

Programme “Society and Future”

Final report – « Research Summary »

PROJECT ACRONYM: **NOMIBE**

TITLE : **New migration and new migrants in Belgium**

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The present document aims at presenting the results of the research project on the Internet.

INTRODUCTION

The **NOMIBE research** project aims at studying new migration towards Belgium, on the one hand, as a complex, diversified and dynamic set of processes, and, on the other hand, with regard to the integration of new migrants and their life styles within Belgian society. The term **new migrant** is generally applied to those migrants who have been resident in Belgium for no longer than 10 years. New migrants are distinguished by a new migratory trajectory, different from that of early guest worker migrations. In addition, they are generally characterised by an ethnic origin uncommon in Belgium. New migrants are not a homogeneous group. NOMIBE focuses on 6 target groups of new migrants, according to legal criteria, time of residence and migration channels: migrant workers (with residence permits), migrants who come for reasons of family reunion (including marriage), asylum seekers, recognised refugees, persons whose status has been regularised (particularly following the 1999 law) and undocumented migrants. Moreover, NOMIBE does not focus on hi-tech new migrants but rather on relatively disadvantaged new migrants, who are more numerous, and who are a major concern for Belgian government policy.

The three objectives of NOMIBE are (1) To give as complete a quantitative picture as possible of the composition and typical profiles of new migrations and new migrants based on the systematic use of all available data banks. (2) To provide a better understanding of why and how the new migrants came to Belgium. Particular attention is paid to studying the causes of the high levels of illegal immigration. (3) To understand and to explain the "migratory career", the "life styles" and the integration patterns of new migrants in Belgian society, focusing on the key dimensions of employment and training, health, housing, education, participation and social interaction.

The framework of analysis incorporates three viewpoints: opportunity structures, resource mobilisation (including social networks) and the careers of the new migrants. With the concept of opportunity structures, the idea is to study social, economic, institutional, cultural and political factors that organise both migration and integration processes. Opportunity structures represent a framework in which resource mobilisation can be deployed. **The main hypothesis** is that the evolution of the migratory career of the new migrants results both from the opportunity structures opened up from above by the institutions (political, economic, social and cultural) in Belgian society and by the mobilisation of migrants' resources (social, economic, cultural) from below. Consequently, the concept of a career reconciles both structural approaches and individual approaches. Another hypothesis is that the various groups of new migrants, according to their specific migration path, have different economic and socio-cultural profiles and that these differences influence the way that the migrants mobilise their resources, particularly in their country of origin. The encounter between new migrants' resources and the existing opportunity structures in effect produces **the careers of the new migrants**. Initially, this theoretical approach is applied to various target groups to create typical profiles. Secondly, the concept of a career is also used to explain the paths of new migrants through the establishment of various categories of legal status and legal identity.

NOMIBE brings together all the **quantitative and qualitative** data currently available for synchronic analysis (federal, regional and community data banks and existing quantitative and qualitative research). In addition, qualitative methods, in-depth interviews and focus groups have been used for diachronic analysis and the analysis of migrant careers. The qualitative methodology used by the NOMIBE project is based on the "grounded theory approach" of Glazer and Strauss (1967)¹ and the approach to data collection is based on the "theory of saturation" (Michelat, 1975; Mucchielli, 1991). Representatives of the six target

¹ For full references, please see the NOMIBE final report's bibliography
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groups for the research project were interviewed in various urban centres (Antwerp, Ghent, Brussels and Seraing) and in rural areas such as Gembloux. Finally, collective interviews were organised with other stakeholders, in particular employers, trade unions, social workers, officials and local office holders, in order to refine the analysis of life styles and of the integration of new migrants.

Beyond the outline of the theoretical framework, the project is separated into two parts. The first attempts to draft a synchronic table of new migrants by drafting typical profiles for the six target groups, and the second takes up the question diachronically by analysing various migration and integration paths.

THEORETICAL PROBLEMS: THE CONCEPT OF “MIGRATORY CAREER”

The use of the concept of the “career of migrants”, or of a “migratory career” is original, even though it has already been mentioned in relevant scientific literature (Peraldi, 2002; Massey *et al.*, 1993; Bordeuil, 2002)². The originality lies in the use of the concept of “career”, as defined in the work of Howard S. Becker (1985). Borrowed from the sociology of work, the notion of a “career” highlights the process of an individual’s passage through various stages or states in the analysis of professional mobility. On this basis, a new theoretical framework, articulating levels of analysis traditionally disjoined by the sociology of migration, can be set up.

Theoretical bases

Becker (1985) defines the concept of career as a process of change of status or position. This change is accompanied during the career, by a change in the conception of “what is possible”, as perceived by the actor, as a result of the attempts made by her or him to effect change. Careers are processes including several interacting factors, which affect mobility from one position to another. Those factors are: (1) the objective facts relative to the social structure; (2) the subjective facts relative to the changes in point of view according to which a person perceives his or her existence as a totality, and interprets the significance of his or her characteristics and actions (Hughes, 1937); (3) the migrant’s definition of success (Becker, 1985); (4) a change of identity related to change of social position (Becker, 1985); (5) the forms of status occupied; (6) the time element that gives the migratory career a certain rhythm.

The concept of career allows a reading of social mobility that brings together in the analysis various levels traditionally disjoined by social science. Those levels are (1) the structure of opportunities and constraints (Becker, 1985; Giddens, 2005); (2) life plans and characteristics specific to an actor: age, level of education, status (Logan, 1996), or gender and ethnicity (Long and Fox, 1995) and, (3) mobilisation of resources, networks and social capital (Rosenfeld, 1992; Bourdieu, 1980; Lemieux, 1999; Lévesque and White, 1999; Lin, 1995; Emirbayer and Goodwin, 1994; Portes, 1998). The typology of resources based on Bourdieu and Lemieux is as follows: economic capital; material resources; cultural capital; information; statutory resources (formal resources necessary for the acquisition of legal status: sworn statements, guarantees) and psychological support.

Reconstruction of the concept of career in relation to migration

Constitutive dimensions of the migratory career

- *Objective and subjective dimensions: their relationship to change:* According to Becker, the migratory career is built up objectively on the one hand, by the attainment of a certain legal

status, involving many stages in a juridical-institutional process, and on the other hand, it is also subjectively constructed through a confrontation between reality and the process of living through the migratory experience. This subjective dimension gives a sociological depth to career processes, as a diachronic and evolutionary construction involved in change.

- *Concept of success: prospects and precautions:* The concepts of success or failure are “a question of perspectives” (Becker and Strauss, 1956). They are analysed through migrants’ perceptions and definitions of their situation in Belgium.

- *Place of legal status in the migratory career:* Being subject to the legal decision making process regarding status influences the mobilisation of resources and strategies related to the migrant’s stay, and even the general orientation of the migrant’s life plan (Adam et al., 2002; Rea, 2002). Moreover, not all forms of status are equal, and their value varies according to the migrant’s life plan.

- *The professionalisation of migration:* The literature refers to the “professionalisation” of migration (Peraldi, 2002). This assumes that the migrant possesses certain competences related to migration such as trans-border mobility and efficient “relationality” (Peraldi, 2002), as well as commercial, organisational, political, identity or relational competences (Ruggiero, 2002).

- *Training: cultures and systems of requirements that apply to migrants:* A career assumes participation in an activity-based subculture organised around an activity. (Becker, 1985). The concepts of culture and training are part of the core of the migrant career, since they make possible the understanding of “why and how (...) some manage better than others at making the crossing between the company of origin and the company of reception” (Moreau, 1995). The dimensions of training, culture and systems of requirements also allow a better understanding as to the way in which migrants control their destinies.

Multilevel analysis of migratory careers

- *Individual characteristics of migrants:* According to Guarnizo *et al.* (2003), the individual characteristics influencing migrants’ activities are duration of stay, nationality, marital status, level of education, age, and gender. Two other crucial features for the migrant’s career are legal status and professional occupation.

- *The structure of opportunities and constraints of new migration in Belgium:* Instead of regarding structure (involuntary migration) as being in opposition to individual choice (voluntary migration), it makes more sense to consider that any human action involves both a degree of constraint and a degree of freedom. Regarding migration, the structural level can come into play first at the international level and later at a national/regional level, affecting individual voluntary action from the outside (Richmond, 1988). In Belgium, this structural level also involves aspects that are specific to the national context. Pécoud distinguishes the “political-legal environment” and the “economical-institutional environment” within the structure of opportunity at the national level (2004). The Belgian state is a key actor structuring the reception of migrants, and creating categories of migrants (Dassetto, 2001; Hein, 1993). Moreover, Belgian regions offer various modes of integration.

- *Resource mobilisation: social support networks for new migrants in Belgium:* Resource mobilisation is observed through the support networks that new migrants have in Belgium (family, friendships, colleagues, etc.). Social support is “one of the principal ways by which people and households acquire resources [and manage to cope] with problems of everyday life, to seize opportunities and to reduce uncertainties” (Wellman and Wortley, 1990). Resources are identified in the above typology based on Bourdieu and Lemieux.

PART A – TYPICAL PROFILES OF NEW MIGRANTS

Demographic data on new migrants: education and training

Immigrants are a very heterogeneous group as regards origin, education, resident aspirations and resident perspectives. The first hypothesis is that the growth of differentiation

in the regions of origin (Deschamps, 2004; Perrin, 2007), coupled with an increasing level of education among younger people in the regions of origin and a high selectivity in migration streams, leads in turn to an increasing level of education among immigrants. Regarding the area of labour, the following hypotheses are put forward: first of all, there are differences in labour market participation according to the region of origin (Vertommen & Martens, 2006); second, the level of employment of highly educated immigrants in every OECD-country is better than that of poorly educated immigrants (OECD, 2007); third, highly educated new migrants experience difficulties in obtaining proper recognition for their degrees, work experience and competences in order to obtain jobs on the same 'level'. (Sarens & Pang, 2002; Geets, Pauwels, Wets, Lamberts, Timmerman, 2006).

Since the mid-1980s, Belgium has experienced a new phase of growing immigration, a trend common to all the EU-12 member states. During this period, typical emigration states in Southern Europe have become countries with a relatively high net-migration balance. Nevertheless, when using the standardised *permanent migration* this would mean for example in 2005 a decrease in the total number of immigrants of 54% (35900 instead of 77400) (OECD, 2006). In Belgium, the *surplus of migration* has had a different rate of increase depending on nationality. In contrast to Moroccans, Poles, Romanians and Turks, people with German, French or Dutch nationality have been very mobile in both directions (immigration into and emigration out of Belgium).

The trends of immigration in Belgium from 1995 to 2006 show that over the (relatively) short term, important streams of immigration have appeared from 'new' immigrant-providing countries such as Poland, Romania, China and India. There are striking differences in the profiles of origin by region. Romanian and Polish immigration is highest in the Brussels metropolitan region, followed by Flanders. Chinese and Indian immigration are most significant in Flanders. Since the year 2000, there has been a strong growth in the number of immigrants holding French nationality (principally in Wallonia) and Dutch nationality (principally in Flanders). Since 2002, the number of Moroccan immigrants has decreased overall, with this decrease being most evident in the Brussels metropolitan region. The influx of Moroccans and Turks has been smaller, proportionally, than the percentage of these nationalities in the existing population. This relative 'underrepresentation' would be more pronounced if we were to take into consideration the large number of naturalised Moroccans and Turks. A distinction can be made between typical 'female countries of immigration' (comparing 1995 to 2005: male share $\leq 35\%$) such as Thailand, the Philippines and the Czech Republic and typical 'male countries of immigration' (for instance India). In Morocco, over the last 10 years, there has been a significant growth in the proportion of males. For Poland the trend has been the reverse.

New migrants are generally better educated than immigrants who arrived more than 10 years ago (i.e. those with 10 or more years of residence in Belgium). As for naturalised and non-naturalised foreigners resident in Belgium for less than 10 years, according the labour force survey this newer group consists of on average in the period 2001-2005 approximately 32% with a high level of education; by comparison, this figure is 20% among those who have been resident for 10 years or longer. This difference in level of education in relation to duration of residence is particularly pronounced between highly educated EU-foreigners (45% for those resident for less than 10 years compared with 18% for those resident for more than 10 years) and highly educated Turks and Moroccans (12% for those resident for less than 10 years compared with 3% for those resident for more than 10 years).

On the basis of labour force data, several conclusions can be inferred: first, the level of education of new migrants in Flanders may be presumed to be on the rise; second, a higher level of education has a positive effect on employment levels; and third, the relationship between 'highly skilled' and 'skilled labour' is the least favourable for newcomers. This means that highly educated new migrants are placed less often, proportionally, in positions requiring 'skilled labour' than highly educated 'old comers'. From this it can be assumed that the specific nature of the educational qualifications held at entry by these new immigrants is not meeting with a commensurate demand for such skills in the labour market, or that there

are problems with the recognition of foreign degrees, or that work experience in the country of origin is not recognised as valuable (Geets, Pauwels, Wets et al., 2006; Geets, 2007). Procedures and practices engaged in, respectively, by the Flemish and French communities differ. Data from the Flemish and French National Recognition and Information Centres (NARIC) reveals that the likelihood of normalisation or recognition of educational qualifications gained in the country of origin depends mainly on the particular country of origin involved and the particular academic discipline.

Work permits in Belgium

Since the official cessation of immigration into Belgium in 1974, the work permit has been the main tool allowing foreign labour to enter the Belgian labour market.

General trends between 1995 and 2006

Firstly, during this period the number of work permits issued rose. This was particularly the case in 2003 with the introduction of the new C permit, but also in 2006 with the massive arrival of Polish workers in Flemish agriculture. Secondly, during this time, Flanders issued twice as many work permits as Brussels which, in turn, issued twice as many work permits as Wallonia. Thirdly, there was a significant decrease in the number of A permits issued. Permit A is the more secure permit, allowing free access to the labour market with no restriction on the period of validity or on the choice of employer. Fourthly, the number of B permits issued remained stable in both Brussels and Wallonia, while Flanders experienced a regular rise, which accelerated dramatically during 2005 and 2006.

In addition, the profiles of the main work permit users have been identified for 2006. In Flanders, the main profile was found to be that of Polish seasonal workers in agriculture. They were granted half of the total number of B permits in that year. Moreover, 97% of the work permits in Flemish agriculture were granted to Polish workers. In the Brussels metropolitan region, highly qualified young Indians working in IT represented the main profile. 83% of the work permits in IT were granted to Indians in 2006. 91.5% of those receiving work permits in Brussels in that year were highly qualified and were on average seven years younger than other highly qualified immigrants. Among them, only 11% were women. In Wallonia, the main profile was found to be that of Polish men working in construction. Half of the work permits granted in construction in 2006 were given to Polish workers. Only 21% of these Polish workers were women.

Disappearance of the A permit and the recent rise of the B permit in Flanders

With respect to the disappearance of the A permit, one hypothesis is that nowadays foreigners are more interested in the acquisition of Belgian nationality than in the acquisition of an A permit. With regard to the B permit, a closer examination shows that its increasing numbers are concentrated in Flanders, and this involves immigrants from new member states of the EU. Due to the special situation in Flanders (where agriculture has been categorised as a sector lacking manpower), immigrants from those countries seek a large number of work permits related to seasonal agriculture. Therefore, even though there is an increase in the number of work permits, they are concentrated in essentially temporary jobs.

The combination of these trends leads us to underline the increasingly fragile status the work permit offers to foreign workers in Belgium. Different indicators are considered; the shortening of the work permit's period of validity, the growing proportion of work permits giving fewer guarantees to the labour migrant and, finally, the decrease in the rate of renewal. While it appears that highly qualified workers are not affected by these factors, the foreign labour employed in deregulated sectors *is* affected because the type of status that these workers are able to obtain is becoming increasingly fragile and precarious. There is thus a transformation in the use of work permits and an erosion of their primary function, that of including foreign labour in the Belgian labour market.

Conclusion

First, the system of labour posting between European countries can be viewed as direct competition for work permits, especially when the periods of validity of these permits are long. As mentioned above, in Flanders, agriculture has been categorised as a sector lacking manpower; but this is not the case for Wallonia. Consequently, while administrative procedures are relatively standardised in Flanders (granting a work permit takes 5 days), the same procedure takes up to six weeks in Wallonia. Second, by 2011 at the latest, but more likely by 2009, all the countries that entered the EU in 2004 will have complete access to the Belgian labour market. While this event will change the trend described above, the level of functioning of the system will probably remain the same. Highly deregulated sectors such as agriculture follow a logic of ethnic niches. These niches have a high rate of turnover with nationalities replacing each other. The countries that are now being granted a large proportion of work permits will not need those permits in the coming years, but these countries will probably be replaced by others, according to current trends. The first countries likely to be replaced are those that entered the EU in 2007: Bulgaria and (in particular) Romania.

PART B – THE CAREERS OF NEW MIGRANTS

Labour market opportunities and migrant career paths (3 case studies)

The trend toward globalisation, characterised by generalised international competition and outsourcing, affects the Belgian labour market. For the sectors that cannot be outsourced, on-site outsourcing has been observed. This tendency creates a dual labour market and a multiplication of different types of worker status. Some nationals manage to hold onto their positions and advantages as long as there is an increasing structural need for foreign labour working under deregulated status. Three case studies illustrate the situation in these deregulated sectors.

Brazilian undocumented workers in Brussels' construction sector

The first case study is particularly revealing. Brazilians have often been viewed as being particularly representative of new migration in Belgium. Their entry into the territory is facilitated by their ability to obtain a three-month tourist visa. However, the associated disadvantage is that few Brazilians succeed in regularising their situation before their tourist visas expire. Most overstay their visas and work clandestinely. This situation leads Brazilian workers to enter into deregulated sectors, and this exposes them to situations of abuse (low wages, extended working days, failure to pay wages). Most Brazilian men in Brussels work in construction. Their employers are "Brazilian bosses" playing the role of labour supplier for building contractors; these contractors are often Portuguese. Most Brazilian migrants share the same migratory life plan: to spend three or four years working in Europe in order to gather together enough money for a specific project in Brazil such as the construction of a house or the buying of land. This goal is difficult to achieve mainly because the working conditions Brazilians encounter in Europe do not allow them to save money quickly. Brazilians therefore face a situation whereby, on the one hand, they cannot complete their home project but, on the other hand, they do not encounter major difficulties in living clandestinely in Europe. So they often decide to extend the time spent away from home. The longer the home project is deferred, the more money they are able to save in Belgium. This leads to a situation in which many Brazilians want to regularise their situation and stay in Belgium.

Polish workers who go to Wallonia to work in seasonal agriculture

The second case study concerns agriculture, a sector subject to very high international competition that cannot be outsourced. In the strawberry farm studied, a very large proportion of the workers are immigrants (one third, Polish, mainly women). Our focus was

on these Polish workers, part of an effort to understand the impact of workers who travel temporarily to another EU country. The tenant farmer is married to a Polish woman. His Polish brother-in-law has created an interim agency in Poland through which seasonal Polish workers are recruited for the farm. These workers are participating in a system of circular migration. Even though they work in Belgium on a regular basis, they still plan to complete their projects at home and their lives remain based in Poland; they do not want to live abroad permanently. Finally, fieldwork produced an interesting illustration of the interactions of workers from East and South (Turkey and Morocco). Working on a family farm with a high degree of segmentation of work and little competition between workers from East and South has allowed for peaceful cohabitation.

Female migrant domestic workers and the system of “Titres Services” in Brussels

Focusing on the trajectories of new female migrants in domestic labour in Brussels, this case study shows how these women access citizenship in terms of law and work thanks to their social capital and their ability to mobilise institutions. The ability to mobilise institutions is particularly present among asylum seekers, distinguishing them from other migrant women. Moreover, through marriages, births and long cohabitations, there is an evolution of the circular migration of female economic migrants toward a goal of permanent residence. Some new female migrants enter into the *Titres Services* system (a state-supported market for domestic work). Regardless of their qualifications - some have university degrees - these women are unable to take advantage of their qualifications in the Belgian labour market. Therefore, housecleaning is the only activity they can undertake. Moreover, flexible working hours allow them to balance work and family life. Nonetheless, they want such jobs to be temporary and they expect to improve their social position by taking educational courses, often in the personal care sector. From their employers' point of view, the plans these female workers have for social mobility seem a bit utopian. The only women who leave this sector are those who become pregnant or who become too old. The others remain in the *Titres Services* system, which is seen as secure, since it gives a sense of belonging to society, despite its low wages. However, the social security of these women is not complete because they frequently face long delays in the renewal of their residence permits.

New migrants in Flanders: meso and micro perspectives

Meso level perspective

Procedure and legal status

Differences between the various types of legal status and the possible transitions within and between these are discussed in this section. Two points of transition are connected with substantial changes: the transition from asylum seeker to recognised refugee and the one from being undocumented to being 'regularised'. Both transitional points can have a major impact on the situation of new migrants. The migrants gain the possibility of obtaining social security and unemployment benefits. Nevertheless these groups often end up in poorly paid temporary jobs.

Labour and education

Five important factors have been identified to explain the mobility of new migrants entering the labour market and their access to education: geographical location, residence status, social networks, gender and existing level of education. Firstly, the homogeneous mix that goes to make up social networks in urban areas can influence the impetus to learn the language of the host country. Asylum seekers are influenced more by cheap housing opportunities than by education or job related motives. Family migrants more often end up in rural areas. Second, for most new migrants the attainment of resident status is the end of a long, uncertain journey. For new migrants for whom a decision on their status is pending, the perception of the possibility of success plays an important role. If they themselves estimate that the possibility of success is slight, they will want the decision-making procedure to last

as long as possible in order to have time to increase their economic, cultural and social capital as much as possible before being forced to leave the country. Third, for all new migrants, social networks can play a major role in discouraging as well as facilitating the decision to learn the language and find a job. Cultural capital increases for irregular migrants who find a job. Fourth, female new migrants with children do not have the same opportunities as men. Their trajectory is often interrupted by the need to care for children. Moreover, their difficulty lies in finding a balance, of having the freedom to work, without this leading to a rupture in the relationship with the father of their children. Fifth, finding a job is less complex for less well-educated migrants in comparison with better-educated migrants. The less well-educated more often end up in temporary forms of employment, often far removed from the skills and experience they had gained in their country of origin. The better-educated face more difficulty in finding employment commensurate with their level of qualifications. Age, schooling and experience play an important role in finding a job, in addition to length of residence and lack of adequate social networks. The most important stumbling block, however, is a lack of knowledge of spoken and written Dutch.

Micro level perspective

Migrants' trajectories

The motives new migrants put forward as reasons for leaving their country of origin are also the ones they present as their legitimate motives for asking to be allowed to reside in Belgium. Only a few motives are deemed legitimate. The perception of Europe as a rich and prosperous area, as well as one where human rights are protected, seems an important underlying motive. Furthermore, the motives of new migrants may change over time. As a result of their experience once in the country and as new opportunities present themselves, new migrants may change their original plans and initial migration route. Some migrants move internally from Wallonia to Flanders or from the suburbs to the city centre and vice versa.

Social networks

Individuals can turn to their advantage the cultural, economic and social resources they obtain through their social networks. Several elements play a role in these social networks. First, several factors influence the development of the social networks. Sometimes ethno-cultural factors such as language or religious background influence this process, but also socio-economic factors such as labour market position, educational level or legal status. Second, social networks have three main functions for new migrants: instrumental and informative functions and the function of the provision of psycho-social support. Finally, transnational networks play an important role in the migrant's career. The establishment and the maintenance of these networks are important to the development of a culture of migration in specific regions.

Asylum procedure

For several asylum seekers, the asylum procedure is a very stressful situation over which they have no control. They experience this procedure as opaque, arbitrary and as a game of chance. As a consequence, it seems that asylum seekers construct alternative criteria to support their admissibility. Official documents are not always meaningful to them. Thus they try to show their willingness to be accepted by showing their integration into Belgian society.

Gender

Gender is probably one of the most crucial variables. Feminisation of migration is evident and gender roles play an important role in the female migrant's career. Similar processes are visible in marriage migrations between a male partner living in Flanders and with a female partner from Morocco, Turkey, East Asia or Eastern Europe. Whereas females often see migration as a way of attaining social promotion and a means of finding a suitable job, male partners often long for women to take up a more traditional role in the family. Furthermore,

some men even forbid their partners from going to integration courses. Participation in these courses is sometimes interrupted by pregnancies or child-related matters.

The career and background of new migrants in Wallonia and Brussels

As part of this research project, forty semi-directed in-depth interviews were held with new migrants chosen according to various criteria, in order to ensure profile diversity in terms of origin, legal status, age, gender balance, professional occupation, level of education, and marital status. These new migrants were residing in three areas of French-speaking Belgium (Bockstael in Brussels and Gembloux and Seraing in Wallonia). Six key dimensions of the construction process of the new migrant's career in French-speaking Belgium were identified:

Motives and the migratory life plan

Overall, the new migrants are motivated by a search for physical and economic safety. The migratory life plan is often collective and the choice of the destination country is subject to constraints.

Sense of success and role of status and work

The migrant's sense of success is thus defined in relation to a tension between emigration from a country of origin, where the material and economic dimension are of paramount concern, and the host country where stability, autonomy and the desire for social inclusion and evolution prevail. In addition, taking into consideration the definition of success, legal status and work occupy an essential place in the migratory career. Legal status is involved in the social identity of the migrant, and work is an element on which this social identity is built.

Migration as a profession – skills and learning

Approaching migration as a profession allows the identification of competences which, according to migrants, are necessary for career promotion. The migrant profession requires the learning of a new way of life, thus ensuring the irreversible nature of the migration.

Relations between migrants

Relations between migrants are characterised by competition for access to available resources. They are also characterised by interdependence and solidarity. Those resources belong to the migrant's social capital, involving, in particular, maintaining friendly relations with other migrants.

Individual characteristics: their impact on new migrants' trajectories

Level of education and access to work varies with age. As regards gender, the socioeconomic role of women in certain cultures of origin makes it possible to understand the feminisation of contemporary migrations. Gender relations within immigrant couples seem to have an influence on these women's definition of success, their process of learning and the way they handle the changes in their lives caused by the event of migration.

The experience of new migrants in relation to the structure of opportunities and constraints in Belgium

Migrants' perceptions represent Belgium as a fantasy, which is not based on actual knowledge. Thus, disillusionment generally occurs after arrival. As they gain experience, the migrants' knowledge of the society around them improves in two main areas: they no longer feel excluded from society, and with respect to political and legal structures, they are less often victims of misunderstanding.

In conclusion, we may say that local living conditions have an important influence on new migrants' trajectories. Living in a locality involves a learning process, and after the migrants have become used to the locality, they learn how to access resources that help them

manage opportunities and constraints more efficiently. New migrants do not weaken, but rather contribute to the general social consensus in terms of values, and this constitutes the basis of the very social and political cohesion of Belgian society. Taking the new migrants' view of their trajectories, it is possible to characterise the general route of their career in Belgium. This route is a pathway filled with difficulties, which it takes time to get used to. The obstacles are all the more perilous, since the new migrants do not have a clear vision of the possible directions and forks that the pathway will present. The migrant's career is a fluctuating, polymorphic process. Its stages are not easily discernible.

CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

First, NOMIBE has worked out a firm and relatively innovative theoretical framework and an empirical approach based on various research techniques. Second, quantitative and qualitative data show that the evolution of new migrants' careers is determined partially by opportunity structures that are created by decisions made by political, economical, social and cultural institutions in Belgium. On the other hand, migrant careers are determined by mobilisation by actors, from the individual level upward, of social, cultural and economic resources, in particular by new migrants. Thus regional variations in the management of labour markets are a determining factor in the explanation of the level of new migrants' professional integration. Third, through the combining of quantitative and qualitative data, NOMIBE has highlighted numerous advantages giving a better account of new migration dynamics.

Regarding the three objectives of NOMIBE as set out in the introduction (composition and typical profiles of new migrations, reasons for migration and migration paths, migratory career and the integration of new migrants), several conclusions can be drawn.

The first conclusion is that Belgium is no longer in a situation of zero immigration, despite what has been claimed. New migrants enter Belgium not only through exercising the right to reunite family members or by requesting asylum, but also through responding to the demand for labour. New migrants' careers are above all workers' careers. The concept of a migratory career has shown that it is too simplistic to evaluate migrants according to their legal status or means of legal entry. This concept has underlined the importance of changes of status.

Key elements regarding typical profiles of new migrants are as follows: (1) New migrants cannot be considered as a homogeneous group. New migrations are diversified according to country of origin, level of education, migration paths, legal status and modes of integration into life in different regions of Belgium. (2) The main countries of origin are Poland, Romania, China and India. (3) New migrants are distributed differently within the three main regions. (4) There are many more women than previously among new migrants. (Castles and Miller, 2003). (5) The level of education of new migrants is higher in comparison with early migrants.

The second conclusion is that NOMIBE confirms that reasons for migration are many. In every case, of course, migrants hope to improve their lives and the lives of their families. Migration cannot be understood only at the micro level of individual choice. Meso and macro levels are also important. NOMIBE has shown that labour market segmentation can attract new streams of migration. Some labour sectors (agriculture, construction, domestic labour, hotel business and catering) appear not to be able to function without new migrants.

The third conclusion is that legal residence and work are two important aspects of the migratory career and integration. The first concern of new migrants, who are undocumented, is to gain the legal right to work in Belgium for some period of time. And legal residence is

likely to promote the social, economical and even political integration of other new migrants.

A fourth element is significant. Migratory careers also rely on the ability of new migrants to mobilise social networks, in particular ethnic networks. Finally, a migratory career is a fluctuating and polymorphous process. The stages that must be gone through are not easily discernible. Migrant careers are not typical, simple, or straightforward. What is certain is that things are not like they were years ago; there is no single path to full integration, but only a variety of paths and possible destinies existing for the new migrants.

Policy recommendations regarding integration policy

- **Improving cooperation between regions** by: (1) improving the use of existing tools; (2) reinforcing coordination based on the exchange of information and good practice; (3) agreeing on a common view of integration; (4) reactivating at the federal level the Consultative Commission for Foreigners (established by a law passed on 15 December 1980) in order to develop a dialogue between various stakeholders, in particular those responsible for issuing legal residence permits and those issuing work permits.
- **Tools for interregional coordination:** (1) Following up the interregional inter-ministerial meetings and (2) creation of a website with information and good practice regarding integration emerging from the regions and communities.
- **Harmonising of public policies** at the local level within each region through the use of appropriate tools.
- **Coordination by the Federal Ministry of Immigration** of the tools set up for interregional and local cooperation.

Policy recommendations regarding the labour market (legislation, control and interregional coordination)

- **Revising the link between the work permit and the residence permit** (the case of Brazilian workers in the construction sector is a good example of the gap between a need for labour that structures new migration and brings in new migrant workers without those workers being able to gain access to legal residence).
- **Revising transition measures** for workers from new EU member states and, particularly, for Polish workers.
- **Reinforcing control** over specific aspects of new migration in Belgium, in particular, over the use of informal workers in outsourcing and workers posted abroad by a company within the framework of the EU (a kind of migration without migrants, since these workers are linked to a company rather than to a country of origin or to the host country).
- **Harmonising the work permit system** between the three regions and, as a result, drawing up a common list of critical professions requiring migrant labour, inspired by the experience of Flanders.

Other recommendations

- An amnesty for undocumented migrants both on the basis of clear criteria and on an individual basis.
- Improving access to quantitative data for future research.
- Encouraging research on the role of new migrants' religious networks.

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