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# A Historical Perspective on Immigration and Social Protection in the Netherlands

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## Purpose of this paper

- To explain the changes in migrant position and access to social protection in the Netherlands since WWII.

## Previous work

- Portability of pensions, health care and social security benefits for legal migrants: Holtzman, Koettl and Chernetsky (2005) and Koettl, Holzmann, & Scarpetta (2006)
- Migrants paying for social protection: Holtzman (2005)
- Work related entitlements in China: Song & Appelton (2008)
- Problems of access: Sabates-Wheeler & Macauslan (2007)

## **Immigration in the Netherlands after WWII**

- (1) 1945 – 1960: immigration predominantly from former colonies
- (2) 1960 – 1973: labour demand driven immigration from Southern Europe and North Africa
- (3) 1974 – 1997: immigration of family members of migrant workers and asylum seekers quantitatively the most important groups
- (4) 1997 – 2007: curbing immigration on family reunification grounds and asylum, lower immigration of low skilled workers and increasing recruitment of higher skilled migrant workers.

# 1945 – 1960: colonial immigration

- Indonesia
- Suriname
- Netherlands Antilles

## **1960 – 1973: immigration from Southern Europe and North Africa**

- Employer led recruitment followed by government agreements
- first with Italy: 1960 and Spain: 1961; Portugal: 1963; Turkey: 1964; Greece: 1966; Morocco: 1969; Yugoslavia and Tunisia: 1970

## **1974 – 1997: family migration and asylum seekers**

- Oil crisis and economic downturn
- Numbers stayed high but composition changed
- 1974 “Memorandum of Reply”- improved access to public services/social security and cultural support

## **1974 – 1997: family migration and asylum seekers**

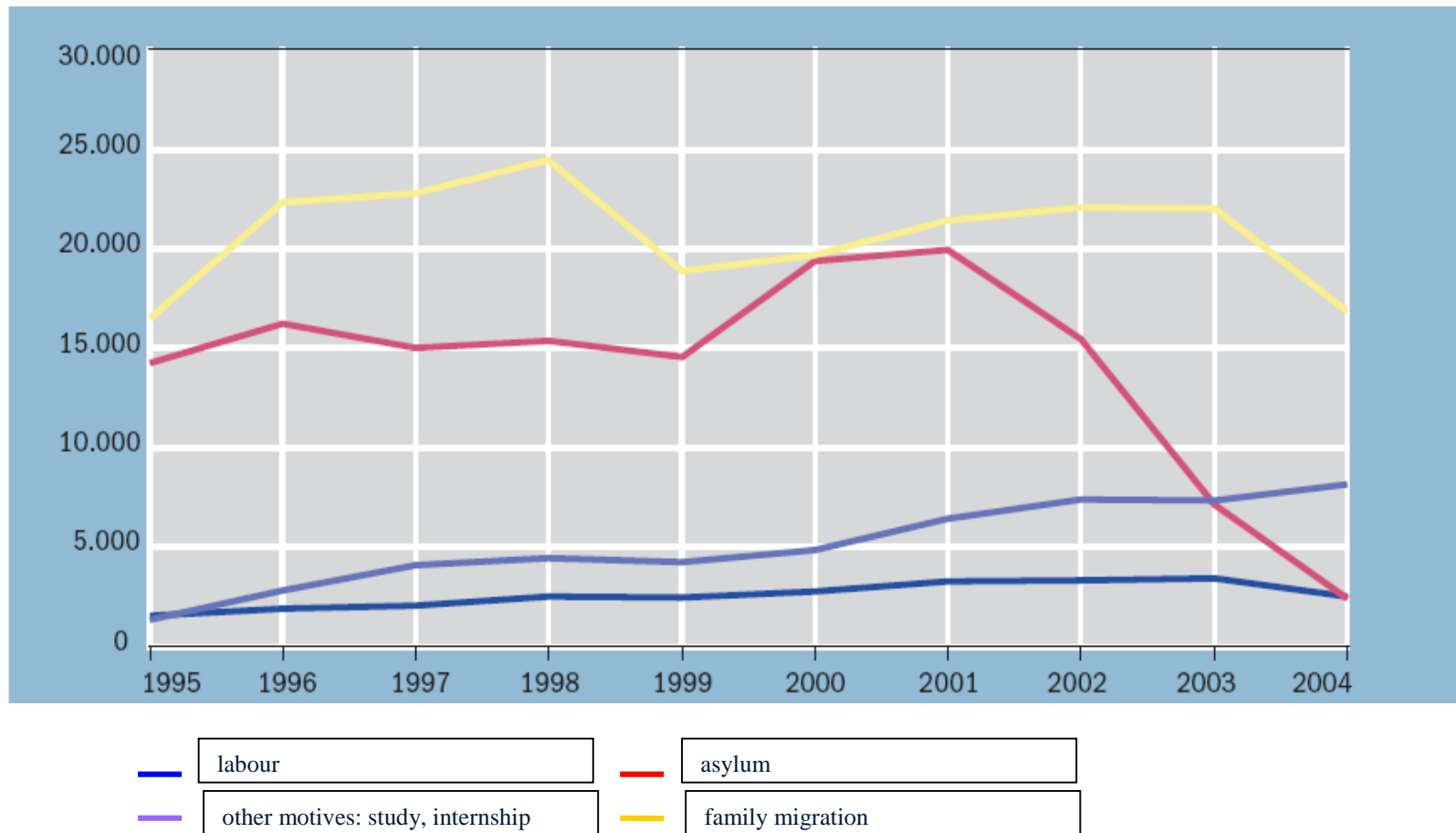
- Non-Western migrants tripled between 1975 and 1985 (200,000 to 600,000)
- 1980s-better education opportunities, better chances on labour market, access to social housing
- End 80s-90s-asylum seekers
- 2001 tightened criteria for refugee status



# The “Linkage Act” (Koppelingswet, 1998)

- Identification of illegal or irregular migrant
- Administration, health services, school or social security administration

## Non-western immigrants by year of arrival and migration motive (in absolute numbers)



## **1997 – 2007: curbing immigration**

- Curbing family migration and immigration of low skilled workers
- Attempt to stimulate immigration of highly skilled workers

# Immigrants and social protection in the Netherlands

- National insurance schemes
- All legal workers are insured
- Social provisions and supplements
  - Undocumented worker have no entitlements

## Recipients of social benefits, age 15-64 years, September 2004, the Netherlands (in percentage of population)

	total share social security beneficiaries within group	of which:			
		inability benefits	unemployment benefits	social welfare	other benefits
Turkish	29	13	4	11	3
Moroccan	29	9	3	16	2
Surinamese	23	8	4	10	2
Antillean	24	4	3	16	2
other non-western	22	3	2	16	1
non-western total	25	7	3	14	2
natives	13	8	2	2	2

Source: CBS Statline, SCP Jaarrapport Integratie 2007 pp. 154

# Asymmetries in contributions and entitlements

- Legal, non-permanent residence have little access in practice
  - Claim of a benefit leads to loss of residency
  - With no residence permit there is no right to social protection for non-citizens

## **Three mechanisms reduced use of social protection benefits by migrant workers over the last decade:**

- (1) the composition of the migrants has changed over the last 10 years with less asylum seekers, less immigrants coming in for family reasons, less low skilled workers and more highly skilled workers
- this leads to less need for migrants to use the social protection system since highly skilled workers are less vulnerable to unemployment and other forms of involuntary economic inactivity

## Reduction of social protection

- (2) since the 1990's the Dutch government has implemented an activation policy for social benefits recipients
- pushed a large number of people (temporary) back to the labour market
- pushed more migrant workers back to the labour markets since they were overrepresented among the non-active social benefit recipients



## Reduction of social protection

- (3) the implementation of the linkage act has made it practically impossible for migrants to claim social benefits since this would lead immediately to the loss of their resident permits or the a refusal of renewal of the resident permit at a specific time.

# Health care for asylum seekers and refugees

- 1970s- regular health care system
- 1979-refugee Health Care Center (bridge between regular providers-increase access), 1987-serviced asylum seekers
- 2000 back to regular system

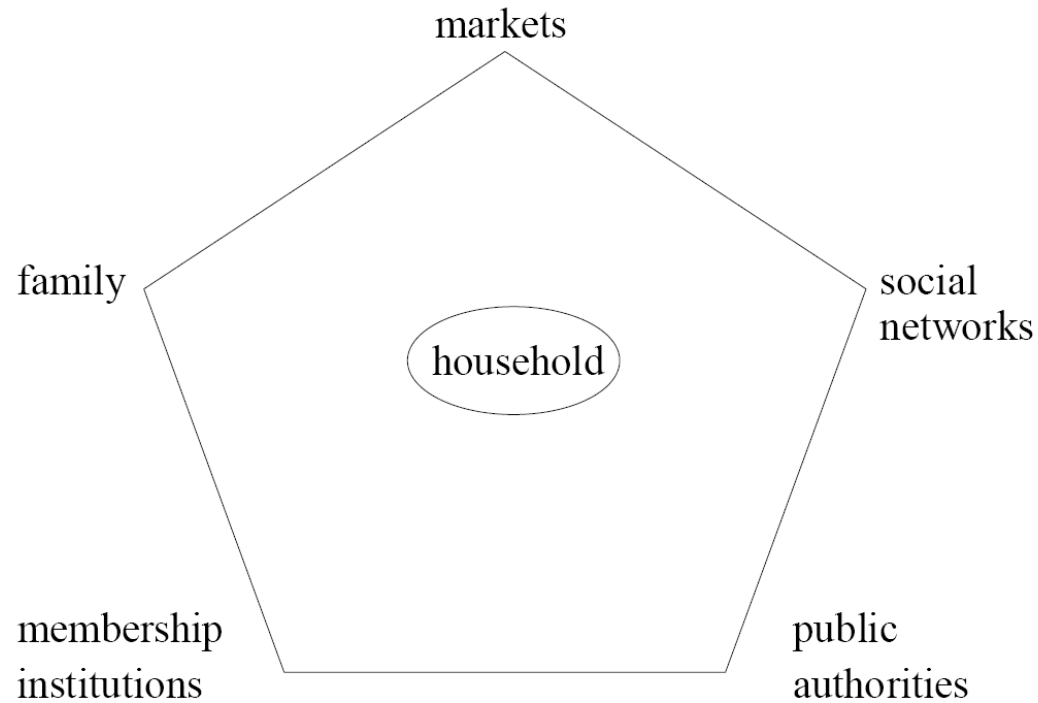
# Undocumented migrants in the Netherlands

- 129,000 undocumented migrants (Heijden, Gils, Cruijff & Hessen, 2006)
- Linkage Law-very few kept social benefits
- Health care in emergency cases
  - Pregnancy
  - Children

# Understanding informal social protection in the Netherlands

- Other means of protection from risk and vulnerability

# The Welfare Pentagon



## Conclusions

- System quite generous for natives and immigrants in the 70s and 80s. In the 90s, benefits were cut back for everyone.
- It is more difficult to stay a beneficiary for a longer period of time.
- Most notable changes have come since 2000.

## Conclusions

- Three major events have made drastic changes to the social protection situation of migrants.
- It has become increasingly clear that there is a mismatch between contributions of migrants (particularly non-permanent migrants) and their access to social protection.