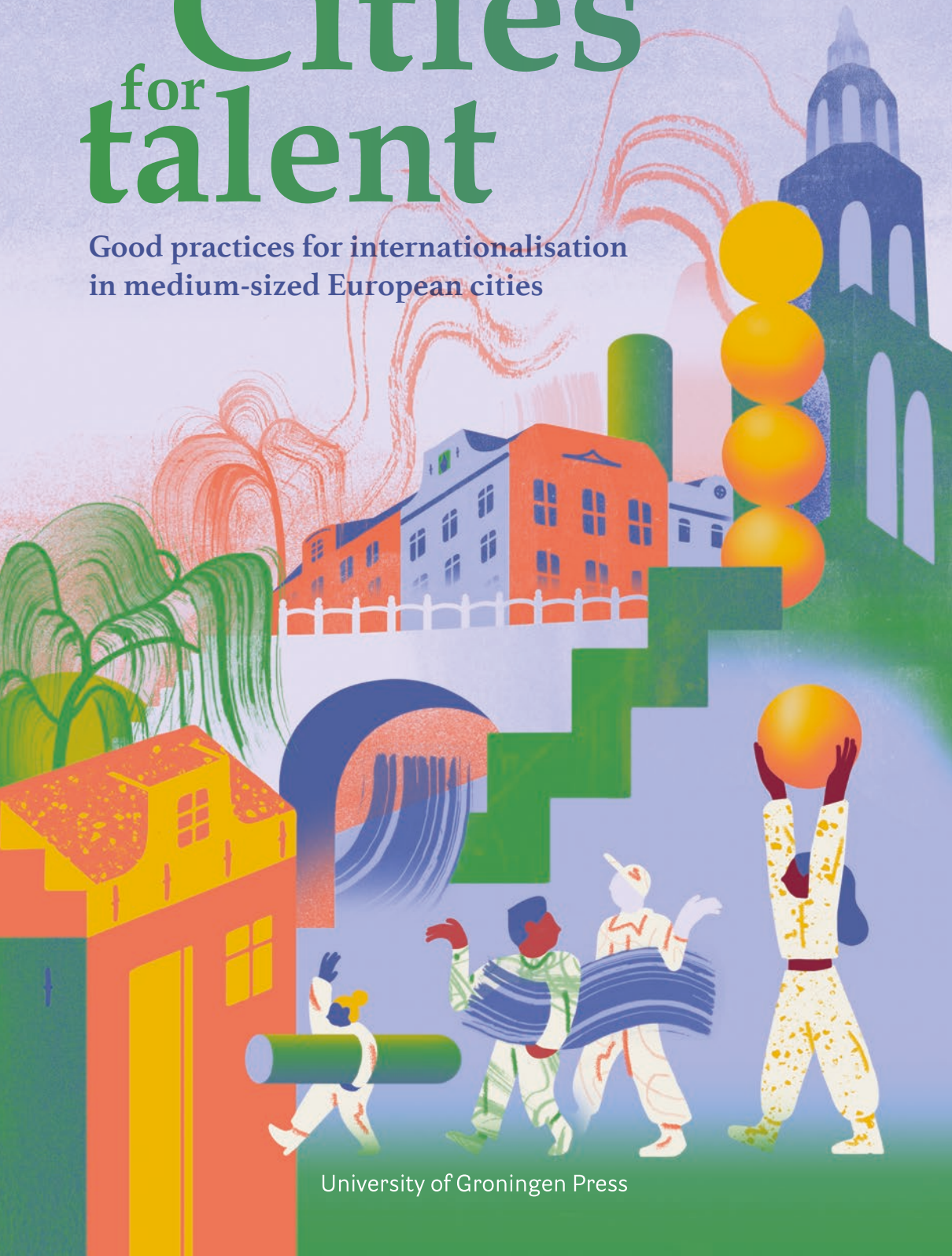Eds. Marian Counihan
& Willem van Winden

Cities for talent

Good practices for internationalisation in medium-sized European cities

University of Groningen Press

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Contents

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Foreword

When were the first seeds for this book sown? For the city of Groningen, it was in 2016. We realised that our city had become more and more international, at a very rapid pace, and that we, the local government, had to respond to that change. A team of four "internationals", among whom Dr Marian Counihan, were asked to write a welcoming policy, which was adopted in full by the city council in 2017.

It was a new, truly integral and participative way of policymaking. That is why Groningen was asked to submit a project proposal for the European URBACT III framework. Dr Counihan and I were invited to present this proposal in the autumn of 2017 during the URBACTFest in Tallinn, Estonia.

Completely within the principles of synchronicity, it was in the same period that I was invited by Dr Willem van Winden to talk about Groningen's policies for a network of middle-sized university cities, EUniversities, also in Estonia, in Tartu. It appears that Estonia is the centre of Europe!

The connection was made. We saw that there is a challenge for medium-sized university cities: how do we deal with the newcomers, the "international talent"? The URBACT project Welcoming International Talent was conceived. With seven European cities (Leuven, Debrecen, Zlín, Parma, Bielsko-Biała, Magdeburg, and Groningen) we conducted an in-depth study on several aspects of this subject, with Dr van Winden as Lead Expert for the entire network, and Dr Counihan as expert and referent for Groningen.

As a policymaker, this project was an eyeopener to me. One cannot observe the dynamics of study and labour migration from the perspective of just one city. It has to be observed in a European or even broader perspective. What happens in Poland, is directly connected to what happens in the Netherlands. In medium-sized cities, we see clear patterns; we observe common issues and challenges. We can learn from each other. Of course, there are also local differences, one must factor in the regional and national context.

One of the underdeveloped aspects of our policies is a broadly shared perspective on diversity and inclusivity. I see that our population is "internationalising" (if that is a word) faster than the "original" population can fathom. I am putting "original" in quotation marks intentionally because I don't think that any of us can claim an unbroken lineage for a country or a region; we all eventually descend from migrants. The realisation that the dynamics of migration, both globally and in a European context, are changing exponentially, has not fully sunk into the minds of our politicians and leaders yet. The recent war in Ukraine is a reminder of this: in just a few months, over 5 million people were set adrift in our own Europe.

It is not apocalyptic thinking, but a predictable scenario that the grand societal challenges, such as climate change and loss of biodiversity, will make migration management a very urgent issue in the coming century. If we change our mindset on migration now, we can prepare for a future where identity is less determined by origin and more by destination.

Lastly, I would like to thank Dr Willem van Winden and Dr Marian Counihan. In the last few years, they took me and my colleagues from other European cities on a journey through all of Europe, and showed us our world in a new perspective.

Jan Kees Kleuver
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Acknowledgements from the editors

talented Groningen illustrator – for our wonderful cover, and Ezra van Wilgenburg for her scrupulous copyediting.

We dedicate this book to all the people of Europe, wherever they come from. It's our small contribution to an integrated Europe, because the people make the city, and the cities make Europe!

Marian Counihan and Willem van Winden

Introduction

Over the centuries, many of Europe's medium-sized cities have had an international orientation, fed by migration waves and dense networks of trade and knowledge exchanges with partner cities. In recent decades, under the influence of European integration, the internationalisation of these cities has deepened, due to growing European mobility and international migration, as well as through the proliferation of cross-border collaboration projects and European city networks such as Eurocities, Energy Cities, and EUniverCities, in which cities exchange policy approaches and/or lobby together to influence European policies in their favour. The rise of European funding for inter-city or cross-border exchanges and collaborative urban innovation projects has also reinforced and deepened European city networking.

But the most profound driver of internationalisation, and the one that is most tangible in the urban setting, is the rise of (skilled) migration. From the late 1960s and 1970s, "guest workers", mainly from Southern Europe and Northern Africa, migrated to Europe's industrial heartlands, soon followed by their families. From the late 1980s, when European economies came out of a long period of recession, higher educated migrants started to enter the labour markets of Europe's cities. International skilled migration has increased in the last decades and has become a key feature of a globalising and increasingly knowledge-intensive economy. The OECD (2018, p. 29) reports a growth of posted workers within the EU to 2.2 million, an increase of 48% compared to 2010; the most recent report on intra-EU labour mobility shows that highly skilled migrants are a growing group of movers.[1] Student mobility has increased steadily in the last decades (OECD, 2021; Vögtle & Windzio, 2016). Between 2008 and 2016, the influx of non-EU students into the EU increased by 20% from 443.8k to 531.2k

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[1] https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/library-document/annual-report-intra-eu-labour-mobility-2020_en

(OECD 2018), and academic staff mobility has increased as well (Morley et al., 2018). International migration has a distinct urban bias: migrants mainly flock to larger urban areas, the nodes of internationally oriented and knowledge intensive economic activity. But medium-sized cities have become more international as well, as we will see in this volume.

Scope and focus of this book

In this book, we focus on what we could call "incoming" internationalisation driven by the attraction, facilitation, and integration of skilled migrants in urban settings, taking a policy perspective. As outlined in more detail below, the book contains academic contributions on each topic, as well as more practical chapters with policy frameworks and approaches, and case studies of skilled migration policies in medium-sized cities: the book is intended to serve several audiences. Primarily, this book aims to be of use to policymakers and HR professionals involved in managing internationalisation. They may find useful insights and frameworks, and practical advice on effective approaches to attract and retain skilled migrants. To scholars of urban studies, city marketing, migration, local administration, and internationalisation, this book offers recent insights into the specifics of urban migration processes in medium-sized cities, policy approaches, internationalisation of universities, and their local ramifications.

Below, we outline in more detail 1) how we understand skilled migration, 2) what characterises medium-sized cities and makes them worth studying as loci of internationalisation, and 3) the role of urban agency and policy in attracting, integrating, and facilitating skilled migrants.

Extensive academic literature deals with skilled urban migration from a variety of angles and lenses. Some studies focus on migration motives and experiences of specific ethnic groups or professions (Beaverstock, 1994; Gaillard & Gaillard, 1998). Others study the incorporation process of migrants in their host city (Glick Schiller & Çağlar, 2009), the role of digital tools and social media in migrants' behaviour (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014), or highlight the human face of migration, describing migration not as an abstract phenomenon, but showing

how actual individuals arriving in their host city become involved in local net-works and engage in place making activities (Van Riemsdijk, 2014).

Influenced by Richard Florida's 2002 seminal book *The Rise of the Creative Class*, many cities started to design policies to actively attract and retain the smartest and brightest knowledge workers to boost their local economy. In Flor-ida's definition, "talent" stands for people with a bachelor's degree or above, but most of the academic literature speaks of "(highly) skilled migration" rather than talent. A migrant is a person living outside their country of origin. The definition of "skill" in skilled migration is often vague and contested (Liu-Farrer et al., 2020; Boucher, 2020). What is clear is that skill is not equivalent to educational attainment: skills have a variable content which cannot simply be assessed (Kof-man & Raghuram, 2013), and change during and after the migration process (Nowicka, 2014). Education remains crucial for acquiring and measuring skills (EIGE, 2017), but soft skills are relevant as well (Beaverstock, 2011), as well as proxies such as years of experience, income level, or composites of the above. Unlike in academic literature, in policy debates, international students and knowledge workers are not often referred to as migrants; the latter term being used more readily in connection with unskilled migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. Conversely, one in five refugees in Europe is highly educated (Van Riems-dijk & Axelsson, 2021), but this group is not often considered when we think about talent. In this volume, we use the term talent and skilled migrant inter-changeably. It is important to remember how heterogeneous and diffuse these categories are, a point to which we return frequently.

Most studies of skilled migration have focused on "global" world cities (Bea-verstock, 1994; Findlay et al., 1996; Ho, 2011; Li & Teixeira, 2007; Sassen, 1991). Large cities are recognized and widely researched as immigration mag-nets, because of the economic, cultural, and social opportunities they offer (Ew-ers & Dicce, 2018). First-tier, capital and bigger cities have historically attracted more migrants, often serving as "gateway" cities, and have therefore been more diverse. Additionally, due to their larger and more diversified economies, bigger cities are also more often home to multinationals with an international corporate culture accessible to foreign skilled workers. In this book, we focus on medi-

um-sized cities in the European setting,[2] which so far have received little attention in literature on skilled migration (as noted by Glick Schiller & Çağlar, 2009; Räuchle & Schmiz, 2019). In fact, small and medium-sized cities compose the largest category of cities in the European context (Meijers et al., 2016). Europe has even witnessed shifts from larger to smaller cities (Dijkstra, Garcilazo & McCann 2013), and second-rank cities in the former EU15 seem more resilient in periods of economic slowdown (Camagni, Capello & Caragliu, 2015).

Recent migration waves have led to a rapid growth of diversified migrant populations in medium-sized cities in Europe, but there are vast differences between these cities in different countries, as reflected in their patterns and processes of internationalisation. Cities with larger research universities have been at the forefront as magnets for skilled migrants, especially international students and scholars. Some university cities, such as Leuven, Oxford, Lund, or Heidelberg, have developed strong knowledge-based economies around their university with start-up ecosystems and science-based businesses, attracting large numbers of scholars and knowledge workers from abroad. Certain cities in Central Europe, such as Debrecen or Timisoara, have seen a large influx of foreign direct investment from European and Asian multinationals, with subsequent immigration of medium to high skilled engineers to build and run the factories. Each medium-sized city has its own mix of factors which produces a unique skilled migration picture. But there are commonalities as well. Unlike capitals or international hubs, medium-sized cities do not have large international labour markets, making it harder for skilled migrants to plan a career. These cities also lack the variety of migrant and expat organisations which may help provide a soft landing for migrants; moreover, city services are less prepared to cater for a more diverse clientele and compared to larger cities with a long history of immigration, host societies of smaller cities tend to be less receptive to migrants.

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2   OECD defines medium-size urban areas as having a population is between 200,000 and 500,000;
    https://data.oecd.org/popregion/urban-population-by-city-size.htm

A policy orientation

In this book, we take a policy lens, studying how city authorities in collaboration with other urban stakeholders seek to manage the attraction, facilitation, and integration of skilled migrants. At first sight, the role for urban policies in migration management seems limited. Immigration regulations and policies are mostly regulated at the national level (Czaika & De Haas, 2013). Cities only have a minor say on the type and quantity of migrants they host: they simply must deal with those who arrive, whether they are EU citizens (who enjoy freedom of movement), residence permit holders, refugees, or illegal migrants (Bernt, 2019). Cities also have little leeway with regard to labour market regulations and the recognition of professional diplomas, qualifications, et cetera.

In this book, we will show how, despite these limitations and restrictions, cities have become increasingly active in talent management activities and policies. City administrations and their allied stakeholders have different rationales to actively attract and retain skilled migrants: to counter the trend of an ageing or shrinking local population, to address local skills shortages, generally or in specific fields (such as IT, engineering, healthcare, and R&D expertise), or to develop a stronger economic profile in these or other fields. Some see the attraction of international talent as a way to become more diverse in terms of culture, which might help monocultural cities to become more attractive and cosmopolitan.

The active attraction, retention, and integration of skilled migrants comes with a number of challenges and dilemmas that we address in this volume. This book has five subthemes, each elaborating on a specific aspect of skilled migration and related urban policies:

- City branding
- Socio-cultural integration
- Internationalisation in higher education
- Labour market integration
- Urban governance

With the exception of the governance theme, which we treat as an overarching "umbrella topic", each theme is elaborated in two chapters. The first chapter is

policy oriented, discussing relevant context, developments and conceptual frameworks which are useful from a policy perspective. For each theme, we offer either extensive case studies or a series of examples of good practices which are being deployed by medium-sized cities. The second chapter for each theme is written by a contributing academic working in the relevant field, reporting on recent findings from their research, embedding them in the themes of this book.

Overview per theme

City branding

Cities tend to position themselves as attractive, international, and outward-looking places for international talent, following a logic of competition for the best brains, in the hope that they will boost their economy. But these shiny city marketing campaigns do not always resonate with the everyday experience of residents. How to do city branding well?

Chapter 1 introduces the notion of city branding in relation to skilled migration. It presents practical tools and concepts for effective city marketing policies and provides examples of marketing and branding policies of European cities.

In *Chapter 2*, Warda Belabas describes recent city branding strategies and the importance of residents in establishing authenticity and credibility of the brand. This is demonstrated by findings from her study of residents' perceptions of the city brands for Rotterdam and Amsterdam.

Socio-cultural integration

Skilled migrants are flocking to medium-sized cities in growing numbers and for various reasons. But when they have arrived, how do they integrate into the local society (if so), what barriers do they face, what conflicts arise, and what policies do cities put in place to increase integration and avoid the emergence of parallel societies?

Chapter 3 addresses the integration of skilled migrants in medium-sized cities. It elaborates on the interplay between the local community and the migrant, barriers which hinder integration, and discusses how local stakeholders (city administrations, universities, employers, clubs, and other local organisations) can foster integration. The chapter is enriched with examples of urban initiatives

in European cities to promote social integration of skilled migrants, from partner programmes to language courses and cultural initiatives.

In *Chapter 4*, Jörg Plöger analyses how cities can be structurally very different from each other in the way they absorb skilled migrants, drawing on empirical research in Manchester and Dortmund. He analyses how and why highly skilled migrants arrive in a city, who arrives (which groups), why there are variations between places, and what factors help to successfully attract and retain mobile professionals.

Internationalisation in higher education

In most medium-sized cities, the university is the largest driver of internationalisation. Universities have always been internationally oriented, but over the last decades they have attracted steeply growing numbers of international (both exchange and degree seeking) students and staff and have internationalised their curricula.

Chapter 5 looks at internationalisation dynamics at European universities, particularly in medium-sized cities. It sketches the broader context, reflects on past and recent policy developments, and identifies current challenges for internationalisation in higher education institutions and their implications for urban governance partnerships. The chapter includes relevant examples from European universities.

In *Chapter 6*, Hans de Wit describes how higher education institutes over the past four decades have internationalised in an increasing but also diversified way. He also reflects on the role of online education, explores the impacts of COVID-19, and discusses the growing importance of the societal role of international universities.

Labour market integration

The integration of skilled migrants into urban labour markets comes with its challenges, especially in medium-sized cities which do not have a long history of skilled migration. Many SMEs have difficulties to adapt to a multilingual and multicultural workforce; career trajectories do not always work out as planned, deskilling is endemic. Moreover, remote working in a (post) COVID-19 world is changing workplace practices, with possibly far-reaching implications.

Chapter 7 deals with the integration of skilled migrants into local labour markets from a policy perspective, for relevant subgroups. Based on academic literature, it reviews barriers and challenges, and presents a range of policy interventions currently taken in medium-sized cities. It ends with an in-depth look at Groningen's current labour market internationalisation programme.

In *Chapter 8*, Peter De Cuyper discusses the forms of capital that play a role in labour market integration for skilled migrants. He reports on the success of a mentoring-to-work approach, based on research in Flanders, and suggests how (local) labour market policies can include such efforts to help skilled migrants.

Urban governance

The final thematic chapter, *Chapter 9*, discusses the governance of skilled migration. Many actors have a role to play: city departments, universities, employers, the cultural and sports sectors, and religious and social community organisations. The chapter deals with the challenge of co-ordination: How can and do these urban stakeholders co-ordinate their actions to attract, facilitate and/or incorporate skilled international migrants in the city, and address the challenges as outlined in the previous chapters? The chapter identifies various models of "co-ordinated international talent management" based on practices in European cities and concludes with a number of policy and governance challenges.

Methodology

The case material in the policy chapters, written by the editors of this book, was collected during two international city exchange/peer learning projects in which the authors participated as project leads. The first exchange project was initiated by the City of Magdeburg (and funded by ESF funds), and ran for two years, during which four two-day exchange meetings were held in the cities of Tartu, Magdeburg, Parma, and Aalborg. The second exchange project, Welcoming International Talent (WIT), was structured in a similar way, funded by URBACT, with participation of the cities of Bielsko-Biała, Debrecen, Groningen (as lead partner), Leuven, Magdeburg, Parma, and Zlin.

In both networks, we held peer-review meetings, during which a variety of stakeholders from the host city (university, city department's employers, student

organisations, et cetera) presented their current policy approaches towards talent management and discussed views and their most important challenges with their peers from partner cities. Each meeting focused on one of three key aspects of talent management: attraction, facilitation, and incorporation (both social and economic). Each meeting also included testimonials from international migrants in that host city. This helped to confront the policy initiatives with everyday practical experiences of migrants, adding a "human face" to global accounts of skilled migration (Favell, Feldblum, & Smith, 2006). While preparing this volume, we held additional interviews with policymakers and other stakeholders.

As such, the volume is intended to give a broad overview of urban governance considerations for incoming internationalisation; a practical and timely combination of insights, ideas, and examples of good practice. We hope it will be of use to policy makers, managers, and researchers in local governments, universities and companies alike.

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City branding

1 Branding medium-sized cities for international talent

Marian Counihan and Willem van Winden

We live in an age of urbanisation, but not all cities are growing or healthy, and some will even decline in population. Which cities will succeed? Which will wither? These questions are often urgent for secondary or smaller cities. We know that size isn't all that matters: cities with sufficient economies of scale and capacity for innovation are well-placed for success, even if they are not large (Frick & Rodriquez-Pose, 2018; Dijkstra, Garcilazo & McCann, 2013).

Increasingly, medium-sized cities in Europe develop policies for attracting, and retaining talent. Unlike capital cities, medium-sized cities are often not as well-known as the bigger (capital) cities and they usually lack a strong existing "brand". Therefore, such cities are not easily recognized as potential destinations for mobile workers or students. For this reason, integrated city branding and marketing activities have become an indispensable part of the "internationalisation toolkit" for medium-sized cities.

In this chapter, we explore how cities can effectively deploy city branding tools, with an eye to attracting and retaining skilled migrants. We reflect on what branding is, and ask: *What are principles of effective city branding?* Secondly, we turn our attention to our target group: international talent. How can we better understand this heterogeneous target group? Then, we turn to several branding cases, illustrating good practices and generating recommendations for cities to implement in their own recruitment and communication strategies. Finally, we briefly discuss the internal dynamics of city branding, and investigate why and how urban stakeholders work together to implement city branding and communication well.

1.1 Principles of effective city branding for international talent

City marketing originally focused on marketing aimed at tourists and business investors. But in recent years new target groups have been added: international students and highly skilled migrants. Marketing to these groups requires a different, more integrated strategy to those used for tourists and investors.

More generally, there is consensus among (place) marketing scholars that "branding is more than a logo" (Govers, 2013), and even more so for place branding, in contrast to say product marketing. Branding and communication efforts of any kind must be embedded in a wider vision in order to be effective. The basic "why" question to be answered in our context is: *why would cities want to attract skilled migrants? And by the way, who is "the city"?*

The fundamental activity of branding is to establish the brand core (character, values, vision, and mission) of what is to be branded (Miltenburg, 2016; Govers, 2013). The "brand core" forms the basis for everything else, and as such should be established before communication strategies and marketing campaigns are developed. At the same time, it should be seen as a living entity that will evolve as the needs and goals of the country and the region change and can be re-evaluated at periodic intervals. In some cases, there will be an already well-established city brand core that can be gainfully co-opted for the purposes of international recruitment; in other cases, it might be developed for this purpose.

On this topic, Miltenburg (2016) says: "Branding is choosing. You can't be everything to everyone, so what do you want to put in the spotlight? […] Through branding, you actively direct how you want people to think and feel about you."

Around the brand core, several more layers of branding must be loaded: the brand promises (*What do we offer?*), the verbal identity and brand narrative (*How do we talk about ourselves?*), the visual identity (*How do we present our offer visually, including logos?*). This is what is typically referred to as branding.

These layers in turn generate the brand interactions, where you and your target groups "meet". Brand interactions are what we typically think of as communication and marketing activities. They include all promotional campaigns, channels, events, partnerships, and places where the brand comes to life and where your target groups will experience it. The brand core will help to inform

decisions also on the level of brand interactions – such as who to partner with, and which events to focus on. Figure 1.1 (adapted from Miltenburg, 2016) illustrates these three basic levels of branding activity.
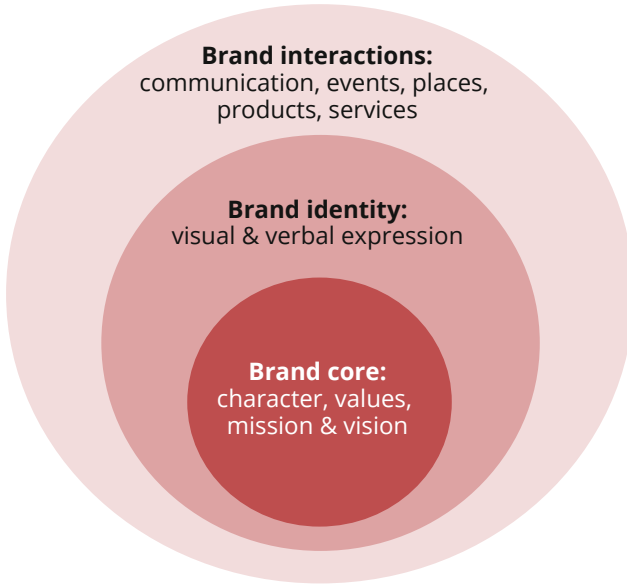
Figure 1.1 Anatomy of a brand
Adapted from Miltenburg (2016)

In the following, we build on this basic conceptual framework for branding, and add a number of principles to consider when developing a city branding strategy.

Create a sense of place

The anatomy of branding makes clear that marketing and communication will only be successful if a specific "sense of place" can be captured in the underlying brand core. In the case of cities, this is complicated (Govers, 2013). Cities consist of many actors and communities, each with their own stories and interests; sense of place is multi-layered and complex. Nobody "owns" the city or fully controls its narrative. This is perhaps the most challenging aspect of city branding.

How, then, can a successful city brand be established? Recent literature (Govers, 2013; Hospers, 2010; Houghton and Stevens, 2011; Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013) tells us that city branding is not about marketing a destination, but about

expressing *identity*. We can understand place brands as "representations of place identity, building a favourable internal (public, private and civil society stakeholders) and external (tourists, investors, traders, migrants) image" (Govers, 2013, p. 71).

A city brand is thus not just an externally oriented marketing mechanism for increasing tourism and investment, as we used to understand traditional city marketing (Kavaratzis, 2004). As cities have become stronger loci of economy and culture, and seek to attract new citizens, city brands become the means to express and reinforce local identity, and increase identification with the city, for both new and existing residents. City branding is also regarded as a way to foster a sense of belonging for both new and existing residents. Brand interactions therefore should show the lived city and involve residents in communicating the place identity (Insch, 2011; Houghton & Stevens, 2011; and see also Belabas' chapter in this volume).

Marketing to attract or retain talent is in this sense different to marketing for tourism or business, because of the focus on authentic, lived "sense of place". The target group are new residents, and consequently day-to-day lived experiences of the city are fundamentally relevant for them, much more so than for businesses or tourists. Conversely, as we also learn from Belabas' chapter in this volume, this also means that existing residents have a key role to play in establishing the brand. Residents' attitude and buy-in to city branding matter for the following reasons (Houghton & Stevens, 2011):

1 They form an integral part of the place brand through their own characters, histories, and actions – adding to the multi-layered experience of place.
2 They contribute substantially to brand ownership and contribute to invaluable word-of-mouth communication (i.e., they play an ambassadorial role, even if not formally given).
3 As citizens, they legitimise the place branding, as well as forming part of the target group, and if this doesn't work can protest or countercampaign against the brand.

Houghton and Stevens (2011, p. 46) argue: "[T]he most effective place branding initiatives are those where a wide range of local players are involved and ener-

gised. On the contrary, initiatives, which do not engage, and in some cases alienate local stakeholders, are almost always destined to fail".

Keep the target group in mind

As a corollary to the above, the target group for city branding and communications is the (potential) resident (or student, visitor, or investor) – and not the municipality, regional government, or other organisation which has given the branding assignment. Although institutional stakeholders of course need to be on board, you should not put their needs above the needs of the end user (in this case new residents) when considering what the brand interactions (events, type of information supplied, et cetera) should be. We have seen this happen in previous iterations of branding and recruitment campaigns, which focused on "broadcasting" without investigating the needs and perceptions of the audience.

Focusing on the perspective of (new) residents with city branding can lead to different choices at the level of building brand identity, for instance in the choice of images or language used. This also means one needs to keep the perspective of the target groups in mind when considering what kind of information to provide (the brand interactions). It could imply, for instance, providing information about living or working in neighbouring regions which fall outside the scope of the marketed region, because they form part of the lived "daily urban system" in which migrants move.

Attention should also be given to local residents' perceptions of the brand core, as discussed above and in Belabas' chapter in this volume. Repositioning your city in an international light can increase local civic pride and sense of belonging but can also put pressure on social cohesion and sense of belonging for locals. City branding should address concerns from locals regarding these challenges – as we discuss in more detail below.

Participatory and iterative design

The heart of branding is understanding how people experience and value the city; accordingly, effective city branding makes use of good qualitative and quantitative information about the preferences and experiences of internationals and locals. Focus groups are a rich source for "soft" data on preferences, opinions, images and concerns from locals and internationals, but also social media anal-

yses can be very effective to explore how target groups talk about and experience the city. In-depth conversations with new residents will help to understand how they orient themselves on the city, which factors influenced their choice of destination, which type of information they used or looked for, and which sources they used for this. This process should be ongoing, so that a brand is continuously tested and updated to address the needs and reflect the experiences of city residents. It helps to include international skilled migrants in the local marketing/branding project team, so that their perspective is included in any branding decisions made.

The above principles can be summarised in four key points:

1 Approach branding and marketing integrally, based on a well-established brand core before moving onto visual and verbal identity.

2 Aim to transmit an authentic sense of place, or place identity, by involving residents in the place branding, especially at the level of branding interactions.

3 Keep branding goals, target groups (end users) and their informational needs in mind.

4 See city branding as a participatory and iterative process, involving a wide range of players.

If place branding is done well, it can bring virtuous feedback loops into play. People wanting to move to a city will mean that companies can employ that talent, and that in turn means the city will become even more attractive to new residents. But who do you want to attract?

1.2   Target group segmentation

For branding and communication, it is important to understand who your target group is. "International talent" or "highly skilled migrants" may sound unitary, but aren't, as discussed in the introduction (and in further detail in the chapters on socio-cultural integration). Which type of talent *exactly* do you want to attract? There is a wide variety among migrants in terms of resources, motives for moving, countries of origin, and alternative options for destinations, even within the highly-skilled migrant group (Scott, 2019).

Several refined typologies of international skilled migrants have been proposed in literature. A well-known typology is that offered by Mahroum (2000). He identifies five types:

- *Accidental tourists*: company managers of international companies, temporarily posted abroad by their employers.
- *Economy class passengers*: engineers, technicians, and other professionals with skills which can be deployed worldwide; they move to places where their qualities are in demand, they are paid well, and are often relatively mobile.
- *Explorers*: entrepreneurs or investors who introduce new ideas and companies into places where they see market opportunity.
- *Pilgrims*: Internationally mobile academics and scientists, attracted by the quality of scientific institutions rather than the characteristics of the country or city.
- *Passengers*: Students who participate in international programmes offered by universities.

The last group can be further subdivided into degree students and exchange students, or by motivation. In Chapter 5, "The international university" (this volume), a typology of international students by Choudaha, Orosz, and Chang (2012) is given.

In the above typology, career or study motives dominate as drivers for international skilled migration. Scott (2006) challenges this perspective and proposes a typology which is based on a wider set of motivations. Besides careers, he identifies lifestyle or relationship motives as drivers of contemporary skilled migration. Moreover, his typology is based on commitment to the host country/city (permanent, temporary, circular), and family status (single, family, or empty nesters). He ends up with four broad categories. Note that this is not a static typology, as during their life course, people typically move between categories. The following categories are discerned by Scott (2006):

- *Expatriates*: they live with their spouse or family, work (or worked) for international companies, and stay for a longer time or even permanently.
- *Nomadic workers*: they migrate for career or lifestyle reasons, stay for relatively short periods, and tend to be single. Two subgroups are *young profes-*

sionals (career driven) and *graduate lifestyle migrants*, typically younger creatives not working for an international employer, in their twenties and thirties as a stage in an increasingly fragmented career life path.

- *Bohemians*: they migrate for lifestyle reasons and emplace themselves to become permanent settlers of their host city.
- *Mixed-relationship migrants*: they settle permanently following their partner who originates from the host country/city.

Lifestyle-driven migrants (bohemians and subgroups of nomadic workers) prefer global metropoles with a rich cultural tissue and a global reputation and are unlikely to be drawn to the medium-sized cities that we focus on in this book (see eg., Florida, 2017; Barwick, 2022). In medium-sized cities, migrants mainly come for career, for study, or because of a relationship. A case study on skilled Indian migrants to Wrocław, Poland (Jaskułowski, 2017) illustrates motives and experiences of international skilled migrants into a tertiary city. Most of these migrants came for career reasons: they had applied for a job at a multinational which happened to be located in Wrocław, or they were inter-corporate transferees. They did not know much about their destination before they arrived. Plöger (this volume) identifies similar motivations for migrants in choosing the city of Dortmund.

When developing a branding and communication strategy for talent attraction, it can be immensely helpful to work with typologies such as those presented here. Branding agencies often choose a set of "personas" potentially representing the above categories, to understand their target groups better and to help keep their interests in mind when making decisions regarding brand interactions. Where can our target group be found? What are their interests and motivations? What pain points or issues would be solved by moving to a particular location? How does our place identity (city brand) connect or appeal to them? Which communication channels, events, partnerships, et cetera will work effectively for this group? What are their informational needs?

Working from a stable brand identity on the one side, and an understanding of your target group on the other, will help to make any marketing and recruitment activity optimally effective. Next, we discuss some internal dynamics of development branding and communication, and in particular, the reasons for

and forms of urban collaboration which will contribute to successful city brand-ing and talent attraction.

1.3   Multi-stakeholder collaboration in branding and communication

Larger actors in the city (universities, research institutes, large companies) often have their own channels, tools, and strategies to attract and recruit internation-al talent. Some have become very professional in this respect and developed deep knowledge on the channels to approach and recruit talent. In many respects, an organisation-based approach makes sense for marketing to and recruitment of talent, because each organisation has its own specific demands. In other respects, stakeholder collaboration will be very valuable. Although international talent may be globally oriented, we know that even for the most mobile workers, there is a need to feel rooted locally, to experience a "sense of place" and connect to where they physically are (see also Chapter 3 on socio-cultural integration in this volume). Thus, any individual marketing and recruitment activity will benefit from being connected to a well-developed city or regional brand.

There is more than one reason for a collaborative approach on branding and communication; think of:

•   A shared and authentic place identity (brand core) can be co-developed for use across platforms and channels, creating a more consistent and recogniz-able city brand, supported by all stakeholders.

•   Shared promotional materials (brand interactions) can be used in recruitment activities; stakeholders can also join forces in trade missions, promotional online campaigns or promotional events.

•   Talent can be recruited and retained cross-sectorally or across companies (as is done in Leuven and Eindhoven, see also Chapter 7 on labour market inte-gration).

•   Common issues and problems in recruitment, informational gaps and bu-reaucratic hurdles can be more easily identified and tackled.

A co-ordinated approach requires the formation of multi-stakeholder working groups and project teams and can lead to shared branding and communication

platforms. Shared ownership needs to be well-organised, so that it is maintained over a longer period. Also see the chapter on urban governance for more on models of co-operation.

With the checklist below, cities and their stakeholders can analyse where they stand in terms of attracting and communicating with international talent. This list can be used to stimulate the discussion between stakeholders to identify gaps and develop joint actions.

Checklist for co-ordinated branding and communication

Before arrival

- Do you know why you want to attract "talent" and which type of talent you are looking for? Do you have clear recruiting goals and target groups (such as professionals, possibly in specific sectors, scientists/researchers, students, et cetera)?
- Do you understand your target group and what they find important in choosing a company, city, or university destination?
- Are your internationalisation actions in line with urban or regional development strategies regarding education, research, and economic development?
- Have you identified a set of shared interests between urban stakeholders when it comes to attracting talent, and is this carried through in your branding?
- Do you have a clear and agreed division of tasks between city, universities, companies, student unions, other relevant local stakeholders, and national organisations with regard to branding and recruitment?

During stay

- Can you provide accessible and relevant information for each group (professionals, students, families), which is not only provided by official organisations, but also user generated?
- Can you serve your international talent in the relevant foreign language (English or other), not only for official matters or in study programmes but also on practical matters to do with everyday life?
- Can you seek to actively understand the experiences, challenges, and problems of internationals and involve them in co-developing branding and communication?

- Can you provide assistance in dealing with official matters and connecting to local communities?
- Is there a clear and agreed division of tasks between city, university, companies, student unions, and national organisations with regard to brand development and interactions?

After departure
- Do you support an active international "alumni" network and actively stay in contact?
- Do you involve international citizens and alumni in recruitment of new talents or as ambassadors for the city?

1.4   Cases of city branding and recruitment programmes: Parma, Groningen, Debrecen

Parma's collaborative branding

Parma has a large and rapidly growing migrant population, an international school, the international institution EFSA, several companies with an international dimension, and several grassroots initiatives to make internationals feel welcome. Individual stakeholders (companies, sports clubs, education institutes) have well-established recruitment procedures and welcome kits for international talent.

The city of Parma already has a strong and well-established identity or brand core built up over the decades, thanks to its cultural heritage and the presence in the economy of internationally well-known companies and products. What was missing in Parma, was a common vision for attracting talent and the possibility to share good practices and put them together to create an effective (online) communication tool for attracting as well as retaining new residents. The municipality of Parma took the lead to improve co-ordination in two respects: locally, with local companies and the University of Parma, and regionally, in a new initiative of the Emilia Romagna government.

Locally, the municipality first created a working group to work on branding and internationalisation in collaboration with the University of Parma and with

connections to private sector stakeholders. This co-ordination between public and private sectors was new but welcomed by both sides. Companies in the region were interested to develop shared branding campaigns, especially as a means to broaden the image of Parma beyond its food industry associations.

The working group set out to identify the needs of their target groups by conducting a survey among international residents who were already established in Parma. The results of the survey led to an inventory of information needed for the new website *Parma for Expats*,[1] which has been developed by the municipality together with local stakeholders as a first point of entry for highly skilled migrants. The platform connects to relevant external sites such as job search portals and municipal services. As well as with online information, Parma seeks to communicate its identity and relevant information through Welcome Days, to be held regularly for new residents. Finally, Parma is developing a "welcome kit" containing materials from existing welcome kits previously developed by stakeholders individually.

At the same time, there was a parallel co-ordination effort at the regional level: the regional government of Emilia Romagna developed a programme to raise the region's profile as a research and innovation ecosystem and thus to better position the cities in the region for talent attraction.[2] Parma will seek to play an active role in this multi-stakeholder partnership as it develops.

> "To scale up our efforts we need to work together more…. The strength of this project is in the group, both local and international. If you create trust, a predisposition to listen and reflect on the experience of others, you can really create important things together, born both from the experiences of others and from ideas that arise from sharing."
> (Ivano Dinapoli, head of Funding and EU Policies Unit, Parma Municipality)

It is interesting to note how, beyond the immediate goals of attracting talent, these developments represent a shift away from the state as the owner of pro-

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1   https://www.comune.parma.it/parmaforexpats/
2   https://internationaltalents.art-er.it

grammes for the common good, and towards a more participatory approach in governance for the city of Parma.

Groningen's integrated brand core

Groningen is a regional city in the north of the Netherlands with almost 230,000 residents. The city is home to University of Groningen and Hanze University of Applied Sciences, each with around 30,000 students, making for a very high student density in the city. It is the capital of the synonymously named province of Groningen, which has a total population of 500,000.

Groningen has recently relaunched its city branding in collaboration with the province and has used the new brand core as the basis of various campaigns and websites to attract students and skilled workers (as well as tourists and businesses).[3] Campaigns and websites are all bilingual and serve to attract both national and international talent. The previous iteration of the recruitment campaign ("Groningen, City of Talent") had been developed by official organisations but evaluated as too sender-oriented; too much "broadcasting", and not in line with the needs and experiences of the target group. The most successful element in this period, and one which has been maintained, is the bilingual *GroningenLife* website,[4] a lively and interactive platform with all kinds of information for students, both national and international. Most of its content is generated by students or student unions, and the project is entirely student-run, with a small paid team funded by the universities. This creates a strong sense of ownership and enhances the credibility of the information on the platform. GroningenLife has not (yet) adopted the current city branding but this might even add to the authentic feel of the website. Taking a lead from this success, the new branding strategy adopted a "tell, don't sell" approach, in which different groups were much more involved in the design and content of the branding interactions. The website *Groningen.nl* was developed as a single point of entry for different groups. It contains a combination of practical information and storytelling, and residents are involved in the latter. The platform was developed by a mixed group

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3   See https://www.visitgroningen.nl/en for the tourist website, and https://groningen.nl/en for the "talent" version.

4   https://www.groningenlife.nl/en/homepage

of stakeholders and citizens, including the "*Akkoord van Groningen*" (the Groningen Alliance),[5] the regional marketing agency, international students and residents.
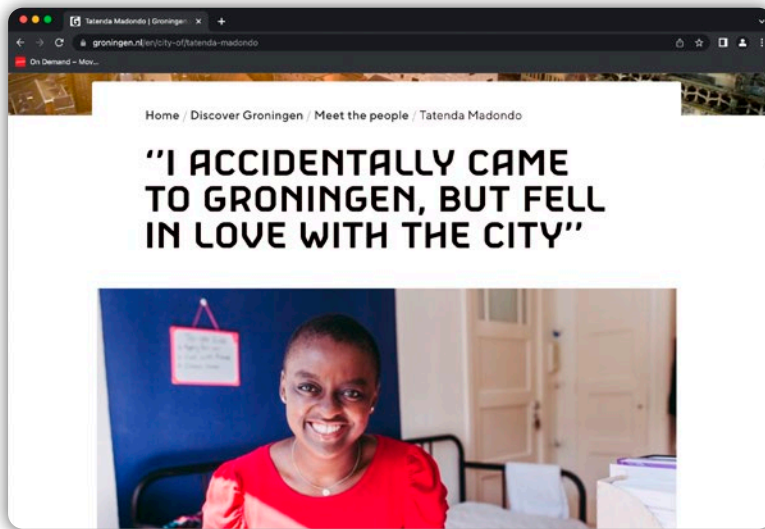
Figure 1.2 Screenshot of one of the stories on Groningen.nl

Debrecen's city identity

Finally, it is instructive to look at the example of Debrecen, Hungary. Debrecen is the second largest city of Hungary, located 220 km east of Budapest, its capital. The city has a population of 207,000 and the wider urbanised region has about 450,000 inhabitants. The University of Debrecen is Hungary's oldest university, founded in 1538. It has 26,771 students, of which one fifth are international, originating from 108 countries. As Debrecen is not a prominent tourist destination, city branding has been relatively underdeveloped.

Despite a national climate not necessarily hospitable to migrants, Debrecen has positioned itself as an international-friendly European city. In recent years, Debrecen has had an influx of international employees, in parallel with substantial foreign investment in the city. International companies are establishing new

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5   https://groningen.nl/en/alliance

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factories, mainly in the car manufacturing and machine industry, electronic, chemical and pharmaceutical industries, and international business services. In the last few years, BMW announced a 1-billion-euro investment to build a new automobile manufacturing plant to create over 1,000 new jobs, a substantial number of which were filled by internationals. Continental built a new manufacturing plant (450 new jobs) to produce automatic transmissions, and most recently, construction started on a building for SEMCORP, an advanced materials firm from China (generating 440 jobs).

Municipal officials at Debrecen had a strong desire to both communicate useful information and express an international-friendly sentiment to new residents. This resulted in a new webpage, *Debrecen4U*,[6] which includes a welcome message by the mayor, as well as local news and events calendar, and emphasises the European character of the city. This example shows how economic incentives combine with a local identity to generate city branding activity which to a certain extent offsets dominant perceptions of the national identity.
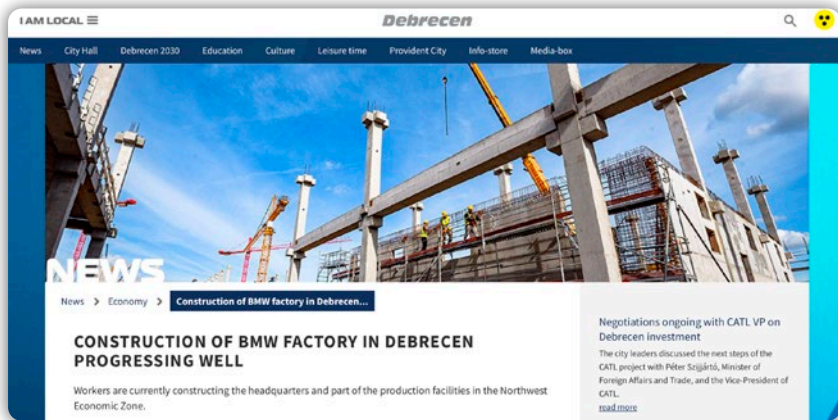
Figure 1.3 Screenshot of local news on *Debrecen4u.hu*

In sum, these considerations and examples provide some conceptual as well as practical tools for urban stakeholders to develop and evaluate their city branding and recruitment strategies. Actions in this area can have a significant impact

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6   https://debrecen4u.hu

on the economic, demographic, and cultural prospects for smaller cities – of which Europe has so many – and can also contribute to a sense of belonging in the wider population. Hence, city branding plays an important role in internationalisation of the city, and should be given sufficient attention in an integrated setting.

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2 City branding for superdiverse cities: why residents' perspectives matter

Evaluating city brands for Rotterdam and Amsterdam

Warda Belabas

2.1 Introduction

Migration flows have transformed societies across the world. This transformation has manifested itself most evidently on the urban level, as cities are the places where migrants settle and build new lives, needing housing, services, education, and work. In the last decades, migration flows of international skilled migrants have increased strongly, partly because of increased efforts by local governments to attract groups such as international students, academics, and knowledge migrants hired by local branches of international companies (Van Winden, 2021). In the context of increased urban competitiveness, cities compete with one another to attract intellectual talent or human creativity, which can come in many different forms (Florida, 2006). Through city branding policies, cities attempt to be appealing to especially these external audiences. City branding is in essence about putting those elements of the city identity on display that are most appealing to target groups such as tourists, investors, and international students or expats.

Nevertheless, there is a consensus in the literature that city branding is more than merely designing a slogan or logo (Kavaratzis, 2004). Even though city branding policies often primarily focus on economic or strategic ambitions, they also have the power to create a collective identity or a shared sense of belonging for *residents*. This means that place brands have the power to become important

marketing instruments to create images for *external* audiences, such as the ones described above, but also for *internal* audiences (Belabas, Eshuis & Scholten, 2020). Ergo, social place branding policies aim to develop identification, social cohesion, and urban collectivity (Mommaas, 2002). Aitken & Campelo (2011), for example, argue that brands interact with the culture and the environment, engaging in an "expanded multilogue" (Berthon et al., 2007) with a multitude of stakeholders in the city. These interactions affect the construction of identities of residents, but also influence brand-making itself as brands need to take into account various cultural codes (Aitken & Campelo, 2011). However, very little is known about how city brands – in practice – are actually experienced by residents and their identity-related meaning making processes, as they are a neglected part of place branding theory (Zenker & Petersen, 2014; Insch & Walters, 2018). Migration literature does show that residents with a migration background identify more strongly with their cities of residence (e.g., Van Bochove, Rusinovic & Engbersen, 2010; Entzinger & Dourleijn, 2008; Van der Welle, 2011), which indicates the potential of city brands to foster local feelings of identity and belonging.

To effectively resonate with both external and internal audiences (i.e., residents), the city needs to embed its effort in a wider vision and a comprehensive narrative which fits with specific topics and values of residents (Strandberg & Styvén, 2019; Gilboa & Jaffke, 2021). Combining both economic and social goals in city branding policies is a challenge however, because it requires serving many different groups simultaneously. In practice, an economic perspective is more dominant in place branding strategies as place images promoted through branding often show the "best" assets of a city, chosen to appeal mainly to external audiences, while less charming parts of the city are ignored and excluded (Kavaratzis, Giovanardi & Lichrou, 2017). The topics and values which actually gain a permanent position in a brand strategy are therefore the ones that fit the reality of the urban competitive context in which many cities find themselves nowadays: the attributes, values, and symbols which stimulate economic growth (Belabas, Eshuis & Scholten, 2020).

The question addressed in this chapter is then how city branding policies are experienced by residents. The internal perspective of place is vital for the formation and communication of place brand, as residents are place ambassadors,

which means that they have to internalise and reflect the core values of the place and thus influence the experience of place (Strandberg & Styvén, 2019). In this chapter, I focus on how people in the city – residents from all walks of life – experience the city brand as communicated by local authorities.

Strandberg & Styvén, amongst others, argue that these residents have "detailed first-hand knowledge of a place and are naturally considered to be informal, authentic and the most believable insider sources of information about the place" (p. 24; see also Braun, Kavaratzis & Zenker, 2013; Kavaratzis, 2012). The commitment of residents is consequently crucial for city brands to be sustainable over time and for attracting external audiences such as tourists to the city (ibid.), "especially for small communities and medium-sized, non-capital cities which are dependent on tourism for their economic viability" (ibid., p. 24; see also Uchinaka, Yoganathan & Osburg, 2019). How can city branding policies reflect the many different faces that the city is home to and resonate with multiple and diverse audiences, while at the same time create a coherent and focused narrative? Zenker and Braun (2017) stress the danger of brands which oversimplify reality and therefore lose the support of residents and other urban partners, as this reinforces the idea that city branding is merely about "the 'selling' of oversimplified and often stereotypical images" (p. 282). Moreover, undervaluing the perspective of residents in brand development can undermine the aim and intentions of a city brand strategy (Insch, 2011). This could impact the overall authenticity and credibility of the brand in relation to other target groups as well, or on a more concrete level it could decrease the positive word-of-mouth by residents (Zenker, Braun & Petersen, 2017).

This chapter focuses on experiences of residents in the city with local city brands in two Dutch cities: Rotterdam and Amsterdam. Both Rotterdam and Amsterdam can be characterised as "superdiverse" cities, with more than 50% of its residents having a migration background. This means that there is no longer one dominant majority group, but many minorities living next and with each other in the city (Vertovec, 2007). The heterogeneous city composition gives an extra dimension to the challenge of creating a city brand that appeals to many different audiences, as residents themselves are also not a homogeneous group of stakeholders (Gilboa & Jaffke, 2021). Moreover, both Amsterdam and Rotter-

dam have increased their attempts in recent years to develop city brands which are attractive to both external and internal audiences.

In Rotterdam, city branding policies aim to improve competitiveness, with an emphasis on attracting international audiences, while at the same time seeking to strengthen local identity, pride, and a vision of the future for local audiences (Municipality Rotterdam, 2021). Whereas in the past, the focus was mainly on the international positioning of Rotterdam with a strong focus on external target groups, in more recent years the city has been working on a strategy to include residents more strongly in the brand strategy. Similarly, in Amsterdam, companies, visitors, and residents are determined as the main three audiences. The attraction of multinationals, start-ups, real estate, social entrepreneurs, and international congresses to the city is a main focus of the economic agenda, whereas the city also invests in increasing local pride and sense of belonging in residents, by organising activities in which they get to know their city and by considering measures to decrease crowds and nuisance in the city (Website Amsterdam & Partners, 2022). This is in line with the general trend in place branding practices in which residents are more and more acknowledged as a target group, even though they are viewed primarily as consumers (with needs and wants) rather than citizens or co-producers (Eshuis, Klijn & Braun, 2014). In Section 2.3, the branding policies in both cities will be further discussed. The leading question for this chapter is thus:

How do residents in the Dutch cities Rotterdam and Amsterdam evaluate city brands and how does this impact on their (local) sense of belonging?

By focusing on this question, we can start to understand the implications of the brand strategy for these cities on residents' sense of identity, belonging and social inclusion. This is an important perspective, as other studies already found that when city brands are oblivious to residents' needs and aspirations, this can lead to less (brand) identification, destruction of the city brand, or even public protesting (Bonakdar & Audirac, 2020; Zenker & Beckmann, 2013).

This chapter results from a qualitative case study on the city brand evaluation by residents in Rotterdam and Amsterdam. Both cities were studied through

eight focus groups in each city, consisting of residents from all walks of life. Of added value to this study is the diverse make-up of the residents who participated in the focus groups, with considerable differentiation in terms of age, education level and migration background. This fits well with the aim of the study to use a bottom-up approach, in which experiences of residents – who usually are not represented in research nor in brand consultations – are taken into account in studying experience and evaluation of branding. In the next section (Section 2.2), some theoretical background is given, followed by a brief methods section (Section 2.3). In Section 2.4, the branding strategies of both Amsterdam and Rotterdam are described, followed by an analysis of how these strategies are received by residents. Finally, in Section 2.5, some concluding remarks are presented.

2.2   Theoretical background

Residents in city branding

Globalisation has increased global flows of "resources, capital and people", but has also resulted in more competition between cities for "attention, influence, markets, investments, business, visitors, talents and significant events" (Zhang & Zhao, 2009, p. 245). As described in Section 2.1, more and more cities are investing in city brand policies as a means to successfully compete along these lines. Not only major cities such as New York, London, and Paris have increased their marketing budgets, but also medium-sized and small cities – such as Rotterdam, the second city of the Netherlands – are more and more invested in actively positioning themselves to both internal and external audiences.

Zenker, Knubben & Beckmann (2010) distinguish between four target groups: 1) visitors, 2) residents and workers, 3) businesses and industry, and 4) export markets. Furthermore, these authors stress that Florida's popular concept of "the creative class" has increased the focus on certain types of *potential* residents, which many place marketeers give high priority in practice (ibid.). This leads to a focus on competitive advantage and less on reinforcing local identity and identification of citizens. The focus on attracting intellectual talent and creativity to the city can be problematic, as the brand may neglect perceptions and experiences of residents, which are not only part of the city landscape but

also function as the main ambassadors for the city, as without them there is no credibility to the brand (Braun, Kavaratzis & Zenker, 2013; Vanolo, 2017). Research shows not only the importance of giving residents influence over symbolic representation and the aspired identity of their community (Eshuis & Edwards, 2013), but also the negative implications of considering residents as one homogeneous group, which especially in superdiverse cities is no longer a reflection of reality.

Criticism of branding practices

Studies on the effects of city brands have become more critical in recent years, addressing the power of brands to distribute a story or narrative of who belongs and who does not (e.g., Donald, Kofman & Kevin, 2009; more recently Kavaratzis, Giovanardi & Lichrou, 2017; Vanolo, 2017; Rebelo, Mehmood & Marsden, 2020; Bonakdar & Audirac, 2020). Here, we see a call for attention regarding the question of power and representation in branding practices, as elements of place identities such as ethnicity, gender and social class are often neglected in official city brands (Kavaratzis, Giovanardi & Lichrou 2017). Place brands therefore do not always reflect people's real-life experiences of differences, but instead represent the ideas and perspectives of those in charge, such as city officials, and are dominated by images which are expected to be appealing to privileged target groups (Vivant, 2011; Masuda & Bookman, 2018). The brand narrative then reflects broader power relations in society. It reflects how the voices of neglected and unprivileged audiences are overlooked, but it also raises questions regarding belonging and social equality. The work of Tuskej, Golob and Podnar (2014), for example, shows how brands that lack sensitivity towards the multi-dimensional formation of cultural identity are more likely to fail in cities which house many different nationalities, ethnicities, social classes, lifestyles, and so forth.

Lastly, in many places, city branding is still a top-down process, in which there exists "a mismatch between the city's identity and core values branded by the government and an understanding of the city in people's minds" (Zhang & Zhao, 2009, p. 245). The call in academic literature towards inclusive branding shows the necessity of involving more stakeholders, especially residents, in brand development processes (Kavaratzis, Giovanardi & Lichrou, 2017). By breaking

open these branding processes, we can generate brands that avoid the tendency to simplify reality with a very narrow (economic) focus, and instead give space to more complex, ambiguous, and ever-changing realities in which residents play a key role (Kalandides, 2012). Needless to say, the involvement of different groups of stakeholders is a challenge in itself, as adding "voices" in brand processes further complicates the core message, while in essence, brands need to reduce the message to its core. In this context, Rebelo, Mehmood and Marsden (2020), for example, conducted participatory research and used collaborative visual methods working with a group of residents of Carvalhal de Vermilhas (Portugal), stimulating "the co-development of collective agency to consider narratives, values, and identities to be articulated for creating and promoting more inclusive representation of place in a (hypothetical) branding exercise" (p. 423). Their work shows both the potential of creating a brand that fosters citizens' identity and identification with the place, as well as its challenges and limitations, since it proved to be a complex process which demanded long-term negotiation and co-operation from many different stakeholders, not to mention the extensive human and financial resources in organising such brand co-creation (ibid.).

2.3   Methods and materials

The data described in below sections originates from 16 focus groups in two Dutch cities: Amsterdam and Rotterdam. In each city, 8 focus groups were organised with residents from a variety of backgrounds in terms of age, education, and migration background. In Rotterdam, a total of 54 residents participated in the focus groups; in Amsterdam respectively 48 residents joined the focus groups. The groups took place in the period from March to December 2021. Some of the groups consisted of residents with the same background (sometimes in terms of education level, in other cases in terms of "having a migration background"), but most focus groups consisted of residents with a mix of demographic characteristics. As discussed in Section 2.1, both Rotterdam and Amsterdam can be characterised as superdiverse cities, in which a demographic majority group no longer exists. More than 50% of these city's residents have a migration background. Furthermore, Rotterdam being a port city – more

so than Amsterdam – houses a higher number of low-educated or low-skilled workers. This is also reflected in the sample, as the aim was to strive for a diversity of socio-demographic characteristics of respondents and their geographic distribution.

The point of departure in the focus groups was Khirfan and Momani's concept of layered "urban imaginaries" (2013), in which the physical elements of the city are linked to the perceived identity of residents, including city activities and the meanings the residents attribute to them. The questions to residents therefore focused on how they experience 1) the physical attributes of the city, 2) the activities within the city, and 3) the meanings that their city evokes for them. Furthermore, in both Rotterdam and Amsterdam, residents were shown images and videos which reflected the main brand story of Rotterdam and Amsterdam, and they were asked to evaluate these images. In addition to the focus groups, formal and informal interviews with the branding teams in both cities were conducted by the researcher, as shown in the data presented below. More specifically, within the period from January to December 2021, two interviews were conducted with the city branding team in the municipality of Rotterdam, and an additional two were conducted with Amsterdam & Partners. These interviews shed light on the underlying assumptions for the city branding strategy and changes which have occurred in recent years.

2.4 Residents' evaluation of city branding in superdiverse cities

In the next section, the main findings will be presented for both Rotterdam and Amsterdam. For each city, a brief introduction will be given on the general branding strategy that the city applies and the institutional setting in which that strategy was developed. The section ends with a comparative perspective on how residents receive city brands in superdiverse contexts.

The case of Rotterdam

Background: city branding

While Rotterdam already initiated some branding campaigns in the 1980s and 1990s, it was in 2003 that the municipality started to invest more intensively in improving Rotterdam's image, which was seen as a cold and unsociable port city (Belabas, Eshuis & Scholten, 2020). In the early 2000s, the focus was primarily on portraying the city in terms of the no-nonsense and "roll up your sleeves" mentality of its citizens and its "bold" approaches. Labelling Rotterdam as "a daring city" referred to the city's interventionist and sometimes controversial policies for social renewal, housing, and integration, but also suggested the city's encouragement of new ideas and innovative concepts by residents or (local) businesses (ibid.). In the period 2006-2013, Rotterdam redesigned its brand towards a more international audience, positioning Rotterdam as a "World Port, World City"; a clear attempt of the municipality to emphasise its favourable geographical location and its key place in a worldwide city network.

However, due to criticism of mainly residents who did not feel connected to the business-focused image of Rotterdam, the city changed its course in 2013 to its current "Make it happen" brand. As in the past, the new brand focused mainly on the mentality of Rotterdam as a city of opportunity, no matter who you are or where you come from. Rotterdam is portrayed as a place where residents, investors and entrepreneurs are offered opportunities to invest, grow and accomplish all their ambitions (Municipality Rotterdam, 2015). New brand values – *international, worldly, groundbreaking, entrepreneurial, no-nonsense, and raw* – were adopted, which, as in the past, suggest the mentality of the city's residents. The new values reflect both the straightforwardness of Rotterdam residents (*Rotterdammers*) and the unpolished and direct character of the city. Different from the previous iteration though, is the fact that the "Make it happen" brand is a *brand alliance*, between the municipality of Rotterdam, the Port of Rotterdam Authority, Erasmus University and Rotterdam Partners. It is important to note that unlike other Dutch cities such as Amsterdam, the city branding in Rotterdam is carried out as a collaboration between a city branding team *within* the municipality, and Rotterdam Partners, an external destination marketing organisation and investment promotion agency for Rotterdam. The in-

ternal team within the municipality is in charge of the vision of the brand, and Rotterdam Partners is mainly paid to implement marketing activities. Whereas the branding team within the municipality is focused on city residents as well as on external audiences ("talent" such as highly skilled migrants and students, investors, et cetera), Rotterdam Partners brings a more economic perspective to the table and is mainly focused on external audiences. In addition to the collaboration between municipality and Rotterdam Partners, they also work in close collaboration with other partners – such as Erasmus University and the Port of Rotterdam – to promote Rotterdam consistently in the same way: a young international city on the water, with Rotterdam's straightforwardness and hands-on mentality as a unique selling point.

Finally, within the internal city branding team at the municipality, there have been many developments since 2018. Important to note are the attempts of the team to get inclusive city branding high on the agenda (Interviews municipality, 2018-2021). Special attention is given to the diversity of the people who live in Rotterdam, with the latest brand vision emphasising the importance of fostering a sense of community in which citizenship, strong local ties, and the pride of residents are central (Municipality Rotterdam, 2021). One example is the collaboration with a private image bank company, in which pictures of the "real Rotterdam" are collected and used for promotional purposes. These pictures go beyond the use of iconic buildings and streets in the city, and instead focus on the places and buildings which *Rotterdammers* from all walks of life would immediately recognise. Additionally, these pictures also capture the diversity of people living in Rotterdam. Another example is the video that was used in the Eurovision Song Contest, organised by Rotterdam in 2021, and which was also part of the brand materials shown in the focus groups. The video showcases the "new world" that Rotterdam represents, in which people from many different cultures are highly visible in the city, in many different settings. The city branding team aims to further invest in initiatives in which diversity is embraced. This is especially important as the city recognises that brand communications in the past seem to have neglected the superdiverse urban composition which characterises Rotterdam (Belabas, Eshuis & Scholten, 2020; Interviews municipality 2018-2021).

Residents' portraits of the city

City branding in essence is about producing an image of the city which not only represents the actual architecture of that city, but also the values and identity of its residents (Ulldemolins, 2014). So how do residents perceive Rotterdam? Which elements of the city do they put on display in their imaginaries of the city?

Firstly, the focus groups, in which 54 residents participated, show how Rotterdam generally is viewed as a multicultural city, where people are straightforward, honest, and friendly. It is described as a place where a diversity of people is represented in terms of nationalities, ethnicities, lifestyles, et cetera. The overall sentiment in all focus groups is that the diversity is very much accepted:

> "I have lived in Rotterdam only for a short time, as my mother was in Sittard, but what I always felt in Rotterdam is this warmth, that it doesn't matter where you're from, or what you look like, which makes me feel very accepted and at home. You see so many different people in the city."
>
> (26 year old Dutch Moroccan woman, May 2021)

Part of this sentiment is the feeling that – in contrast to for example Amsterdam or Utrecht – the street culture of Rotterdam is one in which many different norms of appearance and behaviour are accepted. Rotterdam does not present an elite standard to which residents need to comply. Feeling at home in the city is not solely based in the multicultural ambiance of Rotterdam but is also connected to the down-to-earth mentality of the city's residents. As one resident expresses himself on this topic:

> "In Rotterdam, unlike Amsterdam, you do not have to wear classy clothes or worry about your appearance (…). Here, even if you would go out in a purple dress with red dots, nobody would care, you can just be who you are, and no one will say anything about it."
>
> (40 year old Dutch man, May 2021)

At the same time however, this sentiment of acceptance and tolerance is down-played by a smaller group of residents within the focus groups – mainly highly educated *Rotterdammers* with a migration background – who emphasise that on a political and institutional level Rotterdam has not embraced cultural diversity. Right-wing party "Livable Rotterdam" (Leefbaar Rotterdam) and its anti-migration discourse was mentioned frequently, but also more personal experiences of young students who experienced discrimination in their search for an internship or job. Feelings of being accepted and belonging hence go hand in hand with some scepticism directed towards (political) institutions.

We can then ask: How does this described imaginary connect to Rotterdam's brand? Firstly, while residents in the focus groups use words such as "multicultural", "acceptance" and "tolerant", the city branding strategy uses different words to capture a similar sentiment: "international" and "worldly" (in Dutch: "*werelds*"). However, the brand terminology does not directly reflect everyday experiences of residents, but instead is focused on a more economic translation of these words, revealing the desire of the brand makers to especially be appealing for privileged and skilled external audiences (Bonakdar & Audirac, 2020).

Secondly, the focus groups show how Rotterdam is portrayed as a bustling and lively city, in which one can undertake many different activities. Moreover, Rotterdam is portrayed by many residents as a city that *dares* to challenge the boundaries of what is possible or acceptable. The following quote exemplifies this, as it resembles the "in Rotterdam, everything is possible" storyline which is the basis of the "Make it happen" brand:

> "Rotterdam is a city which brings new things to the table. We are always frontrunners in exciting new activities or policies. Especially to young people, I think we offer many opportunities to try new things."
> (72 year old Dutch man, April 2022)

This is not only reflected in the city's modern architecture and its constant drive to surprise and inspire, but also in how for example entrepreneurs have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic, during which they have explored and initiated all kinds of out-of-the-box solutions to help businesses survive. According to

residents this is very characteristic of the mentality in Rotterdam, in which *drive* and exploring *possibilities* and opportunities are central. Again, this experience of Rotterdam fits well with the brand values that are central in Rotterdam's strategy: entrepreneurial, pioneering spirit. However, residents in the focus groups use their own words, such as "always developing" and "thinking in solutions" as a way of expressing their image of the city. Similar sentiments are expressed by residents but worded differently. Again, the language of the brand seems to fit more into an economic framework, which is not necessarily directed towards internal audiences but mainly to external audiences.

Overall, it is interesting to see how the focus groups mainly provoked dialogue between residents in which their everyday experiences and personal memories were key in the way they perceived Rotterdam. For residents in the focus groups, Rotterdam is not just about the iconic and well-known buildings and spaces of the city. Even though they do mention these iconic physical attributes of the city as typical for Rotterdam's reputation to the "outside" world, their own image of the city is much more focused on buildings and places which are not as well-known but which have personal meaning for them. The marketplace, for example, is frequently mentioned by residents as a place where they would meet people from all walks of life. It's the "street life" of Rotterdam, that to an insider represents the real diversity in the city. The same goes for activities in the city, as residents would mention famous events such as Dunya Festival or World Port Days, which receive much media attention. But the focus group conversations more often discussed how "average" *Rotterdammers* mainly appreciate the green areas, small street events on a neighbourhood level, and gatherings, especially in summer, giving the city a "soul". As we will see in the next section, it is these daily encounters and memories which represent the raw, messy, and multi-faced reality of residents, but which – due to the dominant economic perspective – are often neglected in branding practices.

Residents' experiences of the "Make it happen" brand

Central to city branding is the *brand narrative*, which is reflected in the many brand communications which cities deploy via different channels such as official promotion videos, corporate videos, and social media posts. The brand materi-
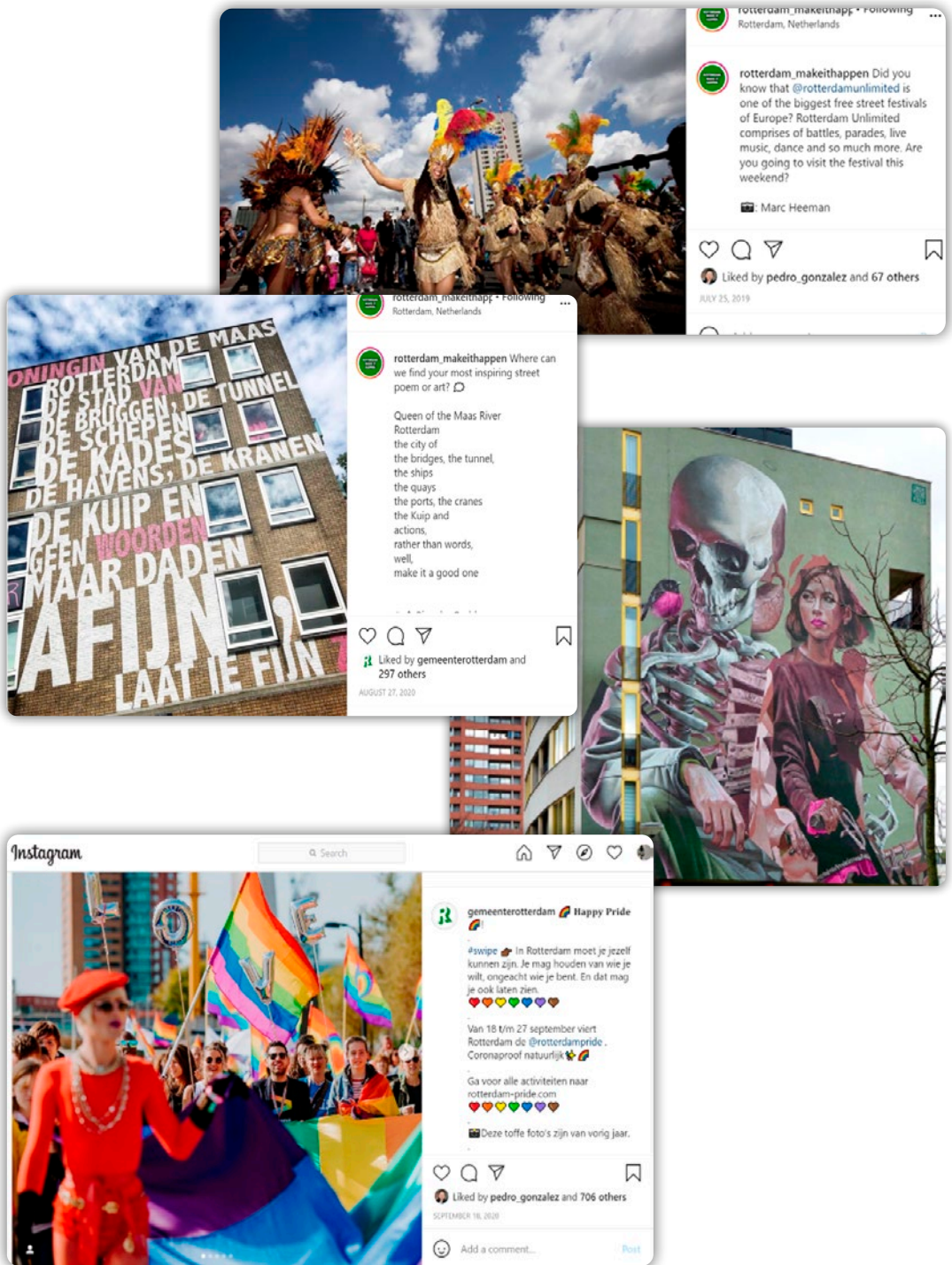
Figure 2.1 Rotterdam Make it Happen, selected brand images

al that was shown to the focus groups consisted of four items, depicting 1) the annual Rotterdam Pride event, 2) the annual Summer Carnival, both of which celebrate the diversity of the city, 3) a well-known street mural (depicting a woman next to a skeleton, perhaps portraying the message that at the end of the day we are all mortal), and 4) a street poem on the wall of a building, about the character of Rotterdam. The first video was developed in the context of promoting the Eurovision Song Contest and shows the pro-diversity attitude of Rotterdam. The second video focused on the more general brand narrative that underlies the "Make it happen" strategy: *it doesn't matter who you are or where you come from, Rotterdam is a city of opportunity and ambition.* Overall, the collection of brand materials was chosen to mirror the "Make it happen" narrative, which is that Rotterdam is a city where people can pursue their dreams, without limitation or discrimination. In doing so, the city attempts to include the diversity of its people, by showing all kinds of cultures, ethnicities, and lifestyles in its brand communications.

Surprisingly, given its strong focus on opportunity, ambition and showcasing the cultural diversity of the city, the "Make it happen" brand was negatively received by a majority of residents in the focus groups, regardless of their age, educational level or ethnicity. This can be explained by three main underlying reasons, which will be described below.

Firstly, the "Make it happen" brand communications were believed to be "unrealistic" and "polished", as according to residents they mainly showed the hip, happy, and glamourised image of Rotterdam, which is not in line with the more nuanced everyday experience of residents. In their own images of Rotterdam, residents were relatively positive about their city but triggered by the brand material they showed a strong resentment in accepting this image as "the real Rotterdam". Rather, because the city brand seems to ignore the unpolished face of Rotterdam, residents in the focus groups seemed annoyed by this attempt of the city to capture Rotterdam. Their appreciation of Rotterdam is mainly based in the combination of the great iconic achievements of the city, *combined* with the imperfect, unpolished and messy reality of everyday life. By portraying a glamourised image of Rotterdam, the brand itself loses its credibility for many of these residents. The following statements reflect this sentiment profoundly:

> "It is just really fake what I see here, it fits the social media world in which everyone looks good and young and perfect ... and that is the reason why it is not befitting Rotterdam. And that is what irritates me, they are using typical slogans of Rotterdam, but the images have nothing to do with the soul of the city."
>
> (40 year old Dutch Moroccan woman, March 2020).

And:

> "What is striking to me is that everything looks so good and full of adventure, but where is reality? Where are the sick people? Where is the deprived side of the city? Where are the single parents? That is what I miss here, the reality of what Rotterdam has become."
>
> (20 year old Macedonian woman, May 2020).

In the eyes of residents in the focus groups, the brand communications therefore have a certain "fakeness" to them, which they cannot comprehend. The "polished" image of Rotterdam is even more disturbing to residents, as Rotterdam is experienced as a "raw" city, which means that Rotterdam compared to other cities in the Netherlands has a roughness to it, but at the same time a strong down-to-earth atmosphere which is key in the city's appreciation by residents. On this topic, Vanola (2017) argues that too much optimism in brand material, in which only vibrant and exciting cultural experiences in the city are shown, can be offensive to residents as there is "no mention of urban problems such as unemployment, urban decay in the suburbs and the lack of welfare services" (p. 5). This seems particularly true for cities such as Rotterdam, in which a very positive and selective image of urban issues, landscapes and subjects clashes with the no-nonsense and down-to-earth mentality of its residents. The glamourised image misses the typical atmosphere of the city and the attitude of its residents, leading to an unrealistic and distorted mirror as it focuses too much on the successes of Rotterdam and ignores the urban reality of its residents.

Of course, the current brand strategy is not only targeting residents, but its content is supposed to be appealing to international audiences. In Rotterdam's

most recent brand policies (Municipality Rotterdam, 2021), the municipality itself admits that the target group of residents has been overlooked as the desire to attract new people, companies and organisations to the city prevailed. This is in line with Trueman, Cornelius and Killingbeck-Widdup (2007) and with Amin (2006) who argue that too strong a focus on business and an international audience may limit the richness of the brand and lead to local communities as critics instead of ambassadors. Residents are therefore very much needed to give credibility and authenticity to the brand. In the case of Rotterdam, we see an affronted and frustrated response by residents, but in other cases such as in Hamburg, city brand campaigns even led to the destruction of the brand, as residents organised a public protest in the form of a "Not in our name" countercampaign (Zenker & Beckmann, 2013). This illustrates the importance of having residents "on board", even if the brand is targeting other (external) audiences.

Secondly, the "Make it happen" campaign was also negatively evaluated by residents in the focus groups because of its emphasis on limitless ambition. While many residents do recognise Rotterdam as a daring or bold city with many opportunities to grow and succeed, they feel the "Make it happen" brand is overdoing it when portraying Rotterdam as a place of limitless ambition. The emphasis on high ambitions made many residents feel excluded as if there is only room for the talented, the career-orientated, the entrepreneurs. *"What about the average Rotterdammer who sells fruits and vegetables at the market or the employees of the local foodbank who work hard every day?"* The brand seems not to focus on these "average" *Rotterdammers*, but instead is targeting those audiences who are successful in economic terms. Here, we see how the brand according to residents is targeted towards talent, creativity, and entrepreneurship, which leads to feelings of exclusion and resentment. For some residents in the focus groups, the brand would even lead them to counteract its message, by mentioning all the social problems which Rotterdam experiences. This connects to the former point: residents can take on different roles, supporting the brand as ambassadors but also denying the brand's credibility by criticising it.

Lastly, as mentioned in the previous section, Rotterdam has invested more in inclusive branding, by showcasing cultural diversity – in terms of the variety of

nationalities, ethnicities, and lifestyles – that the city is home to. Images and videos therefore show people with all sorts of backgrounds. However, especially residents with a migration background had negative opinions about these images, as they felt that it was only a certain type of diversity which was showcased. And again, the polished depiction of diversity is offensive to residents. The following quote illustrates this sentiment very well:

> "This diversity reminds me of a Coca-Cola commercial. I only see young and handsome light-skinned superstars. Where are the families, the elderly, the people that walk on the marketplace, or the hijab-wearing women? Don't they belong to the city? I don't see them. This is not the real diversity that reflects Rotterdam"
>
> (28 year old Dutch Turkish woman, April 2021).

According to this group of residents, the images did not fit the reality of what (super)diversity means on the urban level as the selected people in the brand material only represent diversity in a hip and commercialised way. It has nothing to do with the "real" diversity one can experience when walking through the streets of Rotterdam, or the marketplace, where people of all walks of life come together. Some residents in the focus groups were also disturbed by the stereotyped way in which dark-skinned people were portrayed, dancing or jogging, whereas white residents were more visible in leadership positions. This is in line with the call of Borgerson and Schroeder (2002) to avoid what they call "bad faith", which refers to "stereotypical representations of the exotic other" (Kavaratzis, Giovanardi & Lichrou, 2017, p. 175). The use of (super)diversity in this manner is obviously connected to the ambition of many cities to be appealing to external audiences, which in practice means that they use a very narrowed definition of diversity. This in turn leads to the promotion of "urban images [...] that correspond to the consumption habits and lifestyles of high-income groups" (Donald, Kofman & Kevin, 2009, p. 35).

In sum, we see that the "Make it happen" brand is negatively evaluated by a large majority of residents in the focus groups, regardless of demographic characteristics. The brand is viewed as unrealistic, exclusive, and selective. Even

though the brand values do have much overlap with residents' experiences, the actual brand communications are not befitting the down-to-earth, multi-faced and daily reality of many *Rotterdammers*. The case of Rotterdam therefore teaches us that the great assets and "big stories" which are often sold in brands only speak to one dimension of residents' experience of their city. The unpolished character of the city, with its many contradictions and inconsistencies, is ignored, which is exactly the part that residents appreciate the most. For city branding this means loss of support for the brand, which can be problematic because residents as ambassadors can give credibility to it or break it down through mobilising a counter-voice. This can be problematic for the brand as a whole as it may influence how other target groups such as tourists, entrepreneurs, or investors perceive and experience the brand.

The case of Amsterdam

Background: city branding

Amsterdam is the Dutch capital city, known for its long tradition of cultural innovation, creativity, and a long-held entrepreneurial spirit (Gehrels et al., 2003; Belabas, Eshuis & Scholten, 2020). Like Rotterdam, Amsterdam invested in a thorough redesign of its branding policies around the beginning of the millennium. These efforts were deemed necessary as the city was dropping in tourist destination rankings, which indicated a decreasing competitive position (Interviews Amsterdam Partners, 2018). Since then, Amsterdam focused its redesign on narrowing down the 16 dimensions of its key values to three main brand values which are still central to the strategy: entrepreneurship, creativity, and innovation. This redesign was based on consultation with a selective group of people with "a significant role in the city" and complemented by other sources such as literature on city marketing and a variety of statements about Amsterdam (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2007: p. 19). The selected brand values were believed to position Amsterdam well for the years to come (ibid.).

As a finishing touch to the rebranding efforts, from 2004 onwards Amsterdam capped its strategy with the new slogan "I Amsterdam". While the slogan was initiated as an *international* marketing strategy, the municipality claims that residents were also targeted with the brand (see Belabas, Eshuis & Scholten

Figure 2.2 I Amsterdam, selected brand images

2020). Kavaratzis & Ashworth (2007) mention how "I Amsterdam" was considered the best option as it was easy to remember, but more importantly because of its potential for people to identify with it. According to the municipality, "I Amsterdam" expressed the diversity, collectivity, and the individuality of residents, as it aimed to foster pride and solidarity among residents (Belabas, Eshuis & Scholten 2020). "I Amsterdam" grew to become the main brand used by the city for local, national, and international audiences. It has led to resident counter-branding with the "I Amsterdamned" (borrowed from a 1988 horror film with a similar title) showing residents' disconnect with the city branding strategy (Braun, Kavaratzis & Zenker, 2013). Additionally, the "I Amsterdam" campaign – which was most visible in the giant letters that were installed in the city centre – has in recent years been associated more and more with tourism and its negative effects on the city. The largest political party in Amsterdam, the "Green Left" (Groen Links), argued that the letters needed to be removed as they symbolised "mad individualism" and not the solidarity and diversity which truly represent the city. This has led to a heated debate between local politicians and residents about the (un)desirable effects of the brand on the city and its residents.

Additionally, in recent years, Amsterdam has invested in promoting city life to residents from different backgrounds to engage and rediscover their city through varied cultural activities. The 24H magazine and videos – which were also shown in the focus groups – are good examples of how residents are targeted by brand makers to visit different parts of the city and engage in all kinds of events, from festivals to workshops (Interview Amsterdam Partners, 2021). Similar to what we saw in Hamburg and (partly) in Rotterdam, residents are not only part of the city landscape, but can be strong ambassadors of the city or have the power to deny credibility to a brand by rejecting it or protesting against it.

However, even though Amsterdam has a rich tradition of openness, tolerance and freedom, and a political context in which cultural diversity always has been embraced, as it has in Rotterdam, the brand communication does not focus on this part of Amsterdam's identity (Belabas, Eshuis & Scholten, 2020). This is partly the result of the institutional organisation of the Amsterdam brand. The municipality is the legal owner of the "I Amsterdam" licence. In practice, it is Amsterdam & Partners who co-ordinate city marketing and branding, and are responsible for all activities which aim to improve the city image and engagement for residents, companies, and visitors (Website Amsterdam & Partners, 2021),

with the municipality mainly responsible for (part of) the funding. The involvement of the municipality seems to be less active than is the case in Rotterdam; Amsterdam & Partners seem to take a leading role in the branding, also initiating their own projects with much autonomy in their development.

Portraits of residents

In Amsterdam, the focus groups with residents generally revealed positive "urban imaginaries". Amsterdam is experienced as a diverse, open city which has much to offer in terms of *activities and facilities*. Like Rotterdam, according to its citizens Amsterdam can be described as a multicultural society in which people can choose and express their own identity. Moreover, in Amsterdam diversity is framed not only in terms of cultural background, but in broader terms. The city's openness and tolerance were also connected to the large LGBTQ+ community which the city is home to, as well as to the city's tradition of giving space to many alternative subcultures. So, the overall sentiment was that Amsterdam is a city where one can truly live according to one's own values, beliefs, or lifestyle. This is also in line with the broader image that residents painted of Amsterdam as the city of "freedom" and "eccentricity". For residents with a migration background this sense of freedom is mostly experienced on a personal level, in terms of the freedom they feel to give expression to their own culture. For other residents in the focus groups freedom covered – on a more abstract level – the attitude of Amsterdam, in which its tradition of tolerance towards alternative (sub)cultures is celebrated. This is exemplified in the next statements:

> "To me, Amsterdam is about the freedom of hippies, the "Dam sleepers", the large LGBTQ community … that to me is freedom. It is all about being yourself."
> (38 year old Dutch man, November 2021)

And:

> "To me, it is about eccentricity, in the sense of the people, you can find all kinds of people here, and you can join and choose a subculture you feel comfortable in."
> (29 year old Dutch woman, November 2021)

However, a substantial number of the residents in the focus groups also felt that this sense of freedom and eccentricity is disingrating, as the city has become very expensive in terms of housing and living. This is pushing "average" residents out of the city, while only a homogeneous group of high-income residents remains in Amsterdam. Many residents worried about this trend.

Next to its cosmopolitan atmosphere, residents also praised the diversity in terms of activities, events, and facilities that Amsterdam has to offer. In social, political, and cultural terms Amsterdam is – according to its residents – one of the richest cities in the Netherlands. As one respondent explained:

> "While in cities such as Utrecht, you will have one beer festival a year, in Amsterdam you will have at least five in summer, so you can go when-ever and wherever you want. That is what I love about this city."
> (30 year old Dutch woman, November 2021)

In all focus groups with residents, the image of Amsterdam as a lively and a multifaceted city was reaffirmed and appreciated. Amsterdam does not only offer cultural activities such as museums, concerts, and festivals, but it is also rich in terms of centres for political debate, marketplaces, and even parks and playgrounds. Moreover, contrary to Rotterdam, Amsterdam is very much experienced as a historical city, which naturally is reflected in the rich and old architecture, the famous canals, and the many characteristic gables and alleys. Residents take pride in the aesthetic beauty of the city, which is one of its unique characteristics as no other city in the Netherlands offers historical richness to this extent. In general, the focus groups exhibited a strong sense of pride in "being part of a world city of this size". Pride is taken in its historical allure, but also its international appeal and progressive reputation, as well as its achievements in terms of more physical attributes, varying from the airport Schiphol to the successes of its football team Ajax.

On the other hand, residents in the focus groups also spoke about *other faces* of Amsterdam, which are appreciated less. One group of residents – mainly older participants – do associate the volatility of the city and its historical attractiveness with the increase in tourism, which has led to overwhelmingly crowded spaces, especially in the city centre. This particular group of residents

felt much resentment towards this development, which also impacted on their sense of belonging. Avoiding certain parts of the city or even considering moving outside of Amsterdam were the key consequences for them. Simultaneously with tourism, a broader group of residents observed a "harsher atmosphere" in the city, in which violence and crime have been more normalised in recent years, especially with the increased number of drug-trade related contract killings, which have been covered widely in the media and made the "underworld" of Amsterdam very visible.

Residents' experiences of the "I Amsterdam" brand

Whereas a majority of the residents in the focus groups in Rotterdam agreed in their negative assessment of the "Make it happen" brand, the evaluation in Amsterdam showed much more variation between different groups of residents in the focus groups. Additionally, in Amsterdam the brand evaluation seemed to be partly more positive than in Rotterdam. First, the "I Amsterdam" brand seemed to be very well-known by all residents in the focus groups. The first association that residents have with the brand are the iconic letters, which are placed in the city centre. During focus group sessions, pictures of the "I Amsterdam" letters were shown in many different parts of the city, which was appreciated by residents in terms of representativeness of all parts of the city. The "I Amsterdam" mood movie, in which the many different faces of Amsterdam, varying from culture and innovation to creativity and football, was also shown to the focus groups. Again, in general, many residents appreciated the way the city brand is developed, as the mood movie shows different people and different elements of the city identity. However, some residents in the focus groups – mainly highly-educated – were more critical as "I Amsterdam" was also associated with a more elite or white representation of Amsterdam. The following statements illustrate this well:

> "The classical music that you hear in the background of the movie … it really has an elite component to it, which makes it only attractive to certain types of Amsterdammers, the highly-educated and rich ones."
> (40 year old Dutch Moroccan woman, July 2021)

And:

> "I do not feel very comfortable with the mood movie, it is too white, it shows too little of the real diversity of the city. And I also really missed diversity in terms of Pride, the whole LGBTQ community, the real tolerance and openness that characterises Amsterdam."
> (43 year old Dutch man, July 2021)

Another critical element which was captured in conversations with residents was the reputation of the "I Amsterdam" brand since the political discussion about removing the iconic letters from the city centre. To some residents the brand has since been strongly associated with a critical perspective on overtourism, commercialisation, and individualisation in the city. Statements with the following content were heard several times:

> "To me, 'I Amsterdam' is really contaminated by the discussion on removing the letters. I only can think about the strong politicised debate about it. The letters have really become the symbol of pure individualism and crazy tourism, even though I do not fully agree with that."
> (34 year old Dutch woman, November 2021)

Even though residents were critical of some elements of the brand, generally the focus groups also showed that a majority of the residents liked the "atmosphere" that was created in the brand materials. Residents – in general – recognised the many different faces of the city which are shown in the pictures and videos as it is much in line with the "sentiments" that are typical for the "streets of Amsterdam". This typical "Amsterdam sentiment" is summed up by the diversity of people, places/districts and activities shown in the brand material. Particularly the 24H videos, which show many places – varying from art spots, dance classes and major concerts to the marketplaces and boat rides – were valued, as it is especially the multifaceted character of Amsterdam which is captured in these images. This coincides strongly with the image of the city that residents in the focus groups themselves described: a place with many different people, and many different facilities and activities which one can join or participate in. While the main "abstract" brand values of innovation, creativity, and

entrepreneurship did not seem to play a dominant role in how residents described their city, in the brand *communications* the city has chosen a version of its brand narrative that fitted more naturally with the experiences of residents. The multifaceted focus on people and activities does more justice to the sentiment of the "average" *Amsterdammer*. As one resident explained:

> "I really get the feeling of Amsterdam when I see these images. I see the people that I would see in the streets, and it does something to me, it really affects me, I like it very much."
> (62 year old Dutch Turkish woman, November 2021)

In this instance, the brand communications were closer to residents' experiences, as the material is focused on the *outcome* of innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship, showing the rich cultural life of the city. Even though the "I Amsterdam" brand has challenges because of its strong association with tourism, the brand material in general does not seem to just focus on external audiences; tourists, expats, and investors. It is especially the sentiment which underlies the brand material that speaks to a majority of residents.

Nevertheless, the focus groups also revealed more negative sentiments regarding the branding of Amsterdam. Here, two observations are important. Firstly, a substantial group of older residents in the focus groups showed concern about the effect and *success* of the branding of Amsterdam. These residents feel threatened by the images, as they expect even more visitors to come to the city, which is already experienced as very crowded. Some residents even expressed their wish to move outside of the city because of the overcrowding. The successful branding of Amsterdam is for this reason expected to have even a stronger appeal to an external audience. Even though the branding fit their impression of Amsterdam, it did not foster any sense of pride or belonging, as it reaffirmed their concerns on the quality of life in the city. So, we clearly see the success of the brand backfire: creating an attractive brand for external audiences (tourists, companies, et cetera) means an inherent tension with the desire of residents to keep the city as it is. This is in line with literature on place disruption, which shows how residents are willing to fight for their "places" when they are central to their identity, and particularly when "important symbolic meanings are threatened by prospective change" (Stedman, 2002; Devine-Wright, 2009).

A second group of residents within the focus groups, mainly older residents with a migration background, could appreciate the brand material that was shown, but the images also fostered dialogue on certain social issues in the city such as housing and poverty. As city branding in general focuses on the great assets of a city, in the case of this group of residents it created a counternarrative in which they described missing elements relative to their experience of Amsterdam. This is the same dynamic as was seen in Rotterdam, where the picture-perfect image of the city led residents to actively mention the (social) problems in their city (see also Vanolo, 2017). Interestingly though, in Amsterdam this response was only captured for older migrants. The sentiments described downplay the overall positive assessment of the Amsterdam brand, as they show how branding can lead to feelings of disapproval of the brand in general.

In conclusion, the "Make it happen" brand was negatively evaluated by a large majority of residents in the focus groups of Rotterdam, as the images were seen as unrealistic, focused only on successful and talented people, and as highly polished. The residents in these focus groups, regardless of their backgrounds, did not recognise their city, as Rotterdam is – contrary to these images – appreciated and embraced by them because of its unpolished nature and down-to-earth mentality, and its many different faces which all coexist. Even though the brand values do seem to capture the essence of how residents in the focus groups describe their city, the municipality seemingly did not succeed in translating these brand values into brand communications which fit the street-level reality of these residents. In Amsterdam on the other hand, the brand did suffer from the broader politicised debate on increasing mass tourism and individualisation, but residents were more positive about the brand communications. This has mainly to do with the diversity of the images that Amsterdam distributed, which – in line with the literature – shows more brand complexity, and is therefore evaluated more positively by residents in the focus groups. However, like Rotterdam – but in not as high a degree – residents in Amsterdam were also critical about the selective nature of brand communications, which is mainly focused on the "the elite" in Amsterdam, and therefore neglecting the real diversity of the city.

2.5   Conclusions

City branding has become a key instrument for attracting external audiences, such as tourists, investors, expats, and international students, to the city. However, city brands also impact on feelings of belonging and identification of internal audiences i.e., residents. In recent years both Rotterdam and Amsterdam have given more attention to their (own) residents as a target group. In this chapter, the focus was on the experiences of residents with these city brands, representing superdiverse cities in the Dutch context. The qualitative data which were collected using focus groups in both Rotterdam and Amsterdam exemplify the complexity of developing a city brand that fits residents' experiences, especially as an economic narrative with an international/external audience in mind seems to prevail in many branding practices.

While inclusive branding is highly prioritised in Rotterdam, actual brand material focuses too much on aspects of the city which appeal externally, and which according to residents exaggerate the limitless ambition of the city and commercialise the cultural diversity which characterised the city. Here, brand communications present a strongly glamourised picture-perfect view of the city, which residents do not experience as the "real Rotterdam". In the eyes of the majority of residents in the focus groups – independent of age, education level and ethnic background – the brand fails to capture street-level reality, which is exactly what they appreciate most about living in Rotterdam. In Amsterdam, the "I Amsterdam" brand did suffer from the political discussion of too much tourism and individualisation, but overall, the brand was more positively evaluated by residents. Especially the atmosphere that is created in the brand communications was recognised as befitting the city. Additionally, the many different types of activities and events that Amsterdam offers were reflected very clearly in the brand material, which led to much recognition by residents. Nevertheless, some negative sentiments were also observed in the focus groups, as especially older residents felt that the successful branding of Amsterdam would lead to even more tourism and crowding in the city. Additionally, older residents with a migration background responded to the images by addressing social issues in the city such as housing and poverty, which indicates that the brand images trigger a discussion on the "less charming parts of the city which are ignored or excluded" (Kavaratzis, Giovanardi & Lichrou, 2017).

Implications for city branding strategy

The case of Rotterdam shows how the focus on one dimension of reality – the successes of the city – raises feelings of frustration and exclusion in residents. The context of Rotterdam as a city with a down-to-earth mentality seems to enhance this effect. Furthermore, the case of Amsterdam reaffirms this lesson as it was the multi-dimensionality of the brand that was appreciated by a majority of residents. This is in line with the work of amongst others Zenker, Braun and Petersen (2017) who show that unlike tourists, residents appreciate *more* complexity in the city brand, as simplified brands do not resonate with complex experience of place. As more and more cities are not only targeting external audiences, but also internal audiences, it is important for such cities to become more aware of the street-level experience and urban identity for residents. These perspectives offer daily experiences and memories which are crucial to understand the city's DNA, instead of only "selecting those non-problematic features for their medium-class users, investors and tourists" (Ulldemolins, 2014, p. 3038).

This seems especially true for post-industrial medium-sized cities such as Rotterdam, which according to VanHoose, Hoekstra and Bontje (2021) are even more dependent on including place-based identities and cultural heritage for a successful brand. For post-industrial cities the challenge lies in finding a balance between overcoming negative associations related to deindustrialisation and taking into account existing imaginaries for different resident groups. In the case of Rotterdam, the "Make it happen" brand in which the city is portrayed as vibrant, ambitious and limitless has missed this balance by rectifying the city's image as a "cold and unsociable port city" but without taking into account the cultural heritage of its residents. The traditional down-to-earth mentality of its residents for example does not fit the current glamourised narrative of the brand. In larger (capital) cities, such as Amsterdam, the challenge is different, and lies more in place disruption for older residents, as the attraction of visitors, companies and new residents to the city negatively impacts on their view on and identification with the city. The balance that needs to be found is to appeal to external audiences without alienating original residents.

This chapter contributes to acknowledging and understanding the importance of the daily reality of residents in city branding practices. City branding strategies should consider looking inward first, as "brand advocates may need

to tackle internal stakeholders before targeting external consumers when perceptions vary within the brand decision-making apparatus" (Hultman, Yeboah-Banin & Formaniuk, 2016, p. 5157). By involving residents, one creates a more nuanced brand strategy, which in the end needs to "reflect reality or [..] the 'actual' rather than a 'hypothetical desired' or 'communicated' identity" (Trueman & Cornelius, 2006, p. 6). City branding policies would therefore benefit from broadening their perspective to internal audiences and avoiding a too narrow focus on external audiences. By doing so, the potential of brands as a tool for identification and belonging can be realised to its full potential, while the risk of residents taking the role of critic or protester decreases.

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home

Socio-cultural integration

3 Socio-cultural integration of highly skilled migrants in medium-sized cities

Marian Counihan and Willem van Winden

Migrant integration is a large and complex topic, and raises many questions: firstly, why does it matter? Why would it be important for the local society and for the migrant? And in fact, what do we mean by "integration"; when can we say that social or cultural integration is successful? What is the interplay between the local community and the migrant? What are the barriers that hinder integration in different urban contexts, and how can these be overcome? Finally, what actions can and do local stakeholders (city administrations, universities, employers, clubs, and other local organisations) take to foster integration, and what can cities learn from each other in this respect?

In this chapter we tackle these questions firstly by discussing some of the existing literature on migration and intercultural integration considered in relevant urban contexts, and then by turning to policies and initiatives which provide examples of good practices to foster the integration of international migrants into local society.

3.1   Introduction

"(L)iving with diversity is likely to be one of the defining characteristics of urban life in Western Europe during the 21st century."
(Geldof, 2016, p. 32)

In the European context, urban diversity is a reality of everyday life. In fact, some Western European cities already are majority-minority cities (Brussels,

Amsterdam, and Rotterdam, for example).[1] All over Europe, cross-border mobility is increasing, particularly for highly skilled workers (European Commission, 2021). At the same time, there is growing diversity within (migration) diversity – what Vertovec (2007) has memorably called "superdiversity". Also in smaller municipalities, the number of people with migration backgrounds continues to grow (Geldof, 2016), and this new urban diversity is often a relatively new and rapid development in smaller cities.

The topic of integration and diversity management more generally is often highly politicised. In fact, sometimes the debate has focused on "whether or not" we want a diverse society, "rather than how we can make that society work" (Geldof, 2016, p. 173). In this chapter, we follow the lead of recent migration scholars, who argue that it is time to move on from ideological debates, to acknowledge the complexity of diversity, and to focus more on how to make the reality of (super)diverse cities a good one. Therefore, we start from the recognition that urban diversity is of increasing relevance in European cities, also in the smaller ones.[2]

Integration of highly skilled migrants can be seen as a key means for urban stakeholders to realise the potential inherent in new forms of urban diversity. Social and cultural integration of migrants has both direct and indirect positive impacts. Better integration of migrants is linked to better outcomes regarding social cohesion, discrimination, and polarisation in society. One may argue that social integration can enrich locals and internationals alike in various respects: they can learn from each other's cultures, observe and absorb new ideas and ways of living, engage in new friendships; more broadly, integration can contribute to mutual understanding and respect between nations and cultures. Social integration is also an important precondition for the happiness and job satisfaction of migrants and their families. A sense of belonging may induce them to stay longer. Integration can consequently lead to higher stay rates, allowing the host country to benefit from the economic value and innovative capacity of highly

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1   A majority-minority city is a city in which the majority of the population is made up of minority groups – i.e., there is no outright cultural or ethnic majority. Note that this doesn't mean that there isn't a single biggest cultural or ethnic group present; usually this group is the majority group at the national level.
2   https://english.wrr.nl/publications/publications/2018/07/11/summary-the-new-diversity-v38

skilled migrants. So we see that both direct and indirect impacts benefit not only the migrants but also their host societies.

The urban context and why it matters

The question of migrant integration is increasingly understood to play out at the local level. Cities are where integration takes place and where the problems of integration are most keenly felt – and addressed (Glick-Schiller & Çağlar, 2009; Schiller, 2015; Scholten & Van Ostaijen, 2018). This is referred to as the "local turn" in integration policy (Zapata-Barrero, Caponio & Scholten, 2017), meaning that diversity management is increasingly a matter for urban municipalities and policymakers. The increasing agency that municipalities have in shaping their local or regional integration agendas and policies forms part of a broader shift within Europe towards urban level governance, where cities take an active role in tackling topics that play out globally (Scholten & Penninx, 2016).[3] Hence, the urban context is a highly relevant one when discussing migrant integration.

Furthermore, different urban contexts have different effects. For starters, city size and location play a role in the possibilities for integration. Bigger, central cities often serve as "gateway" cities for migration, and therefore already have a more diverse population (e.g., Geldof, 2016). They might have large mixed international or ethnically defined communities, "enclaves" or "bubbles", in which new arrivals find social contacts easily. They are more likely to have well-established expat desks, migrant organisations, and internationally oriented (municipal) services. Online platforms targeting knowledge migrants such as Internations and Expatica typically offer activities centred on the larger cities since a critical mass of internationals is to be found there.

However, it is not necessarily the case that integration is easier in large or centrally located cities. Smaller cities offer a different mix of opportunities for integration. Firstly, social media and platforms such as Meetup and Eventbrite have made it much easier to informally organise groups and events at the local level. For example, as we write, the *Groningen Expat* Meetup group has 1,322 members who meet up monthly and organise events together, the *Expats in*

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3   See for instance the network of European municipalities Eurocities, "giving all cities in Europe a voice", and characterising the "glocal" approach: https://eurocities.eu.

Parma Facebook group has over 1,700 members, and the *Debrecen Today* Facebook page has over 13,000 followers. Special interest groups are even more common – especially tech and developer Meetup groups have large local followings. These groups and events provide a very low-threshold way to meet similar or like-minded people in the region, regardless of the size or location of the city. They can be initiated by government officials but are often successfully started by enterprising new residents themselves and are entirely self-managed.

Secondly, it may, somewhat paradoxically, be easier to meet and get to know local people in smaller cities, as the environment is too small to support international bubbles or enclaves. Whether or not this is the case depends heavily on the national and local "reception context": what is the attitude of the native population towards newcomers, and what opportunities for interaction are available? Here, policymakers can play an active role in facilitating intergroup contact, which in turn has been shown to reduce discrimination and negative attitudes towards migrants. We discuss successful initiatives to facilitate intergroup contact in more detail below.

A quote from an interview study conducted for the municipality of Groningen illustrates this:

> "After living in Amsterdam for several years, I found it much easier to meet Dutch people in Groningen. There are more proper locals, people who really come from here, and I wasn't in such an international bubble, floating above the city. So it made me feel more at home straight away."
> (Danielle, South African woman, 41 years old)

Finally, the *type* of local context will play a role in the possibilities for migrant integration. Smaller cities that already received migrant groups before and that are economically healthy or revitalising, provide a more favourable context for integration than cities that are still socio-culturally homogeneous and/or suffering economic decline, as also identified by Plöger in this volume. A useful framework here comes from Whole-COMM, a recent Horizon 2020 research project, which distinguishes four types of local context for smaller urban and rural areas that are relevant for migrant integration (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1 Whole-COMM typology of local contexts
Source: Whole-comm Working Paper 1 (2021)

Experience with cultural diversity?	Structural conditions	
	+	−
+	Revitalising / better-off	Marginal
−	In transition	Left behind

The structural dimension includes the local economy and the labour market, as well as demographic composition and trends. The socio-cultural dimension covers levels of socio-cultural diversity and historical relations with migrant-related groups (Whole-COMM Working Paper 1, 2021, p. 38).[4]

In the Netherlands, the Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) recently published the study *The New Diversity*,[5] which distinguishes between *eight* different types of municipalities which all have different types and levels of diversity. For instance, they distinguish border municipalities that house a high degree of migrants from neighbouring countries, as well as medium-sized cities with a large group of migrants from a single background who have been recruited for work or education. The measure of cultural similarity between migrants and locals in these two types of urban context might be different. More generally, the interplay of locality and "migrant mix" will affect the type of integration pathways that are feasible (Jennissen et al, 2018).

When urban stakeholders have a clear understanding of the reception context they are working in, they can develop policies that are better tailored to both migrants and the local population, and therefore are suited to address the potential barriers or backlash to socio-cultural integration.

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4   https://whole-comm.eu/working-papers/working-paper-1-2. The contexts named in Table 3.1 are defined as follows: "Revitalising/better-off localities are characterised by a thriving or quickly expanding local economy and population growth, as well as by a presence of migrants' settlement preceding more recent arrivals. Left-behind localities are characterised by economic and demographic decline and no remarkable arrivals of migrants before 2014. In marginal localities, demographic and economic decline combines with the presence of migrants' settlements before 2014. Finally, communities in transition are characterised by an improving economic and demographic situation in the absence of migration-related diversity before 2014."

5   https://english.wrr.nl/publications/publications/2018/07/11/summary-the-new-diversity-v38

3.2   What do we know about migrant integration?

Now that we have established the important but varying role of the reception context i.e., the city migrants arrive in, let us turn our attention to what it means to integrate.

Cultural integration

There is a large amount of literature within psychology on intergroup and inter-cultural contact. A frequently applied framework to understand possible out-comes of migrant contact with a new culture is the acculturation model, as seen in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Berry's acculturation model of cultural integration
Source: Berry (1980; 2003)

Acculturation outcomes	Maintenance of (elements of) heritage culture?	
Participation in (elements of) new culture?	yes	no
yes	Integration (biculturalism)	Assimilation
no	Separation	Marginalisation

Berry's model distinguishes four possible outcomes of contact with new cultures:
- *Integration*, also called *biculturalism*, in which the migrant adopts (parts of) the new cultural values, behaviour, identities and values, as well as maintaining (elements) of their original or "heritage" culture.
- *Separation*, in which the migrant rejects the new culture and maintains their original cultural values, behaviour and values.
- *Assimilation*, in which the migrant adopts the new culture fully and discards their original culture.
- *Marginalisation*, in which the migrant rejects both cultures.

Empirically, the first outcome, labelled *integration*, is associated with the best outcomes, socially, psychologically, and health-wise for migrants (and margin-alisation is a relatively small category). We could call this cultural integration. Assimilation, in which the culture of origin is discarded, is not associated with

the best outcomes (Berry, 2003; Schwartz et al., 2010). Policymakers can take this into consideration when identifying routes to integration.

A relevant example with respect to biculturalism is the Festival of Cultures, organised at Otto-von-Guericke University Magdeburg and the University of Applied Science Magdeburg-Stendal. A free and open event for which international students prepare cuisine from their home countries and organise cultural performances (dance, music) for fellow students and local residents. This is an example of maintenance of the origin culture in a positive setting of intercultural contact and can also be expected to have positive reception from the local population.

"The students took you to their home countries: with local dishes, games, workshops… It was amazing to see what they came up with!" (Uwe Genetzke, Head of the International Office, Otto-von-Guericke University Magdeburg)

Several factors influence whether a migrant can successfully integrate into a new culture. An important role has been identified as the degree of similarity between the new and heritage culture. If there are shared language skills, cultural values, or ethnic or religious identities, this can make the process of integration easier.

This might be the case in for instance border cities with high levels of regional cross-border migration.

But it's important not to hold too simplistic a view of culture. Culture can be dissected into cultural *practices*, including language, cultural *identities*, including ethnic, religious, national, and regional identities, and cultural *values*, such as individualism or work ethic (Schwartz et al., 2010).

> "I never felt like I belonged in Italy, it felt like my country never offered me the opportunities to become someone, to make something of myself, to reach my potential".
>
> (Laura, Italy, 23 years old)

As the above quote illustrates, a person may hold personal values that align more with the host culture than with their culture of origin – in fact, this might even form a motive to move (Yijälä et al., 2009) – think of work-life balance, gender equality, work ethic, acceptance of sexual orientation, et cetera. Culture is not static and simply imposed; rather, culture is dynamic and multi-faceted, both for the migrant and the host society, and is constantly renegotiated, affirmed, challenged, and remade, especially in contexts of intercultural contact.

An example of the dynamism of cultural identity is the phenomenon of "reactive ethnicity" (Rumbaut, 2008), in which, as a result of discrimination or hostile reception in the new cultural environment, migrants hold on or "retreat" to aspects of their heritage culture and may therefore resist adopting the culture of the new country, leading to separation. More generally, how the host country views and treats the migrant impacts on their identity, and how they see themselves. A famous example of this mechanism is the statement of Nigerian author Chimamanda Adichie who said: "I wasn't black until I came to America."[6]

What this example also shows is that migrant integration is a mutual process, a two-way street. Not only do migrants have to redefine and evaluate themselves in a new environment – indeed, they *become* migrants on moving – but the receiving society also needs to re-evaluate: who are "we", who can belong to "our" society? A big part in the integration process is played by what the host country

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6   https://daily.jstor.org/chimamanda-ngozi-adichie-i-became-black-in-america

thinks about (different types of) migrants and how the migrants themselves perceive these attitudes (Yijälä et al., 2009; Albada, Hansen, & Otten, 2021).

National identity is not always the most relevant aspect of culture. People's identification with their city or region is often more important than their identification with the country in which they live (Geldof, 2016), and here urban policymakers can exercise agency in facilitating mutual integration processes. In our experience, there often is a gap between the level of interest of the local population in coming into contact with newcomers and the lack of opportunities present for actual interaction between local and international residents, including intergenerational contact. It is as if the way we organise social and cultural life still needs to catch up with the diversity in which we operate.

Other aspects of integration

Interrelated aspects of integration are a sense of belonging, place attachment, and local social networks (or social capital) (Wu, Hou & Schimmele, 2011). A sense of belonging is about feeling at home, about feeling accepted and secure, and involves how much a person identifies and chooses to be part of their social environment (community, neighbourhood, region, country). Place attachment is about the emotional connection with one's place of residence. Finally, (local) social networks are about one's contacts – both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Sense of belonging and place attachment have been linked to increased neighbourhood involvement and civic engagement, and in addition to social embedding form an important factor in deciding where to live (Barwick, 2022). Additionally, social embedding is of course related to cultural integration. So, we can expect that social integration along these lines will benefit the migrant in terms of both increased well-being, and increased stay rates, in turn benefiting the city.

Integration of highly skilled migrants

What do we know about the integration of highly skilled migrants? For a long time, this was not even considered a relevant topic of study or policy, since the perception was that this group was homogeneous, mobile, unattached to their place of residence, and endowed with enough economic, social and cultural capital to move about freely – the classic stereotype of the expat, also called the transnational elite (Beaverstock, 2005). But we now know that expat experienc-

es are much more complex, multi-layered, and rooted to place than the stereo-type suggests (e.g., Van Bochove & Engbersen, 2015; Andreotti, Galès & Fuentes, 2013; Barwick, 2022).

In addition, international migration patterns have changed and diversified. We increasingly realise that highly skilled migrants are themselves a very diverse group, in terms of their countries of origin, socioeconomic status and resources, household type, gender, occupation, as well as their migration histories, motiva-tions and intentions regarding future mobility (Vertovec, 2007; Scott, 2019; Plöger, this volume; also see Mahroum's typologies presented in Chapter 1).

Especially relevant in this context is the range concerning future mobility. This is very wide: for some skilled migrants, short-term international experience is a means to get ahead in their country of origin, and they are certain of their return. However, there are also large groups of highly skilled migrants who in-tend to permanently settle in their new home. A recent survey found that over 70% of highly skilled migrants in the Netherlands from outside the EU intend to settle there permanently and apply for Dutch citizenship.[7] For this group, a fuller integration into the new culture is a priority.

Even for groups who do not settle permanently, better integration can be relevant, for intrinsic reasons such as migrant wellbeing and social cohesion, as well as for more instrumental reasons such as a positive ambassadorial or word-of-mouth role that migrants can have after they leave.

3.3   Barriers to integration

With a clearer understanding of what successful integration looks like, we can discuss common barriers to integration that we have come across in working with cities, and which are important for urban stakeholders to consider.

Language

Lack of a shared language is a key generic barrier: communication and contact form the basis for integration, but it is difficult when internationals do not speak the local language, or when large parts of the local population do not speak

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7   https://intelligence-group.nl/resources/knowledge-migrants

English (assuming that this is the local lingua franca). It is not always encouraged or feasible to learn the local language. And even if migrants do take language courses, they may find it hard to practice, because they often live or work in English-language settings or enclaves (international student groups, expat networks, international companies with English as the workplace language). For many migrants, English already is their second or third language, so learning the local language might be less important than mastering English, if this is the language they use at work. Furthermore, especially when internationals are on temporary assignments, there is no real incentive to learn the local language.

Relatively closed local social culture or networks

For some types of urban contexts (see above), cultural diversity is a relatively new phenomenon and the local population might be rather homogeneous. This can mean that local networks are relatively closed off to outsiders, often making participation more difficult, even in more organised settings such as local cultural and sports associations. On the other hand, in contrast to larger (capital) cities that have a longer history of a cosmopolitan population, medium-sized cities usually lack well-established expat clubs or networks and migrant organisations; migrants must create their own spaces and places of belonging or may depend more on local networks. As we discussed above, if opportunities for interaction with locals can be fostered, then integration can be even more successful than in larger cities, which brings us to the next point.

Facilitation vs integration

In some areas, there is a tension between the facilitation of skilled migrants on the one hand – providing them with access to facilities – and integration on the other. Consider international schools, for example. They are recognised by our case cities as important facilities to attract and retain skilled migrants, but at the same time they may hinder socio-cultural integration and stimulate separate local expat networks. To counteract this, shared kindergartens and primary schools are important contact zones where skilled migrant parents and their children develop relations with locals. Similar tensions between facilitation and integration can be found in international university programmes if parallel

tracks are created for local and international students, thus reducing the possibilities to interact.

Physical segregation

Following up on the above, a primary barrier to intergroup contact is physical segregation, such as separate housing for international students. Segregation is often replicated in the classroom, where students are in separate programmes. For working migrants, there might be more or less intentional clustering in certain areas of the city, which can result in a type of enclave. This prevents everyday interaction with the local population and makes further participation less likely.

Lack of opportunities for mixed interaction

We know that increased contact with locals, and greater exposure to the host culture can promote good relations and more positive attitudes between migrant populations and the host culture, preventing bubbles or separation. As the Dutch Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) recently stated: "[E]thnic groups would probably be better able to coexist if they all had a better understanding of each other's cultural backgrounds. […] Promoting contacts between the residents of a neighbourhood should be a major focus area" (Jennissen et al., 2018). Here, relatively simple innovations in the organisation of cultural and social activities can be very productive, as we discuss further below.

Discrimination, hostility, mistrust, and racism

Finally, many (highly skilled) migrants face negative attitudes, hostility, and even downright racism in their host society. Discrimination in the housing market is commonly reported: in several cities we worked with, private homeowners are reported to be very reluctant to rent to foreigners. Similarly for international students, for example in Groningen, they are often faced with a "no internationals" criterion when trying to find a room to rent in student accommodation.

Hostility from the host society can cause a counterreaction in migrants – as discussed above – making integration even harder and increasing the chance of the emergence of "parallel societies". Such problems are surely very difficult to eliminate entirely but urban stakeholders have an active and important role to

play in campaigning, legislating, and enforcing existing regulations to diminish discrimination against migrants.

3.4   Programmes and actions to promote integration

What actions are medium-sized cities taking to integrate international talent into their local society? Dependent on the phase of internationalisation, the local context, and the level of governance co-ordination, city governments and other urban stakeholders have taken varied approaches to facilitating integration of skilled migrants. In the following, we list several programmes and initiatives that have proved successful already, as well as discuss considerations for future policy consideration.

Language learning initiatives

Language learning is a foundation for successful integration. In many cities, free or affordable language courses for internationals are already available. National or European-level subsidies can make these more accessible. Recently, the University of Groningen won funding from a national programme for this purpose.[8] But courses in themselves are not sufficient to ensure language proficiency. Active use of the language is necessary. For this purpose, language cafés, informal language partners and volunteer programmes are extremely helpful.

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8   https://www.rug.nl/language-centre/language-courses/dutch/general-skills/tmmt

Figure 3.1 My Local Friend Groningen

My Local Friend (Groningen)[9] matches local Dutch volunteers to international residents who want to practice their Dutch language skills. Volunteers are recruited from older age groups through community organisations and local newspapers, thus also fostering intergenerational contact which is valued on both sides.

Integration in the workplace or classroom

Literature suggests that the place of work or study is a main driver or engine of integration (Van Riemsdijk, 2014). Larger employers roften make an effort to promote cultural exchange and introduce internationals into local customs and networks. In higher education, mixing national and international students in university classes can enrich the learning experience of both, provided the lecturer is able to facilitate this: students can become more curious and engaged, different backgrounds offer a comparative lens on the subject matter, and debate and learning can be stimulated in this way.

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9   https://citycentral.nl/activities/taal-friend

Buddy programmes

For the initial phase after arrival and a positive first connection with locals, buddy programmes form a very effective type of intervention. Many universities have set up programmes that link international to local students who can help them find their way, but these could be extended to staff at universities and companies too.

Spousal support

To help partners of migrants, partner support programmes have become common in most case cities. A recent local study in Leuven indicated that an unhappy spouse is the main reason for many expats to quit their job and return home, incurring high costs for the employer. Major international employers in the region set up a network in which HR managers share information, challenges, and solutions regarding their international staff and their partners. Partner support programmes at many universities include help with "dual career" settings, partner coaching, finding relevant volunteering opportunities or offering educational courses for career development. As it becomes more common for both partners to work, the importance of such programmes will no doubt only grow.

Fostering local interaction and engagement

As stated above, local interaction and engagement increases a sense of belonging and place attachment. Municipalities can look for ways to foster this relatively simply, in existing programmes with community initiatives or volunteering organisations. One example is from Leuven, where the neighbourhood-level project Stand up for your Neighbourhood (*Kom op voor je wijk*), already running for many years, was also promoted in English and through international networks, enabling new residents to participate.[10] In Parma, international migrants are actively recruited to join refugee support organisations as volunteers. Volunteering is a rewarding and low-threshold form of engagement and helps to build new social support networks. These examples show that existing community and cultural programmes can be "tweaked" relatively easily to facilitate intercultural contact.

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[10]   https://issuu.com/stadleuven/docs/kow_inspiratiebrochure2_eng_def

In a more structural development, the city of Groningen developed *Here & Now in Groningen*, an English-language version of the cultural, community-based and nightlife agenda. Many activities and events (such as concerts) or classes (art, dance) are not particularly dependent on linguistic skills, but need to be made accessible to new residents through new communication means.

Cultural exchange and learning programmes

Creating campaigns, events, and programmes for cultural exchange, appreciation and learning contributes to fostering intercultural curiosity and learning. Magdeburg supports the bi-annual Festival of Cultures where many nationalities present their music, cuisines, et cetera to the public, as described above. Similarly, the University of Debecren organises an International Food Day, a festival where students from every nation can introduce their cuisine to everyone, not just other students, but the general public as well. Food is an excellent means to bring groups together, generating common topics for discussion in an informal atmosphere. Another food-based activity is the organisation of dinners in which international students are paired with local families for a shared meal in people's homes. This could be organised on special occasions (such as Christmas) or turned into an event in itself. This format has proved successful in both Groningen and Magdeburg. Finally, Parma University set up a programme in which international students visit primary schools to talk about their home country and their immigration story, again fostering intergenerational familiarity and understanding.

More prosaically, in some contexts it is very valuable simply to offer classes or lectures to learn locally relevant skills or knowledge. For instance, City Central in Groningen offers new residents cycling classes and neighbourhood "welcome walks" to find out about services and businesses in their suburb.[11] KU Leuven offers *About Belgium* lectures to new university staff, and student organisations in many cities have taken the initiative to arrange local trips for mixed student groups, enabling individuals from different groups to get to know each other and their new place of residence.

Municipal campaigns for diversity and inclusion can be effective as part of an integrated strategy to shift the self-image of the city. In Groningen, City Cen-

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[11]   https://citycentral.nl/activities/fiets-friend

tral had a physical hub centrally located in the city to make internationalisation more visible and to promote contact between locals and international residents, but also participated in events and campaigns to raise awareness of identity and belonging. An example of this was the "Groninger Passport Booth" which was part of a city-wide festival. Residents were invited by actors to ask questions about their local knowledge and awarded a Groningen passport. In this way a notion of low-threshold belonging and citizenship at the urban level is explored.
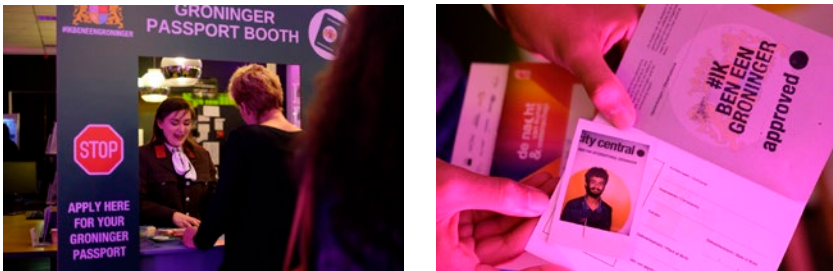
Figure 3.2 Groninger Passport Booth

3.5   Policy and governance considerations

As we have seen in this chapter, migrant integration is of increasing relevance at the urban level. This makes it an emerging urban governance priority. How then can municipalities and other urban stakeholders contribute to successful migrant integration?

Firstly, it helps to keep in mind that integration is a mutual process. The arrival of new residents also impacts on the local population. This should be taken into account in integration policies, as well as included in awareness campaigns, and active steps should be taken to foster contact between different groups at local levels.

Secondly, a dynamic and multi-layered understanding of culture shapes how we see migrants. In particular, the *bicultural* outcome of acculturation as presented in Berry's model allows us to see that cultural identities, behaviour and values are not static and either/or, but can best be viewed as complementary, context dependent, and shaped by intercultural contact.

Finally, taking the above points on board shows a lot of effort is needed to proactively develop and reshape opportunities for mutual contact, cultural exchange, and social networking in contexts of increasing diversity. The social fabric of cities needs to adjust to our new social reality. Urban stakeholders have an important and impactful role to play in this context, although local and international target groups should be actively included in policy development and implementation as well. Sometimes very simple tweaks to existing events or new initiatives can be very effective. A lot can be achieved with goodwill and a little funding; changing minds and facilitating meeting doesn't need to cost a lot of money. The above examples give some ideas for how this can be achieved.

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4   Similar but different – why place matters for highly skilled migrants

Jörg Plöger

4.1   Introduction

Many regions across Europe are subject to significant and ongoing demographic changes. These changes take the form of population decline, ageing populations, with the subsequent reduction of the working-age population, and increasing diversity due to an increase in the share of migrants. Within Europe, Germany constitutes a somewhat unique position with regard to these demographic processes. On the one hand, countries with similarly strong economies such as the Netherlands, Denmark, or France do not face significant demographic challenges nor skills shortages. On the other hand, regions across Southern and Eastern Europe which do face population decline generally have weaker economies and therefore less labour market demand.

Outside of the more dynamic metropolitan areas, population decline and the subsequent decrease of the working-age population has often coincided with periods of economic growth. Under such conditions, employers find it more difficult to satisfy their demand for sufficiently skilled workers. This is particularly true for small and medium-sized cities and regions outside of the main agglomerations and for professions characterised by skills shortages.

In such a context, immigration is often the only factor offsetting these negative demographic trends. With these economic rationales in mind, it is not surprising that Germany has gradually reformed its migration policies since the 2000s, shifting towards skills-based approaches, and facilitating the immigration of labour migrants into specific economic sectors characterised by skills shortages. In addition to national-level legislation skills approaches have been adopt-

ed at regional and local levels as well. Several policy approaches such as those fostering the creative class or welcoming high-skilled migrants are explicitly or implicitly focussing on the attraction and retention of "migrant talent".

There are also limitations to such approaches. As highly skilled workers are in demand, they often have several destination options to choose from. Depending on the location, highly skilled migrants may be quite difficult to attract or – more often – to retain. This may be due to difficulties in finding adequate housing and developing a sense of belonging (Plöger, 2016), or simply because of the lack of appeal of less cosmopolitan settings for international employees (Plöger, 2020). For Germany, the dilemma is illustrated by a study about expats across the world which shows that Germany, while being very attractive as a destination for work, is perceived as a difficult context regarding "ease of settling in" (InterNations, 2019).

The objective of this chapter is to provide insights into the migration of highly skilled workers, and in particular, variations in their paths to integration in medium-sized cities. For this, we draw on empirical research in two older post-industrial European cities. The chapter specifically aims to contribute to our understanding of:

1 how and why highly skilled migrants arrive (conditions),
2 who arrives (groups),
3 why there are variations between places (spatial context), and
4 which factors may contribute to ensuring a more long-term success with regard to the attraction of mobile professionals (policy recommendations).

Section 4.2 gives some context for the focus on highly skilled migrants and introduces the conceptual-theoretical approach used in the current chapter. Section 4.3 further specifies the focus on highly skilled migrants. Section 4.4 contextualises the two cities of Manchester and Dortmund and provides details about the underlying empirical research. A findings section (4.5) draws on the empirical material and focuses on three key variations with regards to highly skilled migration: frequency of mobility, nature of connections to place, and locally relevant migrant communities. The final section summarises and discusses the variations between the two settings and suggests recommendations for policymakers and other stakeholders involved in talent attraction.

4.2   Highly skilled migration and cities

Mobility has been understood as a key characteristic of later modern societies (e.g., Urry, 2007). According to Buckley, McPhee and Rogaly (2017, p. 153), "a world of workers [is] (still and increasingly) on the move" and Jeanes et al. (2015, p. 705) recognise a "mobilisation and activation of working subjects and their human capital". Raghuram (2014, p. 196) argues that "when mobility is produced as a norm in the production of skills, mobility becomes a necessary part of the constitution of a skilled object".

Within this rationale, highly skilled migrants are regarded as a quintessential group representing contemporary global capitalism (e.g., Meier, 2015). Within a context of global economic restructuring and labour market transformations, this group has become increasingly mobilised and is identified as a key asset in neoliberal approaches aimed at competitiveness on different territorial scales. In reality, of course, highly skilled or talent migration – as all forms of migration – must be understood as the outcome of broader processes of socio-economic differentiation on a global scale, including the interplay of mobility and immobility (e.g., Yeoh & Huang, 2011).

This rationale, previously taken for granted, has been dramatically interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. What was until early 2020 considered an unchallenged agenda of increasingly normal work-related mobilities, has since been challenged by the rapid rise in digitalised work arrangements through forms of home or remote working. Work-related migration has been restricted due to national or regional lockdowns, economic downturns, decreasing transport connections, or stricter migration controls to mention only a few.

For several reasons, in this chapter I nonetheless argue for the benefit of focussing – again – on the migration of the highly skilled. First, with the decline in threat posed by COVID-19, it is quite likely that work-related mobility and migration will rise in significance once again. Second, the demographic challenges mentioned above are becoming even more pronounced in a large number of industrialised nations, not least because inward migration to these economies has slowed due to the pandemic. The third reason is a pragmatic one, as this research was conducted before the pandemic; I argue that the empirical findings are nonetheless likely to be indicative of future trends.

The aim of this chapter is to understand why at first glance rather similar localities may receive quite different groups of highly skilled migrants. The chapter explores why highly skilled migration to cities like Manchester and Dortmund varies with regard to who comes, how they come and how they relate to their arrival contexts. In order to understand these place-specific variations we follow the so-called "comparative turn in urban studies" (Ward, 2008), drawing on the conceptual framework developed by Glick Schiller and Çağlar (2011) and the subsequent work by other authors providing in-depth empirical analyses (e.g., Jaworsky et al., 2012; Hickman & Mai, 2015; Platts-Fowler & Robinson, 2015). Glick Schiller and Çağlar argue that cities vary with regard to their opportunity structures for migrants. They reason that this is due to place-specific historic path dependencies, the scalar embeddedness of cities within global networks as well as the role of "migrants as constitutive agents in the relative positioning of cities" (ibid., p. 78).

Following up on these theoretical arguments, Jaworsky et al. (2012) provide an empirical account about how two "similar" medium-sized cities in New England in fact provide quite different opportunity structures. They conclude that location-specific factors such as migrant histories (or pathways), attitudes of the local population as well as policy-making approaches explain such contrasting contexts for migrant reception. Hickman and Mai (2015) have examined the relationship between migration and (local) social cohesion in two multicultural neighbourhoods in London. They find that the "same" phenomenon of social complexity (referring to multiculturalism) is experienced differently in different places and illustrate how the context shapes attitudes towards newcomers.

The following sections now build on these ideas and analyse what shapes the different flows of highly skilled migrants to Manchester and Dortmund.

4.3   Mobilised professionals in two restructuring cities

This section explains how the conceptual ideas outlined above were translated into a particular focus in the empirical research. First, it explains the choice for focussing on "mobile professionals" and for narrowing in on specific professions where migrants have become increasingly important. Second, it contextualises the juxtaposition of two seemingly similar urban contexts, the cities of Manches-

ter and Dortmund. Third, it presents the research methodology and provides an overview of the two samples.

I draw on empirical research about mobile professionals (Williams & Balaz, 2008; Meier, 2015; Plöger & Kubiak, 2019).[1] With the notion of mobile professionals, highly skilled workers are distinguished by the degree to which their professions have become *mobilised*. Clearly, certain professions are more mobilised than others both because the respective skills are more easily transferable across different national contexts, and the respective economic sectors are more integrated into global markets.

Mahroum (2001, p. 23) identifies five main "types of human resources mobility across national borders". Out of these, this research focuses on two groups of highly skilled migrants: 1) academics and researchers, and 2) engineers and IT professionals. For Bauder (2012, p. 84) academics are those "in or preparing for the academic labour market". In academia, mobility tends to be highest during the early career stages due to competition for a limited number of jobs (ibid., p. 86). In the UK and other OECD countries, the academic labour market is increasingly internationalised (Bauder, 2012; Jöns, 2009). Drawing on Foucauldian terminology, Cantwell (2011, p. 425) regards academics as "self-governing actors" moving between universities and research institutes, which are "central in the global competition for knowledge, innovation, and human capital".

Similarly, and facilitated by transferable skills and the use of English as quasi lingua franca, the labour markets of IT professionals and engineers have become increasingly mobilised (Iredale, 2001; Millar & Salt, 2006; Xiang, 2007). An important differentiation between employment in academia and in IT or engineering concerns the incorporation of mobility requirements (Kesselring & Vogl, 2010). While academics are faced with an individualisation of pressures, the latter group appears to have a wider range of work-related opportunities and thus more influence over their mobility decisions. In many private-sector firms however, mobility is now also a key requirement and is implicitly associated with career success (Kesselring, 2014).[2]

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[1]   For a nuanced overview of further literature on so-called middle-class migration, see Scott (2019).
[2]   Since early 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly interrupted flows of work-related mobility. Remote work has quickly become the norm for highly skilled workers, facilitated by the widespread use of modern digital technologies (e.g., Cresswell, 2021; Reuschke & Ekinsmyth, 2021).

4.4   Two similar but different arrival contexts

The aim of this section is to understand to what extent and why the migration of highly skilled migrants varies between seemingly similar spatial contexts, in this case Manchester (United Kingdom) and Dortmund (Germany).

The two cities share several characteristics. Manchester (population 557,000) and Dortmund (population 603,000) are of a roughly similar size. Both cities are located within dense and polycentral agglomerations, Greater Manchester and the Ruhr respectively, which are among the most representative post-industrial regions of Europe. Due to similarities in their economic developmental pathways, both cities are still undergoing profound economic restructuring. To overcome the problems associated with industrial decline, both cities also made comprehensive efforts to reposition themselves in the knowledge economy (e.g., Peck & Ward, 2002; Irle & Röllinghoff, 2008). As a result, Dortmund and Manchester are both considered relatively successful examples of urban recovery within their respective regions. Both are classified as "transformation poles" by Urban Audit (cited in: Clark & Moonen, 2013), which are characterised by "a strong industrial past, but well on their way to manage change and develop new economic activities" (European Commission, 2007, p. 10).

In Manchester, this process was initiated in the early 1980s and was aimed at overcoming the image of a grim, industrial northern city. In what Peck and Ward (2002) call an "entrepreneurial turn" in urban governance, stakeholders in Manchester aimed at increasing the city's competitiveness at the European scale, while emphasising property-led regeneration and place marketing (e.g., Young, Diep & Drabble, 2006, pp. 1693f; Kennedy, 2010). Culture became an important part of the regeneration process in the 1990s. Glick Schiller (2012, p. 38) thus labels Manchester as an "upscaling city" based on efforts to "redevelop the city as a vibrant cosmopolitan centre".

Likewise in Dortmund, economic restructuring is advanced, and the city's economic base has diversified (Maretzke, 2008). Alongside the existing insurance and engineering sectors, IT, logistics, and biotech sectors have emerged, driven by the growth of higher education and research institutions. Like Manchester, Dortmund lacks larger global corporations, and the business landscape is characterised by larger medium-sized employers. Building on a cluster approach as

in Manchester, the city's restructuring strategy included the planning of a business park, Technologiezentrum (TZDO), adjacent to Technical University (TU) Dortmund, which is among the largest in Europe (Van den Berg et al., 2005). Dortmund was one of the first German cities to respond to worries about a projected shortage of skilled labour and surveys the demands for skilled workers regularly.

Despite these common characteristics, there is a risk of falling into the trap of over-emphasising or even artificially producing similarities. To avoid this, it helps to also look at the differences between the cities. Here a few indicators shed light on important variations (see Table 4.1). Firstly, in comparison with Dortmund, Manchester is a much younger city. On the one hand, this highlights much more advanced demographic shifts for Germany as a whole with its ageing population. On the other hand, it is also related to the role of the cities as locations for higher education institutions. In Manchester, not only are numbers of enrolled students higher, the universities are also much more internationalised with regard to students and staff. Furthermore, Manchester's airport is far larger in terms of the number of passengers it handles annually. These variations are reflected in each of the cities' respective rankings in the GaWC index. Both Manchester and Dortmund, while clearly being immersed in the global economy, are not among the most "global cities". Still, Manchester is ranked at 101 as a beta world city, whereas Dortmund positions at 302 (Taylor, 2011, p. 203).

Table 4.1 Select indicators for Manchester and Dortmund which highlight differences

Indicator		Manchester	Dortmund
Population	City Agglomeration	557,000 (Greater Manchester 2.8 m)	603,000 (Ruhr Area 5.1 m)
Share of migrants 1		26.0%	19.1%
Average age (2019) 2		33.3	43.3
Airport, total passengers (2015) 4		23,097,000	1,965,000
Population (rank UK/Germany) – Community members on InterNations (rank UK/Germany) – Rank ratio population/members (2019) 5		5 – 2 – 4	8 – 18 – 23
GaWC rank and index (2011) 6		Beta: 101 (0.22)	Gamma: 302 (0.07)

Sources:
1 Manchester: foreign-born (ons: https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity); Dortmund: foreigners (https://www.dortmund.de/media/p/statistik/pdf_statistik/00_01_Eckdaten.pdf)
2 https://ugeo.urbistat.com/AdminStat/de/uk/demografia/dati-sintesi/manchester/13/4
  https://www.dortmund.de/media/p/statistik/pdf_statistik/veroeffentlichungen/statistikatlas/215_-_Statistikatlas_-_2019.pdf
3 https://www.dortmund.de/media/p/studium___forschung/masterplan_wissenschaft/Masterplan_Wissenschaft_2.0_fin.pdf
4 It must be noted, that while its airport is a smaller regional airport, Dortmund is also served by the larger airport of Düsseldorf (1 hour away). Listed passenger numbers are pre-covid.
5 www.internations.org
6 Taylor (2011); see also Gawc website: https://www.lboro.ac.uk/microsites/geography/gawc

In both cities, highly skilled migrants were identified and approached via different channels, including university networks and newsletters, international companies as well as social media (e.g., Facebook, Meetup, InterNations). Apart from extended personal networks, the social media platform InterNations[3] proved to be the most successful for finding suitable interviewees. For both cities, diverse albeit not representative samples were assembled.

In Manchester, 19 qualitative interviews were conducted with highly skilled migrants during two research stays in Manchester in 2015. The sample comprises 9 female and 10 male participants of 14 nationalities, about half of whom hold EU passports. The Dortmund sample comprises 24 highly skilled migrants of 16 nationalities, out of which 13 were females. The interviews were conducted in 2013. In both cities, about half of the interviewees were either employed in academia, or as engineers or IT professionals. A main difference compared to the Manchester sample was that all respondents in Dortmund were third-country nationals from

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[3] This website manages social networks in cities around the globe and specifically focuses on the groups of 'internationals' or 'expatriates' (www.internations.org).

outside of Europe. [4] In terms of age, the interviewees in both samples varied between their mid-twenties and early forties. In general, the share of respondents in a partnership, married or with children was higher in Dortmund, which is likely to have an influence on their level of independence regarding mobility.

The interviews followed a semi-structured guideline based on three main themes (migration biography, settling in, and social networks). This included a section aimed at gathering biographical information, which is considered particularly important when studying mobile subjects as they shed light on the intersection of life domains such as education, employment, household, or reproduction (e.g., Blunt, 2007; Burrell & Panayi, 2006; Kõu et al., 2015; Rogaly, 2015). After transcription, the interviews were coded inductively using the software MAXQDA. Aliases were used to guarantee the anonymity of the interviewees.

4.5   Varying pathways of highly skilled migration

To understand the range of options policymakers, human resource managers, and other actors in particular cities and regions have with regard to attracting and retaining highly skilled migrants, it is important to learn more about which mobile professionals actually arrive in particular places and how they get there. The focus of this section thus lies on the conditions for and characteristics of how international talent arrives in European cities such as Manchester and Dortmund.

The findings presented here are structured into three subsections. The first seeks to understand who arrives and highlights some interesting variations between the two cities. The second subsection looks at how mobile professionals arrive in these cities by focussing on the importance of specific connections and networks which channel these flows. Building on the previous sections, the third subsection addresses how highly skilled migrants build up in-situ social networks. It must be noted that the explorative nature of this research and the relatively small sample sizes naturally mean that the findings are not represent-

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4   In terms of free movement, migrants with citizenship from an EU country are clearly privileged compared to third-country nationals who often require visa and generally more organisation with regard to relocation. Yet, with regard to their status as highly skilled migrants working in in-demand professions, the differences become less pronounced. Since 2020, Brexit has of course reduced the privileges of EU citizens in the UK.

ative. While considering these restrictions, the research still allows for identifying some interesting variations between the two cities.

Mobile professionals – Advanced vs beginner levels

Interviewees were asked to narrate their biographies, and to provide information specifically about any cross-border relocations. Such relocations represent a range of different moves between places, usually because of a transition in the life course (e.g., study, work, et cetera). Because of the study focus, work and/or career-related reasons were, of course, a main motivation for moving abroad. Still, these were often accompanied by other motives such as moving to or with a partner or simply wanting to experience living abroad or being able to explore Europe. The visualisation of the biographical information gathered during the interviews allows us to search for commonalities regarding mobility among the two samples.

Overall, the biographies of the Manchester group show a higher number of moves abroad. Over half of the interviewees in Manchester reported several relocations throughout their life. An example of such pronounced mobility is Yumika (see Figure 4.1), who was born in Tokyo. During her childhood, she moved to Spain for six years with her family because her father was sent there as an expat. After finishing high school, she attended a college in the United States, followed by several moves between Oxford (UK), New York City, and Japan in a short period of time. She relocated to Ithaca (US) for her PhD studies, before moving to Manchester for a postdoc academic position.

In Dortmund, for the majority of the interviewees, the mobility biographies were less complex and more straightforward. Only three interviewees already had some experience living abroad before moving to Dortmund. For the remainder, the move to Dortmund was often the first time they had left their country of origin, thus illustrating less complex migration biographies. Andrew for example moved to Melbourne from New Zealand for his studies and subsequently found his first job in the subsidiary office of a German engineering firm there. In 2010 he took the opportunity to work as an expat at the head office in Dortmund (Figure 4.2). The generally lower mobility of the Dortmund sample often coincides with their plans for the future: Most Dortmund interviewees regarded their stays as temporary and intended to return to their countries of origin af-

terwards. The stay abroad was seen as useful for gaining work experience or a degree in Germany, which would improve their career prospects after returning.
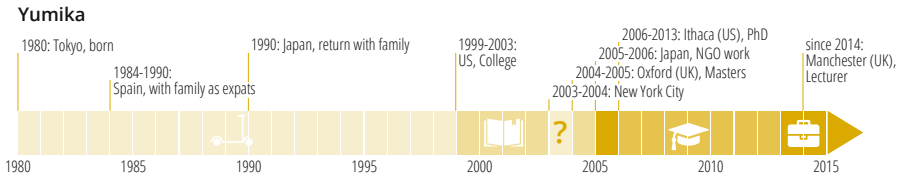
Figure 4.1 Mobility biography of Yumika, Manchester
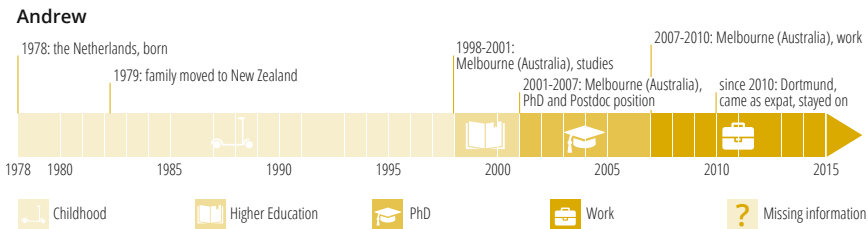
Figure 4.2 Mobility biography of Andrew, Dortmund

The comparison between the migrants coming to Manchester and Dortmund thus highlights a first variation between the two samples: Those arriving in Manchester have generally more experience with international relocation. Through previous stays abroad, we can assume they have developed a set of cosmopolitan skills, which enables them to organise their lives abroad and insert themselves in another spatial context (e.g., Colic-Peisker, 2010). Such "advanced mobile professionals" have arguably incorporated mobility as a normalised feature of careers in mobilised professions (Plöger & Kubiak, 2019; Kesselring, 2014). This is illustrated by the following quote from Thandiwe, who moved to Manchester from Namibia:

"I think [moving abroad] broadens your horizons. It makes you appreciate other people and their cultures. And it makes you realise, there's basically no single right way of doing things. […] So, yeah, it just makes you look at the world in a much more open way, I think. And once you travel, you always have to travel."

(Thandiwe)

In contrast, most of the highly skilled migrants in Dortmund are relative novices with regard to transnational mobility. They are only just beginning to develop these cosmopolitan skills. This finding suggests that cities such as Dortmund and Manchester attract different types of highly skilled migrants with regard to previous experiences.

"Cultural channels" and city images

The interviews point towards another interesting difference: The rationale behind selecting the respective destinations varied considerably between the two cities.

Firstly, in Manchester, most of the highly skilled migrants arrived from another English-speaking (former) commonwealth country, from both the Global North and South. As a result, for many respondents English was either their mother tongue or they were very proficient speakers of the language. In Dortmund, the sample was more diverse with regard to countries of origin. Many respondents did not have advanced German language skills. English skills – while still important and sometimes spoken in more international work environments – were less useful. For the participants in Dortmund, the lack of German language proficiency sometimes posed a barrier to participating socially both at and outside of their work spheres (see section "Varieties of local migrant communities"). In comparison, for the Manchester sample local social participation was easier. Yet, as highlighted by Plöger and Kubiak (2019), this does not necessarily mean that social networks contain many local contacts; it may rather entail connection to other highly skilled migrants with cosmopolitan lifestyles.

Secondly, in addition to the significance of language, the mental image that respondents had of the city was important. Although the migrants arriving in Manchester had practically no relationship with the city before moving there, several of the interviewees described the city as a place where they could imagine themselves living, without ever having been there before. The following quote from Patrick illustrates this ability to form an image of the place:

"The choice for Manchester, it was a great job opportunity. I also knew it would be a relatively decent location. [...] I would have moved to a lot of places for a job, but Manchester was probably as good as it could have turned out."

(Patrick)

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Such notions of being able to project or imagine oneself living in a place were not made at all with respect to Dortmund. In contrast to Manchester, most migrants moving to Dortmund did not have a clear idea about what to expect from the place. Yet all of the Dortmund interviewees mentioned some type of previously established connection to either Germany as a whole, German culture, or the city of Dortmund.

Such connections often constitute a mechanism that channels people to particular jobs and, thus, places (Tippel, Plöger & Becker 2017). In addition to hard and soft location factors, connections can be conceptualised as a third type of location factor (Musterd & Gritsai, 2013). While the Manchester respondents generally had very few previous connections, these connections were very significant in Dortmund. Following the typology by Tippel, Plöger and Becker (2017), three types of connections – professional, cultural, and social – can be distinguished.

Professional connections comprise links between institutions such as companies or research institutes, as well as those between individuals. Whereas the former are based on existing networks within an institution or a company (e.g., office networks, business partners, exchange programmes), the latter are tied to individuals and their professional networks. Many respondents in Dortmund mentioned such personal and institutional contacts, which facilitated the secondment or longer-term transfer of staff as for example illustrated by the following quote:

> "One of the department leaders came to Argentina for a winter school. So I had an opportunity to talk to him. That was basically how we arranged the fellowship."
> (Luis)

Cultural connections are not between institutions, individuals, or groups but rather between individuals and specific spatial contexts and can result from previous visits or, as in the case of international migrants, a proximity to German culture, such as knowledge of the language. These links are generally more ephemeral and subordinate to professional and social connections. Several respondents in Dortmund referred to such cultural links to Germany, including having attended a German school, having German ancestors, or having taken part in exchange programmes with Germany while at school or university. Two

participants also mentioned having attended a German school in their respective city of origin:

> "[...] and then we all attended the German school [in Lima]. My sisters and brother and me. Yes, that's why I have this background with German language and culture and so on."
>
> (Sofia)

Social connections can be understood as what is commonly referred to as social networks. The social networks of highly mobile people are characterised by consisting of weak ties and being spatially dispersed although mostly located in larger cities. Yet this also includes family members or partners who may have either moved to Dortmund or elsewhere in Germany, or who are German citizens. In both cases following a partner or spouse becomes a significant motive, sometimes overshadowing the work-related motives for relocation.

The mobility biographies of the respondents suggest that more "experienced" mobile professionals select places that are associated with a presumably more diverse urban population and a critical mass for cosmopolitan lifestyles.[5] Furthermore, those arriving in Manchester are more likely to relocate from more globalised cities as illustrated by Yumika's biography in Figure 4.1. Those coming to Dortmund are more interested in the work experience per se rather than engaging in cosmopolitan lifestyles, which arguably shifts the emphasis away from place towards workplace/employer or the overall national context.

Apart from hard factors such as the availability of jobs, for the group of highly skilled migrants it is also a matter of being able to *imagine* yourself in a place. In addition to languages and cultural proximity, the cosmopolitan appeal of a place thus plays a role in the type of migration flows to that location. This builds on the ideas developed by Glick-Schiller and Çağlar (2011), in which places are located to different degrees in global networks, thus contributing to their scalar position and the likelihood of attracting specific groups of migrants.

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5   It must be noted however that the research took place before Brexit, which has likely reduced the attractiveness of the UK as a destination for the highly skilled due to stricter migration regulations and an anti-immigration political climate (Botterill et al., 2018; Cassidy et al., 2018).

Varieties of local migrant communities

A third important variation between the samples in Dortmund and Manchester builds on the above-mentioned differences. It relates to the ways that migrants are able to establish local social networks at their destinations and thus negotiate between the "roots" of local social embedding and the "routes" of remaining immersed in a set of transnational ties (Andreotti, Le Galès & Moreno Fuentes, 2013). It also deals with the tension between being able to develop a (place-based) "sense of belonging" and actually being invited to become part of the local urban society through the "politics of belonging" (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

After arriving, the workplace played an important role for both locales, but otherwise the local social networks of the Manchester group were much more cosmopolitan (*modern*) while the group in Dortmund relied more heavily on ethnic communities (*traditional*).

In Dortmund several of the interviewees mentioned having found access to existing migrant communities, based around shared national or cultural backgrounds (Plöger & Becker, 2015). This was mentioned particularly by respondents from China and Pakistan as well as Latin Americans (Spanish language):

> "I spend my free time with my family. Friday is the exception. There is a Pakistani community of university students, PhD students, co-workers. Every Friday we play cricket at the [...] parking area."
> (Naveed)

> "Mostly, of course, with my family and friends I met here in the Institute. So work colleagues basically, but also friends from the community, like people that we met in this Spanish [speaking] community."
> (Luis)

Both quotes illustrate that shared leisure activities are an important purpose behind the localised social networks of people from a similar background. Nonetheless, they are also used for advice on organising their lives and for resolving specific problems, for example finding appropriate accommodation or dealing with bureaucratic issues.

For the interviewees in Manchester, such "traditional" migrant communities based on shared ethnic or national backgrounds were almost irrelevant. Respondents in Manchester did however mention difficulties establishing local social networks when relying on *Mancunians* at first. For them, spatially fixed forms of local engagement like migrant associations lose relevance as they are mostly based on categories like ethnicity or nationality and directed towards longer-term stays (Plöger & Kubiak, 2019). Manchester apparently hosts a sufficiently large pool of mobile professionals, which makes newcomers less reliant on more traditional migrant communities. Non-affiliation with more traditional migrant communities while at the same time differentiating from "locals" or "non-mobiles" is possible when having access to a sufficiently large group of other cosmopolitans.

Access to these cosmopolitans was gained through designated websites, most prominently at the time of the research were www.internations.org, which organises the establishment of local communities of mobile professionals and www.meetup.com, which facilitates the establishment of groups based on shared interests or background usually focussing on specific (leisure) activities.

> "We use social websites like Internations and also Meetup. It really helps people like me who are mobile to meet other people who are in a similar situation."
>
> (Lin)

> "And the people I've met here … well, my friend circle is very international, very multicultural. We can have our own United Nations. Everyone's from everywhere, it's quite good."
>
> (Mahesh)

The emerging local social networks are predominantly composed of other mobile professionals with similar characteristics regarding, for example, mobility, age, family status, and career status. Many referred to themselves as "internationals" (Plöger & Kubiak, 2019).

Mainly due to the predominantly temporary nature of their stay, the group carries an inherent instability and is subject to constant reshaping. Some respondents – such as Mahesh – were aware of the volatile nature of their local social network:

"People move as well. So that's something you have to keep in mind. Cause the people I'm meeting here, they're also in my position, they're also mobile professionals. So, I don't know if they'll move away. So, we're forming bonds and ties… yet, next year, who knows, they might move somewhere else."

(Mahesh)

4.6   Summary of findings and comparison between cities

Dortmund and Manchester both attract highly skilled migrants. As pointed out, with the usual limitations of qualitative empirical studies, we must be careful not to overemphasise more generalised conclusions. The explorative nature does however allow us to identify interesting variations between the two cities.

First, individual biographies matter, particularly with regard to previous exposure to transnational mobility. With more cosmopolitan skills and experiences, highly skilled migrants tend to prefer more well-known places, positioned within global networks and with a certain image, over cities of lesser renown and less connected to global networks. In Manchester, we can see the emergence of a cluster of cosmopolitan mobile professionals, who move in specific circuits between more globalised places which provide the relevant opportunity structures for their purposes (Glick Schiller & Çağlar, 2011). This degree of cosmopolitanism was not evident through the Dortmund sample, which was generally less experienced regarding living and working abroad and more likely to return to their countries of origin.

Second, place-specific characteristics such as their embeddedness in global networks are relevant factors which contribute to the channelling of highly skilled migrants to specific places. More globally inserted (networks) or recognised (image) places like Manchester are regarded as more accessible in cultural terms. Here, migrants do not require much else to inform their decisions. In Dortmund on the other hand, without previous connections or ties which link migrants to the place, region, or nation, they would generally not have moved there. For stakeholders in places below the global radar this means that they have to invest more effort into attracting mobile professionals from abroad.

Establishing and further developing existing networks between institutions, employers or individuals are important in this respect.

Third, and connected to the second point, place-based characteristics also shape to what extent mobile professionals are able to establish local social networks and thus develop some sense of belonging (to place). For both cities, the work environment often constitutes the most important setting for engaging socially and building social ties. Yet, the two cities differ with regard to the opportunities for social interaction outside of the work sphere. While in Manchester highly skilled migrants have access to cosmopolitan communities of other mobile professionals, in Dortmund they are more likely to fall back on existing ethnic communities (based on common nationality or language).

Dortmund and Manchester therefore have surprisingly different arrival contexts for mobile professionals. Arguably, such findings should be reflected on by local and regional stakeholders when designing approaches aimed at attracting and retaining migrant talent. To be able to draw highly skilled talent towards specific cities, stakeholders benefit from understanding some of the factors that shape and channel such migration flows.

Highly skilled migrants are not a homogeneous group. As seen here, they vary considerably with regard to countries of origin, previous experience with mobility, family status, connections to place and culture, and lifestyles. These differences then shape what can be expected from these migrants in terms of local social incorporation as well as length of stay and likelihood of remaining.

In terms of recommendations for stakeholders this means to build on existing strengths and networks. Cities such as Dortmund which are less prominent in global imaginaries and networks can build on existing links to connect specific institutions such as universities, research institutes and private sector companies which operate in international networks. Many such links are already established and should be further strengthened rather than having to build up new links from scratch. The insights and value obtained from these links can then further shape and reinforce the channels through which highly skilled migrants arrive and find their way in a new place.

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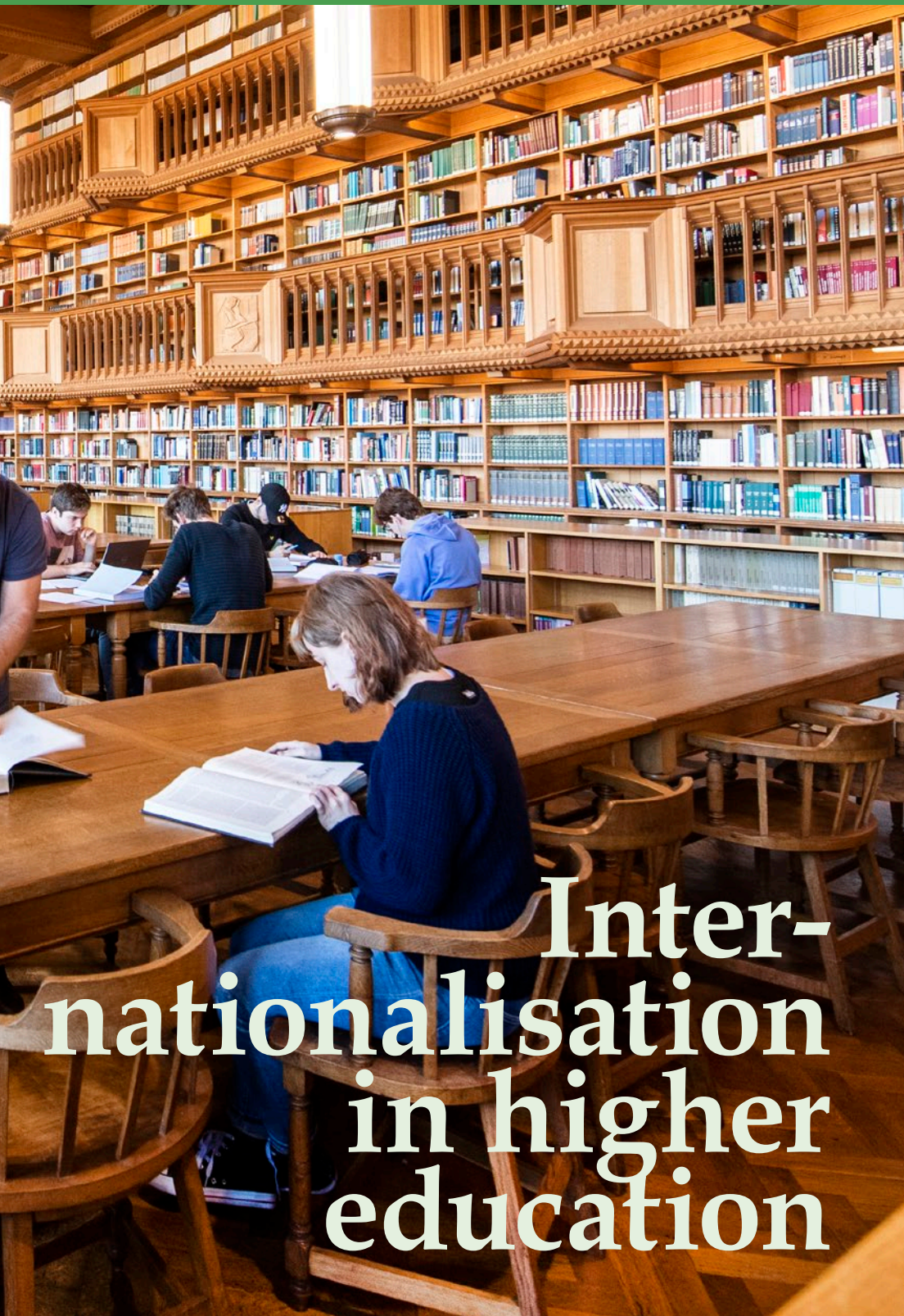
Inter-nationalisation in higher education

5 The International University in the European context

Marian Counihan and Willem van Winden

Institutes of higher education occupy a crucial position in knowledge-intensive economies, and just like other sectors are involved in the dynamics of globalisation and European integration. For universities, internationalisation is potentially valuable for many reasons: it can contribute to the quality of teaching and research, improve cultural exchange and mutual understanding, create "global citizenship" education, and prepare students for a globalised labour market. It can also generate knock-on positive effects for the region in terms of its economy and innovative capacity. (Knight, 2007; Gagliardi 2015; Chellaraj, Maskus & Mattoo, 2008; Lever, 2002). But how to do it well, and what are the possible downsides?

In this chapter we look at internationalisation dynamics for European universities, particularly in medium-sized cities. We start with some broad context, then reflect on past and recent policy developments and current challenges for internationalisation in higher education institutions, as well as some implications for urban governance partnerships. We include relevant examples from practice on the way.

5.1 Context

The "international turn" in European higher education

Europe is characterised by its high density of universities. The over 3,000 institutes of higher education represent around 20% of the world's total, even though Europe is home to just 10% of the world's population. This makes the role of universities in the European urban context highly relevant. There has always been an international dimension to academia; scholars have engaged in correspondence, exchange, and travel across borders as long as universities have been

around. But in recent decades, this international dimension has become much more central, as outlined by Hans de Wit in this volume. As the world of science becomes increasingly globally connected, so do universities.

In the European context, the past decades are characterised by a shift towards more co-ordination, integration, and global orientation within the higher education landscape. In 1987, the Erasmus programme for student mobility was launched. In 1989, the Bologna agreement for compatibility and mutual recognition of European education programmes was signed; in 2009 the ET2020 strategic framework was adopted, which included benchmarks for learning mobility.[1] The recent launch of "European Universities" as part of the development of the European Education Area, represents a next phase in integrated and competitive European higher education. In recent years, initiatives such as Erasmus Mundus have been introduced, representing a renewed focus on profiling European education internationally and attracting more international students. There is also increased knowledge sharing and collaboration in networks (such as Coimbra Group, the Guild, and more recently ENLIGHT[2]) between EU universities, in order to maintain their position in the face of existing and new competition. These developments demonstrate that internationalisation of European higher education is seen as a key driver to contribute to EU growth and development.[3]

From this perspective, all institutions of higher education in Europe have been part of an "international turn", regardless of their own strategies and goals, simply because they operate within the European context, with its goals of integrating and making higher education in Europe more attractive and more competitive worldwide.

Urban context

Europe is *also* characterised by the predominance of small and medium-sized cities, often with a regionally focused economy, as we have mentioned earlier in this volume (and see e.g., Dijkstra, Garcilazo & McCann, 2013). It's precisely

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1   https://ec.europa.eu/info/education/policy-educational-issues/shared-challenges-education-and-training/learning-mobility_en

2   https://www.coimbra-group.eu, https://www.the-guild.eu, https://enlight-eu.org

3   https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/eea-in-the-world/making-the-eu-attractive-for-foreign-students

the combination of globalising higher education institutions in the context of smaller, more regionally oriented cities that can lead to challenging dynamics, and which we will discuss in this chapter.

Indeed, European level developments play out very differently in different cities, depending on the national as well as regional contexts. Factors such as the political climate and immigration regulations shape the possibilities on a national level. At the regional level, factors such as demographic development and the structure of the economy determine what kind of internationalisation is desirable, or feasible. Finally, city governments may also have (more or less active) plans for recruiting residents for particular reasons, such as to fill local skills shortages or to offset ageing local populations (also see Plöger in Chapter 4 of this volume).

Regional demographic and economic pressures have often motivated an "international turn" at institutional level, as universities seek to maintain or increase student numbers by recruiting degree students from abroad. This is an especially relevant driver for universities in smaller European cities, in contrast to first-tier cities which generally have growing populations. Additionally, recruitment of international research talent has become a priority for research universities, as science has become more and more globally connected, and the need to profile research institutes in international rankings has grown.

On the other hand, in the past few years, increasing nationalistic sentiment in several European countries, geopolitical developments and the major disruption to mobility caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have challenged the "international turn" in higher education. We will discuss these in more detail below.

Finally, the type of internationalisation is shaped by the national higher education sector and its embedding in a "national institutional environment" (Graf, 2009), including the way the higher education sector relates to the state, labour market and industry. For instance, internationalisation strategies in the UK have been more commercially oriented because of the need to generate new streams of income to not rely solely on state funding. By contrast, in Germany internationalisation has traditionally focused on not-for-profit projects for network building and collaboration with specific partners (Graf, 2009).

5.2   Internationalisation policy development in higher education

As De Wit (in this volume) points out, almost all higher education institutions mention internationalisation in their mission or strategic plan nowadays. In the European setting it is a strategic priority: two thirds of the countries in the European Higher Education Area adopted national internationalisation strategies by 2018, an increase from one third just three years earlier (16 countries in 2015 against 32 in 2018) (Leask & de Gayardon, 2021).

For some universities, internationalisation is a top strategic priority. KU Leuven states its primary strategic project is to become "truly international", making "the transition from a national university with a global reputation to a truly international university, both in the North and in the South."[4] But internationalisation also features high on the agenda for smaller universities, such as the University of Magdeburg: "Internationalisation is […] a central, strategic element in the positioning of the University of Magdeburg when it comes to research and teaching competitiveness. Through the globalisation of the academic system, it has become an essential regulating factor and serves as an engine for creativity and innovation in research, teaching, and knowledge transfer."[5]

But what does internationalisation mean in practice? Strategies for internationalisation combine two dimensions: *outgoing* ("internationalisation abroad") and *incoming* (including internationalisation "at home").

Outgoing internationalisation includes building networks and strategic alliances with educational and other institutional partners, both within and beyond Europe. Exchange agreements, joint or double degree diplomas, "sandwich" PhDs and research collaborations are the types of outcomes which arise from such networks and partnerships. Sometimes new locations ("branch campuses") have even been included in this strategy, although this has been more common for US, UK, and Australian universities. There is also increased knowledge sharing and collaboration in networks (such as Coimbra Group, the Guild, and more recently ENLIGHT) between EU universities, in order to maintain their position in the face of existing and new competition.[6]

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4   https://www.kuleuven.be/english/about-kuleuven/strategic-plan/truly-international
5   https://www.ovgu.de/unimagdeburg/en/International/Internationalisation-p-23870.html
6   https://www.coimbra-group.eu, https://www.the-guild.eu, https://enlight-eu.org

Figure 5.1 University Hall, KU Leuven

Incoming internationalisation refers to the recruitment and facilitation of international students and staff to the home campus, and the accordant adjustments and developments this brings about. Activities include recruitment and practical facilitation but also programme level changes and other local developments. These dimensions are of course related to each other, and both are necessary for

successful internationalisation. In this chapter we focus on the latter aspect of incoming internationalisation "at home", because of its direct relevance to the urban context.

Moving from quantity to quality

For most institutes of higher education, incoming internationalisation firstly focused on simply recruiting *more* international students, both for exchange and full degree programmes. This usually entailed setting up English-language versions of existing programmes, or sometimes developing new programmes specifically for this purpose. Different countries have had different rationales for recruiting international students, some with more emphasis on the economic aspects than others (Graf, 2009). In this section, we reflect on the shift away from quantity and discuss examples of differentiated student recruitment, before briefly discussing the internationalisation of academic staff.

> "It's important to choose partners strategically, not just for financial reasons. *[...]* Money is never a good driver for internationalisation"
> (Mervin Bakker, head of international strategy and relations, University of Groningen)

The emphasis in what is often the first phase of internationalisation has been on *quantity*: generating more visibility and recruiting globally, in order to increase incoming international student numbers, and is associated with a competitive model of higher education (De Wit, 2010). This fits with the "massification" of higher education in the past decades (Teichler, 1998; Guri-Rosenblit, Šebková & Teichler, 2007; also see De Wit in this volume). It's not necessarily a desire to compete or grow; the focus on numbers is sometimes necessary to simply maintain student numbers overall. Since many rural areas in Europe are ageing and shrinking, universities which have traditionally served the regional population need to recruit further afield if they want to avoid shrinking student numbers and decreased programme offerings.

But a focus on quantity alone can lead to problems, such as a shortage of suitable student housing, lack of institutional infrastructure to support the growth (e.g. in human resourcing and academic facilities such as lecture halls) and a mismatch between graduates and the local labour market. So just focusing

on *more* is not the wisest option; institutions should have a clear idea of their direction for the future, the areas or studies they want to focus on, and the alignment of attraction of talent with the strategic mission of the university and the needs and capacities of the city; this should be a consideration in any attraction activity. From the basic answer to the *why* question, the university can consider market segmentation, a development that is often a second phase of internationalisation. This implies a shift from quantity to quality, or differentiated recruitment.

Additionally, there is a lot of variety across Europe in motivations for internationalisation, and some of these fit much better in the "co-operative model" (De Wit, 2010; Graf, 2009). In the German context, internationalisation strategies have been largely culturally driven. One example is the University of Magdeburg, which invests in relationship building with long-term academic partners for reasons of cultural and academic exchange. Students have been attracted through existing networks such as international German language schools, and scholarship programmes, and are not approached primarily as a source of extra income. The university has long-standing relationships with educational partners in developing countries, focused on educating international students in its areas of specialisation, such as various engineering, sustainability, and sport sciences programmes.

Differentiated recruitment, or the segmentation of target groups, can be based on country of origin, field of study, level of study (Bachelor, Master, PhD), but also on students' motivations. Concerning the latter, the following division of student types – based on a study of international students coming to the US – can be useful (Choudaha, Orosz & Chang, 2012):

- *Strivers* (30% of international students): who are highly ambitious and selective in the universities they choose (preferring highly ranked institutions), but can be low on financial means,
- *Strugglers* (21%): who have limited resources, but are less selective concerning their institutions,
- *Explorers* (25%): who not only have academic interests but see studying abroad as a personal experience. They tend to go to second-tier institutions,
- *Highflyers* (24%): who tend to be wealthy, and are prestige-seeking, so they typically aim for the highest ranked universities.

It is important to note that there is wide variety in international students; they are not all coming from wealthy backgrounds, nor are they all high achievers (Caruana, 2012). Recent research shows that the socio-economic profile of international students is becoming more diverse; those from lower SES backgrounds or first-generation students are increasingly also seeking opportunities to study abroad, either for degree or exchange programmes (Waters & Brooks, 2021).

Some examples of how this segmentation is applied are:

- Aalborg University and Delft University of Technology: specifically aim to attract academically high-achieving students, no matter where they come from.
- The University of Tartu focuses on particular nations (see box).
- The University of Parma targets students in fields related to food and nutrition, in line with their status as UNESCO City of Gastronomy.

> The University of Tartu in Estonia has a very clear recruitment strategy: they focus on three national markets (Latvia, China, Belarus). Beyond that, they go for specific target groups based on the study programmes and country profile, e.g., Finland and medicine. On the national level, they co-operate with other Estonian universities in the Study in Estonia programme to reach other target markets.

In choosing target groups, it is helpful for the university to closely align its activities with national recruitment organisations (such as DAAD in Germany and Campus France in France). The process of choosing target markets should be organised well; the right actors must be involved so that the process does not depend on a single person or dominant faculties but becomes a shared and rational process. Long relations with partner cities, regions and universities help to build trust and a good reputation. Important instruments in this respect are partnership agreements, exchange programmes and summer courses. Returning students can be ambassadors for the host and entice more students to follow their lead.

International staff

In many European countries, the academic labour market has become international, attracting candidates from all over the world. Most important in this respect is the quality of the research group: PhDs or postdocs are attracted to research groups with a strong scientific reputation, as this increases their chance of raising their own research profile. Existing contacts through academic networks are often a first step towards employment opportunities, which means that general campaigns to attract researchers do not make much sense for these groups.

For universities with a lower research profile, it can be more difficult to attract top international researchers, but quality of life, favourable employment conditions, and family-friendly workplaces can also play an important role in attracting research talent. Job opportunities for spouses ("dual career" programmes) are increasingly important for location decisions.

Facilitating the integration of international staff into university life once they are hired is also necessary for successful internationalisation but has been lacking from many universities' strategies until now. Understanding the perception and needs of foreign researchers is key. Universities (and cities) can do much to understand the needs, problems, and challenges of their new staff or citizens. Please refer to the chapter on socio-cultural integration in this volume for more on this topic.

5.3   Current developments and challenges

In this section, we discuss both institutional and societal level internationalisation challenges which are currently relevant for European universities, and good practices which address these. In some universities, internationalisation is still in its early stages, for others, it is now quite advanced. Regardless of the phase, explicit reflection on the underlying reasons for internationalising is valuable, as well as a shared understanding of what is needed to make internationalisation work well given current challenges, and to limit the possible downsides.

Institutional readiness

Universities' internationalisation policy may be well-developed, as well as parts of the implementation. For instance, in many cases, the recruitment process of international students has been professionalised: it is done by specialised agencies, operating nationally and internationally, which "sell" study destinations and universities. In some cases, quantitative targets are set (for example, the German DAAD set their ambition to 350,000 international students annually for Germany). But often, the university organisation itself lags behind these strategic and recruitment-phase developments. Ideally, internationalisation policy is developed in alignment with "institutional readiness" for its implementation. In practice, this means that academic staff *and* administrative staff should be involved in internationalisation policy and implementation. This includes, for instance, ensuring that teaching staff have sufficient language proficiency (usually English) and intercultural competence to deal with an international classroom. Also, although study programmes might be in English, students and staff still need to be able to communicate with the library, education committees, HR, student services, et cetera. Support staff will also interact with international staff and students and could also benefit from extra language or skills training. Welcoming or onboarding programmes for new students and staff will need to be developed beyond the nationally oriented versions, as international students and staff will have different and additional informational needs upon arrival. And last but certainly not least, adjustments to the educational programmes themselves, including both curricula and classroom dynamics, have a crucial role in the success of internationalisation (Leask, 2015), and deserve careful attention after initially having been rather neglected in the process of internationalising.

More generally, it is hugely beneficial to create a shared understanding among local staff and the student population of the *why* of internationalisation – what are the reasons, and what are the benefits – and to consider what support the existing organisation needs before and during the transition to a more international operating context. This process of "sense-giving" (Warwick, 2014, p. 94) is often missing from universities' internationalisation strategies.

The broader "implementation gap"

The readiness for internationalisation also manifests as a gap with regard to implementation in the wider urban setting, particularly in municipal and social services. In the cities the international students or staff arrive in, there are still many practical barriers to do with facilities and services. Consider informational access to essential services such as utilities, rubbish collection and recycling, internet, et cetera, as well as access to healthcare, including mental and sexual health services. Many relevant documents and information sources will not have been translated. Language and cultural barriers need to be considered, and the universities have a key role to play in providing extra information and support to international staff and students. Universities benefit from working with institutional stakeholders to close this gap, but maintain a role in serving as a conduit for relevant information and resources for the staff and students they host.

Housing

For universities which attract large numbers of international students such as Leuven and Groningen, the supply of affordable student housing is starting to become a major issue. In recent years, the University of Groningen has worked with the municipality to supply emergency accommodation for students arriving at the start of the academic year, but the situation has been so dire that students have even been advised not to come if they haven't been able to find housing before arriving.[7] Additionally, international students often face discrimination in the housing market. In several cities, there have been well-publicised problems with local landlords as well as national students who do not want to offer accommodation to or share it with international students. As a double disadvantage, international students usually have little access to legal support in case of overcharging and other problems with private landlords.

In some cases, universities are able to arrange accommodation for students but in other countries the university has little means to do so, and the official responsibility lies solely with the municipality. Co-ordination with local stakeholders and government can be extremely helpful and even necessary, to ensure affordable housing for all students, but this remains an ongoing challenge.

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7   https://ukrant.nl/emergency-housing-hard-to-arrange-city-worried-about-homeless-students-once-more/?lang=en

Mutual acculturation and cross-cultural interaction

Related to the above, having international students and staff on campus is not only a quantitative phenomenon; it implies new diversity in campus culture. This can lead to cultural divides and students self-segregating (Caruana, 2012 & 2014), which diminishes not only student well-being but also the potential to benefit from the cross-cultural interaction which contributes to global citizenship education. This applies both to the classroom setting and outside of it (see the discussion of the "hidden curriculum" in Leask, 2015). There is also a practical facilities aspect to this point: differences in cultural and religious practices, as well as leisure and sport activities can be expected. How can students be facilitated and included in a way that engenders cross-cultural contact instead of cultural divides? Please refer to the chapters on socio-cultural integration in this volume for more on this topic.

Figure 5.2 Students on either side of a canal, Groningen

Mobility and blended learning post-COVID

The COVID-19 pandemic severely disrupted mobility for both students and staff and forced universities to adapt new educational methods almost overnight. The long-term impact remains to be seen, but many universities have stated a commitment to blended learning since the pandemic, making distance and online learning a more integral part of their educational offering.

Europe supports this with the introduction of Blended Intensive Programmes[8] short credit programmes which contain a compulsory virtual element, recently added to the Erasmus+ range of offerings. These blended programmes offer new opportunities for universities which serve students with mobility restrictions or those from outside of the EU, and increases access for non-traditional learners who would normally not have access or consider studying at an EU university (because of e.g. age, or socio-economic situation). These groups can contribute to the universities culturally through academic input and collaboration.

The civic university

A societal level development which impacts on internationalisation concerns the position of higher education institutes in society at large. Universities have always had a core societal role through education and research, but recently the relationship between "town and gown" and the importance of the "civic university" has come to the foreground again in debates about internationalisation (see also De Wit's Chapter 6 in this volume).

Briefly, how can the "global" university fulfil its role and have a positive impact in the wider community, which is possibly much more "local"? Both obstacles *and* opportunities can be found.

Language barriers are a primary obstacle in outreach programmes involving international students and staff. However, when sufficient shared language skills are present, there are great opportunities for the local community to benefit from the networks, skills, and innovative capacity of international students and staff. This also feeds into labour market integration; involvement of students in local or regional (research) projects helps them develop cultural understanding and local connections and might open up internship or job opportunities later.

Another consideration regarding the societal role of the university is assessing which professions are needed in the regional or national context. If there is a shortage of doctors, for example, it does not make sense to exclude national students from medical programmes to the benefit of international students who

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8   https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-b-information-about-the-actions-covered-by-this-guidekey-action-1-learning-mobility-of-individualsmobility-project-for-higher-education-students-and-staff

are not likely to stay on and work in local healthcare, but instead will return to their countries of origin. On the other hand, if there are too few local students in, for instance, STEM programmes, recruitment of international students for these studies might make a lot of sense for the regional economy.

Inclusive internationalisation has two faces

Access to higher education should be within reach for all young people. How do we understand and improve equity in access? Recent EU agreements on internationalisation outline "the need for better support to enable vulnerable and underrepresented groups to access and excel in higher education."[9] We can distinguish two sides to this drive to be more inclusive: the first concerning national students, the second regarding the diversity within the international student population.

Firstly, there is a need to make sure that national students are not "crowded out" if international students take up spaces in selective programmes. At the time of writing, this topic is being discussed in the media (e.g. in the UK, recent media coverage suggested that "record numbers of British teenagers have been rejected by elite universities in favour of lucrative overseas students."[10]) and is negatively affecting the perception of internationalisation. Additionally, English programmes for international students may make study less accessible for national students because they lack the necessary language proficiency. In the Netherlands, there has been much discussion about the relative language barriers which Dutch students face if programmes are only offered in English.

A second aspect of inclusive internationalisation concerns the international students themselves. Traditionally seen as a homogenous and privileged group, there is increasing understanding that there is much diversity in the backgrounds of international students. Factors such as social class, gender, country of origin, and migration status, shape students' experiences and the obstacles they face while abroad, and how they cope with them (Waters & Brooks, 2021, Caruana, 2014).

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9   http://www.ehea2018.paris
10 https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/a-level-results-uk-students-shut-out-oxford-cambridge-universities-overseas-3qtskq3cc

Related to this is access to higher education for migrants who have come through asylum or refugee status routes. Prospective students in this group might need a foundational or bridging programme to fill gaps in their previous attainment before ending the university, but many universities neither offer nor recognise such educational pathways, so there is work to be done here. An example of good practice in this area comes from the Hanze University of Applied Sciences in Groningen which offers a preparatory year for students with a migration status,[11] in which they learn study skills and follow courses to prepare them for entering higher education programmes in the Netherlands.

In sum, the search for more inclusivity in higher education needs to consider all these aspects, and inclusion should be integrated into the broader strategy of universities and their goals in internationalisation, as outlined in further detail below.

Geopolitics and knowledge security

Finally, geopolitical developments such as the rise of China and more recently, the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, have an impact on internationalisation dynamics in higher education. Foreign interference in academic contexts is increasingly high on the agenda of European governments and universities (Teer, 2022). The balance between academic freedom and national security considerations is under scrutiny, as issues such as political influence, self-censorship, unwanted knowledge and technology transfer, dual use of technologies, and knowledge security in general, gain importance. How to make sure that Europe's open and internationalised higher education sector does not inadvertently contribute to the military strength of geopolitical rivals?

An example of how this is being tackled at the institutional level is found at TU Delft, which has published practical tips for researchers and academic departments to help them to mitigate the risks of research co-operation, and has stopped accepting PhD students from certain institutes because of their potential ties to the Chinese military. The higher education sector can be helped by national guidelines and restrictions. For instance, the Dutch government in collaboration with European partners, recently established plans to define and protect

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11   https://www.hanze.nl/nld/onderwijs/talentontwikkeling/grotius-programma

"high-risk" fields from unwanted knowledge transfer and to protect technologies which could be misused for military ends or to gain a technological advantage.[12] National or even European restrictions and authorities take the pressure off universities to make decisions themselves on who – and who not – to work with, but universities should also be aware of the terms and risks of their student recruitment and research partnerships.

5.4   Implications for strategy and governance

The challenges above show that even when internationalisation is successful in a basic quantitative sense, there are always challenges and possible downsides. To truly become a successful international university, internationalisation policy needs to be well thought out and integrated into the broader strategic aims of the university, and if possible, the region. In this final section we reflect on the implications for strategy, co-ordination, and governance.

On practical topics such as housing, access to services, social integration, and cohesion, co-ordination between local parties is almost unavoidable. The sooner universities and local government and other stakeholders work together on such topics, the better. A shared sense of the priorities and needs will make any collaboration more effective.

Ideally, all stakeholders would work with a shared vision of the goals and ambitions for internationalisation, linking the aims of the university to those of the city, region or even country. This is something to work on from the early stages of internationalisation, so even cities who are still focused on numbers should be considering strategic collaboration in this sense.

Linking the internationalisation strategy to the sector strengths or "unique selling points" of the city at large can be particularly helpful. It helps to attract students and staff who fit the needs of the city, and makes it easier to find the target groups. Many smaller and medium-sized cities do not have a very strong reputation or "brand", but the university can play a positive role in developing one. Parma is an exemplary case in this respect. The city and university both link

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12   https://www.delta.tudelft.nl/article/new-desk-knowledge-security-universities-facing-dilemmas

internationalisation to the city's very specific strength and reputation (recognized by UNESCO) as a city of food, nutrition, and gastronomy. This theme has been developed along several lines (food related science and education, events, tourism, food industry, security, et cetera), and also forms the basis for the internationalisation strategy of the university and the city. In education, Parma presents itself as a pivotal international centre for postgraduate training in food and nutrition fields. This positioning takes advantage of a strong network within top European institutions, including EFSA, which will attract experts in different fields of risk assessment, food safety, food security, food law, methodology, nutrition, and other related areas. Programmes include visiting professor and training programmes at the PhD, masters, and professional level.

More generally, a common strategy between city and university (also including other stakeholders) helps to align efforts and can make these more effective. In many cities, internationalisation is an ambition of both the city government and the university. There are many practical collaborations in subfields, and the key players interact for specific projects. Nevertheless, there is work to be done to make collaborations more strategic. In many medium-sized cities, despite agreement on the aim of internationalisation and its benefits, and a relatively fast growth of international students, there is no shared strategy between urban stakeholders. The city and university have not defined specific target groups, performance indicators, or marketing strategies. There is often insufficient attention given to post-recruitment needs for local facilities and services, and cities and universities indicate a lack of co-operative planning on these matters.

A more comprehensive strategic collaborative approach can lead to more effective recruitment, better shared service provision, and better retention of graduates for the local labour market. Done well, internationalisation can therefore enhance the overall goals of educational institutions and contribute to regional development. Please refer to the chapters on governance and labour market integration for more on these topics.

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6 The internationalising university and cities: local and global challenges and opportunities

Hans de Wit

6.1 Context and introduction

Universities and other types of post-secondary education over the past four decades have internationalised in an increasing but also diversified way. Rumbley et al. (2022) state that "internationalisation in higher education is a multifaceted and evolving phenomenon. It touches on a wide scope of issues and can be defined in a multitude of ways" (p. 19), and Hunter et al. (2022) in a critical overview and analysis of higher education internationalisation concepts and definitions note that "the concept of internationalisation continues to be refined and revised, and theories and definitions adjusted to match new and evolving understandings" (p. 70). Internationalisation in higher education over the past four decades has evolved from a marginal and ad hoc range of activities to a more comprehensive and central process, a key strategic agenda for universities around the globe, with a diverse range of rationales and drivers, organisational and programme strategies, and involvement of a broad range of stakeholders, but at the same time has taken a broad range of approaches and actions. Internationalisation is not one model that fits all; its diversity is institutionally, locally, nationally, and regionally shaped, and has changed and evolved over time in response to changing contexts and challenges.

International co-operation and partnership in research and education has been increasing substantively in the global knowledge economy. According to the 5th Global Survey of Internationalisation of Higher Education by the Inter-

national Association of Universities (IAU), based on data from 2018, more than 90% of institutions mention internationalisation in their mission or strategic plan (Marinoni, 2019). "Enhanced international co-operation and capacity building," and "improved quality of teaching and learning," are mentioned as the most important benefits. "International opportunities accessible only to students with financial resources," followed by "difficulty to assess/recognize the quality of courses/programs offered by foreign institutions," as well as "excessive competition with other higher education institutions," are mentioned as the highest risks. The main obstacles mentioned include "insufficient financial resources, […] administrative/bureaucratic difficulties, [and] lack of foreign languages" (Marinoni, 2019; see also De Wit & Altbach, 2021). The survey states that two thirds of university leaders around the world consider internationalisation to be an important agenda item, although Marinoni and De Wit (2019) observe that there is an increasing divide between institutions that consider internationalisation as highly important, and those that do not. In other words, there are universities that are aspiring to become fully international and others that still have a more marginal and ad hoc approach to internationalisation.

How do institutions of higher education respond to the rising importance of internationalisation and its related challenges? How can they influence and respond to local concerns and needs, and what are emerging opportunities for universities as local and global players in a more complex world? These questions will be addressed and positioned in the context of global and European trends in international higher education, with specific attention to the relationship between internationalisation of universities and their location in cities.

6.2 Historical dimensions

Many publications on the internationalisation of higher education refer back to the Middle Ages and the Renaissance period, when, in addition to religious pilgrims, university students and professors travelling the roads of Europe were a familiar sight (De Ridder-Symoens, 1992). De Wit and Altbach (2021) remark that "While limited and scattered in comparison to the European Higher Education Area we know today, we may still speak of a medieval "European space"

defined by a common religion, a shared language (Latin), and a common set of academic practices" (p. 29).

One could add to these features, the identification with the cities they were based and founded in. As the nation states were still in an early stage of development, the universities they attended were identified by the cities they are located in; most of them (although not all) are in what we would call now medium-sized cities, such as Bologna in Italy (1088), Oxford in England (1096), Salamanca in Spain (1134), Paris in France (1160), and Coimbra in Portugal (1290).

By the end of the 15th century, the picture had changed. Three quarters of students went to study at a university in their own region, (De Wit & Merkx, 2022), the number of institutions increased substantively, and the nation state became the key base for higher education, replacing the city. Most universities originated in the 18th and 19th centuries with a distinct national orientation and function. One can speak of a process of de-Europeanization: "Universities became institutions that served the professional needs and ideological demands of the new nation states in Europe. Mobility was rarely encouraged and was even prohibited." (De Wit & Altbach, 2021, p. 30) Whereas the Middle Ages, the Reformation, and the Enlightenment were according to Kolasa (1962) periods of "natural, not organised or regimented, flow of culture, and of free wandering of the creators of that culture across political frontiers" (p. 12), the emergence of political and cultural nationalism challenged this seriously: prohibition of study abroad, displacement of Latin, and replacement of the academic pilgrimage by the more cultural grand tour (Hammerstein, 1996).

De Wit and Merkx (2022) describe the period from the end of the Renaissance to the beginning of the 20th century as predominantly national higher education, "more directed to developing a national identity and serving national needs and less to amassing universal knowledge" (p. 31). Scott (1998) even goes as far as stating that "paradoxically perhaps, before it became an international institution the university had first to become a national institution – just as internationalisation presupposes the existence of nation states" (p. 123).

6.3 The 20th century university and international co-operation

In the first half of the 20th century, promoting peace and mutual understanding through international co-operation and exchange came to the forefront. De Wit and Altbach (2021) mention the creation of the Institute of International Education (IIE) in the United States in 1919, of the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD) in Germany in 1925, and of the British Council in the United Kingdom in 1934 as illustrations of this development. According to De Wit and Merkx (2022) "the first two decades of the 20th century show a growth in mobility, in particular movement towards the United States, more attention from private organisations and foundations for study abroad, and the start of institutional exchange and study abroad programs" (p. 32).

The US took a leading role, mainly as a result of the increased immigration of scholars from Europe. As Goodwin and Nacht (1991) describe, "Views of the world in US higher education were transformed almost overnight by World War II. From a cultural colony the nation was changed, at least in its own eyes, into the metropolis; from the periphery it moved triumphantly to the center" (pp. 4-5).

After World War II, the Fulbright programme of 1946 strengthened the focus on peace and mutual understanding, but gradually rationales of national security and foreign policy took over. The Cold War became the principal rationale to foster an international dimension of higher education, in the US but also in the Soviet Union. In Europe, according to Neave (1992), academic mobility in the period 1950-1970 was "overwhelmingly voluntarist, unorganised and individual" (p. 15), and Baron (1993) describes it as "benevolent laissez-faire" (p. 50). Universities played a rather passive role as receivers of international students, and institutions, governments, and the European Community lacked internationalisation policies. Most activities took place in the context of bilateral cultural and academic agreements or development co-operation and were rather limited in scope.

Massification and differentiation in higher education

The post-World War II period is one of massification and differentiation in higher education. As Altbach et al. (2017) state, "Once the privilege of an elite social

class, gross enrolment ratios (the participation rate for the cohort between 18-24 years of age) in postsecondary education have mushroomed to more than 50% in many countries" (p. xii). This has put pressure on national governments to react and resulted in a diverse range of responses: diversity without differentiation, differentiation between public and private higher education, differentiation within the traditional university sector between world-class universities and more national and regional institutions, and differentiation beyond the traditional university: the creation of universities of applied sciences and other types of professional education. (Altbach et al., 2017)

In the 1980s, the geopolitical context changed as a result of the strengthening of the European Community and the rise of Japan as an economic world power, challenging the economic and political dominance of the US. Initiatives by the European Commission to stimulate research and development and student and faculty mobility among its members, started to develop, even though the European Commission did not have a mandate to invest in education until the Maastricht Treaty of 1992. The flagship Erasmus programme grew out of smaller initiatives that had been introduced in Germany and Sweden in the 1970s and a European pilot programme in the early 1980s (De Wit, 2002). In the 1990s, Erasmus and similar programmes were regrouped under the umbrella programme SOCRATES, which has more recently evolved into Erasmus+, an even broader programme embracing education, sports, and youth initiatives. As De Wit and Altbach (2021) note, "program activities have always been based on co-operation through student and staff exchanges, joint curriculum development, and joint research projects, and the enthusiastic institutional response to these programs set a clear path for the European approach to internationalisation" (p. 30).

Erasmus impacted the reform of higher education not only through the exchange of students and staff. It piloted the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and initiated access to EU membership for countries in Central and Eastern Europe and other aspiring candidates, and paved the way for both the Bologna Process as of 1999 and the realisation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) (De Wit et al., 2015).

Political rationales were driving the Commission and its members, as Kerr (1994) notes, because they realised that "it has been to the advantage of na-

tion-states to support the expansion of higher education and its internationalisation, within and beyond their borders" (p. 20).

Cities play a marginal role in this process, although some reference to and sentiment of the medieval role of cites in higher education development still prevails, for instance in the creation of university networks like the Coimbra Group of oldest universities in Europe, created in 1985 and the Compostela Group of Universities, created in 1994 and referencing the pilgrimage Camino de Compostela in Spain. Another network referencing the cities its universities belong to is UNICA, Network of Universities from the Capitals of Europe, created 1990. These and other networks of universities have only a marginal link to their cities and are more European (and increasingly global) and institutional than national or local in their focus.

6.4   Internationalisation after the 1990s: from ad hoc and marginal to strategic

The end of the Cold War, the process of Europeanisation and other forms of regionalisation, as well as the global knowledge economy, have forced universities in the 1990s to respond and to become international actors themselves. National and regional programmes (in the US Fulbright and Title VI programmes, in Europe research grant programmes such as Horizon 2020, and the Erasmus+ mobility scheme of the European Commission) stimulated and supported institutions of higher education in their drive towards more strategic internationalisation. At the same time, the dominance of political rationales of peace and mutual understanding but also of national security shifted towards more economic drivers for internationalisation. Both in the US and in Europe during the 1990s, a shift took place towards economic competitiveness. Van der Wende (2001) speaks in that respect of a change in paradigms from co-operation to competition, although not fully at the expense of the more traditional approach to internationalisation. In this process, the European region became more dominant as a driver for internationalisation. The research framework programmes, Erasmus/Socrates for mobility, and the start of the Bologna Process in 1999, are exemplary in this respect.

The global knowledge economy

Whereas massification was the dominant development in higher education in the previous century, since the turn of the 21st century the increasing importance of the global knowledge economy – the increasingly technology and science-based globalised set of economic relations which requires high levels of knowledge, skills, and sophisticated international relations – has become the main driver of development in higher education, with research-intensive universities playing a central role. As De Wit and Altbach (2021) state: "Research universities are among the more internationally linked institutions. They have strong links with similar institutions around the globe, host international faculty and students, and in increasing numbers function in the global language of science and scholarship – English" (p. 32). Excellence initiatives are being implemented in many countries and competition for funding, talents, and access to top academic journals and to top positions in global rankings become driving forces for internationalisation and mobility. These have brought about a differentiation within national systems, by separating an elite sector of world-class level universities from other, more nationally and regionally oriented, research universities. Rankings – national, regional, global, institutional, by discipline, and across an increasing number of other dimensions – have come to play a central role in the construction of excellence schemes. Marginson (2017) states that "global ranking has remade global higher education as a relational environment" (pp. 6-7), through competition, referring to higher education as a competitive market of universities and countries; through hierarchy, as a core element of the system of valuation; and through performance, leading to "an often frenetic culture of continuous improvement in each institution" (Marginson, 2017, p. 7).

The global knowledge economy has also driven student mobility. Over 5 million students received cross-border education in 2019, more than double the number of ten years before, and that has been the trend decade on decade, really since the 1950s. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the estimations were that this number would increase to at least 8 million in 2025. Although definitions and data are not commonly agreed upon and there are different types and levels of mobility, the trend has been clear, as are some of the main characteristics: mobility for a full degree is predominantly South-North, while mobility as part of the home degree is mostly North-North; the main recipient countries are

Anglophone (US, UK, Australia, Canada), with France, Germany and more recently China and Russia following (although recent geopolitical developments might shift this), as well as countries teaching substantively in English (such as the Netherlands), and the main sending countries are China and India. Middle-income countries have the largest flows of outbound mobile students, followed by upper-middle-income countries, while low-income countries send out the smallest number of outbound students, but have the highest outbound mobility (5% of students in tertiary education in low-income countries study abroad). On the inbound side, high-income countries enrol three quarters of all globally mobile students, compared to one fifth for upper-middle-income countries (De Wit et al., 2022).

Cities as emerging actors in internationalisation

It is in this context of the global knowledge economy and society: excellence initiatives, rankings, branding and reputation, as well as differentiation with a strong focus on world-class universities, that cities become key actors again. Building on the reputation of Silicon Valley as well as knowledge centres like Boston in the US, cities in Europe and elsewhere began to appreciate their higher education institutions as centres of talent, research and development, innovation, and branding (as presented for instance in regional and global rankings) (Van der Winden et al., 2014). The link between cities and universities became more predominant, for instance in the EUniverCities Network, created in 2012, in which medium-sized cities as well as universities work together in order to give knowledge cities more visibility within Europe.[1] Also, several of the European University Alliances, created since 2019 under the European Universities Initiative of the European Commission, include links with their cities.[2]

International innovation, research and development are thus high on urban agendas, but conversely, location also has an impact on international education. A global ranker, QS World Universities Ranking, has started to rank the "Best Student Cities for Studying Abroad" and although most of the Top 100 cities are capital cities and in Europe, also a substantial number of medium-sized cities

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1   https://eunivercitiesnetwork.com
2   https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/higher-education/european-universities-initiative

are represented. Another ranking body, Times Higher Education, includes the most international universities but also in this ranking, institutions in medium-sized cities are present. And although one can question the value of such rankings, and rankings in general – Blanco et al. (2022) speak in that respect of "an unfortunate alliance of rankings and internationalisation" – their existence is an indication of the importance of location and internationality in both higher education and the knowledge society.

In addition to the shift in paradigm from co-operation to competition and as such towards economic rationales, political rationales have also become more dominant again, but with a shift from peace and mutual understanding towards soft power, or as Knight (2020) calls it, "knowledge diplomacy". One can see such a shift in national policies of internationalisation in a wide range of countries, including China, India, and Russia, but also France and Germany.

Cities become key factors in attracting international students, particularly capital cities but also other student-centred medium-sized cities. Michael Green, senior associate VP of College Relations & Advising at IES Abroad, recently referred to the inclination many students have to study in capital cities: "There certainly is demand for more provincial cities, too, but the capital city is the biggest draw. They've always been a draw, but even more so now" (PIE News, June 10, 2022).

A counterreaction: from competition back to co-operation?

The internationalisation of higher education is undeniable but at the same time it has its negative effects and is encountering many challenges. Internationalisation is an elitist and exclusive phenomenon in that only a small number of students, staff and institutions benefit from it, and in particular in the Global North. It is a process in which the main focus is still on mobility for a small minority of students, staff, programmes, and institutions, at the European level approximately 15-20% but globally less than 2%. De Wit et al. (2022) state: "international student mobility might well contribute to increased global inequality between sending and receiving countries and institutions, as well as between students who have access to these opportunities and students who don't. An international student recruitment policy also needs to address its serious ethical and social consequences" (p. 299). Increasing concerns about 1) an

overly economic lens on internationalisation in the sense of focus on revenue generation and competition, and of 2) a shift from local to English language dominance, and 3) recruitment of international students at the costs of access and quality education for local students as well as 4) adequate services (such as student housing), feature in current debate in politics, media and the higher education community. The situation in the Netherlands is illustrative of these concerns (Unangst, Altbach & De Wit, 2022; Van Donselaar, Geurts & Hobees, 2022), but it is also present elsewhere. De Wit et al. (2022) conclude in their analysis of international student mobility and recruitment in non-Anglophone countries, that "countries with education export ambitions must take a systematic and comprehensive approach to recruitment. Such an approach must involve strategic and operational initiatives in the framework of comprehensive internationalisation – and not be primarily driven by rationales of revenue generation, soft power, and rising in the rankings. Being driven primarily by those three rationales is unrealistic for most non-Anglophone countries, in particular in low- and middle-income countries, and will contribute to further global inequality and exclusion of systems, institutions, and individuals" (p. 299).

De Wit and Altbach (2021, pp. 34-35) summarise trends on internationalisation over the past decades as follows:

- "Greater focus on internationalisation abroad than on internationalisation at home.
- More ad hoc, fragmented, and marginal than strategic, comprehensive, and central in the policies of universities and governments.
- Benefiting a small, elite subset of students, faculty, and institutions rather than aiming for global and intercultural outcomes for all.
- Directed by a constantly shifting range of political, economic, sociocultural, and educational rationales, with an increasing focus on economic motivations.
- Increasingly driven by national, regional, and global rankings.
- Poor alignment between the international dimensions of the three core functions of higher education: education, research, and service to society.

- Primarily a strategic choice and focus of institutions of higher educa-
  tion, but increasingly also a priority of national governments (for
  reasons of soft power, reputation and/or revenue) and of regions
  (EU, Bologna signatories, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations
  (ASEAN), etc.).
- Increasing commercialization and involvement of for-profit compa-
  nies in all aspects of the international higher education agenda."

As a counterreaction to this exclusive focus on mobility, movements like "inter-
nationalisation at home" (Beelen & Jones, 2015), "internationalisation of the
curriculum" (Leask, 2015) and "comprehensive internationalisation" (Hudzik,
2015) have emerged around the turn of the century, trying to shift the focus on
internationalisation to all students, not exclusively the small percentage of
mobile ones. Also, the rather exclusive focus on only one of the three missions
of universities, education, has been challenged with an appeal to more specific
attention to internationalisation of research (Woldegiyorgis, Proctor & De Wit,
2018) and for society (Jones et al., 2021).

Although these appeals, and a related call for virtual exchange or "collabo-
rative online international learning", did resonate in words, in practice the focus
continued to be on internationalisation abroad: mobility. The COVID-19 pan-
demic, and increasing concerns about climate change, inequality in society as
well as geopolitical tensions, require a different approach to internationalisation,
which makes inclusive internationalisation more relevant and strengthens the
appeal for "internationalisation for society" (Jones et al., 2021). It also reem-
phasises the critique of internationalisation as a Western paradigm (Jones & De
Wit, 2014; De Wit, 2020) and the call for "decolonizing the curriculum" (Stein
& Andreotti, 2016).

Similarly, while the focus in internationalisation has been primarily on edu-
cation and research, the internationalisation of the third mission of universities,
service to society, received little attention until recently. Bridging the local and
global, supporting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and moving
away from a more revenue focused and competitive form of internationalisation
to one that serves societal needs is more important than ever, a shift from glob-

al knowledge economy to global knowledge society, at all levels, including the local one.

The 2015 definition of internationalisation in higher education (De Wit et al., 2015), as "an intentional process of integrating an international and intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of the institution in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society" (p. 281), reflects these appeals for a more inclusive and socially responsible internationalisation. An internationalising university must make strategic choices, either more defined by economic and/or political rationales or driven by social responsibility. And in that context, it is crucial to create a strong balance between local, national, regional, and global forces, not as conflicting contexts but as *integrated* dimensions of internationalisation.

6.5   Looking at the future

The COVID-19 pandemic had a strong impact on the internationalisation of higher education, in particular on the mobility of students and staff, which came almost completely to a halt for two years, in 2020 and 2021. Although early signs show that there is a return to the numbers of mobile students and staff to previous levels, it is difficult to tell if this situation is temporary or structural, and whether the sending and receiving countries, cities and institutions will remain generally stable. Recent geo-political tensions, in particular between China and the western world and as a result of the Russian invasion in Ukraine in 2022, as well as the economic and financial crisis resulting from these tensions, will have an impact on academic collaboration and mobility. There is also pressure on mobility due to climate change.

The extent to which mobility will structurally change given these large-scale shifts remains to be seen; what we do know is that cities will continue to be attractive places for international students and academic collaboration in education and research for the years to come, but that cities are not all equal in this respect.

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Labour market integration

7 Highly skilled migrants and local labour market integration

Marian Counihan and Willem van Winden

In the last decades, labour markets in Europe have opened up to international talent. Attracting a highly skilled workforce from abroad is viewed as a key strategy to address the demographic challenges of ageing and shrinking working populations, and to keep a competitive edge in knowledge-intensive economies (e.g., Guthridge, Komm & Lawson, 2008; Schittenhelm & Schmidtke, 2011).[1] At the same time, the migrants' participation in labour markets lags behind that of non-migrants, even in highly skilled groups, as we show below (and see De Cuyper, this volume). What factors can explain this and what policy steps can be taken to improve labour market integration?

In this chapter, we focus on the integration of skilled migrants into local labour markets from a policy perspective. First, we outline the relevant (urban) context, discuss the different relevant subgroups, and then, based on the literature, briefly review the barriers and challenges which impact on labour market outcomes. Then we list a range of policy interventions as devised in the medium-sized cities that we analysed, before finally taking an in-depth look at Groningen's current labour market internationalisation programme.

7.1 Internationalising labour markets

As stated above, one of the key developments of the past decades in (European) labour markets is their opening up to highly skilled migrants. Especially in areas such as tech, higher education, and professional services, a global skills market

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1   https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_2921

has emerged (Czaika, 2018), facilitated by European integration and active national policies to promote skilled immigration. Degrees are increasingly mutually recognized, and English has become the working language in many companies. As a result, growing numbers of skilled migrants have entered the labour market in cities across Europe.

That does not, however, imply that there is good integration into the labour market: in most European countries, the employment rate among foreign-born residents is lower than that of non-migrants, and not just in lower educated segments. In fact, migrants with a tertiary education have the biggest lag in employment levels.[2] In addition, compared to locals, highly skilled migrants are more vulnerable to both crises at the level of the firm and recessions (Richardson, 2016), more often work below their qualification levels ("brain waste") and have been found to have lower earnings when in employment (Schittenhelm & Schmidtke, 2011). Thus, full labour market integration does not happen by itself, even for skilled migrants. It's also important to remember that skilled migrants are a heterogeneous group: we can consider international students, academic staff, employed professionals, freelancers, spouses, refugees, et cetera, each subgroup having its specific access routes to work and facing their own barriers and challenges on the labour market (see also De Cuyper in this volume).

Importantly, the place of work or study serves as a main driver or engine of integration (Van Riemsdijk, 2014). Larger companies realise this, and typically put initiatives into place to promote cultural exchange and introduce internationals into local customs and networks. Labour market integration can consequently play a valuable role in broader integration and cohesion in the socio-cultural life of urban contexts.

Labour market integration in smaller cities

What are the factors motivating and shaping the internationalisation of labour markets in smaller cities? In recent years, a growing number of medium-sized cities have taken deliberate and co-ordinated action to attract skilled migrants (as seen in Chapter 1), motivated by the wish to either address specific shortages in the local economy or as a way to counter demographic trends that lead to

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2   https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/ddn-20211110-1

a shrinking workforce. In cities with tight labour markets, migrants can play a valuable role in filling vacancies in key sectors and keeping the regional economy robust. Shortages are common in growth sectors such as tech, energy, and engineering, as well as healthcare and hospitality, and employers are eager to find qualified staff. Skilled migrants have a positive effect on companies' innovative capacity, and contribute to knowledge creation (Bosetti, Cattaneo & Verdolini, 2015), as they bring cultural knowledge and international connections, and enhance cities' entrepreneurial capacity, as they are more likely to start their own businesses (Dheer, 2018; Fairlie & Lofstrom, 2015).[3]

Ceteris paribus, immigration has a positive knock-on effect on demographics, and supports the viability of local amenities (education, culture, sports, commercial services, et cetera). This is an important reason for cities with a declining population to attract skilled migrants, or to raise the stay rate of international students.

Medium-sized or second-tier cities have a number of specific characteristics which impact on how well they can absorb skilled labour. Firstly, the size and shape of the economy: such cities typically have a smaller economy, often reliant on a few key sectors, which may be semi-public (healthcare, education) or centred on established firms in sectors such as manufacturing, chemistry, et cetera. City connectivity somewhat compensates for size (Meijers, Burger & Hoogerbrugge, 2016), but in general the range of job opportunities for international talent is limited compared to larger agglomerations. Graduates and young professionals tend to move from smaller cities to larger economic centres,[4] so-called "escalator regions", where options for career development are better (Scott, 2019).

Another typical characteristic of such cities is the regional orientation of their companies, resulting in closed company cultures or lack of incentive to hire international staff. This is further discussed below. Note that this very much depends on the age and sector – young tech companies are typically "born global", more inclined to have English as the lingua franca, and often have high interest in recruiting international staff.

In university cities the loss of international graduates leaving to seek work elsewhere, often to the major cities of the same country, represents a significant

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3   https://wol.iza.org/articles/immigrants-and-entrepreneurship/long
4   https://katapult-mv.de/artikel/77-3-prozent-bleiben

loss of human capital, or "brain drain". And conversely, better retention of international graduates for the local labour market represents major value for the regional economy.

One factor which is disrupting the local labour considerations is the increased adoption of remote working practices, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Tech or IT-heavy companies are in some cases offering fully remote positions; conversely some companies are faced with candidates who would like to accept job offers without relocating. The rise of remote working will play out differently depending on the type of sector involved, but does not necessarily disadvantage smaller or more peripheral locations.

This is because quality of life is a factor often working in favour of smaller cities. Especially for mid-career workers or those with families, ease of transportation, safety, green spaces, access to schools, more affordable housing and a good work-life balance are important facets of residence decisions, and medium-sized cities typically score highly on these. This is something to also consider in branding and recruitment – more on this topic in Chapter 1.

7.2   Relevant migrant subgroups

As we have seen in previous chapters, there is no such person as "the" skilled migrant: migrants come from different cultural backgrounds, with different motives and time horizons; they will have different routes and face specific barriers and challenges in navigating the urban labour market. Below, we discuss the following groups: international students, academic staff, professionals (expats), partners of employees, and refugees.

International students form a significant part of the international population in most university cities. They come to the host city to follow a degree programme or as exchange students. Full degree students will spend several years living in their host city, establishing a home for themselves for the duration of the programme. During their studies they can already become part of the local labour market through taking on part-time jobs, summer jobs, or internships. Cities are increasingly recognising that international students are an important source for a highly educated workforce, but there is little policy in place for post-study

retention of these graduates (Han, Gulanowski & Sears, 2022). Lack of retention has an outsize effect on second-tier or smaller cities, which have smaller job markets. OECD reports that after graduation, an average of 25% of non-EU students intend to stay in the country of study,[5] and this figure is even higher for some countries. But there are also many students who move to the bigger and more centrally located cities because of better job opportunities, as mentioned above.[6] This represents a brain drain for smaller university cities.

International academic staff are the second category of skilled migrants. Academia is very internationally orientated as a sector, in which it is common to spend part of your career abroad, but internationalisation has gained even more pace in the previous decade, and many universities have growing numbers of foreign PhDs, visiting scholars, and permanent international academic staff. This is especially the case in North-Western Europe, and somewhat less in Central and Southern Europe. International academics have a paid job and are therefore formally integrated into the regional labour market. For them it can be problematic to further their career in the local university or even outside of academia. Moreover, academic staff face cultural barriers: it is not always easy to become a full-fledged part of the host society, even within the context of the university setting (Morley et al., 2018).

The third category are *professionals*. They are skilled migrants working for international companies, permanently or temporarily, or independent professionals who take advantage of certain skills gaps or opportunities. Again, for these groups, initial economic integration is not the issue, because they have a paid job – that's what they came for in the first place. But moving jobs or progressing in their career can be hindered by their migrant status, especially when they come from outside the EU. They also face challenges in social and cultural integration like the ones described below, especially if they decide to settle in the region permanently.

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Perception of this group as homogeneously privileged and highly mobile is rightfully shifting. Increasingly, international talent comprises what is called "middling migrants" (Scott, 2019; Grigoleit-Richter, 2017). This group of migrants is characterised by their (mostly) middle-class status, high level of education, and mid-level career position, but often with mixed or fragile social mobility (Robertson & Roberts, 2022).

A related subgroup is formed by *trailing spouses* of international staff. As it becomes more common in couples for both partners to be fully employed (the "dual career" model), a lack of employment opportunity for partners is increasingly an issue when recruiting international staff, especially in smaller labour markets. Universities often have implemented partner programmes to address this issue but are faced with difficulties helping partners find work outside of the academic context.

A fourth category is formed by skilled migrants who arrive as *refugees*. One in five refugees in Europe are highly educated, but they are hardly recognised as talent (Van Riemsdijk & Axelsson, 2021). Because of their migratory route, they are treated in a different "policy silo", refugee policy, which is not always connected to regular labour market policies, and has its own policy rules, legal frameworks, and incentives. The integration of refugees into the local labour market is difficult to realise until they have acquired settled status. Even then, for those who obtained refugee status, it can be difficult to assess their qualifications, and they will also suffer from the challenges outlined below.

For each group, we can therefore expect a specific mix of obstacles to labour market participation, which is the topic of the next section.

7.3   Barriers to labour market integration

A number of obstacles to regional labour market integration are present in European countries to a greater or lesser degree and are shared by most groups we have identified (Remennick, 2003; Schittenhelm & Schmidtke, 2011; Han, Gulanowski & Sears, 2022). We also see specific barriers for medium-sized cities and peripheral economies.

Permit procedures

A primary barrier is dealing with the formal side of employment. Procedures to obtain work permits can be lengthy and complex, hindering the entry of internationals into local labour markets. Employers would benefit from a rapid and smooth process of work permit provision, but they are entirely dependent on national agencies; inter-city collaboration could help to put pressure on national agencies. Long and costly work permit procedures make it less attractive to hire international staff, especially for smaller companies (SMEs). There are national and regional programmes to address this obstacle in several European countries, so-called "expat desks", which are discussed below.

Lack of recognition of qualifications

A second formal barrier is the lack of recognition of qualifications, typically leading to "deskilling" (Schittenhelm & Schmidtke, 2011; Chakravartty, 2006; Hawthorne, 2001; Purkayastha, 2005) as the education or skills migrants obtained elsewhere may not be recognised by their host country. Even within the European Union, there is no automatic recognition of academic diplomas across member states. This can make it difficult for employers to screen and select potential international hires, and lead to delays and downwards mobility for employees. Recognition of diplomas is organised at a national level but for some professions there are mechanisms in place to evaluate qualifications.[7] An example is the "certificate of competence" awarded by the Dutch government to healthcare professionals to allow them to register to practice in the Netherlands.[8] A temporary regional measure to address this issue for other professions could be co-operating with local educational organisations or sector bodies to understand and evaluate foreign certification and diplomas.

Language

There are several cultural barriers, the foremost being language skills. Language is a centrally important factor in labour participation and encouraging and facilitating internationals to learn the national language is therefore paramount to

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7   https://www.enic-naric.net
8   https://business.gov.nl/regulation/registering-as-healthcare-professional

long-term advancement in this area. In smaller countries, international students, and migrants more generally, are less inclined to learn the local language than in larger countries. This can hinder access to internships, jobs, and local networks. Mixing nationals and internationals in education and other contexts is an important vehicle to improve integration and to facilitate language skills. Language learning as a path to integration is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

> "It's important to look at your labour market with a very critical eye. What exactly are the opportunities for internationals? Is the labour market sufficiently open for non-native speakers? Wishful thinking doesn't help anybody. The bulk of the task may well be advocating a bigger investment in language classes and networking with potential employers."
>
> (Natalie Di Filette, Co-ordinator International House Leuven)

Migrants' lack of local cultural knowledge and networks

A second key set of barriers is formed by a lack of cultural knowledge for "path-finding" to work. Routes to employment differ across countries or even regions, and newly arrived migrants have limited access to practical know-how such as where to look for jobs, how to present themselves to potential employers, and how to prepare their CV. Also, we recognise that networks are a very important route to employment, but migrants usually have limited or non-existent local networks which can help them to access professional contacts. The lack of cultural and social capital forms a major barrier to accessing jobs (Schittenhelm & Schmidtke, 2011; De Cuyper in this volume).

Company cultures and practices

Company culture can form a different type of informal barrier. In medium-sized cities, SMEs tend to dominate the local economy. Established companies are generally more regionally oriented, requiring local language skills, and they often do not have a high level of cultural or organisational readiness to take on international staff. Additionally, the formal requirements for work permits and skills recognition et cetera, are relatively burdensome for smaller companies and can therefore form a double disincentive to hire international staff. When companies do recruit skilled internationals, we understand they are often reluctant

or not in a position to invest in further development for these staff, or to offer them language courses or other skills training. This reduces the opportunities for personal development and local integration of these groups. Finally, in smaller companies, many vacancies are filled without formal procedures (Cardon & Stevens, 2004). For smaller labour markets with a relatively large SME sector these cultural barriers can play an outsized role in hindering labour integration.

Ethnic and gender discrimination

Discrimination is endemic in labour markets (e.g., Nagel, 2007; Andriessen et al., 2012). Research shows that applicants with foreign-sounding names are significantly less likely to get selected for job interviews, even on the basis of identical CVs.[9] Discrimination varies across countries but is present in all EU states studied. Gender also plays a role as female candidates have worse outcomes than their male equivalents in studies of labour market access and advancement. Skilled migrants often face racism and sexism, even though they are seen as privileged (Cranston & Lloyd, 2019).

Deskilling

Deskilling at the individual level means working below you skill level; being overqualified for the job you do. This is a persistent problem, especially for migrants from outside the EU (e.g., Van Riemsdijk & Axelsson, 2021; Schittenhelm & Schmidtke, 2011), but there are (so far) very few local policies to address this. A factor in deskilling is the lack of recognition of previous work experience, similarly to the lack of recognition of qualifications. Both issues lead to delays or backsliding in professional development.

Finally, we consider the barriers which international students face. As mentioned above, university cities are increasingly investing in retaining these graduates for the local labour market. An overview of obstacles on their particular route to work is presented in Table 7.1.

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9   See shadow report from the European Network against Racism for details: https://www.enar-eu.org/ wp-content/uploads/shadowreport_2016x2017_long_final_lowres.pdf

Table 7.1 Barriers to labour market integration of international students

	Type of labour market integration	Barriers
During studies	Internship, summer/part-time jobs	Language: Lack of English language internships, lack of local language fluency. Pathfinding: How to find an internship? Reluctance of smes to hire internationals.
After graduation	Finding a job	Language: Most companies will require local language proficiency. Company culture; reluctance of smes to hire internationals. Pathfinding: Lack of understanding of local business culture, lack of practical knowledge of how to effectively present themselves to employers. Network: Lack of local networks to access jobs or provide references. Visa status for non-eu/eea students: limited time to job search after study.
	Becoming an entrepreneur	Language: Most incubator programmes are not in English. Pathfinding: Lack of access to local networks, funding and subsidies, lack of understanding of local business culture, lack of knowledge of opportunity structure.

7.4   Policy and programme developments

National level

At the European level, there are initiatives to streamline the attraction of talent.[10] But generally, national legal frameworks set the conditions for opportunities for non-EU internationals to access work, and every EU member has its own rules. Recently, there has been a tendency in EU states to increase opportunities for international talent, especially for the higher educated and those in fields with labour market shortages.[11] In Germany, university graduates can stay 18 months after graduation if they are actively looking for a job; the country offers a temporary residence permit for qualified skilled workers. The Netherlands has had tax advantages for knowledge migrants in place since 2004, but introduced an "orientation year" for non-EU students,[12] and a special "start-up visa" for international entrepreneurs.[13] The Czech Republic introduced its *Regime Ukraine*

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10   https://population-europe.eu/files/documents/pb37_skills-and-talent_final.pdf
11   https://education.ec.europa.eu/news/visas-for-work-in-europe-after-graduation
12   https://www.welcome-to-nl.nl/immigration/recently-graduated
13   https://ind.nl/en/residence-permits/work/start-up

programme in 2016, a national programme to attract professionals from a limited set of countries (Ukraine, Mongolia, Serbia, and the Philippines).[14] Going even further, the Danish government has introduced a new funding incentive: 7.5% of university funding for students depends on whether they find a job after graduation. This incentivises universities to make sure that international students stay in Denmark after graduation and find work.[15] Certain fields of study even offer first-job guarantees to students, to entice them to come to, and stay in, the region.[16]

Local level

What actions are being taken to advance labour market integration at the regional level? Urban stakeholders in our study believe that active labour market integration policies form a central part of international talent management. To overcome the challenges specific to medium-sized cities, working together with institutional and sectoral stakeholders seems to be essential. In particular, programmes that focus on strengthening strategic partnerships for access to jobs and to building or developing regional ecosystems to advance entrepreneurship, innovation and economic growth are seen as invaluable. More and more focus is placed on the connection of the labour market to local education – i.e., programmes which engage students (who already reside in the region) in the labour market during their studies. Note that these initiatives can also work for national students. Many cities now organise career events specifically aimed at (international) students. Table 7.2 gives an overview of some of the types of initiatives in place, with examples in the second column. We discuss Groningen's extensive strategic programme in more detail below.

Eindhoven

The Dutch city of Eindhoven has a large tech sector and due to ongoing shortages in this growing sector, is continuously recruiting international talent. In close collaboration, regional stakeholders developed the Brainport Talent Attraction Program, with a range of activities.[17] All English-language tech and IT vacancies from the region are

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14   https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/d318d9fe-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/d318d9fe-en
15   https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20171201152155351
16   https://www.sdu.dk/en/samarbejde/industrisamarbejde/foerste_job_garanti
17   https://brainporteindhoven.com/en/business-and-innovation/business/how-to-attract-international-knowledge-workers#c20494

bundled on the international *Brainport Eindhoven* website so that foreign talent can see at a glance what the region has to offer them. An Employer Branding Toolkit was developed for companies to use in their own labour market communication. Companies work together to retain talent for the region through "talent sharing": if an excellent candidate at a certain moment in time is not selected for a position at one company, the candidate either is asked if they can share their CV with other companies in the region, or is encouraged to visit the English-language Brainport website and consider job openings elsewhere in the region. Also, a strong network of HR professionals has been established to share experiences. Brainport Eindhoven offers various (paid) additional options for employers who want to invest intensively in talent attraction, such as participation in targeted promotional campaigns for groups of companies inspired by (one-off) opportunities on the international labour market.

Table 7.2 Local policies and initiatives for labour market integration

Type of initiative	Example programme in partner cities
Visa & work permit fast-tracking	Expat centres such as International Welcome Center North, where local stakeholders and national government support fast work permits and visa processes (Groningen).
Physical centres/desks with info on jobs and education	Informagiovani: a service centre in the city centre for those aged 13-35 years, offering information and support on topics such as work, post-graduate courses, scholarships and active citizenship (Parma). Mybb: Service point for internationals (Bielsko-Biała).
Start-up policies	Specialised start-up counselling for migrants; International Startup School (Magdeburg). Startup Visa Groningen,[18] a collaboration between Startup facilitators in the region and International Welcome Center North (Groningen).
hr co-operation	Regional hr manager meeting to exchange knowledge, vacancies, and soft skills development (Leuven).
International job portals	Internet portal of the Career Service with job offers of regional companies and information about career events in the region (Magdeburg). Make it in the North, an online job portal with regional vacancies in English, as well as career events, a digital map of regional businesses, and internship placements (Groningen).
Spousal programmes	Partner coaching in finding a job, further skills development, or volunteering opportunities (Groningen, Leuven).
Connecting students to the labour market	Institutionalised "dating service" connecting companies with migrants, career events for graduates (JobsHere),[19] and "Partner von Morgen", – a program for small and medium-sized companies in Sachsen-Anhalt, where international students can apply for internships (Magdeburg).

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18 http://startupvisagroningen.nl
19 https://eunivercitiesnetwork.com/news/staying-on-in-magdeburg-after-graduation/85/

Figure 7.1 Visitors at Magdeburg's recent JobsHere event

Groningen's labour market programme

Groningen is a regional city in the north or the Netherlands with almost 230,000 residents, 30,000 of whom are students. The city of Groningen plays a central role in the economy of the Northern provinces (including the neighbouring provinces Drenthe and Friesland), and while many surrounding areas have a shrinking and ageing population, the demographics of the city are robust: it is growing, and, because of the high density of students, it has the youngest population of the Netherlands.

The population has rapidly become more diverse in the past decade or so. Currently, approximately 25% of the city's population has a migration background. This is a growth of more than 50% since 2006, while in the same period the Dutch population has hardly grown. This change is driven largely by the internationalisation of the educational institutions, as well as a growth in migrant numbers through asylum and EU labour migration. The outsized international (student) population of the city is increasingly viewed as a valuable source of highly skilled labour, and as such represents an untapped economic opportunity for the region. This realisation, as well as steep local labour shortages in key sectors, led to the development of an extensive programme to open up the regional labour market to international students and knowledge migrants: Make it in the North.

Make it in the North[20] is a programme for labour market integration for internationals in the North of the Netherlands, established in 2018 by strategic partners of the Groningen Alliance.[21] The programme contains several elements: a job portal, internship placement programmes, networking events and job search support. It has been realised as a partnership between the three northern-most provinces of the Netherlands and has been implemented and managed by staff from the International Welcome Center North (IWCN), an "expat centre" of the type that is present across all economic regions of the Netherlands. In this case, IWCN has taken on a more active role reaching out to regional players, including companies, sector bodies, and the provincial government. These regional players needed to come on board as stakeholders to realise the goal of opening up the labour market. Educational institutes have also been important partners in establishing the link to international graduates and helping to organise internship placements.

> "It's not just about a jobs platform for internationals; it's about companies getting to know that international talent... it's actually an awareness campaign in that sense."
>
> (Geert Kamminga, programme manager, The Groningen Alliance, Groningen

Networking is a key route to employment for many employees in the Netherlands, and this means that an online jobs portal can only go so far when trying to open up access to the job market for international jobseekers. That is why networking events and internships are crucial additions to this channel to the labour market. Sector-specific career events, e.g., for energy or tech, have been organised in collaboration with the relevant regional sector bodies and platforms. Job search support includes webinars and online articles on how to write a CV and cover letter, Dutch networking culture, and links to regional networks and resources. Finally, a resource package for local companies to assist them in hiring international staff is currently being prepared. This can be as simple as providing translated documents, but also includes soft skills such as intercultur-

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20   https://www.makeitinthenorth.nl. Make it in the North was a follow-up to the NUFFIC Make it in the Netherlands programme.
21   https://groningen.nl/en/articles/about-tga

al awareness. This kind of information can best be provided in interactions, not as static leaflets or brochures and adapted to the company context.

Figure 7.2 Career networking event for Make it in the North

The case of Make it in the North provides a set of transferable practices for other cities looking to open up their labour markets:

- Strategic regional and/or inter-city collaboration is likely to help achieve critical mass and range in the job market offering.
- Governments need to actively co-operate with regional SMEs and sector bodies to improve their readiness to internationalise; this generally needs long-term investment in relationship building, development of shared resources, and transfer of soft skills. The role of bigger regional players can be leveraged to assist SMEs with topics such as HR procedures and resources.
- Partnering with universities to improve the match between educational programmes and the local labour market is essential to raise the stay rate of graduates.

If city governments succeed in realising these co-ordinating practices, they will be well-placed to attract and retain international talent, despite challenges of scale, and thus build their economic and innovative capacity. The rationale, forms, and examples of co-ordinated urban governance are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 9.

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8 Mentoring migrant talent to work: a conceptual and empirical framework

Peter De Cuyper

8.1 Introduction

Labour market integration is considered a key indicator for measuring migrant success in a host country. It is also seen as an essential step in terms of social integration (Konle-Seidl & Bolits, 2016; Newman et al., 2018; Reyneri & Fullin, 2011; Valtonen, 2001). At the same time, studies indicate that integration into the labour market is no simple task (Eggenhofer-Rehart et al., 2018; Hooper, Vicenza Desiderio & Salant, 2017). For example, a report of the OECD/European Commission (2018) shows that the employment rate of immigrants born outside the EU is 9.5% lower than that of native populations in the EU27 (64.4% versus 73.9%), while in countries such as Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands, the employment gap amounts to 15.2%, 18.6% and 18% respectively (figures from 2019). Labour market access appears to be equally difficult for highly skilled new migrants. A 2016 study by Wets and De Cuyper found that the employment gap was relatively higher for highly skilled newcomers than for medium-skilled or low-skilled newcomers. Moreover, this group frequently end up accepting jobs they are underqualified for. Over one third of highly educated immigrants in employment in the OECD and the EU are overqualified for their jobs – a rate 13 percentage points above that of the native-born in the EU. Recent immigrants are particularly affected by over-qualification (OECD, 2018). On the other hand, there is a large demand for skilled workers. This mismatch leads to "brain waste".

While there are many policies and programmes that focus on the labour market integration of migrants, most of them focus on low-skilled workers. They

also do not address the broader difficulties faced by migrants, and thus fail to translate into sufficient improvement in access to suitable work. Taking this into consideration, there appears to be a need to upgrade existing policies and programmes and identify new strategies to facilitate the labour market integration of (highly skilled) migrants. An increasingly popular yet out-of-the-box intervention in this context is "mentoring-to-work". While this type of mentoring could be used for other target groups as well, in this context, it means that an unemployed immigrant (mentee) and a volunteer familiar with the local labour market (mentor) are matched so that the latter can assist the mentee towards employment. Mentoring-to-work is particularly popular when it comes to highly skilled newcomers. The most influential programme in this respect started in 2002 in the city of Toronto, following a summit in which leaders representing the city's various sectors and communities came together to assess challenges in the Toronto region and to generate new ideas and solutions to address immigrant un- and under-employment. One of the challenges was immigrant employment and specifically how the region's labour market could better leverage the immense skills and talents that immigrants bring. As a result of this summit, the TRIEC Mentoring Partnership was born with more than 1,500 matches on an annual basis. The city of Toronto is the largest Employer Partner, meaning that they are the largest contributors of mentors.

In the meantime, this tool's potential has been recognized at both national and international levels. The OECD regularly lists mentoring as a good practice for both social integration and labour market integration (OECD, 2014). In addition to countries such as Canada, where mentoring to work already has a strong presence, a host of mentoring projects have sprung up in a number of other countries, especially in response to the "refugee crisis" not only focussing on highly skilled immigrants but also on low skilled. This has particularly been the case in Germany, Spain, Sweden, and Belgium. Where initially mentoring programmes were mainly set up by NGOs, the instrument has become more institutionalised in some countries. This is, for instance, the case in France with the "1 jeune, 1 mentor" programme in which 200,000 young people receive help from a mentor who will guide them at school or towards a first job or internship on the labour market. In Flanders, the public employment service issued funding

to mentor-to-work organisations in 2019 to improve migrant newcomers' access to the labour market.

Mentoring-to-work looks promising because it taps into existing resources that traditional labour market instruments have largely ignored or not capitalised on, such as the knowledge and expertise of employers and experienced employees (De Cuyper & Vandermeerschen, 2019). One of the barriers preventing non-native speaking newcomers from accessing the labour market is that they lack the human capital (i.e., specific local knowledge, skills, and network) relevant to the host country. Employers and employees, however, *do* have this knowledge, which is often specialised, localised, and sector specific. This makes them ideally suited for mentoring and supporting non-native speaking newcomers on their journey towards employment. The main objective of mentoring-to-work is to increase newcomers' human capital with respect to the host country but mentoring-to-work can also raise awareness among employers about some of the labour market barriers faced by highly skilled newcomers. This, at least, is what current theory seems to indicate.

Despite the growing interest in mentoring-to-work, there is not a lot of academic research about the topic (Bagnoli, 2022; Månsson & Delander, 2017; Neuwirth, 2017; Weiss & Tulin, 2021). Research has mainly been focused on other forms of mentoring in different contexts. Moreover, there is a lack of conceptual clarity when it comes to the expected effects of mentoring-to-work. The scarce research about mentoring-to-work focuses on different effects or outcomes. Månsson & Delander (2017), for example, focus solely on employment outcomes, while Neuwirth & Wahl (2017) add career and psychosocial functions derived from the mentoring *at* work literature. An exception is recent work from Bagnoli, Estache and Fourati (2022) which does take different forms of human capital into account. In this chapter, we aim at advancing the field of mentoring-to-work by providing an analytical framework that can be used to analyse effects of mentoring-to-work.

The remainder of the chapter will be organised as follows. In Section 8.2, we will discuss how mentoring-to-work programmes work and the role that cities can play in this. In Section 8.3, an analytical framework that allows for a systematic analysis of the effects of mentoring-to-work will be presented; the study

methodology is presented in Section 8.4. In Section 8.5, we will discuss results from exploratory research on effects of mentoring-to-work using this analytical framework and show that mentoring-to-work can indeed add to different forms of human capital. An overall discussion will be provided in the final section.

8.2 Research context: how do mentoring-to-work programmes work?

While there has been a long tradition (especially in the Anglo-Saxon world) of youth mentoring, workplace mentoring (mentoring *at* work) or mentoring in education, mentoring-to-work is a relatively new concept that is making headway primarily in Europe. While mentoring-to-work adopts several aspects of other forms of mentoring, it addresses a different set of challenges and follows a different trajectory. De Cuyper, Vandermeerschen and Purkayastha (2019, p. 117) define mentoring-to-work as follows: "A person with more localised experience (mentor) provides guidance to a person with less experience (mentee), the objective of which is to support the mentee in making sustainable progress in his or her journey into the labour market. Both mentor and mentee voluntarily commit to this and establish contact on a regular basis. The relationship is initiated, facilitated, and supported by a third actor (organisation). While asymmetrical, the mentoring relationship is of a reciprocal nature." Mentoring-to-work is thus seen as a developmental relationship for the mentee in which the necessary skills and competences are acquired without having to lead to immediate employment. Employment is the ultimate goal but mentoring-to-work can also be successful without having a job in the short term (De Cuyper & Vandermeerschen, 2022).

Programmes under the mentoring-to-work banner come in different shapes and sizes but have broadly speaking the same structure with different modalities (see Figure 8.1). The following components can be distinguished:
- *Recruitment of mentors and mentees*. These activities are aimed at guiding mentors and mentees into the programme. Most of the programmes work with local or regional employment offices to recruit mentees. When it comes to the recruitment of volunteer mentors two main approaches can be distin-

guished: 1) recruiting individual mentors by flyers, advertisements, volunteering websites et cetera, and 2) working with employer partners. The latter means that organisations give their employees the opportunity to act as a mentor, sometimes within their working hours. Most of the organisations see this as a part of their corporate social responsibility or as a way to enhance intercultural and coaching skills of their employees (Van Dooren & De Cuyper, 2015).]

- *Selection and screening of mentors and mentees*. Determining whether the mentors and mentees are eligible for the programme and assessing the characteristics and needs of mentors and mentees to achieve a good match is a next step in every mentoring programme. The selection criteria differ between programmes and are sometimes specified by funders when it comes to the mentees. When it comes to mentors the selection criteria also differ for most of the programmes but generally demand a certain level of work experience. This is to ensure that the mentors have an existing network and a sufficient level of knowledge that can be of use to the mentee (Purkayastha & De Cuyper, 2019).

- *Matching* of mentors and mentees or the process of determining the most suitable match for mentees and mentors is the next step in a mentoring programme. Most of the programmes match highly skilled profiles on sector or function, for example a civil engineer with a civil engineer, but also traits like personality can play a role in matching (Purkayastha & De Cuyper, 2019).

- *The mentoring relationship*, in which mentor and mentee contact each other at regular intervals and for a certain length of time to achieve the defined objectives. This mentoring relationship has a fixed duration in most programmes and lasts between three and twelve months. Most of the programmes opt for six months.

- *Follow-up*. A third party – the mentoring organisation – provides follow-up and supports the mentor and mentee during their trajectory. Most provide training for mentors. These organisations are mainly NGOs.

Most of the programmes act locally even when funded by national programmes and serve a certain region or city. The reason to operate on a local basis is the fact that the added value of mentoring-to-work lies in the knowledge of local

labour markets. Most of the Belgian programmes, for example, are locally embedded in large and medium-sized cities and serve one city or province. The role of the local governments differs. In some cases, cities only fund the mentoring programme, others play a more active role in trying to engage mentors within the city. In some cities, like the city of Toronto mentoring-to-work is embedded within a broader vision. According to the city of Toronto it demonstrates the city's commitment to be a leader in helping (highly skilled) newcomers find employment in their chosen professions, but also give the employees of the city the chance to be a mentor, giving them opportunities for professional development through gaining or improving their leadership and coaching skills.
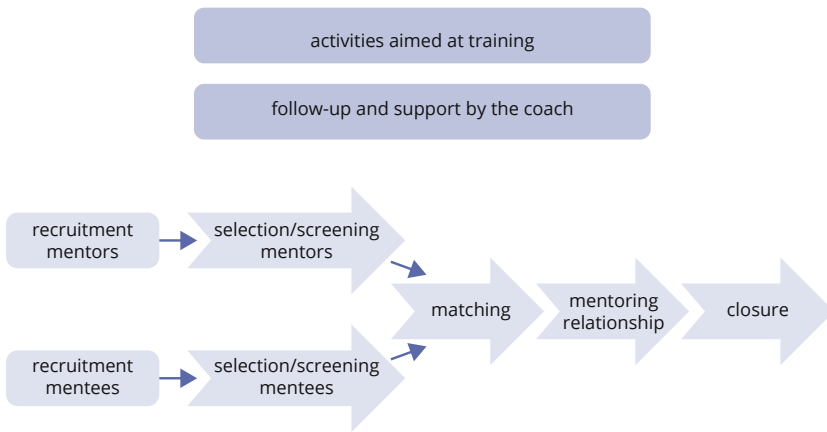
Figure 8.1 The mentoring process
Source: De Cuyper et al., 2022

8.3   Analysing the impact of mentoring-to-work for migrants: an analytical framework

To understand why mentoring-to-work is viewed as a promising tool for the labour market integration of highly skilled migrants, it is important to understand the range of factors influencing the labour market position of (new) migrants. These factors work at several different levels, from the labour market's systemic characteristics (contractual flexibility, minimum wage, et cetera), to the employer level (discrimination, recognition of foreign degrees, et cetera) and the

human capital of migrants themselves (Becker, 1964; Mincer, 1958). This human capital consists of elements such as economic capital (degrees, technical competences, et cetera), language capital, social capital (professional networks, shared acquaintances, et cetera), cultural capital (understanding local working culture, jobs, sectors), psychological capital (self-confidence, motivation, et cetera) and information capital (e.g., knowledge of the national or local labour market). A lack of (country-specific) human capital is likely to translate into difficulties in finding employment. Migration entails a loss of economic, social, cultural and information capital as these types of capital are not easily transferable across geographic and cultural borders (Borjas, 1994; Chiswick & Miller, 2009; Eggenhofer-Rehart et al., 2018; Friedberg, 2000; Kogan et al., 2011, De Vroome & Van Tubergen, 2010). Examples include insufficient language skills (Cheung & Phillimore, 2013; Chiswick & Miller, 2003), existence of a professional network, ability to access job openings, knowledge of local protocols regarding CVs and job interviews, understanding common practices in the workplace, and so on (OECD, 2014; Eggenhofer-Rehart et al., 2018).

The current toolbox of active labour market policies focuses predominantly on "economic capital" (e.g., providing vocational training, encouraging migrants to get an additional diploma or certificate), while cultural, social and information capital often remain underemphasised. The potential strength of mentoring lies in its potential to act as a reinforcement in other areas, such as information capital and the development of social networks.

In the following section, we discuss the analytical framework, describe what the different forms of capital imply, and explain how mentoring can potentially contribute to increasing these forms of capital. The latter is based on previous research by Vandermeerschen and De Cuyper (2018) who conducted exploratory evaluation research in which five programme co-ordinators of mentoring-to-work projects aimed at highly skilled immigrants were interviewed about the goals and vision of their programme. The analytical framework was also discussed and validated in a learning network which was set up in early 2021 to support five mentoring-to-work organisations funded by the Flemish public employment service. The analytical framework is thus not only grounded in academic knowledge but also reflects a lived reality.

Economic capital

In the economic literature, "human capital" is mainly understood as formal education/training and work experience. This notion fits well with what is commonly referred to as hard skills or, in other words, measurable functional or technical skills that can be acquired through training or work experience and can usually be formalised through diplomas and certificates (see De Cuyper, De Rick & Gonzalez Garibay, 2012). The hypothesis is that the higher the level of education and number of years of work experience, the higher the chances on the labour market. This is not only true for migrants but for all job seekers. What is specific to migrants is that both education and work experience in the country of origin and in the country of destination must be taken into account. Work experience in the country of origin is not simply transferable to the country of destination. For example, work experience in the country of origin may not be adapted to the expectations of the same sector in the host country (i.e., Belgium) (see e.g., Chiswick & Miller, 2009; OECD, 2014). Foreign diplomas are not always recognised or may not be valued as highly, and after migration it may no longer be possible to prove that one has obtained a diploma (Corluy, 2014; Grant & Nadin, 2007).

In most European countries, formal education is the responsibility of educational institutions and public employment services. Therefore, it is not expected that mentoring will contribute to "economic capital". However, mentoring can play a role in guiding people to internships and training courses, as we describe below. If we want to examine the unique effect of mentoring, it is important to control for these variables, i.e., to check whether differences in mentoring outcomes are not due to differences in education and work experience.

Social capital

Social capital is defined by Rettab (1995: p. 22) as "the beneficial effects the individual gains from the quantity and quality of his/her social contacts to serve his/her upward mobility". The underlying assumption is that the higher a person's social capital, the better their position on the labour market. Attuleb (1995), for example, states that one third of the population in the Netherlands found a job through their social network. In the United States, this figure is even higher – around 60%. A survey by the Flemish public employment service

(2010) shows that three quarters of employers first check with their own staff members whether they are interested and/or know someone who is eligible for the job. It has long been known that social capital can be an important lever on the labour market (see e.g., Granovetter, 1995). According to Kogan (2011), two mechanisms come into play here: 1) individuals within the social network can act as references and thus reduce potential employers' uncertainty about a person's competencies and credentials, and 2), for job seekers it is a means to gain insight into (internal) vacancies and increase the efficiency of the job search. A problem for migrants is that social capital is difficult to transfer. Migration often implies the loss of one's social network. Increasing social capital can therefore be a strategy to increase migrants' chances on the labour market.

Many mentoring projects explicitly aim to contribute to this (bridging) social capital or to the development of a professional network. The mentor is often already a first extension of this professional network since they are usually an established professional within the field the mentee wants to work in. Consequently, the idea is that the mentor introduces the mentee to contacts within their own network. Therefore, if we want to evaluate to what extent mentoring for work contributes to the expansion of social capital, we must examine to what extent it contributes to the expansion of professional contacts (quantity) as well as to their quality.

Career skills/information capital

Having the right competences does not necessarily lead to a job matching these competences. The way people look for a job is also important. Research among job seekers indicates that it is not only important to look for a job but also to use the right job search strategies (Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1997). Job search behaviour is an important predictor for finding a job (see Kanfer, 2001). To adopt the right job search behaviour, information and familiarity with the *local* labour market is needed. Rettab (1995: p. 22) calls this "information capital" and defines it as "the knowledge and familiarity of the individual with his/her environment gained from present and past research activities, such information allows the individual to take effective decisions regarding present and future career development". Information capital is thus about knowledge of the context: who can help you find a job, what is the most appropriate search strategy

for the intended sector and function, what are important companies in a sector/ for certain functions/profiles, what are the expectations in certain jobs and sectors, what does the actual application process look like (e.g., requirements for a CV and motivation letter, expectations for a job interview) et cetera.

Another important element is that not only knowledge as such is important, but that it must lead to migrants being able to make the right decisions about their current and future careers. Making such decisions requires a good understanding of what one wants to achieve and whether one has the right competences to do so. This means assessing one's skills and characteristics (in the new context) and linking these to the goals one wants to realise. In the literature on careers, Kuipers (2003) calls this "reflection on qualities". Especially for refugees and migrants, the new context in which they find themselves sometimes requires reorientation, e.g., because diplomas aren't valued as highly, certain competences are not transferable, there are other expectations or requirements in a job which appears similar to jobs in the home country, certain jobs do not exist in their new country, et cetera. Reflection is thus necessary. This should eventually lead to realistic goals (and self-image) and an understanding of competences and skills one needs to develop or improve if one wants to reach a certain goal.

When it comes to information capital the idea is that the mentor is an established professional who is often active within the sector or function the mentee wants to apply for and can use this "insider perspective" to help enhance the mentee's information capital.

Cultural capital

The concept of "cultural capital" was introduced by Bourdieu (1986). The concept can be described as "the set of values, norms, and customs that people share and relates to all domains of society" (Geets, 2011, p. 49). If we translate this into the context of the labour market, it concerns norms and values that are important in the labour market, such as the cultural codes that exist around job application procedures, as well as cultural codes in the workplace. This type of capital is important when finding a job, but it is just as important and possibly even more so when it comes to job retention or integration on the work floor. In this context, cultural capital can include norms and expectations regarding ethics, leadership, conflict resolution, communication with supervisors and customers, et cetera (see

Lai, Shankar & Khalema, 2017). These norms and expectations may not only vary according to the host society, but may also vary by sector, company, and job function. Although there are similarities with information capital, cultural capital is more about unspoken/implicit rules and agreements (see e.g., Van Ngo & Este, 2006). What is the right balance between promoting oneself sufficiently and showing motivation on the one hand, and avoiding coming across as pushy or arrogant on the other? When do you look someone in the eye? Do you talk to your manager and take initiative, or do you limit yourself to carrying out a given task? Should you indicate if you are experiencing problems or if an assignment is unclear or unrealistic, or is it better to accept the situation? Considerations such as these reveal the role of cultural capital.

When it comes to cultural capital, the same idea applies as for information capital. The mentor can give advice on the job application procedure itself as well as give tips and tricks regarding norms and expectations on the (sectoral) work floor.

Psychological capital

Compared to the other forms of capital – economic capital, social capital, information capital, cultural capital, and language capital – psychological capital has received little attention within the literature and certainly very little when it comes to migrant studies. Given that certain groups of migrants have often experienced major trauma, loss (e.g., of professional identity) et cetera, this is nevertheless important (Pajic et al., 2018).

The concept of psychological capital comes mainly from the field of positive psychology. Psychological capital is understood as the combination of self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience (Newman et al., 2014; Luthans & Youssef, 2004; Luthans, Youssef & Avolio, 2007).[1] While economic capital, according to authors such as Luthans, Youssef and Avolio (2007), can be summarised as "*what* you know" and social capital as "*who* you know", psychological capital

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1   The components of psychological capital as described here are well-known concepts that are firmly embedded in psychological literature. Luthans and colleagues (2004; 2007) brought these concepts together into one construct, namely psychological capital, and applied this to a work-related context.

is about "who you are" and "who you become". Four components can be distinguished:

- *Self-efficacy* (based on Bandura's social cognitive theory, 1997) is described as the confidence to perform a task successfully, or to achieve a goal. Applied to this context, a person with high self-efficacy will be confident that they will find a job (again) in the future, and that they have the right skills and abilities to perform well in a new job (Lim & Loo, 2003, in Chen & Lim, 2012). A meta-analysis by Kanfer, Wanberg and Kantrowitz (2001) shows that self-efficacy has a high positive correlation with job search behaviour and the number of job offers, and a high negative correlation with the duration of unemployment.

- The second component, *hope*, is based on the work of Snyder, Irving and Anderson (1991) and involves taking actions through motivation and determination to achieve one's goals and seeing possibilities (or paths) to achieve a goal. Hope thus encompasses two aspects, namely "agency" or "goal-directed energy" on the one hand, and "pathways", or distinguishing paths to your goal on the other (Luthans, Youssef & Avolio, 2007, referring to Snyder, Irving & Anderson, 1991). Translated to the context of labour market integration of newcomers, a "hopeful" individual will be motivated to find ways to (re-)enter employment and invest energy in this. Those who are hopeful also maintain a greater sense of control over the situation (Snyder, Irving & Anderson, 1991).

- The third component, *optimism*, refers to a positive assessment of the future, and the tendency to attribute positive events to oneself, and to attribute negative events to other, temporary factors. In this context, an optimistic individual will spontaneously attribute a setback on the labour market to factors outside himself (economic situation, bad luck, internal candidate, et cetera) rather than concluding from this experience a lack of "employability" (Chen & Lim, 2012).

- Finally, *resilience* is understood as the capacity to recover from setbacks and move on (Luthans et al., 2007; Driessens & Van Regenmortel, 2006). Research shows that one of the most negative effects of losing a job is that it affects self-esteem and that dismissed employees see themselves as unfit (Eliason & Storrie, 2006).

It is important to note that the role of psychological capital has not yet gained a systematic place in the literature on the labour market integration of migrant newcomers. An exception is the study by Pajic and colleagues (2018) which shows that Syrian refugees with higher psychological capital search for a job with more confidence. Overall, however, there is little knowledge to date about the specific challenges and obstacles faced by refugees and other newcomers in this area. Based on the broader literature on migration and integration, however, we see some important concerns regarding the psychological capital of non-native newcomers, particularly linked to acculturation stress (both premigration and post-migration stress) (Borsch et al., 2019; Philimore, 2011; Warfa et al., 2012), and loss linked to migration. For example, Warfa and colleagues (2012) show how the identity of being a "refugee" – and the "devaluation" that comes with it – is a burden that many refugees carry with them. For example, those who used to have their own business, a job with prestige, et cetera, seem to be reduced to just being "refugees" in their host country. Both materially and in terms of social status, many newcomers who speak a foreign language have to cope with a loss. Factors such as "loss" and pre- and post-migration stress can have a negative effect on psychological capital.

In summary, it appears from the above that, on the one hand, psychological capital is an important asset in the search for employment and, on the other hand, that newcomers face additional challenges (risk factors) as a result of their migration. Some of the mentoring programmes explicitly focus on the enhancement of psychological capital, others see it more as a side effect of mentoring.

Language capital

The context-specific nature of human capital is particularly relevant when it comes to language skills. There is no uniformity on the exact "weight" of knowledge of the host country's language in the totality of human capital, but it often emerges as very important when it comes to labour market participation (see e.g., Chiswick & Miller, 2014; Cheung & Phillimore, 2014). A study in Switzerland – a country with four national languages where refugees are assigned to a particular canton without taking into account any (mis)match between the spoken language in the canton and the immigrant's language skills – shows that those who are assigned to a region of which they speak the language have a

significantly higher chance of finding a job within two years (Auer, 2018). In higher skilled jobs, particularly, knowledge of the language of the host country seems to be a determining factor (Corluy, 2014). Investing in language training is therefore prominently put forward as a policy recommendation (Konl-Seidl & Bolits, 2016; OECD, 2014). Yet research shows that the reality is not that simple, and language training does not appear to automatically lead to better integration (Gonzalez-Garibay & De Cuyper, 2013; De Cuyper & Vandermeerschen, 2016).

The degree of mastery of the language of the host country is related to all distinguished types of capital. In some jobs, it may increase productivity (economic capital), and/or facilitate social contacts (social capital). Mentoring can contribute to all the described language skills by offering opportunities to practice. Vandermeerschen and De Cuyper (2018) show that this is not often put forward as an explicit objective of the mentoring programme but is typically seen as a side effect.

8.4   Methodology

To explore whether mentoring-to-work succeeds in increasing the different forms of capital, three sources were used. First, four pilot programmes were analysed which were set up in the broader context of the @level2work programme. This programme ran in Flanders from June 2016 to March 2018 and tested and implemented new intervention strategies to increase labour market opportunities for highly skilled newcomers at their level of qualification. The programme was funded by the Flemish Asylum Migration and Integration Fund. Different interventions (n=40) were implemented and evaluated in eight regional pilot programmes to identify successful strategies. One of these interventions was mentoring-to- work, which was implemented in four of the eight pilots. 158 mentees participated in the programme. A process evaluation of the pilots was conducted. The aim of the evaluation was not to sketch a representative view on the percentage of effects that appear, but to gain more insight into whether mentoring adds to the different forms of capital, and under which conditions. Therefore, we tried to interview a diverse sample of respondents. A total of 30 mentees were interviewed, from 18 different countries of origin. All inter-

viewees had origins outside of the European Union. Syria was the most common country of origin (eight interviewees). The age of the interviewed mentees ranged from 25 to 52 years old. Of the interviewees, eight were employed. The interviews with the mentees addressed five main themes: 1) their motives for joining the mentoring programme, 2) the mentoring process so far (frequency of contact, actions taken so far, agenda setting), 3) the benefits of the programme for the mentee, 4) the prerequisites for a successful mentoring relationship, and 5) a general evaluation (covering questions such as: What did you think of the programme? What were the positives? Did you face any issues while participating in this programme?)

A second source builds on the first. As a result of the positive evaluation of the @level2work project in 2019, the Flemish public employment service (PES) subsidised five mentoring-to-work organisations in 2019 to set up 1000 mentoring-to-work trajectories for highly skilled migrants, low skilled immigrants, and low skilled young adults. Within the ESF project "Towards effective and qualitative mentoring projects" (www.mentoring2work.eu), HIVA – KU LEUVEN supported the PES and the mentoring organisations with a learning network, by developing quality criteria (De Cuyper et al., 2022), and by developing the analytical framework described above including indicators and sample survey questions (De Cuyper & Vandermeerschen, 2022). In October 2021, the public employment service used this framework and the sample questions to conduct a survey. The survey was sent to mentees 18 months after they started mentoring. Of 85 mentees, 36 answered the questionnaire. The data do not allow us to sketch a representative picture of the effects of mentoring-to-work as there will be a selection bias, nor do they allow us to differentiate between the different groups of mentees. However, they can provide further insight into the question which potential effects mentees do experience from mentoring-to- work and which they do not.

The last source is recent research conducted by Bagnoli, Estache and Fourati (2022). A survey was conducted among 113 mentees participating in the DUO for a JOB mentoring programme. DUO for a JOB is a mentoring programme in the Netherlands aimed at first, second and third generation migrants with a non-EU background between 18 and 33 years old. While DUO for a JOB was not included in our qualitative research, it is included in the PES survey but only a

few DUO for a JOB mentees responded to the survey. In this respect, this survey is an interesting addition to our research data. We will use these data to confirm or reject our findings. It is important to note that the authors stress that the survey is not representative for the population of mentees within DUO for a JOB as it is expected that more educated mentees are more likely to participate. 50% of the respondents were highly educated.

By combining these three sources that each cover a different aspect of mentoring-to-work organisations and mentees, we aim to gain more insight into the potential of mentoring-to-work to improve the different forms of human capital.

8.5 Results

In this section, we discuss whether the claims about the potential of mentoring-to-work are also experienced by the mentees by discussing the results for the different forms of capital. We start from the PES survey and add data from the other sources in the discussion below. In Table 8.1, the results of the PES survey are summarised in terms of the different forms of capital.

Table 8.1 Perceived benefits from mentoring2work
(results of the PES survey, n=36)

Social capital	% respondents agreeing*
I met people who could be interesting in helping to find a job.	72.0
Information capital	
I know where to find vacancies for the job I'm aiming at.	88.9
I am more able to write a cv.	83.3
I am more able to write a cover letter.	83.3
I have more insight into sectors and the Belgian labour market.	94.3
I have more insight into the job demands I'm aiming at and the match with my competences.	97.2
Cultural capital	
I have more insight into work floor culture.	70
I have more insight into how the work floor culture differs from my home country.	80
Language capital	
I am more able to conduct a job interview in Dutch.	72.0
I have improved general knowledge of Dutch.	66.7

Psychological capital	
I have more confidence in my capabilities on the labour market (self-efficacy).	80.6
I have more confidence in finding a job that fits me (self-efficacy).	86.1
I am more determined to reach my goals (hope).	91.7
I see more alternatives/solutions when I'm encountering obstacles in my way to work (hope).	77.8
I can persist longer in my search for a job (resilience).	91.7
I feel I am more able to deal with setbacks in my search for a job (resilience).	83.3

* This column denotes the percentage of respondents agreeing that this statement applies to them.

The general finding is that mentoring can have an added value for the various forms of human capital. When it comes to social capital, about 72% of the respondents reported that they met people who could be interesting or helpful in finding a job as a result of mentoring. Similar findings can be found in Bagnoli, Estache and Fourati (2022), with 64% of mentees reporting that mentoring helped them build a professional network. The surveys do not allow us to get more insight into the number of professional contacts or the quality of these contacts. From the qualitative research we learn that the mentor is often already a first extension of this professional network because they are usually themselves an established professional. Several mentees mentioned, for example, that their mentor acts as a reference on their CV. It cannot be derived from the survey if the extension of the professional network goes beyond the mentor. Findings from the qualitative research show that network building on behalf of the mentee is not always an easy task for the mentor. Much seems to depend on the way the programme is set up. Some mentors may not have been able to use their network if a non-sector specific match was made and the mentor and mentee came from widely varying sectors. Secondly, for their mentee to use their network, mentors have to place a lot of trust in their mentee and they may not want to impose too much on the people in their network. Thus, we found that mentoring can indeed add to building a professional network, but we do not know to what extent.

Both the PES survey and the survey of Bagnoli, Estache and Fourati (2022) show that mentoring can play an important role in building information capital. More than 80% of the mentees reported receiving help with writing a CV, a cover letter, where to find vacancies, et cetera. In the PES survey, 94.4% also

mention more sectoral knowledge and knowledge about the Belgian labour market. The latter does not come as a surprise. The qualitative research shows that (highly skilled) mentees mentioned sector-specific advice as being the most important element in creating added value. This involved aspects such as mentors familiarising the mentees with the Flemish labour market and advising them about the ins and outs of a specific profession or sector in Belgium. This seems to be the key factor in creating added value. The mentees confirmed there were quite a few differences in professional approaches between their country of origin and Belgium, and the mentor helped them deal with these differences. The mentors explained how things worked in Belgium, which enabled the mentees to implement effective job search strategies such as knowing where to look for sector-specific vacancies, et cetera. One mentee reported in this respect:

"Honestly, the most important thing was that it opened my eyes to the biggest companies where they could hire talent like me, he also told me what special points to mention in the interview, what to ask at the end… the range of salaries and market for engineers. This is also important information."

A second dimension of information capital is what we called "reflection on qualities", leading to realistic goals and an understanding of which competencies and skills one needs to brush up on. In the qualitative research, mentees report that the mentor helps them find out which steps the mentee still has to take or how the mentee can improve their chances, for example by following the right training. The mentor shows the mentee opportunities. The mentor helps to provide perspective by delineating more clearly what is or is not feasible, what the characteristics of sub-sectors are and what the required competencies are, and so on. Mentoring ensures that people have a better idea of where they want to or could work, and what steps they still need to take to reach this goal. It also implies that mentors provide guidance in the search for information (e.g., where to find information about the education system in Belgium, about training, et cetera). This added value is confirmed within the surveys. Nearly all mentees reported having more insight into job demands and the match with their competences. A more particular indicator is that mentees reported that mentoring helped them in assessing whether their language proficiency is sufficient for the

job they are aiming for. Bagnoli, Estache and Fourati (2022) report that 70% of mentees got help with finding courses or training.

Cultural capital is related to information capital. More than 70% of the mentees report having more insight into work floor culture and how it differs from their home country. One specific element of culture-specific advice is help with job applications and, more specifically, the dos and don'ts of job interviews. This aspect is not explicitly covered in the surveys. The qualitative research shows that the added value for highly skilled immigrants is not so much in "general" job interview advice, but rather in job interview advice that is tailored to a specific sector in Belgium.

Most of the mentoring programmes see the enhancement of language skills as a "side effect" of the programme. However, a majority of the respondents (66.7%) reported that mentoring helped to improve their (general) knowledge of Dutch while 72% indicated being more able to conduct a job interview in Dutch.

Psychological capital has not gained a systematic place in the literature on labour market integration of migrants. The qualitative research showed that mentoring can add to psychological capital. Mentees mentioned that the mentor helped them to "dare" to do more and gave them more self-confidence. Others emphasised the motivating character (*"It helps not to give up and to sit at home"*). Based on these findings, psychological capital was added to our analytical framework. In both the survey of Bagnoli, Estache and Fourati (2022) and the PES survey, more than 80% of the mentees reported gaining confidence as a result of mentoring, Bagnoli, Estache and Fourati (2022) even report 99%. When it comes to other dimensions of psychological capital, for example "hope" ("I'm more determined to reach my goals", "I see more alternatives and solutions when I'm encountering obstacles in my way to a job"), and resilience ("I can persist longer in my search for a job even if I don't find a job immediately", "I feel I am more able to deal with setbacks in my search for a job"), between 80 and 90% of the mentees confirm to have made progress on these dimensions. Mentoring-to-work thus seems to play an important role in enhancing this sometimes overlooked form of human capital.

8.6   Discussion and conclusion

Combining academic knowledge about forms of human capital with practice-based knowledge from practitioners in the field of migrant mentoring-to-work, we identified and described forms of human capital which could be enhanced by mentoring-to-work. The result is a framework to analyse effects of mentoring-to-work which is open yet clear: it is sufficiently precise to offer guidance for policy, research, and practice, but at the same time leaves enough room to be adapted to different forms of mentoring-to-work.

Applying this framework to new and existing data about mentoring-to-work shows that mentoring-to-work has the potential to enhance the different forms of capital for highly skilled immigrants. The added value for information capital and, to a lesser extent, social capital did not come as a surprise. The high scores on language capital and in particular psychological capital do. The unique strength of mentoring seems to lie in the flexibility of the instrument and the ability to target different forms of capital (see also Vandermeerschen & De Cuyper, 2018). The results, however, mainly stem from exploratory research. Important questions remain, such as: can these results be generalised for a broader population of migrants? For whom is or can mentoring-to-work (be) effective? Under which conditions and modalities does it work? Vandermeerschen and De Cuyper (2018) stress, for example, that effective mentoring for highly skilled newcomers seems contingent on sector-specific matches. Bagnoli, Estache and Fourati (2022) found that higher skilled immigrants are more interested in building a professional network, whereas lower skilled migrants are more interested in advice about training. Further research based on larger samples should validate and go beyond the current research findings.

The framework and the results are also useful from a broader perspective. First, both the framework and the results show the multiple obstacles to access the labour market for (highly skilled) migrant job seekers. Policy measures aimed at the integration of migrant job seekers should thus not only focus on "economical capital" such as diploma recognition and training but also take other forms of capital into account in designing and evaluating policy measures aimed at migrants. Second, current policy evaluations about the labour market integration of migrants have the tendency to focus on employment rates after an interven-

tion. However, integration processes take time and even when migrants do not directly find a job at their level, this does not mean that interventions do not have any effect. Migrants can make progress in their journey into the labour market on the basis of different forms of human capital. The analytical framework makes it possible to measure this progress. We hope that policymakers on different levels adopt a broader view on labour market integration in designing and evaluating labour market programmes, not only taking employment indicators into account but also the growth of migrants in terms of the different forms of human capital. Mentoring-to-work can be a good instrument to take these different forms of human capital into account. Local governments can take a leading role in developing mentoring-to-work projects trying to avoid brain waste, as was shown by the Canadian experience for example, not only by funding mentoring-to-work projects but also by seeing this as a form of corporate social responsibility, actively stimulating employees to act as mentors in the programme.

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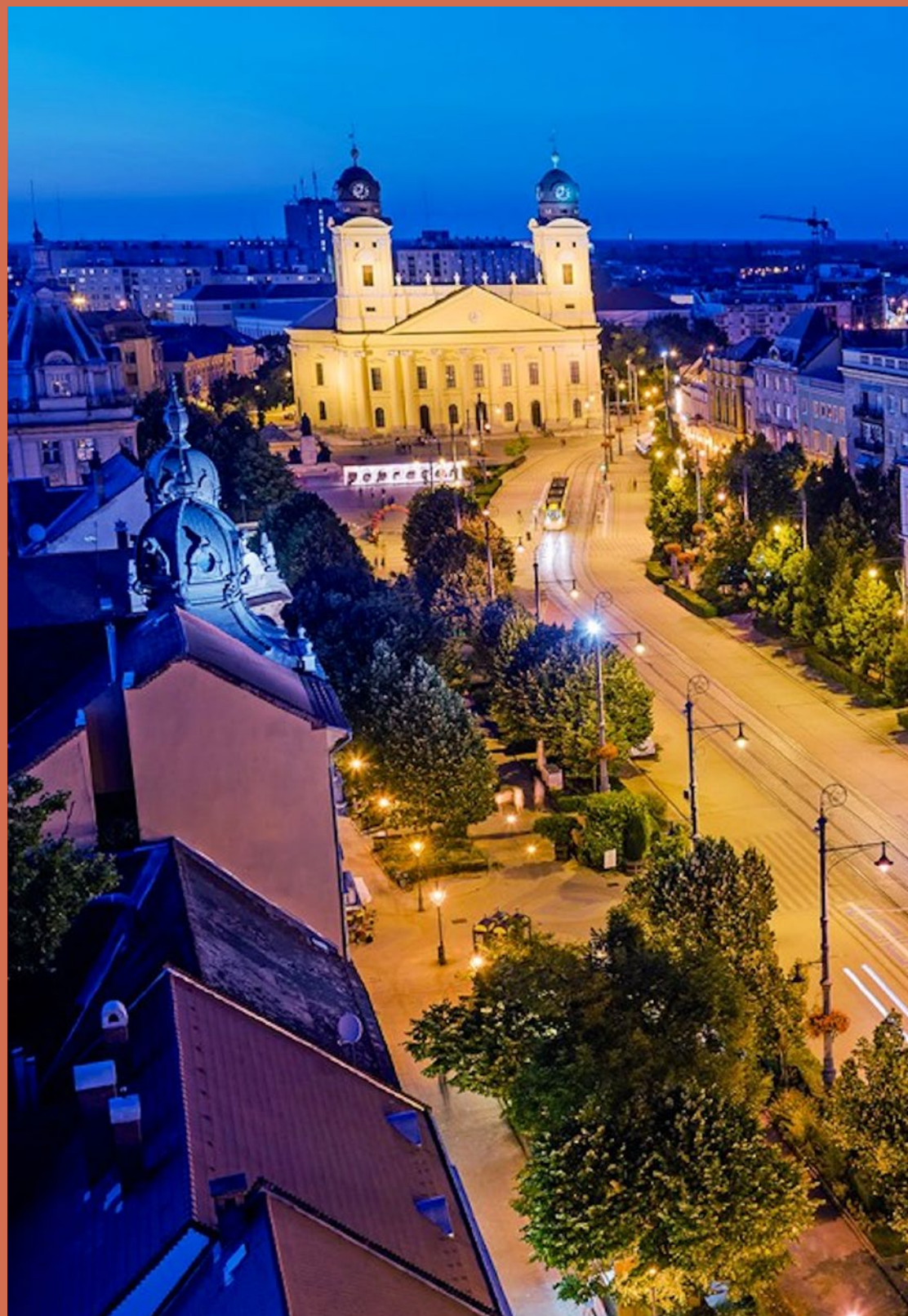
Urban governance

9 Governance models for talent management

Willem van Winden

9.1 Introduction

Cities have gained importance in the governance of skilled migration (see Caponio & Borkert, 2010; Jorgensen, 2012; Hepburn & Zapata-Barrero, 2014; Scholten & Penninx, 2016; Schiller, 2015 & 2017; Schammann & Kühn, 2017). But the scope for urban action is limited: when it comes to skilled immigration, cities are not autonomous decision-making bodies, but are bound to national and international legal frameworks which vary between countries (Bernt, 2019). Despite these limitations, as became clear in this book, we see a growing activity of cities to attract and support skilled "wanted" migrants as part of an urban or regional economic development agenda.

Relatively new – and underexplored in literature – is that city administrations closely collaborate with other actors in the cities to manage the welcoming and integration of skilled migrants in a more comprehensive way. In this chapter we discuss emerging forms of co-ordinated international talent management (CITM): comprehensive strategies and initiatives by urban stakeholders to attract, facilitate and/or incorporate skilled international migrants. These efforts reflect the recognition of a shared interest or common challenge that the participating stakeholders cannot (or do not want to) address individually. Co-ordinated international talent management (CITM) can be understood as a manifestation of urban governance, emphasising the relationships and interactions between actors, and the conditions and rules that frame them (Da Cruz, Rode & McQuarrie, 2019; Kjaer, 2004; Colebatch, 2009).

In this chapter, we illustrate recent practices of CITM using examples from the European cities of Parma, Leuven, Magdeburg, and Groningen. These cities took part in the URBACT exchange programme *Welcoming International Talent*, in which the authors acted as experts and moderators. All of them have developed a co-ordinated approach towards skilled migrants, involving several stakeholders, but all in different ways. In each city we held two-day peer-review workshops and field trips, with active participation of local stakeholders and representatives from other cities involved in CITM. Additionally, we held interviews with policy-makers involved in CITM in each city.

The chapter discusses the *why*, *what*, and *how* of CITM in the case cities. Section 9.2 focuses on the why question: *Why do cities develop CITM approaches; what are their rationales?* Section 9.3 will focus on the what: we will discern CITM policies in three domains: attraction, facilitation, and integration of skilled migrants. Section 9.4 discusses the *how* – organisational and governance aspects, identifying two types of governance. The chapter ends with challenges and policy recommendations for cities concerning (co-ordinated) international talent management.

9.2   Rationales and triggers of CITM

In medium-sized cities, CITM emerges when key urban players (city administrations, international companies, sector bodies and knowledge institutes or universities) recognize the commonality of problems and challenges that come with increasing numbers of skilled migrants. What specifically triggers the stakeholders to collaborate?

In the cities of Magdeburg and Groningen, local universities have been the prime drivers. They experienced a strong growth of international student populations (both from EU and non-EU countries), partly due to an overall growth of international student mobility, and partly as a result of active marketing policies. In Parma, the establishment of the European Food and Security Agency (EFSA) in 2003 was a prime catalyst to take more substantial action to welcome internationals: the agency employs about 600 highly skilled employees – most of them migrants – and generated a large and sudden influx of skilled migrants. In Leuven, the larger players in the local knowledge economy (the university and

IMEC) were the ones who recognized that a common approach towards welcoming talent would be better than a fragmented one.

In all cases, city administrations set up CITM initiatives in response to pressure from universities and companies, but they had other reasons as well. In all our case cities, CITM is framed as a strategic urban policy instrument to compete with other cities in attracting skilled labour, to promote economic development, or to prevent urban and even regional decline. Policymakers indicate that CITM is important because skilled migrants help their cities to become more diverse and cosmopolitan, and diversity is regarded as an important factor to compete in the race for investment and talent (following Florida's [Florida, 2002] influential prescriptions). Another frequently reported rationale for CITM is to counter the trend of an ageing population (strong in Groningen and Magdeburg, both situated in regions with a declining population). Cities are happy to welcome new skilled inhabitants who provide substantial purchasing power and can sustain local amenities. CITM is also seen as instrumental to support regional labour markets; all cases cities report skills shortages (particularly in specific fields such as IT, R&D, and engineering) and see incoming skilled migrants as a solution.

9.3   What is being co-ordinated?

A co-ordinated, multi-stakeholder approach can be applied to the attraction of skilled migrants, their facilitation (giving the access to amenities and services), and their integration into local society.

In the *attraction* of international talent, co-ordination typically results in joint city marketing campaigns or the creation of informative websites with general information about the city. But some cities go beyond that and focus on specific target groups that they want to attract. In Leuven, city, university, and knowledge institutes joined to address specific target markets and organise joint trade and marketing missions to selling the region as a destination for talent and investment. India is one of their core markets: the city hosts a large and growing community of highly skilled Indians; researchers, entrepreneurs, employers, and students. In 2013, India House was opened, aimed to promote cultural, economic, and social networks between Leuven and India.

> "The biggest companies in Parma, the university, and many of the local stakeholders have their own strategy to attract international people. The difficulty is to collaborate to have a unique tool, useful for everybody."
>
> (Teresa Folli, City of Parma)

The second area of stakeholders' co-ordination and collaboration is the *facilitation* of skilled migrants. Before and upon arrival, skilled migrants face a number of challenges: finding adequate housing, complying with formalities, accessing public facilities, medical assistance and insurance, et cetera. A lack of English-language information in all these domains is the main generic barrier. So how do the relevant city stakeholders co-ordinate their efforts to address these issues?

Typically, universities and larger employers put their own support structures in place to help "their" internationals. Universities have support desks for students, helping them to find housing, insurance, and finding their way through bureaucracy. Some cities have set up more collaborative and streamlined actions in the field of facilitation. A typical form is through welcome centres or expat desks (Groningen and Leuven). Here, various administrative units (city departments, and sometimes also national immigration agencies) offer services to expats in a more co-ordinated and accessible form. In 2014, Groningen opened its International Welcome Center North (IWCN), an expat support centre, providing new residents with a "one-stop-shop" when they arrive in the North of the Netherlands. IWCN is the result of co-operation between urban, provincial and national government as well as local institutions – a great example of successful multiscalar collaboration in this area. It offers help by streamlining government formalities such as resident permits, taxes, and address registration, as well as information services, referrals to affiliated service providers, and social activities. In 2018, International House Leuven was set up by a similarly broad partnership of stakeholders from government, university and business. It functions as an information, knowledge, and service centre for internationals and their families, and for organisations in the Leuven region employing international talent. Magdeburg publishes a "migration guide" for newly arrived people with basic information about life in the city. Our interviews with migrants demonstrate that they appreciate and use these services, but at the same time strongly rely on social media as a resource to prepare themselves and navigate bureaucracies. Especially Facebook groups (for specific communities such as

Ukrainians in Magdeburg) help them to get into contact with immigrants from the same country or university to gather information and support.

The third area of collaboration is where urban stakeholders join up to help skilled migrants *integrate into the local society and labour market* (see Chapters 3, 4, 7, and 8 for examples). Typically, in these fields, many organisations help their "own" skilled migrants to integrate better (employers, higher education institutes, cultural organisations, et cetera), but increasingly we see co-ordinated approaches where stakeholders unite to address specific target groups (for example activities for spouses), or themes (cultural or culinary festivals).

9.4   Co-ordination models for international talent management

We defined CITM as co-ordinated efforts by urban stakeholders to attract, facilitate, or integrate skilled internationals. How can this co-ordination be structured? This section describes two types of co-ordination models: a strategic model, and a lighter co-ordination model.

Strategic models

Strategic CITM models adopt a longer-term integrated approach towards skilled migrants, including comprehensive programmes and projects to do with all aspects of skilled migration (attraction, facilitation, and integration). CITM is embedded in wider urban or even regional development strategies and backed by the top level of the participating organisations. Stakeholders systematically set joint priorities, align their interests, frame their collaborative efforts, and define projects or actions, and have a relatively solid funding base. Examples of strategic models are found in Groningen and Leuven.

International Groningen

Launched in 2016, The *International Groningen* programme is a common, comprehensive strategy, with a set of concrete and funded actions. At a strategic level, the entire programme is supported by the Groningen Alliance, a partnership between the municipality, the province (recently joined), and the higher education-

al institutions in the city.[1] The partners are also the main funders/sponsors of the programme. Their common interest is to develop Groningen as a leading economic hub with strong knowledge and innovation ecosystems in energy, health and digitalisation. The partners agreed that they all want to attract more internationals, to retain them (by opening up the local/regional labour market for them), to improve the availability of good-quality housing, to brand Groningen as an international-friendly city, and to integrate internationals better into society. The programme is overseen by a steering committee formed by the mayor, the chairpersons of the higher education institutes and local hospitals as well as the King's Commissioner. Under this strategic umbrella, several project teams have been created, in which a wider set of stakeholders work together (international students, skilled migrants, and policy workers from both universities and the local government) and implement the various projects in the target fields of housing, city living, communication and especially the labour market. Each project is developed and implemented by mixed teams of municipal, provincial and university employees, self-employed residents, international students, and interns. Projects are based on perceived needs of the stakeholders and discussed in focus groups consisting of international residents and local student project groups to better understand how internationalisation is experienced and what the key challenges for the city are. To monitor the programme, the city collects data on stay rates and participation, and commissions a biannual International Student Barometer (which measures satisfaction for housing, social inclusion, and career prospects).

Leuven MindGate

Leuven's approach to skilled migrants is embedded in Leuven MindGate, a wider triple helix strategy in which city, university, and businesses work together. In 2016, Leuven MindGate was founded by 29 leading knowledge institutions, companies, and the city of Leuven. The goal of Leuven MindGate is to join forces to develop the city as a leading region for health, high tech, and creativity. Attracting and welcoming international talent is considered a key condition to realise this. Leuven already had a wealth of welcoming and integration initiatives for internationals in place, mainly in larger organisations (the university, IMEC, bigger companies), but the establishment of MindGate propelled a more collaborative and comprehensive approach.

• • •

[1] https://groningen.nl/en/articles/about-tga

Table 9.1 Co-ordination models

Strategic models	Co-ordination	Key collaborative projects, events or initiatives	Stakeholders involved
Groningen	CITM is an explicit part of a broader strategy for the development of the regional knowledge economy; co-ordination, knowledge sharing, and the defining or funding of projects is derived from the strategy of the Groningen Alliance.	*International Welcome Center North:* to help internationals with practicalities	Regional cities, three provinces, national government, Connect International and City Central
		International wayfinding: Signage project to improve city wayfinding for non-Dutch residents and visitors	Initiated by international resident urban planner, together with various departments of the municipality
		City Central: physical hub for social integration (now part of IWCN)	Initiated by international resident; funded by all main stakeholders
		At home in Groningen: portal and working group to improve information and support regarding housing	Working group led by municipality and members from educational institutions, including students
		International Groningen.nl portal: online information portal supplying English language information about the city and its surroundings	Marketing Groningen, municipality, province, knowledge institutions, expats
		Make it in the North: regional programme to improve labour market access	Regional cities, three northern provinces, employer associations, knowledge institutes
		Northern Times: English language regional news site	IWCN with regional news bureau and international interns
		Here&Now: cultural agenda for internationals	Initiated by international resident, funded by main stakeholders
Leuven	CITM is part of Leuven MindGate's mission, a triple helix development organisation.	*Leuven International House:* a service and community centre for internationals and their families, and for organisations in the Leuven region employing international talent.	City, university, companies, knowledge institutes
		Exchange of HR managers: structured exchange of knowledge and information about well-being of expats and their families	Companies, university, knowledge institutes, city
Light co-ordination models			
Magdeburg	Working groups, co-ordination groups; collaboration in projects; Mayor's Office plays role of co-ordinator of activities and projects	*Festival of cultures*, on which international communities present themselves in the city with cultural and culinary expressions	City, university, cultural organisations
		"Mile of Democracy", in which schools, universities, unions, companies, organisations, and authorities stand up for tolerance and against racism.	Universities, city, schools, migrant organisations
Parma	Working groups, co-ordination groups; collaboration in projects	*Teaching Placement programme* in which international language students teach their mother tongues at nursery and primary schools in Parma.	University, primary schools, nursery homes

To fund MindGate, the city of Leuven invested € 100,000 per annum (for 2016-2019), and the partners pay a membership fee (the amount depending on their size). The biggest (IMEC, UZ Leuven, KU Leuven and UCLL) each contribute € 50,000 per annum. The contribution is based on the number of employees, and the smallest pay as little as € 200 per annum.

Within Leuven MindGate, internationalisation is one of the priorities. A key result from the foundation of MindGate is the establishment of International House Leuven (IHL), a service and community centre for internationals and their families, and for organisations in the Leuven region employing international talent. IHL is there to provide support for internationals related to relocation, social integration, and living and working in the Leuven region. It should become a vibrant hub for local networking and community building. Also, it should co-ordinate activities aimed at attracting and incorporating internationals and serve as a platform for knowledge exchange between organisations.

Lighter co-ordination models

In lighter co-ordination models, stakeholder collaboration is based on the recognition of common interests, rests on a light institutional framework (if institutionalised at all), and typically takes the form of working groups in which departments of the various stakeholders participate in projects. There is less of a common vision and strategy, and the scope is urban rather than regional. This type is practised in Magdeburg and Parma. In Magdeburg, stakeholders meet in thematic working groups to align their approaches. For example, to reduce administrative complexities for internationals, the cities' Foreigners Authority holds regular consultations with the international offices of both universities and with all responsible staff of the other scientific institutions. Also, there are mixed working groups who organise welcome events and social-cultural activities aimed at the social acceptance and integration of international talent into local society, and the partners developed the web portal Welcome to Magdeburg which offers comprehensive information on arriving, living, and working in Magdeburg.

The mayoral office plays an important role in the overall co-ordination of all activities regarding CITM. Recently, the office stepped up efforts towards a more strategic approach; plans are developed to open an international house in the city centre which should serve as a centralised one-stop-shop for all kinds of

services for internationals; it should also become a landmark to underline the city's openness to migrants and become a place for social events where locals and internationals can meet. In the future, BürgerBüro Mitte, a department of the Immigration Office and a Welcome Service for international students, researchers, and specialists will be located under the roof of the International House. Its opening is planned for the end of 2023.

Parma has a similar structure of working groups that co-ordinate joint projects and programmes to welcome and integrate internationals; in a joint working group, the university and the EFSA (European Food and Security Agency) identified common challenges which "their" internationals encounter: finding adequate housing, overcoming language barriers, and discrimination. The city, university, EFSA, and some major employers took the first steps to develop a more comprehensive internationalisation strategy aligned with the economic strategy of the city, which focuses on gastronomy, food science, and culture.

9.5   Key challenges

The following specific challenges regarding the governance of co-ordinated international talent management policies can be identified:

Finding common ground. Stakeholders in the city or region must have a shared interest to start collaboration. But who are these stakeholders, and what exactly is the shared interest? This is not always clear. As a starting point, it can help to organise well-moderated workshops in which various urban stakeholders (including at the least universities, international companies, and various city departments) make explicit what their own interests are in internationalisation, what problems and challenges they perceive, and in what field or domain they might want to collaborate with others (a collaborative website, a shared welcome package, an international house, integration programmes for spouses, et cetera), and also in areas they prefer to work more individually. This point is also relevant for cities which already have strategic partnerships in place: even for them it can be beneficial to evaluate how well the partnership still addresses common issues from time to time.

"It works well to adopt an 'hourglass model' with three stages:
1) Go big, engage a large group of stakeholders to explore the issue;
2) Slim down: select high impact strategic partners and work with them on concrete results;
3) Go big again: build on the successes and expand again".
(Natalie de Filette, Leuven)

Setting a modus of collaboration. If partners have identified common ground to take action, the next question is how to do this. Here, a variety of options are open, from formal to informal, from lightly structured to heavily institutionalised, from integrated to more task-based. Also, much depends on the local context, culture of collaboration, and mandates of the local government vis-à-vis other government agencies. Having said that, some considerations can be made in general. Firstly, it helps to create a small strategic group in which welcoming activities are co-ordinated, preferably by a respected group of people on a sufficiently high position in their parent organisations. This helps to avoid fragmentation, improve embeddedness in broader policies, and gives a clear mandate to the people in working groups who do the work on the ground. Secondly, it can make sense to create different subgroups for different types of actions or tasks, as not every action needs the same approach. In the early stages of collaboration, setting up "light" working groups can help to let stakeholders get to know each other, build trust, and understand each other's challenges. Also, a broader range of stakeholders can be invited to such groups. Thirdly, on the political level, it helps if the mayor or an alderman/woman actively champions the welcoming activities.

"The main challenge is that very different project partners, such as the university or the city administration, have to work together. Different structures and mentalities come together".
(Sandra Goltz-Dangler, Magdeburg)

Involving internationals. A key lesson from Groningen is that the involvement of internationals in any kind of action or working group is key. They are the target group, and their insights are invaluable to do things right. Their involvement can go from brainstorming sessions about what to do, to active co-creation (as in the case of the Groningen international cultural event calendar).

Clearly set roles and responsibilities. Integrated welcoming policies rely on voluntary multi-stakeholder collaborations, in which partners have made commitments but typically without a clear hierarchy, control, leader, or other strong enforcement mechanisms. This always brings the risks of freeriding and freewheeling and allows partners to not live up to the expectations or promises they made. Formal agreements or commitments (such as the Groningen Alliance's strategic agenda) can help, as key partners make clear what they will commit to in the longer run, and how they will collaborate. A more formalised and professional take is especially important for more strategic actions in which stakeholders make larger investments, such as the creation of a joint International House.

Secure long-term funding. In principle, welcoming policies have a longer-term perspective, and therefore should not be organised on a project basis with funding limited to the duration of the project. For such policies, it makes sense to have structural or at least programmatic funding for several years, from the city, as well as large organisations with a big stake in internationalisation (typically the university, development companies, the province, and possibly larger companies or research institutes). In addition, funding from smaller stakeholders can be collected in various forms such as man-hours, contributions to specific sub-projects, or membership fees.

Establish links with refugee and immigrant integration policies. In many cities, a sharp policy dam exists between talent management and attraction policies (for the higher skilled) on the one hand and integration or refugee policies on the other. Talent attraction is about pro-actively rolling out the red carpet for much-needed internationals who support the local economy, whereas integration and refugee policies are more reactive policies to address problems of housing and integration for unregulated migrants (refugees) or immigrant communities who are in an unfavourable position. Differences between both subgroups exist and must be reflected in policy, but the distinction should not always be that sharp: first of all, many societal integration problems for both groups might be similar; second, international talent is everywhere, also among immigrant communities and refugees; and third, many legal and bureaucratic issues are the same for both groups, especially when the immigrants are from outside the EU. Cities therefore are wise to reflect on how their co-ordinated talent management policy can be combined

with refugee and integration policies; within the city administration, this demands a collaboration between social and economic departments.

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Conclusions and outlook

In this book, we have reported on various aspects of internationalisation processes in medium-sized cities, as they are playing out across Europe today. We combined policy perspectives with examples of good practices from these cities and alongside these we included relevant academic contributions for each theme. We started by discussing the role of city branding for attracting migrants and the importance of an authentic sense of place and including the perspective of residents in this process. Then we offered frameworks and insights to understand the processes of socio-cultural integration in the bigger context of increasing urban diversity and looked at how this is impacted by both the type of migrants, including their backgrounds, migration pathways, and motivations, as well as the context of reception: the cities themselves. Many cities in Europe are also centres of higher education and this plays a large role in urban development, so we included a survey of the state of internationalisation at universities, with a particular focus on how this plays out in the urban context. A fundamental factor to successful internationalisation is matching skilled migrants with the right type of job, so we described contextual factors, barriers, and initiatives relevant to their integration into the labour market. Finally, we looked at how these policy themes come together in new modes of urban co-ordination and the developments and good practices in this area.

In this concluding chapter, we would like to offer insights and outlooks which we think are relevant for internationalisation in Europe's cities in the coming years. These considerations emerged from our research and we feel they deserve attention from policymakers and researchers alike.

Rethink the division between wanted and unwanted migrants

Cities tend to draw a sharp policy line between the "wanted", skilled migrants and the more "problematic" lower skilled ones. Often, we assume that all refugees and asylum seekers fall into the latter category. Häußermann (2006)

described this as a "dual regime" of growth and integration policies: from an economic development perspective, cities design policies to actively recruit "highly qualified" or "creative" migrants, which is reflected in place branding and business development programmes. At the same time, cities address socially weaker groups of settled migrants from the perspective of "social problems" and "integration deficits" (Bernt, 2019). Facilitation policies aim to roll out the red carpet for the much-wanted skilled immigrants, easing access to public sector bureaucracy and amenities, but such one-stop-shop or fast track types of service are not available for less wanted types of immigrants such as refugees or lower skilled migrants from outside the EU. They end up in separate, less welcoming policy processes. However, as we have shown in this book, the line between these two groups is blurry. Surprisingly, many of the "wanted" skilled migrants end up being underemployed or socially isolated, many refugees are highly educated, and a large group of lower skilled migrants integrate well and fully deploy and develop their entrepreneurial skills to the benefit of local society. For this reason, it's time to rethink such simple dichotomies and develop new visions on a diversifying urban society.

Consider the local impact of internationalisation

Internationalisation is not just about facilitating migrants, it is about a shift in orientation for a city as a whole, including local institutions, organisations, and residents. It will have impacts that are broadly felt and need to be managed actively. This applies to local organisations which need to be equipped to provide services to a wider range of residents (Jennissen et al., 2018). It also means navigating eventual tensions between locals and internationals, especially in cities with tight housing markets or lower acceptance levels for cultural diversity. Actions to attract and retain new residents must take the absorptive capacity of the city population at large into account, in two directions. On the one hand, citizens' concerns must be taken seriously and inform decisions on how far to go with active internationalisation. On the other hand, as exemplified throughout this book, cities can do much to reduce prejudice by bringing locals and migrants together in all sorts of ways.

Develop intelligence for evidence-based policies

Cities should do more to base their policies on evidence, using data from qualitative and quantitative methods. Cities nowadays take a more active role in the attraction, facilitation, and integration of skilled migrants, but their policies are hardly evidence-based. Detailed urban data on migration are scarce: cities typically have numbers of non-nationals – including their country of origin – but not their education level, or other relevant data. Even though the case cities described in this book have the explicit ambition to attract and incorporate international migrants (and develop relevant policies), they do not systematically collect even basic data on their target groups. Digital platforms and migrant online communities contain a wealth of first-hand qualitative information on how migrants feel, how they appreciate the city, and what their problems and challenges are. But city administrations are often slow to use these free sources of rich qualitative data for informed policies, or to actively engage with migrants on these issues. Partnerships with universities to collect data could be productive here.

Related to this, cities express the intention to actively attract skilled migrants and develop promotional materials accordingly, but they typically fail to define specific target groups or segments. And, with a few exceptions, there is no strategic collaboration in talent attraction between city, universities, and employers. Stakeholders collect surprisingly little detailed data and conduct minimal research on the types of international migrants they want to attract, their behaviours, preferences and needs, the needs of employers, attitudes of citizens, or stay rates of international students. Effective co-ordinated talent management should include mechanisms to systematically collect "intelligence" about the well-being of skilled migrants in the city and region.

Rethink skilled migration in times of digitalisation

A crucial question for the years to come is how the digitalisation of work practices and the rise of remote working and studying – accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic – will affect skilled migration, and what the policy implications might be. On the one hand, there are strong indications that companies, especially in tech sectors, increasingly adopt remote working practices, hiring staff from other countries without requiring them to move to their location. Also, digital labour platforms keep making inroads in the labour market, con-

necting supply and demand in new ways, allowing companies to find freelancers to do assignments regardless of their location. The majority of platform workers are below the age of 35 and are highly educated (ILO, 2021). In universities, key drivers of internationalisation, digital learning is developing rapidly, with more opportunities for remote studying or blended models. For cities and employers, the growth of remote working and studying across borders means that attracting and integrating talent takes on a different meaning. It might require a shift in policy orientation towards helping local companies to digitally tap into a global talent pool in a responsible way. Remote working has opened up new discussions about where to live, and could render smaller cities more attractive to some groups, such as mid-career migrants, provided locations have enough to offer in terms of quality of life.

Digitalisation is also changing the way authorities deal with migration procedures, as digital technologies are adopted to transform services and processes, from online application forms to automated decision support in procedures. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the use of big data is becoming increasingly salient in this respect but comes with caveats and risks of discrimination and bias and prudence is strongly advised. City and university administrations in medium-sized cities are only beginning to develop capacities to use such technologies in a responsible and ethical way.

Develop novel governance and co-ordination models

With regard to facilitation and integration policies, some cities have taken a more strategic and collaborative approach. They are discovering that they need to work harder than their larger counterparts: compared to capitals or larger cities, they lack international infrastructures and amenities, as well as expat communities which help migrants to have a soft landing. Local stakeholders could collaborate more strategically to address the many issues around skilled migration, as described in this book. Such approaches require solid and long-term funding and capacity building, rather than one-off projects here and there. Moreover, cities are wise to co-develop an integrated vision on internationalisation which goes beyond migration, taking not only local but also regional, national, and supranational levels into account.

The challenges of our time do not stop at regional or even national boundaries. Climate change, environmental degradation, polarisation, loss of trust in institutions and in democratic process – these are phenomena playing out across much of the world. Medium-sized cities can – and some already do – address these challenges, by developing joint agendas (with universities and other stakeholders) around the UN Strategic Development Goals (SDGs) or similar ambitions. Such agendas do not only connect local or regional issues with global ones, but also mobilise and connect citizens from various cultural backgrounds. This approach integrates processes of internationalisation into the broader imperatives of our time and will allow the potential of it to be more fully realised.

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An interdisciplinary volume combining academic articles with thematic case studies and commentary by policy makers and practitioners, resulting in a combination of academic research and policy recommendations for timely societal impact.

Medium-sized cities across Europe are increasingly and actively attracting skilled migrants. How can these cities best manage the challenges of internationalisation? That is to say: How can they attract, facilitate and integrate skilled migrants, enabling them to contribute to the regional culture and economy, while still serving their local populations and maintaining social cohesion?

In this volume, we combine academic findings with policy reflections to provide a uniquely interdisciplinary guide for academics, policy makers and professionals in local governments, universities, HRM departments, for successfully co-ordinated international talent management.

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