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Winners and Losers

A Rejoinder to Anne Winter and Matthias Kortmann

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The criticisms of Anne Winter and Matthias Kortmann of *Winners and Losers* enable Leo and Jan Lucassen to revise and explain more clearly a number of key arguments of their book. These particularly concern questions about the aim and usefulness of comparisons in time and space. Regarding the spatial comparisons (especially with Germany and Belgium), the authors have tried to show in which respects Dutch migration history is unique and where more general mechanisms were at play. Concerning the comparison of the post-war immigration dynamics with the Early Modern Period, Leo and Jan Lucassen argue that this yields much more than one would assume at first sight. It forces us to think systematically about what is similar and what is different, but it also sheds new light on apparently familiar and unproblematic cases.

We are very grateful to the editors of the *BMGN - Low Countries Historical Review* for having taken the initiative in putting together a discussion pertaining to our book *Winners and Losers*.[1] The criticisms of our colleagues Anne Winter and Matthias Kortmann are most welcome and enable us to revise and explain more clearly a number of key arguments of our book. Although their reactions are quite different, 1) they both question our methodology, 2) make comparisons with the countries whose migration history they know best, 3) and finally both seem not entirely convinced about the use of comparing the post-war period with the previous centuries. Therefore we will concentrate our rejoinder to these three central points, also bearing in mind the German edition of our book at the end of this year.[2]

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Comparing dimensions of integration

As so often in our discipline, the methodological problems are linked to the various ways historians set up comparisons – between different groups of migrants, between migrants and natives (often also descendants of previous immigrants), or comparisons between different historical periods. Anne Winter is very right to point out that the advantages and disadvantages of immigration for the receiving society are not thought through very systematically. Our point of departure was to offer a balanced judgment of the consequences of migration that not only stresses the positive side, as most migration historians are inclined to do, but also to highlight the negative aspects. By drawing up the balance sheet for the host society we indeed neglected to differentiate in a systematic way between the short and long term and between opposite interests, for example of employers and workers, although we touch upon these distinctions. Short term advantages for employers who did not want or were unable to modernise (as in the textile industry)[3] and instead recruited low skilled and cheap guest workers, are obvious. However, we also know that in the longer term the textile industry, as well as coal mining and shipbuilding, has vanished from the Netherlands. In the short term attracting low skilled and cheap labour from elsewhere in a tight labour market benefits employers as well as governments who want to avoid rising inflation and who are not willing to level incomes. This clearly lowered wages, but more importantly – in contrast to Scandinavian countries for example – in the Netherlands it delayed the increase of women's participation in the labour market. As Anne Winter writes, advantages and disadvantages of immigration for individual members of society however, are not univocal and we fully agree that a further elaboration of the model is much needed.

Matthias Kortmann mentions other methodological problems and wonders what we mean by 'integration over two or three generations *as a rule*'. Let us first make clear how we have defined 'integration'. In our book we have chosen a broad definition that distinguishes between two dimensions: 1) the structural social and economic position in society and 2) how migrants and their descendants identify with that society *and* vice versa how they are perceived by the native population. Furthermore, we stress that settlement processes take time and can only be evaluated over a longer period of time. At least we should distinguish between the positions of different generations.

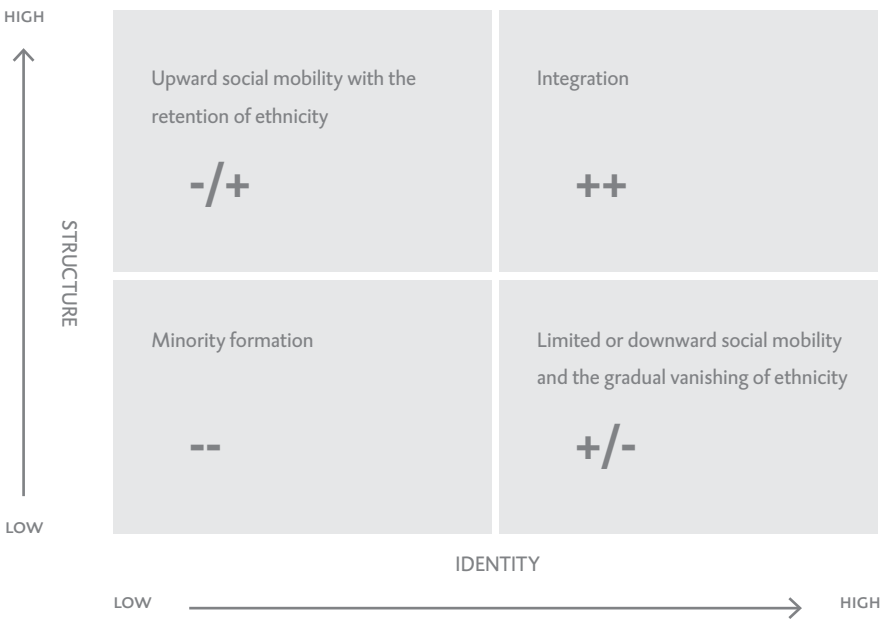
1 Leo Lucassen and Jan Lucassen, *Winnaars en verliezers. Een nuchtere balans van vijfhonderd jaar immigratie* (Amsterdam 2011).

2 By Waxmann Verlag Münster, in the series 'Niederlande Studien'.

3 Wil Tinnemans, *Een gouden armband. Een geschiedenis van mediterrane immigranten in Nederland, 1945-1994* (Utrecht 1994) 70.

Integration need not necessarily be the end result of a settlement process, which can also result in minority formation for example. Nor is it a linear process. Whether descendants of immigrants become integrated depends on the way they are treated by the host society ('position allocation') as well as on their characteristics ('position acquisition'), in terms of structure (human and cultural capital) and identity (cultural preferences such as religion, family system etc.).[4] So we can speak of full integration when over time (often at least three generations) descendants are no longer primarily identified as ethnic others and themselves primarily indentify with the culture of the host society, and when their social and economic position does not significantly deviate (any longer) from that of the population at large. Theoretically, with this definition there are four possible outcomes of long term settlement processes, summarised in the following figure:

Possible outcomes of the settlement process of immigrants in the long term



4 Leo Lucassen, *The Immigrant Threat: The Integration of Old and New Migrants in Western Europe since 1850* (Urbana, Chicago 2005); Leo Lucassen, David Feldman and Jochen Oltmer (eds.), *Paths of Integration: Migrants in Western Europe (1880-2004)* (Amsterdam 2006); Jan Lucassen and Rinus Penninx, *Newcomers: Immigrants and Their Descendants in the Netherlands* (Amsterdam 1997).

As we show in our book, in general immigrants are disadvantaged at the start of the settlement process, either because they suffer discrimination ('position allocation') or because they cannot fully exploit their human capital by lack of language proficiency and networks. As a result they profit less from most scarce common goods such as housing, education and paid work. This structural (temporary) disadvantage can be aggravated when receiving societies treat immigrants collectively as different and exclude migrants from key institutions, such as official public positions and certain sectors of the labour market. The best example of such barriers is the position of Jews in the Dutch Republic who were treated as second class citizens, at least until Emancipation in 1796. The consequence of such formal exclusions of immigrants and their descendants is that even when discrimination is lifted it takes a long time before the boundaries with the majority society become blurred, let alone shift in order to include former minorities in the mainstream.[5] 'Lighter' forms of exclusion such as negative stereotypes can also form a barrier to mutual identification, as the Islamophobic atmosphere in recent decades shows. We should add though, that segmented forms of integration (variant -/+ and +/- in figure 1) can also be the result of preferences of immigrants and their descendants themselves, who for cultural or religious reasons like to keep a distance and, for example, choose to marry predominantly within their own ethno-religious group.[6] As we show in our book however, in Dutch history full integration is the rule in the long run.

We would also like to stress that barriers to full integration need not necessarily be the result of an explicit wish to exclude immigrants. A telling example is the decision of representatives of employers, workers and the State in the early 1980s to (ab)use the Dutch Disability Law (Wet op de Arbeidsongeschiktheidsverzekering), by labelling low skilled workers in decaying industries, both immigrants and natives, collectively as 'disabled'. Not because most of them could no longer work, but because this provided them with higher and continuous social benefits. The result, however, was that most of them never found work again and became poor role models for their children, with far-reaching social consequences.

The emphasis on the institutional design of the host society does not mean that we overlook the many and important differences between migrant groups. Especially the structural characteristics in terms of human and cultural capital have proved to be crucial in explaining differences in long term outcomes of settlement processes. A good example is the school results

5 For the concepts of boundary 'crossing', 'blurring' and 'shifting' see: Richard Alba and Victor Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration* (Cambridge Mass. 2003).

6 Leo Lucassen and Charlotte Laarman, 'Immigration, Intermarriage and the Changing Face of Europe in the Post War Period', *The History of the Family* 14:1 (2009) 52-68.

of children of refugees from Iran, Iraq and Somalia. A recent study shows clearly that whereas the parents, who were mostly highly educated, remained largely unemployed or found jobs only in the lower segments of the labour market (former engineers as taxi drivers for example), the children of Iraqi and Iranian parents are doing extremely well at school.[7] This not only shows the importance of human capital, but also puts into question the pessimistic essentialist assumptions about Muslims that most integration pessimists have voiced.

Comparing in space

The second point in the reactions of Matthias Kortmann and Anne Winter regards the interesting point of comparison with the neighbouring countries Germany and Belgium, particularly with regard to the post-war period when in all three North-Western European states guest workers were recruited on a large scale and when (especially from the late 1980s onwards) substantial numbers of refugees arrived. Germany and Belgium were the first to import workers from Southern Europe (particularly from Italy and Spain, and fewer from Greece and Yugoslavia), and were soon followed by the Netherlands. Differences include first of all the origin of the dominant guest worker groups from outside Europe – Turks in Germany and Moroccans in Belgium, with the Netherlands somewhere in between. Another difference is the immigration of post-colonial migration, which was considerable in the Netherlands (both from the East Indies in the 1950s, from Suriname (1970s and 1980s) and the Antilles (1980s-present)). Germany formally had no post-colonial migrants, although the 'Aussiedler' from Eastern Europe could be considered as such, if one wants to stretch the definition of 'colony'.

These differences between the three countries have influenced the historiography of migration to a great extent. Due to the linguistic conflict between Flemish and French speakers, Belgium did not develop a continuous national history since the Middle Ages. As a result historians focus on separate historical periods with only scant attention paid to migration, even when we include the work of Frank Caestecker and Carl Strikwerda, not mentioned by Winter.[8] This fragmented tradition stands in the way of a systematic

7 E. Dourleijn et al., *Vluchtelingengroepen in Nederland. Over de integratie van Afghaanse, Iraakse, Iraanse en Somalische migranten* (Den Haag 2011).

8 Frank Caestecker, *Alien Policy in Belgium, 1840-1940: The Creation of Guest Workers, Refugees and Illegal Aliens* (New York 2000); Carl Strikwerda, 'France and the Belgian Immigration of the Nineteenth Century', in: C. Guerin-Gonzales and C. Strikwerda (eds.), *The Politics of Immigrant Workers: Labor Activism and Migration in the World Economy since 1830* (New York, London 1993) 101-132.

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Two Turkish guest workers from the Kuiperstraat in Spakenburg are reunited with their wives who were admitted to the Netherlands only after much difficulty. A neighbour (a woman in the local Spakenburg costume) offers flowers to the happy couples, 11 September 1968.
National Archives/Spaarnestad Photo/ANP.

comparison between 'now' and 'then', but has also prevented a common Dutch-Belgium approach. Thus it is a pity that the increasing knowledge of the immigration to early modern cities like Antwerp[9], remains largely isolated from the current historiography on migration. Obvious parallels with Dutch cities are also often lacking, for example between foreign migration to Flemish cities in the eighteenth and Dutch cities in the nineteenth century. In both cases the numbers are relatively low, but the composition of the migration streams is highly interesting.[10] Finally it is striking that most studies on migration to mining areas in Belgium and the Netherlands, or colonial migration circuits, are carried out predominantly along national lines.[11]

With respect to Germany there are both institutional similarities (the influential voices of integration pessimists such as Bosma and Sarrazin), but also differences. Most important is the initial refusal – at least until the early 1990s – of the German state to naturalise Turkish migrants, not so much because of an anti-Turkish sentiment, but primarily because of the constitutional commitment to admit migrants from Eastern Europe with German ancestry, known as 'Aussiedler' and 'Volksdeutsche'. This ideological path dependency changed in the course of the 1990s when naturalisation of Turks became much easier and limits were imposed on 'Aussiedler'. Another frequently mentioned and related institutional difference is the well known Dutch multiculturalist policy in the 1980s and 1990s, which stressed the importance of immigrants retaining their ethnic identity, facilitated by, among other things, support for migrant organisations. According to some scholars this has delayed the integration process of Turks and Moroccans in the Netherlands, compared to Germany where the state abstained from a (cultural) integration policy.[12] As we have argued in our book, this policy was highly symbolic and differed much less from Germany than is often suggested. This conclusion is in line with the outcomes of a systematic comparative study by the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP). This report shows that there is no significant difference in the position of Turks in Germany and the Netherlands and that there are no indications that the Dutch minorities

9 Jan De Meester, *Gastvrij Antwerpen? Arbeidsmigratie naar de zestiende-eeuwse Scheldestad* (PhD dissertation Antwerpen 2011).

10 Marlou Schrover, *Een kolonie van Duitsers. Groepsvorming onder Duitse immigranten in Utrecht in de negentiende eeuw* (Amsterdam 2002); Anne Winter, *Migrants and Urban Change: Newcomers to Antwerp, 1760-1860* (London 2009).

11 An exception is Serge Langeweg, 'Buitenlandse arbeiders in de steenkolenmijnen van Luik en Nederlands-Limburg in de twintigste eeuw: een vergelijking', *Studies over de sociaal-economische geschiedenis van Limburg* 53 (2008) 89-116.

12 Ruud Koopmans, 'Good Intentions Sometimes make Bad Policy: A Comparison of Dutch and German Integration Policies', in: R. Cuperus, K.A. Duffek and J. Kandel (eds.), *The Challenge of Diversity: European Social Democracy facing Migration, Integration, and Multiculturalism* (Innsbruck 2003) 163-168.

policy put Turks at a disadvantage.[13] In short, the Dutch migration history is part of the Western European migration history, but at the same time also an interesting case. Therefore we welcome the invitation of our critics to explore this field in the future.[14]

Comparing in time

Finally we would like to explain why we think that the last two chapters of our book, which cover the period 1500-1945, have more than just an auxiliary function, as Matthias Kortmann argues. We may not have been very explicit about this point, but we would like to emphasise that the long term bridging the Early Modern and the Modern Period is crucial to the understanding of the post war period in terms of continuities and differences. First of all it enables us to see that the migration dynamics in the period 1975-2000 were unprecedented. As we show in our book – see in particular the dramatic graph on page 66 – something very unexpected happened in 1973 when the oil crisis broke out: while the economy slipped into a long recession, immigration of Turks and Moroccans increased dramatically. This never happened in previous centuries, when immigration was a reaction to a booming economy. Here, however, the opposite happened, and that calls for an explanation. As we have demonstrated, this reversal of labour market dynamics was not caused by a conscious policy from the left to open the gates, as a number of integration pessimists have suggested. Instead this badly timed immigration was the unexpected and largely unforeseen effect of two major developments in the twentieth century – the emergence of a colour blind welfare state, combined with the explicit desire of states to monitor their borders and regulate migration from other countries.[15] The gradual building up of social and legal (residency and family reunification) rights of guest workers explains why – despite mounting unemployment – from the mid 1970s onwards they chose to stay and call for their families. This decision was a direct reaction to the imposition of restrictive aliens policies in the mid 1970s, as guest workers all of a sudden realised that leaving meant that they would lose the social and

13 J. Dagevos et al., *Türken in Deutschland und den Niederlanden. Die Arbeitsmarktposition im Vergleich* (Den Haag 2007).

14 See e.g. Klaus J. Bade et al. (eds.), *The Encyclopedia of Migration and Minorities in Europe: From the 17th Century to the Present* (New York 2011); Jan Lucassen and Leo Lucassen, 'The Mobility Transition Revisited, 1500-1900: What the Case of Europe can offer to Global History', *The Journal of Global History* 4:4 (2009) 347-377; idem, 'European Migration History (19th-21st Centuries)', in: S.J. Gould and S.J. Nawyn (eds.), *International Handbook of Migration Studies* (New York 2012 forthcoming).

15 See also Saskia Bonjour, *Grens en gezin. Beleidsvorming inzake gezinsmigratie in Nederland, 1955-2005* (Amsterdam 2009).

legal rights they had acquired and earned during their stay in the Netherlands, and that return was impossible. Studies that limit themselves to post-war period often take the dominating role of the (welfare) state for granted and fail to appreciate its newness.

The same is true for the interpretation of the last decades. Only by looking at the long term can we conclude that with the liberalisation of the intra-European labour market, exemplified by the spectacular increase of labour migration from Eastern Europe, and the gradual exclusion of these migrants from the welfare state, the early modern migration-labour market dynamics have been largely restored.[16]

Finally, the comparison with the Early Modern Period reveals that the current polarised discussions about immigration should not be explained only by the changed dynamics we described above, but that they also are the result of the rise of democracy. Whereas full democracy, established in 1918, makes it possible to mobilise anti-immigration sentiments, this was much harder before. Although in early modern Dutch cities negative stereotypes of immigrants were widespread and groups like Jews were harassed and treated as second rate citizens, these nativist sentiments could not be mobilised easily when it went against the interest of the prevailing ruling class. City elites, unhindered by a democratic constituency, were primarily motivated by economic concerns, which, for example, explain why Amsterdam kept its gates open for (often poor) labour migrants until the end of the eighteenth century, despite the fact that many of them ended up at the bottom of society. The demand for labour, not least the insatiable need for sailors by the VOC, was simply too large, and immigration restriction would have had a negative influence on the urban economy as a whole.

In other words, as we have demonstrated with these examples from the migration history of the Netherlands, making comparisons between apparently very different time periods, yields much more than one would assume at first sight. It forces us to think systematically about what is similar and what is different, but also sheds new light on cases one thinks to understand already fully. ◀

16 Leo Lucassen, 'Cities, States and Migration Control in Western Europe: Comparing Then and Now', in: Bert De Munck and Anne Winter (eds.), *Gated Communities?: Regulating Migration in Early Modern Cities* (Aldershot 2012) 217-240.

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