

Profiling Immigrants in Leiden, 1855-1925

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Abstract

This article examines the local implementation of immigration regulation in Leiden between 1855 and 1925, with special attention to gender differences in registration, labor market position, and expulsion practices. While historical research has largely focused on national migration policy, this study shows that local administrative routines and labor demand strongly shaped the experiences of migrants. Women were significantly underregistered in the decades after the 1849 Alien Law, as authorities prioritized men as household heads. After 1918, registration procedures became more uniform, yet female migrants – particularly unmarried German domestic servants – remained closely monitored. Their migration profile was tied to the high demand for domestic labor, partly because local women increasingly preferred factory work. Although men were more often expelled overall, records reveal that after 1918 German female servants were expelled more frequently than before and were subject to stricter surveillance. The Leiden case supports the argument that local authorities primarily sought to control migrants' mobility, with moral oversight more strongly directed at women.

Introduction¹

The gender turn in migration history has stimulated research into various aspects of female migration.² The migration of women in the

¹ The research for this paper was financed by the Leiden *Stichting Kleine Woonhuis*.

² Leslie Page Moch, *Moving Europeans. Migration in Western Europe since 1650* (Bloomington (IN) 2003) 14; Katharine M. Donato and Donna Gabaccia, 'Introduction', in: *Ibid.* (eds), *Gender and international migration. From the slavery era to the global age* (New York 2016) 1-16.

nineteenth and twentieth centuries in particular has attracted attention. These centuries have been identified as the age of “feminization of migration”. However, this characterization has been debated.³ Schrover problematized the characterization as vague and imprecise, and not supported by figures on sex ratios. “Feminization”, she concluded, often relates to the perceived “problems” related to female migration. The opportunities for women and men to migrate changed over time as “some restrictions fell away, while new ones were installed”.⁴

The share of men and women in migration is partly related to the creation and implementation of immigration legislation, in which gender was a decisive factor. Research into the gendered legislation has mainly taken place from a national perspective, with the state as a starting point.⁵ Transnational migration increased in the nineteenth century, as did the state bureaucracy that allowed control of migration. National citizenship became important, and nation states made a stronger distinction between citizens and foreigners. Most research into the developments in migration policies have focused on national policy. As Althammer argues in her work on immigration control, we know much less about how migration regulations were put into practice at the local level.⁶

This gap also applies to research on migration in the Netherlands. Lucassen and Van der Harst noted that lack of research on specific cities has led to an overly general picture of migration in which the local contexts are rarely central.⁷ Knowledge of the local context is important to explain the gender patterns in the admission and expulsion of

3 Trent Alexander and Annemarie Steidl, ‘Gender and the “laws of migration”. A reconsideration of nineteenth-century patterns’, *Social Science History* 36:2 (2012) 225-227; Marlou Schrover, ‘Feminization and problematization of migration. Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries’, in: Dirk Hoerder and Amarjit Kaur (eds), *Proletarian and gendered mass migrations. A global perspective on continuities and discontinuities from the 19th to the 21st Centuries* (Leiden 2013) 103-131.

4 Schrover, ‘Feminization’, 130-131.

5 Beatrice Zucca Micheletto, *Gender and migration in historical perspective. Institutions labour and social networks, 16th to 20th centuries* (London 2022) 18.

6 Beate Althammer, ‘Whose freedom of movement? Immigration control in nineteenth-century Prussian cities’, in: Christoph Cornelissen, Beate Kümin and Massimo Rospocher (eds), *Migration and the European city. Social and cultural perspectives from early modernity to the present* (Berlin, Boston 2022) 147-172, 149.

7 Leo Lucassen and Gerard van der Harst, ‘De vreugde van het tellen. Nut en noodzaak van twintigste-eeuwse vreemdelingenregisters voor historisch migratie-onderzoek’, *Tijdschrift voor Sociale Geschiedenis* 24:3 (1998) 293-315, 294; Leo Lucassen, ‘Revolutionaries into beggars. Alien policies in the Netherlands 1814-1914’, in: Andreas Fahrmeir, Olivier Faron and Patick Weil (eds), *Migration control in the north-Atlantic world. The evolution of state practices in Europe and the United States from the French Revolution to the Inter-War period* (New York, Oxford 2003) 182.

immigrants. Greefs and Winter, for example, showed for Belgian cities between 1846 and 1910 that differences in local employment structures influenced the sex ratios among immigrants.⁸

In this contribution, we return to a topic studied by both Lucassen and Schrover and examine the implementation of Dutch national immigration legislation at the local level between 1855 and 1925 from a gender perspective. We are particularly interested in how national policy was implemented in the city of Leiden, where both Lucassen and Schrover have settled as labor migrants specialized in migration history. We will examine to what extent differences between men and women were visible and if and how labor market circumstances influenced this process.

A focus on the local level is particularly relevant, because the national Dutch Aliens Acts of 1849 and 1918 were implemented locally. Urban authorities were given considerable autonomy to implement policies that served local interests. There is consensus among historians that the Aliens Act of 1849 was hardly, and only very selectively, complied with. The promulgation of a new Aliens Act of 1918 led to the establishment of local branches of the immigration police for stricter and more extensive control of foreign migrants. From the 1920s onwards, supervision would have become less strict.⁹ The impact of these important changes in national legislation on local practices has hardly been examined. Most studies have focused on either the correspondence between the Ministry of Justice and local authorities, or the deportation of unwanted migrants. This approach resulted in a contradictory picture: historians point to the limited compliance with the legislation on the one hand, but on the other hand also emphasize the newly acquired power of local governments to remove poor migrants from the country, as a result of which thousands of foreigners would have been deported every year after 1850.¹⁰ More research is needed to provide clarity.

8 Hilde Greefs and Anne Winter, 'Cities in motion. Mobility, migration selectivity and demographic change in Belgian cities, 1846-1910', in: Bruno Blondé, et al. (eds), *Inequality and the city in the Low Countries (1200-2020)* (Turnhout 2020) 79-100, 89-90.

9 G. van der Harst and L. Lucassen, *Nieuw in Leiden. Plaats en betekenis van vreemdelingen in een Hollandse stad 1918-1955* (Leiden 1998) 10-11.

10 See among others: Corrie van Eijl, *Al te goed is buurmans gek. Het Nederlandse vreemdelingenbeleid 1840-1940* (Amsterdam 2005) 13-73; Jan Lucassen en Rinus Penninx, *Nieuwkomers, nakomelingen en Nederlanders. Immigranten in Nederland 1550-1993* (Amsterdam 1994) 78-79; Lucassen, 'Revolutionaires into beggars', 187; Marij Leenders, *Ongenode gasten. Van traditioneel asielrecht naar immigratiebeleid, 1815-1938* (Hilversum 1993) 8-9, 91.

Leiden is a good case study to examine the local implementation of the national legislation due to its extensive documentation of foreigners and the changing socioeconomic situation. By the nineteenth century, little was left of the large, typical migrant city that Leiden had been in the seventeenth century. Around 1850, Leiden had become a relatively small city with some 36,000 inhabitants and an uncertain labor market.¹¹ Although the economy revived due to industrialization over the course of the nineteenth century and immigration slightly increased, employment rates fluctuated.¹² Most newcomers came from the immediate vicinity and were slightly more often female than male. The number of foreigners recorded in the population was small though they were particularly well documented.¹³

In the following, we aim to answer the question: how was national policy implemented in the context of the urban labor market, and were there differences between men and women in this regard? After an introduction of the sources we will look at the differences in registration between men and women arriving in Leiden between 1855 and 1925, the profiles of incoming men and women, and the profiles of the expelled.

Sources and methodology

This contribution is based on the Leiden Aliens Registers (*Vreemdelingenregisters*) between 1855-1904 and 1918-1925 and the Register of Issued Free Passes (*Register van verleende vrijbiljetten*) between 1855 and 1896 for traveling by train.¹⁴ These two registers stem from the National Aliens Acts of 1849 and 1918.

The first Act of 1849 regulated admission, residence, and expulsion of foreign nationals and stipulated that foreigners could be admitted if they had sufficient resources and proof of their identity. Newcomers

11 H.D. Tjalsma, 'De bevolking', in: R.C.J. van Maanen and Boudien de Vries (eds), *Leiden. De geschiedenis van een Hollandse stad. Deel 3 1795-1896* (Leiden 2004) 41-51, here 42.

12 Cor Smit, 'Leiden op stoom, veranderingen in de economische structuur', in: Van Maanen and De Vries (eds), *Leiden. De geschiedenis van een Hollandse stad, Deel 3*, 55-65; Frits Boersma, 'Economische en sociale verhoudingen. Breuk met het verleden', in: R.C.J. van Maanen and J.C.H. Blom (eds), *Leiden. De geschiedenis van een Hollandse stad, Deel 4 vanaf 1896* (Leiden 2004) 58-99, 67-68.

13 Tjalsma, 'De bevolking', 51.

14 Erfgoed Leiden en Omstreken (hereafter ELO), Archief Gemeentepolitie van Leiden (hereafter AGL), inv.no. 2467, 2468-2471, inv.no 985. For the period 1904 and 1918, the *Vreemdelingenregister* is missing from the Leiden archives.

who met these conditions could apply to the local police for a travel and residence permit (*reis- en verblijfpas*). Everyone with a pass was an “admitted foreigner” and could not be deported, except through the intervention of the subdistrict court. The pass had to be renewed every three months.¹⁵ Lucassen and Van Eijl have pointed to the liberal nature of the Aliens Act of 1849. In principle, everyone was welcome, except for poor foreigners and political troublemakers.¹⁶

The Leiden Aliens Register was kept by the Aliens Police and contains information about the foreigners’ name, registration date, age, profession, place of birth, last place of residence, the authority and place of issue of the foreign passport, place of destination, date of issue of travel as well as residence pass, description, reasons for issuing the pass, place of residence in Leiden, and sometimes physical characteristics and other comments.¹⁷ The register includes 1,378 registrations. Some migrants returned to Leiden and were registered twice, or even more. The register contains the names of 1,093 individuals: 192 women, 844 men, and 57 individuals for whom the sex is unknown (table 1), including children who came with their parents and a group of 28 unspecified musicians. The Aliens Register contains the names of 152 expelled foreigners. We assume that the 1,226 registrations (942 individuals) without any explicit rejection were admitted. The Register of Issued Free Passes (*Register van verleende vrijbiljetten*), issued for traveling by train, contains information about foreigners who were expelled. Deduplication of the individuals recorded in both registers brings the total number of foreigners expelled by the Leiden authorities between 1855 and 1904 to 221.¹⁸

15 Corrie van Eijl and Marlou Schrover, ‘Inleiding’, in: Marlou Schrover (ed.) *Bronnen betreffende de registratie van vreemdelingen in Nederland in de negentiende en twintigste eeuw* (The Hague 2002)

15. So-called ‘assimilated’ foreigners, a status that could be granted to foreigners who lived in the Netherlands for more than six years and foreigners who were or had been married to a Dutch woman and had had a child with her in the Netherlands were exempt from the obligation to obtain a pass.

16 L. Lucassen, ‘De Breestraat als kosmopolitisch centrum. Italianen, Chinezen, Duitse dienstbodes en Joodse vluchtelingen in Leiden, 1872-1950’, in: Jaap Moes and Ed van der Vlist (eds), *In de nieuwe stad. Nieuwkomers in Leiden, 1200-2000* (Leiden 1996) 90; Van Eijl and Schrover, ‘Inleiding’, 13; Van Eijl, ‘Al te goed is buurmans gek’, 19.

17 Louk Pöckling and Schrover, ‘Registers van verstrekte en geweigerde reis- en verblijfpassen (1849-1923)’, in: Schrover (ed.), *Bronnen betreffende de registratie van vreemdelingen*, 36.

18 According to the law, foreigners were only admitted if they had been issued a travel and residence pass. In practice, though, many foreigners did not get a pass but were not escorted out, either, and thus tacitly admitted. These migrants still could be easily deported if they fell into poverty. To check this condition, we have used the Municipal reports with information about the number of foreigners

Table 1 Male and female foreigners in the Leiden Aliens Registers (1855-1904; 1918-1925)

	1855-1904				1918-1925			
	Total	Men	Women	Unknown	Total	Men	Women	Unknown
No. of registrations	1,378	1,069	252	57	3,024	1,090	1,827	107
Admitted	1,226	927	244	55				
Expelled	152	142	8	2				
No. of unique persons (after deduplication)	1,093	844	192	57				
Number of unique persons admitted (after deduplication)	942	703	184	55				
Expelled foreigners	220	204	12	5	82	42	40	

Source: ELO, AGL, inv.nos. 985, 2467-2471

With the Aliens Act of 1918, the Dutch government aimed to implement a stricter immigration policy and better oversight of all foreigners entering and residing in the Netherlands.¹⁹ The national policy was partly based on the increasing fear of the dissemination of revolutionary ideas. Yet socioeconomic considerations and the need to gain better control over the labor market were the most important reasons for the act.²⁰ For the first time, the Dutch government considered employment and unemployment as factors for setting conditions on migrant labor, and the rising costs of social welfare increased the perceived need to distinguish between its own citizens and foreigners.²¹

The Aliens Act of 1918 stipulated that foreigners had to report to the local police within 24 hours of arrival. They were given an identity card that they had to keep with them during their stay in the Netherlands and had to hand in when they left the country. When foreigners moved

settling in Leiden and available for the period 1860-1895; ELO, *Gemeenteverlagen: statistieken betreffende de bevolking van Leiden, 1851-1895*.

19 Lucassen and Van der Harst, 'De vreugde van het tellen', 297; L. Lucassen, 'Lokale vreemdelingenregisters en vreemdelingendossiers (1918-1940)', in: Schrover (ed.), *Bronnen betreffende de registratie van vreemdelingen*, 115; Leo Lucassen and Jan Lucassen, *Vijf eeuwen migratie. Een verhaal van winnaars en verliezers* (Amsterdam 2018) 79.

20 Lucassen, 'Lokale vreemdelingenregisters', 114.

21 Van Eijl, *Al te goed is buurmans gek*, 105; Lucassen, 'Lokale vreemdelingenregisters', 114.

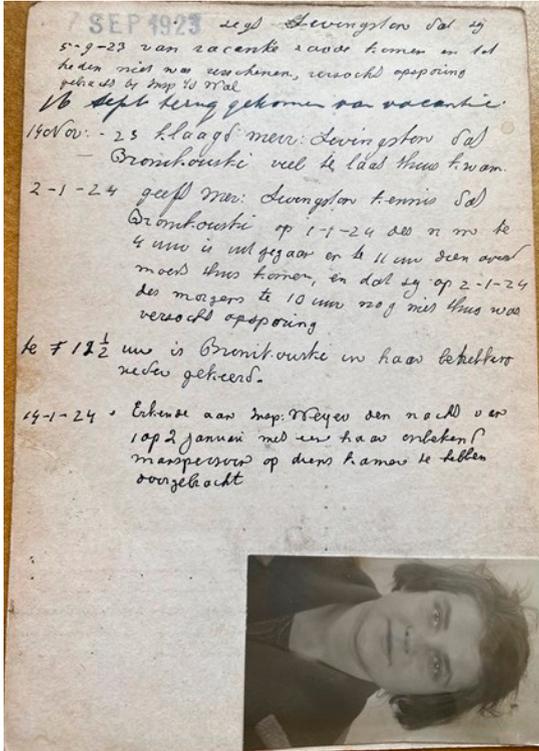


Illustration 1 Identity card
 Maria Bronikowsky, 1923

Source: Erfgoed Leiden
 en Omstreken, Archief
 Gemeentepolitie van Leiden,
 inv.nr. 2468

to another municipality, they had to report to the local police again. The head of the local police was instructed to keep the records of identity cards and control passes.²²

The Leiden Aliens Register for the period 1918-1925 is exceptionally rich and well preserved and consists of chronologically ordered identity cards for 3,024 people. The registration contains name, photo, date of registration with police, country of birth, place and date, nationality, (past and present) military relationship to a foreign power, means of subsistence, place of residence, current address, and date of collection of the identity card. About two thirds of the cards contain additional information about, for example, whereabouts, family, passport or visa, as well as notes about criminal offenses or moral behavior. Registration depended on the willingness of foreign nationals to report, and not everyone did.

²² Lucassen, 'Lokale vreemdelingenregisters', 115.

Registration of male and female immigrants

In the registration of aliens, significant differences between men and women became apparent. These disparities were not primarily the result of actual numbers, but of underregistration likely caused by institutional bias. Until 1918, the focus lay on recording male migrants, who were regarded as the heads of households.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, less than 20 percent of the total of 1,226 admitted foreigners registered in the Leiden Aliens Register were women. Moreover, much less information about them was recorded than about men. Information about place of birth and occupations is often lacking. A comparison of the Aliens Register with the Leiden municipal reports shows that in reality the number of female migrants from abroad was much higher. Between 1860 and 1895, not just one fifth, but an average of 43.4 percent of all migrants from abroad were women.²³ Furthermore, over the course of this period their share increased from 38.5 in 1849 to 49.6 percent in 1889.

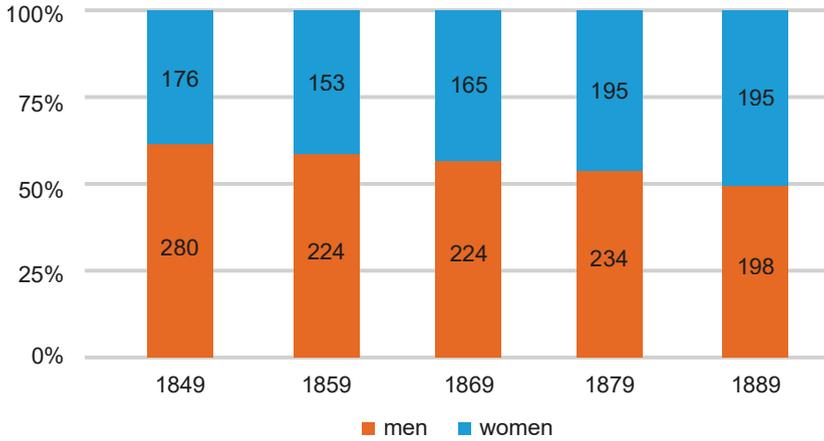
Apparently, the Leiden police did not register all incoming women in the Aliens Register in the first period after the introduction of the regulations for foreigners. Furthermore, in the first years a large proportion of those immigrants who were registered as newcomers in Leiden did not receive a travel and residence pass: only 22 percent of incoming men and 14 percent of incoming women received a pass.

The low number of women in the Leiden Aliens Register was not exceptional. In the Amsterdam registers for travel and residence passes of 1852, women comprised only 5 percent of the foreigners. Schrover points at various explanations: the skewed sex ratio among the migrants could play a role, as could the fact that non-Dutch women married to a Dutchman did not have to be registered. In addition, women were probably less likely to receive a travel and residence pass, because they could easily be expelled without such a pass. Schrover suggests that this may have been related to the banning of prostitution, although it is unlikely that all these women were seen as prostitutes.²⁴

The Leiden data suggest that the explanation is likely to be found in a combination of under-registration and the need to maintain control over immigrants. Women who migrated with their husbands or parents were often listed under their male relatives' name, which reflects societal norms that viewed men as the primary legal and economic

²³ ELO, *Gemeenteverslagen: statistieken betreffende de bevolking van Leiden, 1851-1895*.

²⁴ Schrover, *Bronnen*, 52-53.

Figure 1 Male and female foreigners settled in Leiden, 1849-1889

Source: ELO, *Gemeenteverlagen: statistieken betreffende de bevolking van Leiden, 1851-1895*.

representatives of the family. In the first years of the regulations for foreigners, the Leiden police only registered female newcomers separately if they arrived independently, without parents or a husband.

The fact that, between 1855 and 1861, significantly more foreigners were admitted than travel and residence passes were issued was likely related to a desire to exert greater control over the mobile population. Schrover concludes that from 1871 onward, the refusal to issue travel and residence passes was used as a means to more easily expel undesirable foreigners from the country.²⁵ Recently, Althammer has argued that European migration policy in the nineteenth century was aimed at controlling the freedom of movement of migrants rather than at preventing immigration.²⁶ This rationale also appears to have been the case in Leiden in the second half of the nineteenth century. The Leiden economy experienced high unemployment, which may have affected women in particular. The occupation censuses show a decrease in the share of women in the labor market, presumably because men were given priority in the labor market.²⁷ Maybe Leiden authorities were more reluctant to grant travel and residence passes to women, especially if they were perceived as more economically dependent or vulnerable, limiting their mobility and legal presence.

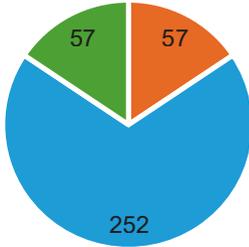
²⁵ Ibid., 55.

²⁶ Althammer, 'Whose freedom?', 149.

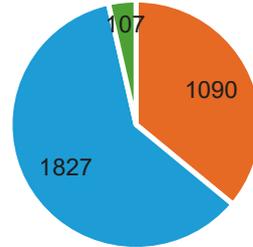
²⁷ Smit, 'Leiden op stoom', 74.

Figure 2 Male and female foreigners in the Leiden Aliens Register, 1855-1904 and 1918-1925

a. 1855-1904



b. 1918-1925



■ Men ■ Women ■ Unknown ■ Men ■ Women ■ Unknown

Sources: ELO, AGL, inv. nos. 2467-2471.

Although there was considerable under-registration of women in the Aliens Register for the period 1855-1904 and the information about registered women was limited, it is striking that the register started after the Aliens Act of 1918 shows a completely different picture. The under-registration of women disappeared. In fact, women outnumbered men and comprised 60 percent of all foreign migrants in the register. Another striking difference with the older register is that the information about women is much more complete. The Aliens Act intended to register and monitor newcomers more strictly and, apparently, this intention was also followed up in practice. Remarkably, sex differences no longer seem to have been important in the way of registration.

The Leiden data clearly show that the registration of foreigners was highly gendered. As a result, women were under-registered until 1918. In the next section, we examine differences in the profiles of male and female newcomers in relation to changes in the labor market.

The profile of male and female foreign migrants coming to Leiden

The admission of foreigners was always strongly related to the demand for labor and the pressure on local poor relief. The question is how strong the relationship was between the labor market and the profile of immigrants in Leiden after the introduction of the national immigration laws in 1849 and 1918. The labor market certainly played

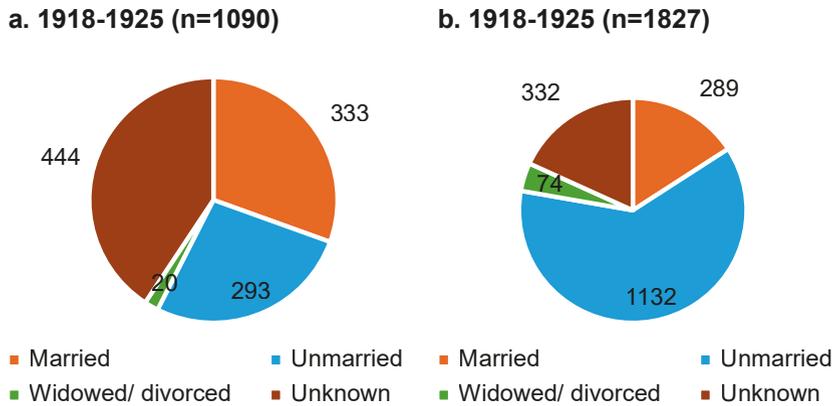
REGISTRATIE.		1) NAAM	OORSPRONG.	BEROEP.	VUTENLANDSCH PASPOORT.		VISUM ALBIER.		
VOLG. NUMMER.	1855 DATEER.	2) VOORNAAM.			1) Geboorteplaat.	1) Datas.	1) Aankomst.	1) Datas.	1) Bestemming Plaats.
			2) Woonplaat.	2) Noemer.	2) Plaats van Afgeho.	2) Datas.	2) Ouderne bepaling.		
1	Jan 13	1) <i>Deumans</i> 2) <i>Andreas, van de Wierden</i>	41	<i>Beltschaven</i>	1) <i>Sten</i> 2) <i>Capeen</i>	1) 5. Dec 1855 2) 112	1) <i>Sten</i> 2) <i>Capeen</i>	1) 24 Jan 1855 2) C.	<i>Sten</i>
2	" 15	1) <i>Kupper</i> 2) <i>Bong Joseph</i>	49	<i>Buckhansen</i>	1) <i>Sten</i> 2) <i>Sten</i>	1) 1. Dec 1855 2) 91	1) <i>Sten</i> 2) <i>Sten</i>	1) 17 Jan 1855 2) C.	<i>Sten</i>
3	" 15	1) <i>Aboul</i> 2) <i>Sybil</i>	38	<i>Professie</i>	1) <i>Sten</i> 2) <i>Sten</i>	1) 1. Dec 1855 2) 100	1) <i>Sten</i> 2) <i>Sten</i>	1) 17 Jan 1855 2) C.	<i>Sten</i>
4	16. 12	1) <i>Libot</i> 2) <i>Leonard Kromm</i>	22	<i>Handwerker</i>	1) <i>Sten</i> 2) <i>Sten</i>	1) 1. Dec 1855 2) 147	1) <i>Sten</i> 2) <i>Sten</i>	1) 17 Jan 1855 2) C.	<i>Sten</i>
5	" 14	1) <i>Decker</i> 2) <i>Jan</i>	22 1849	<i>Handwerker</i>	1) <i>Sten</i> 2) <i>Sten</i>	1) 24 Jan 1855 2) 15	1) <i>Sten</i> 2) <i>Sten</i>	1) 17 Jan 1855 2) C.	<i>Sten</i>
6	" 16	1) <i>Forvald</i> 2) <i>Jan</i>	38	<i>Handwerker</i>	1) <i>Sten</i> 2) <i>Sten</i>	1) 1. Dec 1855 2) 147	1) <i>Sten</i> 2) <i>Sten</i>	1) 17 Jan 1855 2) C.	<i>Sten</i>
7	" 18	1) <i>Kuifela</i> 2) <i>Henrick</i>	27	<i>Handwerker</i>	1) <i>Sten</i> 2) <i>Sten</i>	1) 1. Dec 1855 2) 111	1) <i>Sten</i> 2) <i>Sten</i>	1) 17 Jan 1855 2) C.	<i>Sten</i>
8	19. 9	1) <i>Bailliere</i> 2) <i>Henrick</i>	28	<i>Handwerker</i>	1) <i>Sten</i> 2) <i>Sten</i>	1) 1. Dec 1855 2) 111	1) <i>Sten</i> 2) <i>Sten</i>	1) 17 Jan 1855 2) C.	<i>Sten</i>
9	" "	1) <i>Seligman</i> 2) <i>Jan</i>	27	<i>Handwerker</i>	1) <i>Sten</i> 2) <i>Sten</i>	1) 1. Dec 1855 2) 111	1) <i>Sten</i> 2) <i>Sten</i>	1) 17 Jan 1855 2) C.	<i>Sten</i>
10	" 13	1) <i>Frankin</i> 2) <i>Henrick</i>	44	<i>Handwerker</i>	1) <i>Sten</i> 2) <i>Sten</i>	1) 1. Dec 1855 2) 111	1) <i>Sten</i> 2) <i>Sten</i>	1) 17 Jan 1855 2) C.	<i>Sten</i>
11	" "	1) <i>Novis</i> 2) <i>Jan</i>	28	<i>Handwerker</i>	1) <i>Sten</i> 2) <i>Sten</i>	1) 1. Dec 1855 2) 111	1) <i>Sten</i> 2) <i>Sten</i>	1) 17 Jan 1855 2) C.	<i>Sten</i>
12	" "	1) <i>Pinet</i> 2) <i>Jan</i>	29	<i>Handwerker</i>	1) <i>Sten</i> 2) <i>Sten</i>	1) 1. Dec 1855 2) 111	1) <i>Sten</i> 2) <i>Sten</i>	1) 17 Jan 1855 2) C.	<i>Sten</i>
13	" 17	1) <i>Kavonne</i> 2) <i>Henrick</i>	40	<i>Handwerker</i>	1) <i>Sten</i> 2) <i>Sten</i>	1) 1. Dec 1855 2) 111	1) <i>Sten</i> 2) <i>Sten</i>	1) 17 Jan 1855 2) C.	<i>Sten</i>
14	" 10	1) <i>Jan van Diek</i> 2) <i>Jan Jaquet</i>	40	<i>Handwerker</i>	1) <i>Sten</i> 2) <i>Sten</i>	1) 1. Dec 1855 2) 111	1) <i>Sten</i> 2) <i>Sten</i>	1) 17 Jan 1855 2) C.	<i>Sten</i>

Illustration 2 Leiden Foreigners' register, 1855

Source: Erfgoed Leiden en Omstreken, Archief Gemeentepolitie van Leiden, inv.nr. 2467

a role in the profiles of men and women admitted to Leiden, but this process was not one-sided. It turns out female migrants themselves also made clear choices. As we will show below, they likely preferred to work as domestic servants in a household rather than in the textile industry.

Figure 3 Marital status of male foreigners in Leiden, 1918-1925 (n=1090) and 1918-1925 (n= 1827)



Sources: ELO, AGL, inv. nos. 2467-2471.

As was evident in the previous section, the quality of information about the newcomers differs per period. The Leiden authorities, for example, only began to register the marital status of newcomers after 1918, and appeared to be less interested in the marital status of men than that of women.²⁸ And, as in most historical sources, occupations of men were registered more consistently than for women.

For a long time, migration historians have assumed that female migrants often traveled as married partners with their husbands, while male migrants were unmarried and traveled independently.²⁹ More recently, this image has been refuted, and migration historians generally recognize that many women migrated independently to European cities without family or husbands. As Winter and Greefs have shown in their research of the trajectories of 3,000 foreign newcomers to Antwerp between 1850 and 1880, many women were single and made use of new travel options.³⁰

The data on Leiden in the period 1918-1925 show a similar pattern. Only one fifth of the female foreigners for whom the marital status was recorded were married, compared to more than half

²⁸ While the marital status for 88 percent of women was recorded, this applied to only 60 percent of men.

²⁹ Marlou Schrover, 'Women and long-distance trade migration in the nineteenth-century Netherlands', in: Pamela Sharpe (ed.), *Women, gender and labour migration. Historical and cultural perspectives* (London 2002) 85-107.

³⁰ Hilde Greefs and Anne Winter, 'Alone and far from home. Gender and migration trajectories of single foreign newcomers to Antwerp, 1850-1880', *Journal of Urban History* 42:1 (2016) 61-80.

Table 2 Country of origin foreigners registered in the Aliens Register, 1855-1904*

Place of birth	Total	%	Men	%	Women
Germany	684	62.6%	559	66.2%	113
Belgium	107	9.8%	80	9.5%	20
Switzerland	59	5.4%	47	5.6%	12
France	59	5.4%	46	5.5%	13
Austria/ Hungary	33	3.0%	30	3.6%	6
Italy	29	2.7%	26	3.1%	3
England	18	1.6%	11	1.3%	7
Netherlands	26	2.4%	9	1.1%	9
Russia	8	0.7%	6	0.7%	2
United States	4	0.4%	4	0.5%	0
Other	15	1.4%	10	1.2%	0
Unknown	51	4.7%	16	1.9%	7
Total	1093	100.0%	844	100.0%	192

Sources: ELO, AGL inv. no. 2467.

Place of origin of about half of all women and of a number of young men is not recorded. The figures presented in the table include estimates based on the country of origin of the main registrant ('hoofdgestreerde').

of all men. Most newcomers were unmarried on arrival, and the share of unmarried women was even higher than the share of unmarried men: information about the origin of the migrants – for the nineteenth century indicated by their place of birth, for the twentieth century by their nationality – provides some insight into the travel distances. Women were not necessarily the short-distance migrants they were thought to be, and patterns for women and men were remarkably similar for this early period. Most foreigners arriving in Leiden between 1855 and 1925 were from Germany. About 10 percent came from Belgium, while the remaining migrants originated from other Western European countries (France, Switzerland, Italy, Austria, England).

Half a century later, the pattern had changed. Travel distances had increased, and the countries of origin had become more diverse: in addition to migrants from Western European countries, people also arrived from Central and Eastern Europe (Hungary, Romania, Russia, Czechoslovakia). The 'other' category is also interesting in this respect, with women from Canada and Japan as well as women of all kinds of European nationalities. However, the largest group of women, and less

Table 3 Nationality of foreigners registered in the Alien Register, 1918-1925

Nationality	Total	%	Men	%	Women	%
German	1,947	66.7%	564	51.74%	1,383	75.7%
Hungarian	131	4.5%	20	1.83%	111	6.1%
Belgian	133	4.6%	82	7.52%	51	2.8%
Austrian	115	3.9%	37	3.39%	78	4.3%
American	53	1.8%	40	3.67%	13	0.7%
Italian	49	1.7%	37	3.39%	12	0.7%
Swiss	49	1.7%	21	1.93%	28	1.5%
English	47	1.6%	29	2.66%	18	1.0%
Czech/Slovakian	38	1.3%	19	1.74%	19	1.0%
French	28	1.0%	14	1.28%	14	0.8%
Russian	26	0.9%	18	1.65%	8	0.4%
Polish/ Romanian	18	0.6%	14	1.28%	4	0.2%
Romanian	14	0.5%	11	1.01%	3	0.2%
Other	48	1.6%	33	3.03%	15	0.8%
Without nationality	58	2.0%	28	2.57%	30	1.6%
Unknown	163	5.6%	123	11.28%	40	2.2%
Total	2,917	100.0%	1,090	100.00%	1,827	100.0%

Sources: ELO, AGL, inv. nos. 2468-2471.

so of men, came from Germany. This regional specialization coincided with the specialization in work.

What can be said about the occupational profiles of the immigrants who were attracted to Leiden? In their research on mobility in Belgian cities between 1846 and 1910, Greefs and Winter find that heavy industry cities like Liège and Charleroi attracted mainly male migrants, while a textile city like Ghent mainly attracted female migrants. Commercial and service-oriented cities, such as Brussels and Antwerp, would offer more opportunities for female immigrants in services and in retail.³¹ The occupational profiles of the Leiden immigrants show a different pattern. Leiden was a typical textile city and with the increased importance of other industries, employment in the industrial sectors grew. However, it was mainly local women and men who filled those gaps.

³¹ Greefs and Winter, 'Cities in motion', 89.

In the nineteenth century, most women with a recorded occupation worked in economic services (trade and transport) or in other services (table 4). Women in this latter sector worked in domestic services. Strikingly, though, the largest group worked as artists or musicians. The share of male migrants working in this sector was also high. It is significant that most of these foreigners with an occupation in the entertainment sector were registered but did not receive a travel and residence pass. This must have been the result of the circular of August 28, 1852, in which the minister of justice warned against issuing passes to these people because they probably could not provide for themselves. The fact that they were not expelled supports the argument that the implementation of migration policy focused on controlling rather than restricting immigration.³²

Overall, the occupations registered for women arriving in Leiden in the nineteenth century show a reasonable degree of economic independence. Almost all foreign nationals in the economic service sector came from Germany, and the share of German men and women in this sector was almost equal. The majority were Westerwald traders engaged in seasonal trade in pottery in the middle of the nineteenth century, who traveled in large numbers to the Netherlands every year. After 1870 this seasonal migration came to an end, probably due to the improvement of employment opportunities in Germany because of industrialization. Around that year, the Westerwald migrants also disappeared from the Leiden Aliens Register. These women often traveled with male colleagues, yet they were frequently registered independently, as female merchant or trader. This status confirms that they were not just followers of male relatives, but independent entrepreneurs.

A comparison of the occupations of male newcomers with data on the Leiden labor market reveals that the occupations of migrant and local men did not align, either. The available censuses of 1849 and 1899 show that 66 to 59 percent of Leiden men worked in industry, 15 to 22 percent in economic services, and only 10 and 11 percent in other services.³³ Among male migrants, by contrast, the share working in the service sector was remarkably high (table 4).

A few decades later, the registered occupations of foreigners had changed considerably. Between 1918 and 1925, the share of migrants working in economic services had decreased, while the share in other

32 Althammer, 'Whose freedom?', 149.

33 Smit, 'Leiden op stoom', 75.

Table 4 Recorded occupations of foreigners in Leiden Aliens Registers

	Aliens Register, 1855-1904				Aliens Register, 1918-1925			
	Total	%	Men	Women	Total	%	Men	Women
Industry	427	31%	242	2	474	16.3%	405	69
Agriculture	3	0.2%	3	0	14	0.5%	14	0
Economic services	284	20.6%	254	30	215	7.4%	172	43
Other services		29.5%	298	80	1,224	42%	201	1,023
Other	31	2.2%	28	3				
No occupation	14	1%	2	6	381	20.9%	50	362
Unknown	213	15.5%	54	131	608	13.1%	246	331
Total	972	100%	881	252	2,916	100%	1,088	1,828

Sources: ELO, AGL, inv. nos. 2467-2471.

services had risen sharply. It seems that this shift was mainly caused by changes in the recorded occupations of female migrants related to the specific demand from the labor market.

After 1918, large numbers of German domestic servants came to work in the Netherlands. They provided a solution to the so-called domestic servant question that had dominated the societal agenda for decades, and which concerned the issue of how to obtain good and reliable personnel. Dutch domestic servants had a bad reputation and were said to be sloppy and badly raised. German girls, by contrast, would be well educated, submissive, and experienced and were thus in demand. For German girls, working in the Dutch service sector was appealing not only because there was demand, but also because working conditions for domestic servants were more favorable than in Germany.³⁴ In addition, many Dutch girls preferred positions in the industrial sector over domestic service, as the latter entailed long working hours, low salary, limited independence and freedom of movement, and the obligation to live with the employer – apparently even despite the poor working conditions and low pay in factories.³⁵

In 1909, 2,600 foreign domestic servants worked in the Netherlands; in 1920, 9,100 (ca. 4 percent of the domestic servants in the Netherlands). And their number kept growing, increasing tenfold in just three years.³⁶ The deteriorated political and economic situation in Germany after World War I further stimulated the migration of young women from Germany to the Netherlands.³⁷ However, criticism rose as unemployment grew. German women were not only accused of being responsible for unemployment among Dutch women, but also of endangering morality.³⁸ In Leiden, however, this condition did not detract from the city's appeal to domestic servants. Almost half of all women arriving between 1918 and 1925 (893) had a recorded occupation in domestic services, usually as a domestic servant, sometimes as a nanny or kitchen maid. A few dozen worked in education or health care.

34 Marlou Schrover, *Een kolonie van Duitsers. Groepsvorming onder Duitse immigranten in Utrecht in de negentiende eeuw* (Utrecht, Amsterdam 2002) 298-299.

35 Van der Harst and Lucassen, *Nieuw in Leiden*, 65.

36 Barbara Henkes, *Heimat in Holland. Duitse dienstmeisjes 1920-1950* (Amsterdam 1995) 38.

37 Van der Harst and Lucassen, *Nieuw in Leiden*, 65.

38 Henkes, *Heimat in Holland*, 46-49.

Women from abroad were hardly ever employed in the industrial and manufacturing sector. The difference with Leiden women, for whom this sector was the largest employer, is remarkable. This difference did not result from excluding female migrants from the factories, however. On the contrary, jobs for women in the textile factories were poorly paid, and entrepreneurs had difficulty finding staff. The textile factory *Clos en Leembruggen*, for example, recruited female staff in Germany in the 1920s. Unmarried women were offered a job as (literal) spinsters, receiving room and board as well as wages. Some of them left their factory jobs within a few months to take up work in the hospitality industry or as domestic servants. Others returned to Germany, and by 1926 most German women had left the city.³⁹

The occupational profile of male newcomers was more diverse. Men worked in industry, economic services, and also in other services. Between 1918 and 1925, two thirds of male migrants working had an occupation in the industrial and manufacturing sector and three quarters of these men came from Germany. Not only did the sectors in which German men and women worked differ, but so too did their levels of education. Male migrants were far more likely to have higher-skilled occupations. Among the newcomers were, for example, several factory managers.⁴⁰ Additionally, male migrants were employed in university education, came to Leiden as students, or worked in religious professions.

Although the Leiden industrial sector grew during this period, this sector did not attract foreigners, and this shortfall was even more true for women than for men. Foreign women were much more likely to find work as domestic servants, which likely resulted not only from choices made by the urban authorities, but also from the preferences of the female migrants themselves. In addition, local women also appeared to make clear choices, as they seem to have preferred factory work over domestic service.

The question is whether there were also differences between men and women in the likelihood of being expelled. In the next section, we examine which factors were decisive in the expulsion of immigrants and what differences existed between men and women in this regard.

39 Van der Harst and Lucassen, *Nieuw in Leiden*, 39.

40 *Ibid.*, 31.

The profile of expelled immigrants

Historians have discussed the main purpose of national aliens legislation, along with how and why it affected men and women differently. There seem to have been several objectives. Lucassen and Penninx have argued that the Aliens Act of 1849 had been introduced as a response to revolutionary movements in Europe with the aim of keeping 'political troublemakers' out of the country. However, Van Eijl found that the fear of revolutionary newcomers played only a minor role in the parliamentary debates on the law. The law's primary purpose was to exclude poor foreigners.⁴¹ There seem to be a consensus that everyone who did not cause political unrest or economic burden was basically welcome.⁴²

What was the chance of being expelled? Following the promulgations of the acts, women were much less likely to be expelled by the aliens police than men. Van Eijl suggested that this was because women found work more quickly than men; because they only left their country of origin once they had secured a position; and because men were probably more frequently arrested for vagrancy, theft, or begging.⁴³ Lucassen noted that although women accounted for 50 percent of the Dutch immigrant population during the interwar period, they represented only 15 to 30 percent of those expelled. He concluded that women's young age, alleged risk of them becoming pregnant, or lapsing into immoral behavior did not result in increased control. Furthermore, he found considerable differences between cities. In large cities, such as Amsterdam and Rotterdam, expulsion rates of German female servants were above the national average. In smaller towns such as Leiden, though, servants ran a much lower risk of being expelled.⁴⁴

In contrast to Van Eijl and Lucassen, Henkes arrived at a less positive conclusion. She highlighted the vulnerable position of German domestic servants and the constant threat of being expelled. She argued that even after they were admitted to work, the Dutch police kept an extra eye on these women. The police often made use of the legal option of the Aliens Act of 1849 to expel foreigners without means

41 Van Eijl, *Al te goed is buurmans gek*, 20, 59.

42 Lucassen and Penninx, *Nieuwkomers, nakomelingen, Nederlanders*, 78-79.

43 Ibid.

44 L. Lucassen, 'Administrative into social control. The Aliens Police and foreign female servants in the Netherlands, 1918-40', *Social History* 27:3 (2002) 327-342, 337; L. Lucassen, 'The police, gender and social control. German servants in Dutch towns, 1918-1940', in: C. Emsley, E. Johnson and P. Spierenburg (eds), *Social control in Europe* (Columbus (OH) 2004) 226-244.

of subsistence when domestic servants were out of work or otherwise in trouble. Immigrant girls risked deportation in case of refusal to work, illness, pregnancy, and when they posed a danger to public order and morality. In Amsterdam, the immigration service and aliens police worked together with the vice squad in carrying out checks on immigrants in public places and sometimes in people's homes.⁴⁵

How do our data on Leiden fit into this debate? Between 1855 and 1904, the number of expulsions differed greatly from year to year. An initial peak in expulsions in 1855-1856 was followed by two decades in which the number of expulsions was rather low. After the period 1876-1888 the policy changed and numbers of expulsions rose again. All in all though, the numbers were low. Only 152 migrants in the Aliens Register (11 percent) had to leave the country. Together with the expulsions from the Register of Free Passes, the total number of expulsions amounts to 221 (table 1). The Aliens Act of 1849 was thus not strictly enforced in Leiden. At the same time, many foreigners were admitted but did not get a travel and residence pass. This practice allowed the police to easily deport them in case of unemployment, poverty, and undesirable behavior. The lack of work, in addition to its nature, seems to have been decisive.

Notably, only 5 percent of all expelled migrants were women. Five of these twelve women worked as prostitutes. Prostitution was not illegal, but the Leiden police regulated it by monitoring brothels and by ensuring that women were registered as prostitutes, underwent medical check-ups, and did not attempt to lure passersby inside in public view.⁴⁶ The existence of a double standard regarding the work of prostitutes is evident, as two of these women were found in a brothel and thus in fact worked, though were expelled on the grounds of having no "means of subsistence or identification papers".⁴⁷

For men, it is striking that more than half of the expelled migrants (55 percent) worked in the industrial sector. That is twice as much as the proportion of men admitted. Apparently, there was no demand for craftsmen or industrial workers in the Leiden labor market. Remarkably, the increased expulsions after 1875 fell precisely during the decade of

45 Henkes, *Heimat in Holland*, 122-124.

46 Marion Pluskota, Roos van Oosten, Suzanne Tegelaar and Marije van der Windt, 'Gender and the geography of crime in nineteenth-century Leiden and Amsterdam', *Crime, History & Societies* 26:2 (2022) 5-23.

47 Schrover, *Bronnen*, 52-53. Schrover argues that the fear of prostitution was a reason to keep women out more quickly.

increased unemployment between 1877 and 1885, in which the effects of a number of international economic crises can be seen. Itinerant artists and traders probably did not need to be deported and left on their own.

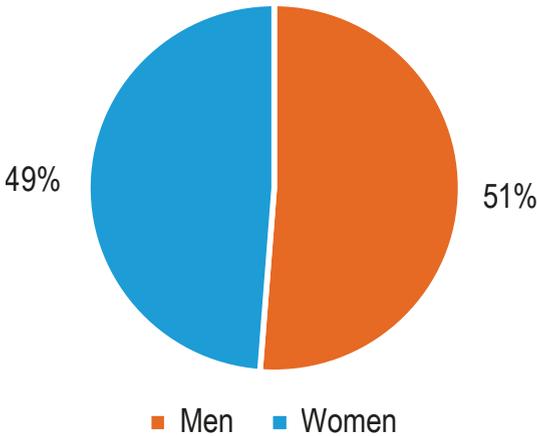
The formal reason for expulsion was always related to the legal provisions of the 1849 Aliens Act: the lack of money or means, no identification papers, or a combination of these conditions. A couple of foreigners were expelled after a prison sentence in the military detention institution or after the fairs, where they had found temporary work. However, additional information on 42 expelled migrants suggests that other motives were also important in the police's decision. Notes about these migrants included references to drunkenness, begging, vagabondage, and dishonorable behavior. Only one person was labeled as a political troublemaker. The importance of being able to support oneself probably explains why mentally or physically ill newcomers were also more vulnerable to expulsion.

Did the 1918 legislation lead to changes in the profile of expelled immigrants? The 1918 Aliens Act was intended to enforce stricter measures against foreigners who lacked financial security. Remarkably, though, the expulsion rate did not increase: between 1918 and 1925 only 2.7 percent (82) of all 3,024 registered migrants were expelled, which rate was even lower than before 1918. These low percentages align with the findings from Lucassen that only a small number of migrants in a small city like Leiden faced deportation.⁴⁸

What about the position of German female domestic servants in Leiden? Did they indeed run a very low risk of being expelled as Lucassen suggested? He argued that domestic servants in a small town like Leiden were less likely to be expelled than their colleagues in big cities such as Amsterdam. Furthermore, the increasing police involvement and activities regarding aliens should not be labeled as social control. Only occasionally, when the police were confronted with 'deviant' behavior, administrative control would lead to social control. Although, Lucassen admits that women may have been targeted more often than men, he stresses that this type of social control only affected a tiny minority of all female aliens who stayed in Leiden. The Leiden police were reactive and only took action after complaints. Henkes, by contrast, emphasized the risk that domestic servants faced of being expelled.⁴⁹

48 Lucassen, 'Administrative into social control', 338-339.

49 Ibid., 338-341; Henkes, *Heimat in Holland*, 122-124.

Figure 4: Gender ratio for expelled foreigners, 1918-1925

The daily practices of the Leiden police appear more nuanced than the stark contrast suggested by Lucassen and Henkes. This discrepancy may be related to the sources. Henkes partially based her findings on interviews with former domestic servants and their employers, which provided valuable insight into their feelings of insecurity, along with their fear of the real risk of deportation. Lucassen examined the *Algemeen Politieblad* (General Police Report). In our examination of the local implementation of the national legislation, we investigated the police annotations on foreigner and identity cards. These records reveal a low expulsion rate, yet also challenge the notion of a purely 'reactive' stance by the immigration police after 1918.

What stands out in the Leiden data on expulsions of foreigners is the proportion of women involved. Lucassen observed that between 1920 and 1935, only 15 to 30 percent of expulsions concerned women and that barely any German female servants were expelled.⁵⁰ The records from the Leiden aliens police show that the proportion of deported male and female foreigners in Leiden was nearly equal (figure 4): 35 of all deported women (88 percent) were German, 24 were domestic servants. The number of deported German domestic servants was thus significantly higher according to the Aliens Register than in the *Algemeen Politieblad*. And although numbers remain low, German female immigrants were more likely to be expelled from Leiden after 1918 than they were in the period between 1855 and 1904.

⁵⁰ Lucassen, 'Administrative into social control', 338.

The aliens police also closely monitored the movements of foreigners. Between 1918 and 1925, the Leiden police made 670 annotations about the foreigners' registrations and de-registrations. It is significant that 75 percent of these annotations concerned female migrants, nearly 70 percent of whom worked in the service sector. The movements of domestic servants were particularly closely scrutinized by the aliens police. It is difficult to determine to what extent the labor market conditions in Leiden led to deportation, but the labor market was indeed sometimes mentioned as an argument against German maids. In 1924, German servant Margaretha de Wilde was expelled because "Dutch workers can be found for the work she has done".⁵¹

The Leiden data show that the likelihood of expulsion was not high, but at the same time it also demonstrates that the urban authorities wanted to keep a close eye on the newcomers. The policy was therefore aimed at administrative control rather than at limiting immigration. This administrative control proved to be gender-biased, as it was primarily the movements of German maids which were monitored and recorded.

Conclusions

The registration from the period 1855–1925 shows that in the first 50 years after the introduction of the Aliens Act in 1849, there was considerable under-registration of women. In this period a large proportion of the newcomers did not receive travel and residence passes, most probably because the authorities wanted to maintain control over the immigrants. The Leiden economy experienced high unemployment in the second half of the nineteenth century, which had a greater impact on the position of women in the labor market. The Leiden authorities were more reluctant to grant travel and residence passes to women, especially if they were perceived as more economically dependent or vulnerable, limiting their mobility and legal presence. With the new legislation in 1918, immigration control increased, and men and women were registered in the same manner.

There were also significant differences in the profiles of male and female migrants. The large majority of women coming to Leiden between 1918 and 1925 were unmarried, and only a small proportion

51 ELO, AGL 1865-1993, inv.nr. 2468-471.

was married. Immigrant men were more often married but, at the same time, the urban authorities paid far less attention to the marital status of male immigrants. The origin and marital status of female newcomers in Leiden was strongly related to their labor market position, because there was a large demand for German domestic servants in households. Although half of these women had not arranged work upon arrival, they still managed to find employment as maids. Their opportunities also seemed to be linked to the choices made by Leiden girls and women. As the industrial sector grew during this period, Leiden women seem to have preferred factory work over positions in domestic service. Men, on the other hand, found work in a much wider variety of occupations, including higher-skilled positions.

Although the numbers of expelled foreigners varied considerably from year to year, the overall proportion remained low. The introduction of the 1918 Aliens Act did not lead to high numbers of deportations. Moreover, both the absolute number and the percentage of deportations (relative to the total number of registrations) were even lower than before 1918. These findings confirm conclusions by other Dutch historians. Our conclusions add nuance to the notion of a purely 'reactive' stance by the immigration police after 1918 and to the assumption that women were significantly less likely to be expelled. First, based on the records of the immigration police, the proportion of deported male and female foreigners in Leiden was nearly equal. Secondly, the number of deported German domestic servants was higher in the Aliens Register than in sources examined by other historians. Although the numbers remain low, German female immigrants were more likely to be expelled from Leiden after 1918 than they were in the period between 1855 and 1904. Thirdly, female migrants were more strictly monitored during this period.

Overall, our findings for the case of Leiden between 1855 and 1925 confirm the argument made by Althammer that local migration policy in the nineteenth century was aimed at controlling the freedom of movement of migrants rather than at preventing immigration. It also confirms the conclusion that the urban authorities primarily aimed at administrative control, though this control focused more on women than on men.

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