burens zien, maar als een homogene massa. Dit kan contact tussen omwonenden en arbeidsmigranten verstoren en kan vooroordelen in de hand werken. Een restrictief huisvestingsbeleid kan hierdoor bijdragen aan de wens van het electoraat om niets van de aanwezigheid van arbeidsmigranten te merken.

Beleidsaanbevelingen

1. Behandel arbeidsmigranten als eersterangsburgers en niet als een groep waar niets van gemerkt dient te worden.
2. Beperk de langdurige opvang van asielzoekers in afgelegen en sterk geïnstitutionaliseerde asielcentra.
3. Laat de evenredige spreiding van statushouders los en plaats hen niet langer in gebieden zonder een geschikte aankomstinfrastructuur.