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A room with a view
Irregular immigrants in the legal capital of the world

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ABSTRACT ■ In this article we combine field observation, interviews, cartographic and police data on nationality and illegality to analyse the social and economic mechanisms explaining the rising presence and social relations of irregular immigrants in the Schilderswijk (disreputable inner district) in the Dutch city of The Hague. Secondly, we pay attention to some unintended consequences of the restrictive policies, such as the rise in subsistence crime among irregular immigrants. Four factors are described that underline the structural nature of irregular migration: (1) the continuing immigration of non-western and East-European immigrants to the Netherlands; (2) a demand for cheap labour in specific (informal) sectors of the post-industrial economy and in remnants of industrial and agricultural sectors; (3) a steady supply of (informal) housing in poor urban districts provided by private (ethnic) households and big landlords; and (4) a demand for potential partners, partly partners who are in a dependent and powerless position.

KEY WORDS ■ irregular migration, spatial concentration, informal institutions, urban marginality, multiculturalism, crime, citizenship, unintended consequences, the Netherlands

On 7 March 2005, I (G.E.) received an invitation from the Minister of Justice Rita Verdonk and the Minister of Housing Sybilla Dekker, to discuss with them the issue of irregular or illegal immigrants in Dutch society, especially the problem of the spatial concentration of illegality. Irregular immigrants are people who stay in the country without official permission. Many of them came to the Netherlands on tourist visas and stayed; others crossed the border illegally or became illegal when they were refused refugee status (Burgers and Engbersen, 1999; Staring, 2001). I accepted the invitation and went to The Hague, which is the third-largest city in the Netherlands. It is the seat of the government, housing both chambers of the Dutch parliament and all the Dutch ministries. It is also the seat of the United Nations Permanent Court of Arbitration and International Court of Justice, both housed in the Peace Palace. Because of the presence of these and other judicial international institutions, The Hague defines itself as the 'legal capital of the world'.[1]

I was brought into a room in the Ministry of Housing in which the two ministers were waiting. Both ministers are members of the Dutch conservative liberal party. The room I was brought into was a room with a view: a room with a fascinating sociological view over the eastern urban landscape of The Hague. The major ministries are located near the Schilderswijk and surrounding multicultural districts in the Netherlands. Many poor and unemployed immigrants of Turkish, Moroccan and other non-western origin live in these 19th-century districts (Kloosterman, 2002).

Before I started my presentation, I asked the women to look out of the window. Although many Dutch citizens think this is one of the key activities of public servants in The Hague, I sincerely did not intend to offend them; it was a sociological experiment. If you look out of the window you get a superb view over these multicultural districts of The Hague and it was in fact a very sunny day. I informed the two ministers that in spite of all the new legislation developed in the 1990s, the new deportations centres being built in the Randstad,[2] and the rise in police actions to combat illegal work and illegal housing, there is no empirical indication that the number of irregular immigrants in the city of The Hague or in the Schilderswijk is decreasing. On the contrary, the number is stable or on the rise (Leerkes et al., 2004). And these numbers are increasing in districts which are located near the main institutions that produce legislation to combat illegality, such as the House of Parliament and the Ministry of Justice. I also informed

them that within a very short geographical distance of the House of Parliament and the Ministries of Justice and Housing, more than 40 organizations exist (private and semi-public) that are helping irregular immigrants (especially rejected asylum seekers). Some of them are financed by the local state, for example, the municipality of The Hague (Rusinovic et al., 2002). The existence of these local organizations indicates severe contradictions within the state, especially between the national or European state level and the local level.

The two ministers looked impressed for a few moments. Then they told me that it was crucial to intensify their restrictive policies in order to combat illegality more effectively. They had no doubts about the relevance of their own policies and the restrictive policy measures that had been taken in the recent past in order to combat illegality. In their brief reaction both ministers neglected major findings from recent research on the spatial concentration of irregular immigrants in Dutch cities (especially Rotterdam and The Hague) and on the social consequences of irregular migration (Engbersen et al., 2002; Leerkes et al., 2004). These research results question the premises of the current Dutch alien policy. In less than 10 years, the Netherlands took an extensive set of measures to combat illegal residence, of which the most comprehensive is the Benefit Entitlement (Residence Status) Act (see Van der Leun, 2003). This Act came into force in July 1998 in order to exclude illegal immigrants from all public services (social security, health care, housing and education). The Benefit Entitlement (Residence Status) Act was preceded by several other measures that affected the position of undocumented immigrants, such as tying social-fiscal numbers to a valid residency status (1991), the Marriages of Convenience Act of 1994, the Compulsory Identification Act of 1994, the Employment of Aliens Act of 1994 and the revised Aliens Act of 2001. These legislative changes were paralleled by major administrative operations. Since 1995 there has been a central computerized database containing data on all foreigners residing in the Netherlands. Every police unit now has access to this database and keeps its own record of foreigners (the VAS or Foreigner Administration System), which is directly linked to a central database. Moreover, other government services – like welfare departments – can check the central database to see whether their clients are lawful residents and hence entitled to certain services or benefits. For a long time, the changes existed primarily on paper and enforcement was rather lax. In recent years, however, active controls have been intensified. The New Aliens Act 2000 has enabled this. In addition, the capacity of the aliens' police and of the labour inspection force was increased to combat illegal labour and illegal stay. Moreover, special detention centres were built for illegal immigrants and asylum seekers who have exhausted all legal remedies.

In this article we present some of our findings on the social and economic

determinants that explain the spatial concentration of irregular immigrants in neighbourhoods like the Schilderswijk. We will also argue that the exclusionary policies have contributed to a rise in subsistence crime among irregular immigrants. The Dutch migration policies may have prevented a steep increase in illegal immigration to the Netherlands. However, these migration policies of marginalizing irregular immigrants have been ineffective in reducing the number of irregular immigrants residing in The Hague. In this article we will present the results of a collective research programme in the Schilderswijk. That is why we change from using the singular to the plural in this article. We will also make use of previous ethnographic research conducted in three multicultural districts in Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Utrecht and of police data on apprehensions of irregular immigrants in the city of The Hague. The main aim of this article is to analyse the social and economic mechanisms that explain the presence of irregular immigrants in the Schilderswijk. Secondly, we pay attention to some unintended consequences of the restrictive policies, such as the rise in (subsistence) crime among irregular immigrants. Before we present our findings we give an introduction to the Schilderswijk area and explain our research methods and data sources.

In the shadow of the ministries

The Hague had 470,000 inhabitants in 2004. In that year the indigenous Dutch accounted for 55.6 per cent of the city's total population; Turks, 6.6 per cent; Moroccans, 5.0 per cent; Surinamese and Antilleans, 12.1 per cent; immigrants from other less developed countries 10.0 per cent (including immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe); and immigrants from other advanced economies, 9.7 per cent. In the period 1997–2003, The Hague had about 15,000 to 20,000 irregular immigrants annually (Leerkes et al., 2004: 40). Many of the regular immigrants from less developed countries rely on public housing that is heavily concentrated in the eastern part of the city. High-income groups are located in the western part of the city. As a result, The Hague is one of the most segregated cities in the Netherlands (Kloosterman and Priemus, 2001).

The Schilderswijk is one of the largest and most extensive multicultural areas in the Netherlands. As mentioned in the introduction, the area is situated in the shadow of the major Dutch ministries. The Schilderswijk has a famous reputation in the Netherlands because of its urban social problems. It is also the most disreputable area in The Hague. As much as 85 per cent of the population are immigrants (first and second generation), the largest group being Turks. Most of them originate from non-western countries. Although the Schilderswijk has nearly 30,000 inhabitants in

total, we studied only the western part of it. This district has almost 15,000 inhabitants and well over 6000 households, of which 45 per cent are single-person households. The composition of the population of the area is characterized by a relatively large proportion of young inhabitants (46 per cent are younger than 24). Of all the inhabitants, 51 per cent are in the low-income bracket and 37 per cent do not work. The neighbourhood economy is marked by a high level of commercial service provision (75 per cent) and – to a much lesser extent – industry (16 per cent) and other services (8 per cent). There is a thriving trade in exotic products in and around the many ethnic shops; there are call shops, taxi companies, travel agents, day-labour agencies, hairdressers and a large number of primarily Turkish teahouses. A large proportion of the houses date back to before the Second World War (38 per cent were built before 1930). The majority of the houses is owned by housing corporations and belongs to the public housing sector, but substantial numbers of private sector homes are also available.

It is a well-known fact that the Schilderswijk is home to a large number of irregular immigrants. There is a very visible, large group of East-Europeans (especially Bulgarians) in the area, particularly during the summer months when they perform seasonal labour. They were easily approachable when we tried to speak to those waiting for vans to take them to the nearby Westland (extensive area of market gardening activity). Most were very willing to tell us their stories, particularly when the remuneration we proposed to give them as thanks for their cooperation proved to be more than their daily wages. Also very active and high profile are the – mainly Turkish – illegal contractors who are usually linked to one of the many day-labour agencies in the area that provide work for seasonal labourers. There are many meeting places where irregular immigrants meet almost every day in search of work, accommodation or just to chat. The Van der Vennepark is one of these meeting places, which, according to a community policeman, acts as an unofficial bus station for buses to and from Bulgaria. Illegal contractors and potential employees meet in the teahouses as do the landlords and people looking for somewhere to live. From here, their countrypeople show the newcomers the ropes in the area.

In order to find out more about the circles operated by Turkish and Bulgarian irregular immigrants in and around the Schilderswijk, we interviewed 10 professionals for whom the neighbourhood is their work area. They were two neighbourhood policemen and a superior with the local police, an alien's police employee, council officials and housing corporation staff. Furthermore, we conducted interviews with 30 irregular immigrants, of whom 15 were Turks and 15 Bulgarians. Interviews were also conducted with 13 Turkish landlords. Informants were acquired through key figures in the area. Furthermore, potential informants were approached in bars, tea

houses, at the mosque or in the street. On average the interviews took two hours. As thanks for their cooperation, irregular immigrants were given remuneration. For many the promised remuneration was often a reason to agree to be interviewed. However, others indicated that they would like to participate in the research so they could tell their stories. Some expressed the hope that by cooperating, their situation and that of others like them would improve in the future. The interviews with illegal immigrants and accommodation providers were carried out by a team of interviewers, including the authors of this article. The selection of the interviewers was based on ethnic background (the interviews were held in the respondent's mother tongue), experience with the research groups concerned, and interview skills. All interviewers had attended, or had completed, higher education. The interviewers recruited respondents with the help of key informants (police, social workers, etc.), or searched for respondents in cafes, teahouses, mosques, or in the street. Respondents were asked whether they could bring the interviewer into contact with other illegal immigrants or their landlords. The interviewers made use of a questionnaire with open and closed questions.

Furthermore, we analysed apprehension data of The Hague police (N = 8773). These data provided information on registered home addresses, reasons for apprehension and nationality of all illegal immigrants apprehended in The Hague between 1 January 1997 and 1 October 2003. Finally, we made use of data collected within the framework of the Unknown City research project (Burgers and Engbersen, 1999; Engbersen, 1996; Engbersen et al., 1999). As part of this research project (conducted from 1992 to 1998), some 170 irregular immigrants were interviewed, all living in Rotterdam. In addition, three small ethnographic studies were carried out in the cities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Utrecht to determine to what extent irregular immigrants are supported by various ethnic communities.[3]

Spatial and ethnic patterns of incorporation

We start our analysis by showing three pairs of maps of the city of The Hague (see Figures 1 to 6 and Table 1). These maps show the distribution of regular and irregular Turks, Moroccans and East-Europeans across the city. The accentuated parts – especially the black ones – are urban areas in which many regular and irregular Turks, Moroccans and East-Europeans reside. The Schilderswijk is in the heart of this area. We can observe that the distribution of irregular Turkish immigrants resembles the distribution of regular Turkish immigrants. The regular and irregular Moroccan populations show a more fragmented pattern. However, both populations are located in nearly the same urban area. In the case of the European

Table 1 Legend for Figures 1–6

	Fig. 1 (%)	*Fig. 2 (per thousand residents)*	*Fig. 3 (%)*	*Fig. 4 (per thousand residents)*	*Fig. 5 (%)*	*Fig. 6 (%) thousand residents)*
White (low concentration)	<4.7	<1.5	<3.8	<0.4	<1.0	<2.3
Light grey (average concentration)	4.7–11.1	1.5–4.5	3.8–8.5	0.4–1.0	1.0–1.3	2.3–5.8
Grey (high concentration)	11.1–17.6	4.5–7.5	8.5–13.3	1.0–1.5	1.3–1.6	5.8–9.3
Black (very high concentration)	17.6–26.7	7.5–16.4	13.3–21.3	1.5–2.4	1.6–1.9	9.3–14.1

Note: The data for irregular immigrants represent registered residential addresses of apprehended irregular immigrants. Since not all irregular immigrants are apprehended these figures underestimate the actual number of irregular immigrants. A 'high' concentration indicates that the percentage of illegal immigrants if more than one standard deviation larger than average. A 'very high' concentration indicates a percentage of more than two standard deviations above average.

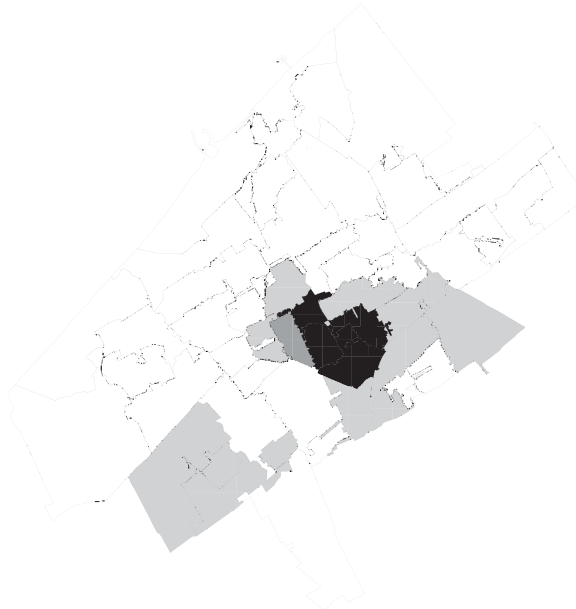

Figure 1 Spreading of regular Turks across The Hague.

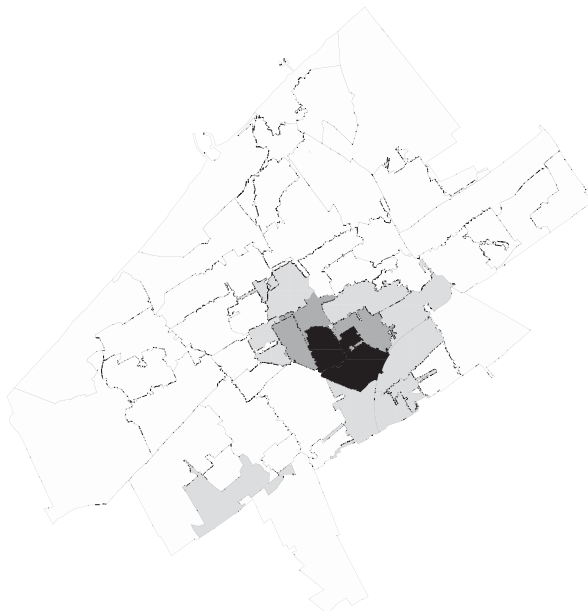

Figure 2 Spreading of irregular Turks across The Hague.

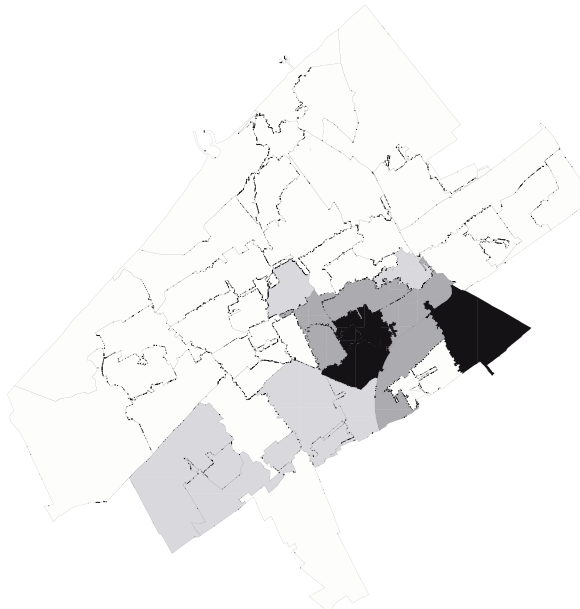

Figure 3 Spreading of regular Moroccans across The Hague.

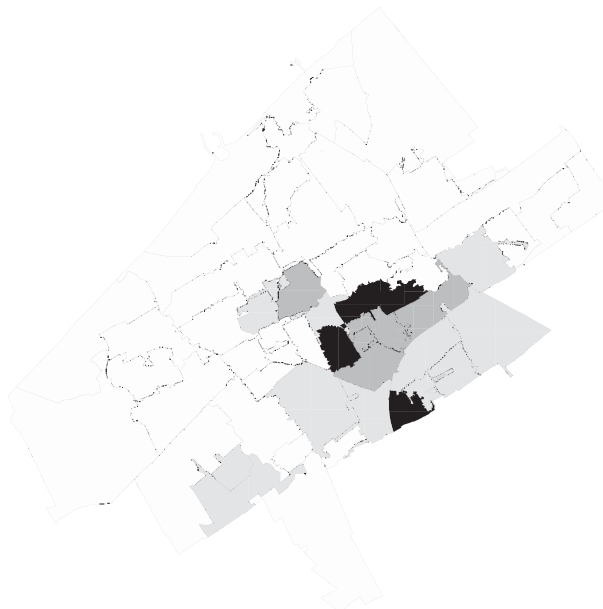

Figure 4 Spreading of irregular Moroccans across The Hague.

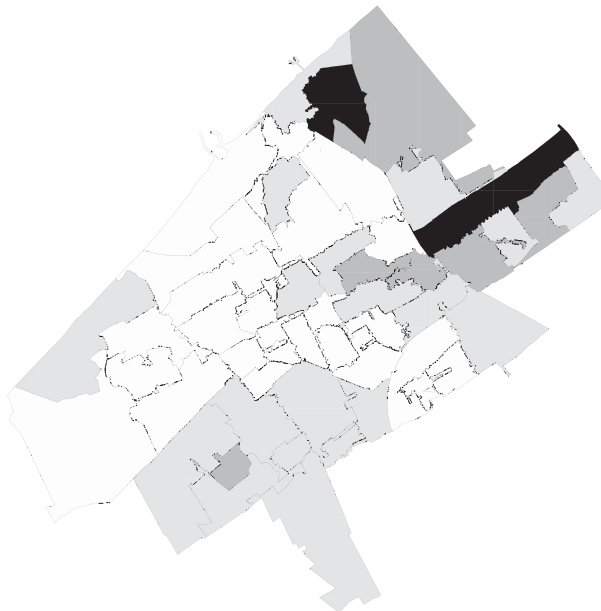

Figure 5 Spreading of regular Eastern Europeans across The Hague.

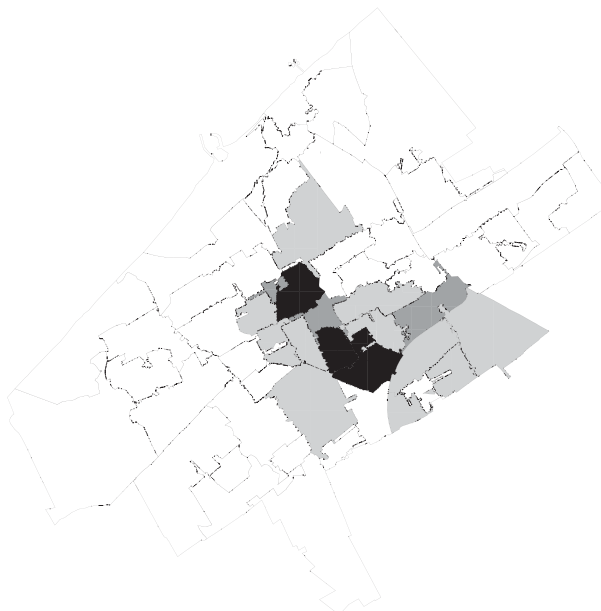

Figure 6 Spreading of irregular Eastern Europeans across The Hague.

population we witness a total mismatch. The distribution of regular East-Europeans does not coincide with or is not related to the irregular Eastern-European population. The regular Eastern-European population is located in the richer parts of The Hague.

It is interesting to note that these geographical maps seem to correspond with the patterns of ethnic incorporation distinguished in earlier ethnographic research in three urban areas in Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Utrecht (Burgers and Engbersen, 1999; Engbersen et al., 1999). These ethnic community patterns of incorporation played a substantial role in explaining the residence opportunities and spatial concentration of Turkish groups in the city of Rotterdam, African groups in the city of Amsterdam, and Moroccan groups in the city of Utrecht.[4]

The first pattern of incorporation was *communal sharing* (Fiske, 1991). The central dimensions of this pattern are shown in Table 2. It can be widely observed in the Turkish community in Rotterdam, and to a somewhat lesser degree in the African one in the Amsterdam Bijlmermeer area. Substantial help is given to an exclusive group of relatives such as brothers and uncles. The assistance often covers a wide range of fields such as aid to come to the Netherlands or in finding a job or housing. This incorporation pattern does imply a form of organized migration within a transnational community. This was particularly true of the Turkish

Table 2 Ethnic community patterns of incorporation

	(Transnational) community pattern	*Bounded solidarity pattern*	*Market pattern*
Support pattern	Communal sharing	Bounded solidarity	Economic rationality
Extent of support	Permanent	Incidental	Market pricing
Reason for support	Enduring solidarity	Situational loyalty	Financial profits
Object	Relatives	Compatriots	Irregular immigrants
Migration pattern	Organized	Non-organized	Non-organized
Relation between regular and irregular immigrants	Long-term dependence	Incidental favours	Contractual
Principle of reciprocity	Give what you can/ take what you need	Situational giving and taking	Market pricing
Social conflicts	Social exclusion	Indifference	Being sent away/ losing a job

community in the Rotterdam Delfshaven area. 'If you bring someone over here, then you are responsible for him in every way', said one of the Turkish respondents. Comparable statements were made by African and Moroccan respondents. One African respondent put it as follows: 'The decision to bring someone over here is just as difficult as the decision to have a child. You know you are responsible for that person in every way. I don't want that responsibility.' The motivation that plays a crucial role in this kind of support pattern has to do with enduring solidarity with one's own family. Nonetheless, there is an asymmetrical relation between the aid giver and the 'illegal' aid recipient. The aid recipient who has no legal status remains dependent on the aid giver for a lengthy period of time. This long-term dependence can ultimately jeopardize the 'give what you can and take what you need' reciprocity norm (Tilly, 1990). Irregular immigrants might not be expected to make a proportional contribution, but they are expected to express a certain appreciation and gratitude for the help they receive. Or they are expected to do a little something now and then in return.

The second pattern entails *bounded solidarity* (Portes, 1998). Aid is given to a less exclusive and consequently larger circle of compatriots (see Table 2). In specific situations, people feel called upon to help irregular compatriots who are confronted with setbacks and to whom they feel connected. We discovered this pattern especially within the Moroccan community in Utrecht and among African groups in the Amsterdam Bijlmermeer. The support provided is limited and restricted. It often pertains to financial aid, but it can also involve incidental help such as providing medicine, introducing irregular immigrants to potential employers and marriage partners, or serving as an interpreter with a lawyer or physician.

This incidental support can be jointly organized, for example via collections, but it can also be of a direct personal nature. The aid is often provided within a local and geographically restricted network of ethnic groups. For instance, a local community will collect money to pay for some specific thing. This is what the Ghanaian organizations in the Bijlmermeer district in Amsterdam do. As one respondent stated, 'I am a member of various organizations including a women's organization. If a woman who is here illegally has a baby, we all contribute some money. That's also what we do if someone is ill or dies.'

In this support pattern, the help is not specially focused on irregular immigrants who have come to the Netherlands by means of organized migration. In this model, there is often an asymmetrical relation between the aid giver and the illegal aid recipient, but it is not a relation of permanent dependence. It is a more anonymous and impersonal relation in which incidental favours are granted. The reciprocity norm that plays a role in this model is one of situational giving and taking. People assist irregular

immigrants in specific situations in the expectation that, once the newcomers are able to, they will do the same if it is called for. One African respondent put it as follows:

> I did indeed give some money to a member of my family who is here illegally. He needed the money. He was having trouble because he couldn't find a job. He has to eat. And I would also give friends of mine money for the same reason. You never know when you yourself might need a friend.

The third incorporation pattern is based upon *market relations* between the legal providers of jobs, housing, documents and so forth, and the irregular immigrants who need them (Mahler, 1995). Employers give irregular immigrants low-paid jobs, and landlords rent apartments, rooms and beds to irregular immigrants (see Table 2). Irregular immigrants can also buy or hire the documents they need (passports, identification cards, health-insurance cards, social security numbers). Particularly in the Bijlmermeer district in Amsterdam, there is a professional forgery industry that produces and rents out (false) documents. In addition, marriages of convenience become a marketable commodity. In all these cases, financial profits were the main motivation. As one respondent stated: 'I once helped someone register at an employment agency with my identity number. Other people charge 300 to 500 euros a month, but I only ask for 200 euros.' Another one said: 'It depends on the kind of relation you have with the person and what he wants to do with the documents. If he wants to use them to make money, then I'll charge him. I once let someone use my passport for 1000 euros.'

In this third incorporation pattern, there is also an asymmetrical relation between the two providers of work and services and the irregular immigrants. A contractual agreement can always be cancelled, for example if illegal workers or tenants are not submissive enough or violate certain rules of conduct. Labour and housing conflicts are then settled by firing or evicting the irregular immigrants or simply refusing to pay them for the work they have done. In this incorporation pattern, the relations between the actors are predominantly impersonal. Not only are compatriots provided with accommodation or jobs, but also other ethnic groups. Transnational as well as local networks fit into this market pattern. An essential element in this pattern is the solid basis for the emergence of informal markets where the demand and supply of labour, housing and documents can come together.

The geographical maps of The Hague (Figures 1 to 6) seem to validate these three patterns of incorporation that were distinguished in previous ethnographic research in other Dutch cities. The pattern of communal sharing is, again, of relevance for the Turkish population. Regular and irregular population seem strongly entangled. Communal sharing leads to

a perfect match between the residential spreading of regular and irregular Turks across the city of The Hague. The pattern of bounded solidarity seems to correspond with the more fragmented residence pattern of Moroccans. The irregular Moroccans are living in almost the same area as the regular Moroccans, but their residential patterns do not correspond totally. And the pattern of informal market relations seems relevant for the irregular East-European population. According to their residence pattern they are not able to fall back on compatriots who are living in other areas in The Hague. There is an absolute mismatch between the residential patterns of regular and irregular East-Europeans. The regular East-Europeans reside in the western part of The Hague and are working at international organizations or embassies. Irregular immigrants are not linked to these middle-class groups and are therefore dependent on informal market relations that are provided by other ethnic groups. Regular Turkish immigrants especially play an important role in providing elementary services to irregular immigrants with regard to labour and housing. This is a new insight from The Hague study. In previous ethnographic studies we focused on ethnic patterns of corporation that were dominant for one specific ethnic group in a specific urban area. The Hague study shows the interaction between different ethnic patterns of incorporation.

Moreover, we can observe that all three groups reside in more or less the same urban districts: the Schilderswijk and surrounding neighbourhoods. In the next two sections of this article we will try to answer the question of why these groups are residing in this area. We will focus on two groups that seem to rely on different patterns of incorporation: the Turks and the Bulgarians. However, as we shall demonstrate later in our analysis, the Bulgarians in our research belong to a Turkish-speaking minority. As a consequence they have the capability to access some of the neighbourhood networks and markets dominated by Turkish inhabitants of the Schilderswijk.

Why are they there?

One of the leading questions of our ethnographic research was to explain the presence of irregular immigrants in the Schilderswijk. Our ethnographic analysis, inspired and influenced by earlier research, and additional quantitative analyses, showed that there are four factors that are crucial to understanding the spatial residence pattern of irregular immigrants (Burgers and Engbersen, 1999; Engbersen et al., 1999; Staring, 2001; Van der Leun, 2003).

Ethnic patterns of incorporation

The first factor is the presence of legal compatriots who are able to provide work, housing, care, healthcare, information, relevant documents and possible partners. This network of compatriots from which irregular immigrants are able to mobilize resources is of vital importance for irregular immigrants. Social capital is therefore the most important currency for irregular immigrants (Engbersen, 2001). Most irregular Turks we talked to say they moved to the Schilderswijk because of the presence of compatriots – people from their area of origin – but particularly family who can help them to find work and accommodation. Some also indicate that the area makes them feel safe because many of their compatriots live there and they are therefore inconspicuous. One of the Turkish irregular immigrants we spoke to told us:

> I ended up here because my brother pointed this area out to me. He said that if I lived in a more upscale area the risk of being caught would increase. According to him people living around me would then betray me more quickly. Here in the Schilderswijk there are many people of different nationalities in the same position I am in.

Turkish irregular immigrants are primarily men who have come to the Netherlands in the hope of finding employment. This group consists of singles, but also of men who have a family in Turkey and who have left their country of origin for economic reasons. The poor economic situation in Turkey and the stories they hear about Europe is what makes most of them immigrate to the Netherlands. They come over with the aid of family members who already live in the Netherlands (Staring, 2001). These men enter the Netherlands on a tourist visa or are illegally smuggled across the border. Upon arrival they can usually count on the help and support of these family members. But even if they have no family in the Netherlands, people from their area of origin – who they meet in the tea houses of the Schilderswijk – often take care of them. In Turkish this is referred to by the term *hemserim*, which means 'I am compelled to help someone from my area of origin'. Help primarily consists of providing accommodation and helping the person in question to find a job. Help is particularly provided when the person concerned is someone from their village, a friend's distant relation or just someone they know through friends of friends. Take for example, Kerem, a 23-year-old young man from Turkey. He came to the Netherlands in 2001 and has remained illegally ever since. He came over with the help of his uncle who lived in the Netherlands and moved to the Schilderswijk. Initially he could primarily rely on support from his uncle, but over time he got to know an increasing number of people who helped him out. He currently works in market gardening. He got this job through

his family. Since he moved to the Netherlands, he has lived at two different addresses. He spent the first six months living with his uncle who owns a house in the Schilderswijk. When he found a job, his uncle rented the top storey of his house to him and two of his friends. Kerem pays 100 euros a month for the accommodation. His two friends are also irregular Turkish immigrants and work in market gardening just like Kerem.

Although Turkish irregular immigrants are in many cases cared for by family members, they often opt to go and live independently once they have found work. The majority of them manage to make contact with sub-contractors in the tea houses of the Schilderswijk. As it became more difficult for individual illegal immigrants to gain access to the labour market, intermediary organizations sprang up. Sub-contracting and semi-legal temporary employment agencies have become important institutions to facilitate a match between the demand and the supply of irregular workers.[5]

A common way of finding a room is by asking around in the area. Most Turkish irregular immigrants who have a network that provides easy access to work end up in the commercial accommodation sector. They rent a house or a room from private individuals, sub-let or stay in a boarding house. However, the need to become independent from one's family or compatriots is also the effect of a more selective and critical attitude of regular migrants towards illegal compatriots and family members. In the beginning of the 1990s irregular guests could easily find formal employment and a marriage partner, which enabled them to legalize themselves (Van der Leun, 2003). Nowadays this is becoming increasingly difficult. As a result, irregular migrants continue to be dependent on family and acquaintances for a longer period of time. Due to problems of providing lasting support, regular immigrants become more critical of irregular compatriots and family members and refuse to take the responsibility to help them permanently. As a consequence, altruistic ethnic patterns of 'communal sharing' are transforming into patterns of 'bounded solidarity' or 'informal market relations' in which irregular immigrants have to contribute for the support they receive (Grzymala-Kazlowska, 2005).

Like the Turkish irregular immigrants, the Bulgarian irregular immigrants – who are part of a Turkish minority in Bulgaria – indicated that the problematic economic situation in Bulgaria was the principal reason for moving to the Netherlands. Some of them said that they, as a Turkish minority in Bulgaria, were discriminated against, that they received low wages, and that they – more often than not – had to do the dirty work. Therefore they decided to leave their country of origin. The Bulgarian group consists of single people who have come to the Netherlands to make better futures for themselves; but also men who have families, but are unable to support them in their country of origin. The latter frequently come to the Netherlands to work as seasonal labourers. For example, some see friends

and family come back to Bulgaria every three months with money they earned in the Netherlands. Eventually they decide, often with the aid of friends or family already present in the Netherlands, to have a go by taking one of the vans that travel back and forth between Bulgaria and the Netherlands on a daily basis. According to the professionals, the journey and reception of the Bulgarians is more coordinated and organized than that of any other group. This organization is for the most part run by established, regular Turkish immigrants who have found a gap in the market. The Bulgarian irregular immigrants indeed have clear benefits: due to the fact that they speak Turkish they – as far as work and accommodation are concerned – can definitely gain support from the Turkish community in the Netherlands. One of the Bulgarian irregular immigrants told us:

> The most support I have had has been from the Turkish community in the Schilderswijk. I am a Turkish Bulgarian, I speak Turkish. They showed me the ropes here, a Turkish friend taught me an additional trade. Thanks to him I am now a welder and earn slightly more than my countrymen.

Furthermore, Bulgarians told us that people from their area can rapidly show them around the labyrinth of illegal employment and accommodation in the Schilderswijk. In the area's tea houses they often meet one of the many (Turkish) illegal contractors who help them get a job. Generally, they rent rooms from Turkish homeowners. The Bulgarian seasonal labourers come to the Netherlands during the summer months where they primarily work in market gardening and return to Bulgaria during the winter. Sadik is an example of a seasonal labourer. He is 35 and has been illegally staying in the Netherlands since 2000. He is married and his wife and children live in Bulgaria. Besides his own family, he supports his in-laws financially. In Bulgaria he worked in construction as a semi-skilled labourer, but the money was hardly enough to support his family. That is why he and a group of Bulgarians travelled to the Netherlands in a small van. A one-way trip costs 150 euros. The van took them to the Schilderswijk. Once they had arrived, people from his village took him to one of the areas with many bars where he met friends and acquaintances. They looked after him, offered him a place to stay and introduced him to a Turkish sub-contractor who put him in touch with his current employer. Sadik currently works in market gardening in the Westland. During the winter, when there is no work, he returns to his family in Bulgaria. He shares a three-room house with seven other irregular Bulgarians. His illegal contractor arranged this accommodation for him. The rent is deducted from his wages. It is a well-known fact that Turkish Bulgarians can rely on their family less because there simply are not that many regular Turkish Bulgarians living in the Schilderswijk. They are therefore primarily encountered in the informal housing sector that is mostly the domain of established, legal Turkish

immigrants, who either rent out private premises or sub-let properties owned by housing corporations. Irregular immigrants who have been living in the Netherlands somewhat longer and know the deal, also arrange the transfer and the commercial reception of their compatriots. One of the local police's superiors, with years of experience in the area and who has seen many influxes of irregular immigrants, had the following to say:

> There are also Bulgarians here who have earned some money, who are illegal immigrants, but have nevertheless bought a house. They all fix up that house together. And then they get people from Bulgaria to come here. And then they arrange for those people to live there and get them jobs. Or a couple of Bulgarians buy a coach and drive to Sofia once or twice a week. Have their own temp agency in Bulgaria. And that also applies to other countries. And the people doing this meet each other in tea houses and learn from one another.

So, as well as the Turkish temporary employment agencies in the Schilderswijk, temp agencies are established in Bulgaria that recruit workers for working in the horticulture areas near The Hague. In her study on undocumented immigrants in New York, Mahler (1995: 156) describes how illegal immigrants are supported (at a price) by regular immigrants to find work and accommodation. This is done by those who have sufficient 'immigrant capital', in other words, those who know how the system works and how to sell their knowledge. The same process occurs in the Schilderswijk. Irregular immigrants who are established in the neighbourhood create temp agencies in Bulgaria to recruit workers and provide all kinds of commercial services in relation to jobs, documents and housing for irregular newcomers when they arrive in The Hague.

Economic opportunities

A second reason why irregular immigrants move to the Schilderswijk are the economic opportunities the area offers. It is easy to get work at the nearby fruit and vegetable market, but also at the many bakeries and restaurants, bars and catering companies. Many of the irregular immigrants indicate that they moved to the area because they found work there or because they can walk to work from the Schilderswijk. Moreover, the Schilderswijk proves attractive to irregular immigrants due to its location in the vicinity of the Westland (market gardening) and the city of Katwijk (fish processing) where many of them find work. There are also sufficient facilities present in the area to transport workers who do not have the right papers to and from their places of employment. The Bulgarians often told us of their surprise that irregular immigrants in the Schilderswijk wait for the vans that take them to work right under the police's noses. Some of

them told us that when they had just arrived in the Netherlands they chased the vans in the morning to get work that way. On average they work for 25 euros a day, but some people indicated that they were also willing to work for less money. Furthermore, there proves to be widespread fraud with tax and social security numbers. The owners of temporary employment agencies are said to often call in contacts that work for the tax authorities to look up 'dormant' social security numbers for them. These numbers belong to immigrants who have returned to their country of origin; the numbers are then bought by the owners of the day-labour agencies. In others words: sub-contractors and temp agencies are performing informal, unregulated operations in order to facilitate a match between the demand and the supply of illegal workers.

The area is also home to a large commercial service sector (garages, hairdressers, etc.). Some irregular immigrants told us how they had been brought over to the Netherlands to work in the family business as cheap labour. A number of the professionals we consulted also said they had a strong suspicion that these companies, who need technically educated but low-income staff, actively recruit irregular immigrants in their countries of origin. An aliens' police employee commented:

> But I also know that people are recruited in Bulgaria to come and work here. The Bulgarian consul stated that temporary employment agencies are also said to exist in Bulgaria. Because illegal labour is much more profitable than drug trafficking.

In our research we have found several examples of family-based recruitment. For instance, a Turkish boy was brought to the Netherlands by his uncle to work in his hairdresser's shop and another boy was brought over to work as a mechanic in his cousin's garage. Irregular immigration is therefore, to a large extent, ordinary labour migration which meets an economic need.

The facilities the area offers irregular immigrants are mentioned as an important reason for moving there. Indeed, there prove to be many relevant facilities such as mosques; shops that sell products from the country of origin; and tea houses for spending the days in – naturally related to the presence of legal countrymen. Moreover, because of the presence of countrymen, irregular immigrants can set up sidelines (for example, Turkish coffee houses, travel agents, taxi companies, etc.) and can benefit from certain forms of charity (e.g. meals for everyone during Ramadan). A Bulgarian irregular immigrant said:

> The pubs and bars on the Hoefkade are full of Bulgarians. If I need anything I go by the pubs and bars. I talk to acquaintances and soon have what I need. They can get you almost anything for the right price. From a job to

> fake passports, weapons, drugs, etc. Even if I had come to the Netherlands without knowing a soul then people would still help me, we are all in the same boat. We came here for the same reasons, to us it is an obligation to help new arrivals as much as we can.

Informal housing market

A third reason why many irregular immigrants move to the Schilderswijk is because it is easy to find an affordable home there. The area is known for having a lot of private property. It is well known that a large number of slumlords are active there. Almost everyone knows the area's major slumlords – who own hundreds of buildings – by name. But there are also many small-time home owners who rent rooms at high prices. Moreover, the area has an extensive social housing sector. A few housing corporations own a large quantity of low-income housing. Many immigrants are housed in this sector (Burgers, 1998). This enables the renting out of rooms and the sub-letting of property to family and others. Irregular immigrants often hear about the favourable accommodation situation in the Schilderswijk from others and then settle there. A Turkish irregular immigrant commented:

> I had heard that a lot of renting to illegal immigrants went on in the Schilderswijk. I then went to the Schilderswijk and walked into various pubs. This is how I ended up in Sabri's pub. He helped me find this place after hearing that I had been sleeping rough on a building site for two weeks. He knows a lot of people around the area. And so he knew there was someone looking for tenants for his house.

The Turkish irregular immigrants primarily end up in the Schilderswijk because in many cases they have family living there. But many Turkish irregular immigrants are also encountered in the commercial sector. They almost all end up in houses owned by Turks. The Turkish landlords we spoke to were primarily young men between 20 and 40. They are usually the children of former guest workers who try to increase their income by renting out houses. It is noticeable that Turkish landlords generally work in the sectors (hotel, restaurant and catering, market gardening, cleaning, construction) where many irregular immigrants can also be found. Others work as illegal contractors or have a day-labour agency. It is therefore not very surprising that they often encounter irregular immigrants who they then accommodate at a price. Turkish Bulgarians also generally end up with Turkish landlords. They are particularly attracted to the many premises they rent out. Bulgarians are therefore more likely to end up in the Schilderswijk due to the area's socio-economic status than because of the presence of regular countrymen. That Bulgarians end up in boarding houses or in bed

sits has to do with, among other things, the fact that they are a relatively new group here and that there are therefore few compatriots for them to turn to. Burgers (1998) has shown that the first guest workers who came to the Netherlands were generally housed in boarding houses in the pre-war urban areas. Besides the fact that these areas offered cheap housing opportunities, they also became attractive to labour migrants at a particular point in time because they could encounter an increasing number of compatriots and partners in adversity there. But in addition, the Bulgarians often end up in boarding houses because they spend very little on accommodation. Although their wages are reasonable (200–900 euros per month) they save most of their salary so they can send it home to the family in Bulgaria. After all, many of them are financially responsible for the family members who stayed behind. The Turkish irregular immigrants also earn relatively good wages (over 900 euros per month) which makes it easier for them to afford their own home.[6] In contrast to the Bulgarians, they are willing to spend more on accommodation. The way in which the groups live therefore seems to be determined to a great extent by the irregular immigrants' social network; their income; and whether or not they are financially responsible for family members who have remained behind in the country of origin.

Informal relation market

Finally, the professionals regularly alluded to their suspicion that some of the single people in the area had relationships with irregular immigrants or provided accommodation to irregular immigrants of the opposite sex. On the basis of the interviews it becomes clear that this situation can have various causes. Initially, this concerns single people who have met an irregular immigrant in the Netherlands and have offered him or her accommodation. Key informants told us about older, single men who offer accommodation to young women whom they suspect are illegally residing in the Netherlands. We encountered an older Dutch man who married a much younger Czech woman who is an irregular immigrant and works as a prostitute. The man was very pleased with his beautiful young wife who also brought home her earnings. But his wife remarked that it had also been a good move for her to marry a man with Dutch nationality as it had led to her receiving a residence permit.

> I met my partner through one of my girlfriends. She had already met him. She told me about him and we got acquainted at her house. I had confided to her my idea of marrying and staying married until I could get a Dutch residence permit and therefore also a Dutch passport. For me it is the fact that I can get a Dutch passport. That does not mean to say that I let my

> husband boss me around. I had asked him that I did not have to move into his house. He however wanted me to move in with him. Now our relationship has deepened I am increasingly conscious of the fact that I enjoy being married to him and spending my time with him.

Another example was a Turkish man who had been residing illegally in the Netherlands for years and who – with the aid of his family – had entered into a sham marriage with a Dutch woman who had agreed to the marriage due to financial difficulties.

> My sister and my brother-in-law brought me over to the Netherlands. My brother-in-law then got me a job at a restaurant, and I stay at their house. A month later my niece proposed me entering into a sham marriage with someone to obtain a residence permit. We found someone who wanted to marry me through acquaintances. My brother-in-law then lent me money so I could marry her.

Secondly, some single people have their illegal partner come over to the Netherlands from their country of origin (it is possible for these partners to come to the Netherlands legally at first, but then to stay after their visa has expired). A housing corporation employee told us that he encounters many cases of people with such a partner every month. These are often single people who according to the immigration authorities' criteria cannot sufficiently prove that they can support their partner, for example because they do not have a permanent employment contract or work, or because their income is too low. Furthermore, the employee of the aliens' police said there were regular reports of irregular immigrants with 'relational problems'. This concerns people who have ended their relationship and make known that their partner is in the Netherlands illegally. According to housing corporation staff, the proportion of single people can have a third effect. Some single people have a relatively large home, for example after a relationship has gone wrong. One of the tenants often remains in the home while the other leaves. The remaining tenant then has space left over which they can sub-let informally. In accordance with the findings of Staring's research (1998, 2001), it is said to be primarily single Turkish men who rent rooms to third parties. It is also said that the sub-letting market within this group has to a large extent to do with the mobility of Turkish immigrants. For example, many older immigrants spend part of the year in their country of origin. Others spend extended periods of time in their country of origin or elsewhere due to work, family or other obligations. During these periods of absence they often rent out their empty home to irregular friends or family members.

In addition to our ethnographic research we have carried out a multiple

regression analysis to test the assumption that these four dimensions – presence of compatriots and other ethnic groups, economic opportunities, private housing and the number of single people – are crucial to overrepresentation of irregular immigrants in the Schilderswijk. The findings of the regression analyses based on apprehension data and official socio-economic and demographic data on neighbourhoods are described in more detail elsewhere (Leerkes et al., 2004). We found that the local concentration of (non-western) immigrants stands out against the other variables as the most important factor. While economic opportunities and private housing also yield significant effects, the percentage of single people contributes relatively little (but still significantly) to the number of illegal residents in a neighbourhood. The elevated concentration of irregular immigrants in the Schilderswijk is primarily due to the high percentage of regular immigrants of non-western origin. The availability of cheap housing is also crucial. Whereas 11 per cent of the total urban population is of non-western origin, in the Schilderswijk West this percentage is no less than 79. And while the average value of the urban housing stock is 76,000 euros, in the Schilderswijk this figure is only 45,000 euros. At first sight the neighbourhood economy and relations with single residents do not contribute (so much) to the overrepresentation of irregular immigrants in the Schilderswijk West; the number of enterprises in commercial services is lower than the urban average, and the percentage of single residents is not unusually high in the Schilderswijk West. However, many enterprises in the neighbourhood are run by immigrant families. Irregular immigrants have more access to immigrant enterprises than to the enterprises in other neighbourhoods since the latter are more often run by Dutch entrepreneurs. In addition, as we have shown, economic activity in the neighbourhood surroundings is also of importance. And while the percentage of single residents is not high in the Schilderswijk, many of these are unemployed and low-skilled single people with low incomes. Poor single people are more inclined to have illegal partners than those who are more affluent since the latter can more easily obtain a resident permit for their non-Dutch partners, and have also more chances in the 'primary' marriage market.

Finally, the ethnographic analysis shows that not only do irregular immigrants reside in the shadow of the ministries, but also that their presence is related to the existence of several informal and illegal markets in the spheres of work, housing, relations and documents. These informal markets can be classified as *bastard institutions* (Hughes, 1994) or *parallel institutions* (Mahler, 1995) that partly fulfil the same functions as the formal institutions in the spheres of work, housing and relations.[7]

The rise in subsistence crime

If we compare the labour market findings of the study in The Hague with previous findings, a shift has taken place from the formal to the informal economy. In the period 1992–3, 170 illegal immigrants were interviewed in the city of Rotterdam. More than one third of them worked within the formal labour market (Burgers and Engbersen, 1999). In 2001, 156 illegal immigrants were interviewed. Almost none of them worked in the formal economy (Engbersen et al., 2002). Most of the respondents in the Schilderswijk worked illegally or gained access to the formal economy with the help of false documents or illegitimate temporary employment agencies. The shift from the formal into the informal labour market is related to the new exclusionary policies. These policies include: (1) severe employer sanctions; (2) more manpower, resources and political prioritization of the control on illegal alien employment; and (3) the building of a protective ring of documents and documentary requirements around the formal labour market, blocking access to stable tax-paid jobs. Since 1991, it is impossible for illegal immigrants in the Netherlands to register on the population register and thus obtain a social-fiscal number, the 'entry ticket' to formal work (Broeders and Engbersen, forthcoming; Van der Leun, 2003).

As a result of these policies, irregular immigrants became more dependent on the informal economy, on illegal labour subcontractors and on fraudulent temporary employment agencies. The Chamber of Commerce in The Hague, for example, has registered about 2000 agricultural agencies. Approximately 600 of them are fraudulent and had an estimated turnover of 55 million euros a year. Most of the Bulgarian respondents had contacts with these agencies. Other Dutch research has shown that more and more groups of irregular immigrants, including Turkish immigrants, are working in catering and the personal service industry (Engbersen et al., 2002). These are sectors in which illegal labour is more difficult to control, compared to traditional sectors such as construction, manufacturing industry, agriculture and horticulture. Incidentally, increased participation of irregular immigrants in the personal service industry (nursing and care services) is a phenomenon that has existed in southern Europe and North America for many years (Bade, 2003; Cornelius et al., 2004; Miller, 1995; Sassen, 1991).

Another finding is the increase in criminal offences among irregular immigrants, especially theft such as shoplifting and burglary, involvement in sale of illicit drugs, fraud and the possession of false papers. These crimes are related to the precarious position of irregular immigrants. The offences usually aim at acquiring money (theft and drug trafficking) or access to the labour market (false documents). Analyses of police statistics over the period 1997–2003 show that the category of criminal offences as a reason for apprehension has doubled in size from 22 per cent in 1997 to 45 per

cent in 2003 in The Hague. This sharp increase in *subsistence crime*, in other words crimes committed in order to stay and to survive in a country (Albrecht, 2002), can also be regarded as an undesired effect of the current restrictive immigrants policy.[8] This increase in crime has not only occurred in the city of The Hague but also in other parts of the Netherlands (Engbersen and Van der Leun, 2001; Engbersen et al., 2004). It is clear that the exclusion of irregular immigrants from legitimate means of survival (especially formal work) pushes some groups of irregular immigrants toward income-generating criminal activities in order to be able to reside in the Netherlands. In our research we did not interview any irregular immigrants who were involved in crime. However, our respondents were aware of the mechanisms that may cause forms of subsistence crime. A Turkish respondent said:

> I want to mention that the laws must become more lenient. Now they lead to the exploitation of illegals and to criminal and wrong behaviour among illegals. Because I have no job, I can easily fall into delinquent behaviour. I am more vulnerable for criminal organizations. I think that a lot would improve if other illegals and I could work legally without being exploited. In the past one could get a social security permit. Now you have nothing, even no insurance, while illegals are doing the most dangerous and dirty work.

Another Bulgarian respondent remarked:

> My employer is guaranteeing me work and he deducts the rent from my wage so that it is not necessary for me to commit crimes. However, if I come in urgent need of money and there is no work, then my employer can provide me with other means to make money. Some of my compatriots are dealing drugs now.

The police data also show that among the two groups we interviewed (Turks and Bulgarians) residence crime is on the rise (see Table 3). This is noteworthy because these two groups, especially the irregular Turks, belong to the most embedded groups in The Hague. In 1997, 10 per cent of the Turks and 4 per cent of the irregular Bulgarians were apprehended for criminal offences; after 2001 these figures rose above 20 per cent (see Table 3).

However, in comparison with other groups these figures are relatively low. The rise in crime among irregular immigrants illustrates that the access to (formal) work is becoming more problematic and that ethnic patterns of incorporation have their limitations. These figures also show that the restrictive policies do not automatically lead irregular immigrants to return to their home country or to other European countries. Many of them stay in the Netherlands. However, they are increasingly going underground: in the informal economy and in crime.

Table 3 Reasons for apprehension of irregular immigrants by nationality and year in the police region The Hague (%) (1997–2003)

	Turkey	*Bulgaria*	*Poland*	*Other East-Europe*	*Northern Africa*	*Other Africa*	*Asia*	*Other countries*	*Total*
1997									
Illegal residence	87.7	72.7	66.5	76.1	37.9	64.3	74.2	54.5	68.6
Misdemeanours	2.2	22.7	10.2	5.2	19.7	12.6	5.0	13.8	9.2
Criminal offences	10.1	4.5	23.3	18.7	42.4	23.1	20.8	31.7	22.2
N =	*276*	*22*	*176*	*134*	*132*	*143*	*120*	*145*	*1148*
1998									
Illegal residence	83.6	71.4	49.5	57.2	37.6	50.3	62.9	65.2	60.3
Misdemeanours	6.9	9.5	10.5	16.0	18.0	30.2	24.3	5.0	14.8
Criminal offences	9.5	19.0	40.0	26.8	44.4	19.5	12.9	29.8	24.9
N =	*262*	*21*	*200*	*194*	*133*	*169*	*140*	*161*	*1280*
1999									
Illegal residence	58.2	74.4	49.5	42.8	37.0	57.7	61.4	70.1	55.2
Misdemeanours	5.6	17.9	17.4	29.5	20.5	19.7	20.0	5.4	17.0
Criminal offences	36.2	7.7	33.0	27.7	42.5	22.6	18.6	24.5	27.9
N =	*177*	*39*	*109*	*166*	*127*	*239*	*140*	*147*	*1144*
2000									
Illegal residence	59.9	76.0	53.8	54.5	22.0	62.3	56.4	44.3	57.2
Misdemeanours	26.7	12.7	11.3	12.5	31.0	15.5	23.1	7.2	17.4
Criminal offences	13.4	11.3	35.0	33.0	47.0	22.2	20.5	48.5	25.4
N =	*187*	*221*	*160*	*112*	*100*	*207*	*156*	*97*	*1240*

	Turkey	*Bulgaria*	*Poland*	*Other East-Europe*	*Northern Africa*	*Other Africa*	*Asia*	*Other countries*	*Total*
2001									
Illegal residence	66.5	49.0	20.4	41.7	27.0	36.4	60.4	21.6	45.7
Misdemeanours	9.8	18.8	18.4	12.2	30.3	23.1	15.9	20.3	17.2
Criminal offences	23.7	32.2	61.2	46.2	42.7	40.6	23.6	58.1	37.1
N=	*224*	*208*	*103*	*156*	*89*	*143*	*182*	*74*	*1179*
2002									
Illegal residence	52.9	72.5	17.9	32.6	16.4	30.1	39.8	33.3	43.8
Misdemeanours	14.9	10.3	21.4	14.9	14.1	20.5	37.8	14.9	17.5
Criminal offences	32.2	17.1	60.7	52.5	69.5	49.4	22.4	51.7	38.7
N=	*174*	*484*	*173*	*181*	*177*	*176*	*196*	*87*	*1648*
2003*									
Illegal residence	62.6	54.9	14.9	39.4	11.9	25.0	30.5	23.5	37.0
Misdemeanours	12.9	14.6	24.6	17.2	21.1	19.3	21.9	17.6	17.9
Criminal offences	24.5	30.5	60.5	43.3	67.0	55.7	47.6	58.8	45.1
N=	*155*	*246*	*114*	*180*	*109*	*140*	*105*	*85*	*1134*

* For 2003 the data are available for the period January until September.

Concluding remarks

The four factors that have been described underline the structural nature of irregular migration. These factors are structural determinants of irregular migration that will not change overnight. Immigration of non-western and East-European immigrants and corresponding (irregular) chain migration to the Netherlands, including the city of The Hague, will continue to exist in the coming decades (Snel et al., 2004). One can also predict that there will be a rather stable – perhaps increasing – demand for cheap, low-skilled labour in specific sectors of the post-industrial economy (e.g. for domestic work) and in remnants of industrial and agricultural sectors. There will also be a steady supply of housing in poor urban districts provided by private (ethnic) households that want to earn some extra money or by big landlords who are able to profit strategically and substantially from the presence of irregular immigrants. The current neo-liberal policies that aim to reduce the public housing sector and to increase the number of owner-occupied houses may increase the supply of private housing. And, finally, due to processes of individualization and marginalization there will also be a demand for potential partners, to a degree partners who are in a dependent and powerless position (Bauman, 2003, 2004; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). In addition, the strict criteria that now apply to family formation seem to contribute to an increase in irregular partners, because unemployed and low-skilled immigrants are not able to meet the strict criteria to enable their partner to come to the Netherlands (Snel et al., 2004).

These structural determinants make clear that irregular immigration will be a permanent feature of neighbourhoods like the Schilderswijk. These determinants also explain why the new migration policies have had limited success in eliminating or reducing the number of irregular immigrants in The Hague and the Schilderswijk, although they may have prevented a steep increase. At any rate current policy measures force some groups of irregular immigrants to go underground and develop criminal activities (see also Bigo, 2004; Wacquant, 2005). However, this view on the – at least partial – ineffectiveness and criminalizing effects of current restrictive policies was not shared by the two Dutch ministers. The blind spots of the current official irregular aliens' policy prevented the two ministers to face the reality outside the doors of their ministries. The room in the Ministry of Justice was a room with an obstructed view.

The Schilderswijk case illustrates that it is worthwhile to consider policy options that can have a decriminalizing effect (Biao et al., 2004; Cornelius, 2005; OECD, 2005). For example, the expansion of labour migration programmes (both temporary and permanent) would enable some irregular labourers to work legally, and might help to counteract the development

of informal labour markets (and the activities of the illegal contractors and subcontractors involved). Similarly, the selective legalization of irregular migrants could help in this regard. Significant regularization programmes have been carried out over the past few years in countries such as Italy, Greece and Spain, and to a lesser extent, in Belgium, Portugal and France, but these remain unthinkable options for the Dutch government and other European governments (Germany, Scandinavian countries) (Levinson, 2005). Other policy options include systems of earned regularization to legalize irregular migrants, and realistic return programmes that stimulate people to go back voluntarily, in a sustainable manner. Such measures would get the Schilderswijk out of the shadow of the ministries in The Hague. However, it is realistic to assume that current Dutch policy makers are more willing to stick by the current situation of institutionalized hypocrisy, and put up with the undesired side effects of the restrictive policy. The law stipulates that irregular immigrants are not allowed to stay on a national territory and sell their labour power, although that is what happens in the 'legal capital of the world'.

Our analysis contradicts Soysal's (1994) view on the emergence of forms of post-national citizenship. Her model of post-national belonging is based on universal social rights, as laid down in the conventions and declarations of supra-national bodies such as the UN, which, according to her argument, are gradually incorporated into the constitutions and laws of nation states. We think she is overstating the extent to which this is happening. The current trend in advanced European welfare states is to exclude irregular immigrants, not on extending citizenship rights to the large group of unwanted immigrants. This is clearly the case in The Hague: the juridical capital of the world.

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Notes

1 The Hague serves as host to major international institutions involved with international law, arbitration among states, trials of war criminals, combating chemical weapons and criminal investigation. The increasing number of organizations affirms the description of 'The Hague as Legal Capital of the World' put forward by Mr Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the then Secretary-General of the United Nations in 1998. In addition, many other

organizations involved in international law and international relations have their offices in The Hague (Krieken and McKay, 2005).

2 The Hague is part of a wider urban system in the western part of the Netherlands called the Randstad. This urban configuration includes (among other cities) Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht, Leiden, Haarlem and Delft and has about 6 million inhabitants. All these cities are located within commuting distance of each other (Kloosterman, 2002).

3 We focused on the Turkish community in Rotterdam, the Moroccan community in Utrecht and the African community in Amsterdam, which consists mainly of Ghanaians. For the sake of clarity we use the word 'community', although it is obvious that there is not such a thing as one single community in these cases. We interviewed 42 Turkish households (32 irregular and and 10 regular), 40 African households (25 irregular and 15 regular) and 39 Moroccan households (28 irregular and 11 regular).

4 The concept of 'patterns of incorporation' was taken from Soysal (1994). In *Limits of Citizenship* she describes how various societies in Western Europe incorporate immigrants (see also Portes and Rumbaut (1990) for America). She distinguishes three 'state incorporation patterns' in European countries. Our former study *The Unknown City* (Engbersen, 1996) also produced three patterns of incorporation, but at the ethnic community level rather than the national state level (see also Chavez, 1992).

5 Interestingly, it is often official economic policies of deregulation and creating more flexible labour markets that provide the opportunities for these intermediary structures. In the Netherlands, for example, the boom of legal, semi-legal and shady temp agencies was a direct result of the government programme that aimed at the deregulation of the sector (Broeders and Engbersen, forthcoming).

6 The Turkish illegal immigrants spoken to all had jobs; two of the Bulgarian illegal immigrants were unemployed.

7 Hughes (1994: 193–4) wrote:

> whatever they be, and whatever they have in common, these bastard enterprises should be studied not merely as pathological departures from what is good and right, but as part of the total complex of human activities and enterprises. In addition they should be looked at as orders of things in which we can see the social processes going on, the same social processes perhaps, that are to be found in the legitimate institutions.

8 An alternative explanation is that the police are now more active in tracking down irregular immigrants than before, which also increases the number of apprehended illegal immigrants who have been arrested for criminal activities. This is not very likely because most criminal irregular immigrants are arrested by police officers working for basic police units, who do not know beforehand whether they are dealing with illegal

immigrants or not. Yet, in cases in which the police are actively searching for people, this may be the case. The fact that there is a significant rise in people arrested for the possession of false documents and a rise in people who have been declared 'undesirable aliens' does point to a selective and more active enforcement by the police. However, if the figures on these reasons for arrest are excluded from the overall figures, the rise in criminal offences as a reason for apprehension is still very strong (Engbersen et al., 2004).

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