

# **Asian Migrants and European Labour Markets**

Patterns and processes of immigrant  
labour market insertion in Europe

*Edited by*

Ernst Spaan, Felicitas Hillmann  
and Ton van Naerssen

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# Asian Migrants and European Labour Markets

In an era of globalization and demographic transition international migration has become an important issue for European governments. The past decades have seen an increasing and diversifying flow of migrants from different parts of the world, including many from South, South East and East Asia. It has become apparent that in several countries of Europe the demand for workers in certain sectors of the labour market is increasing and that Asia has become an important source for these workers.

This collection explores the phenomenon of Asian immigration in Europe and particularly the ways in which Asian immigrants gain access to local labour markets, including analyses of the factors fostering and sustaining integration. The book includes studies of nine European countries, including Germany, France, Spain, Italy and the United Kingdom, shedding light on the labour market positions of different ethnic groups within Europe with a focus on immigrant entrepreneurship and economic strategies. In the analysis, socio-cultural, economic, institutional and policy aspects are taken into account.

*Asian Migrants and European Labour Markets* will interest scholars in the field of labour economics, population and migration studies, geography and international business.

**Ernst Spaan** is Senior Researcher at the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute with an interest in population and development issues, international migration and inter-ethnic relations. He has collaborated on a range of research projects concerning international migration. **Felicitas Hillmann** is Senior Lecturer (*Privatdozent*) at the Free University, Berlin. Her academic interests are in the fields of social geography and development research. For some years her research has focused on migration and gender, ethnic economies and the labour market insertion of immigrants. **Ton van Naerssen** is Associate Professor in the Department of Geography at Radboud University, Nijmegen. His research interests include development theory, international migration and the governance of urban poverty in developing countries.

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# Preface

In the current era of globalization, a conspicuous feature has been the increasing migration flows from Asia to Europe, both highly dynamic migration regions and increasingly interconnected. In contrast to the former 'guest workers' from Mediterranean countries to selected countries in northern Europe, who found work in industry and manufacturing mainly through bilateral agreements between governments and employers, recently arrived Asians have carved out niches on the European labour market as, for instance, Indian and Pakistani retailers, Vietnamese caterers, Filipino domestic workers or Sikh milkers. Likewise conspicuous is that, up to now, relatively little research has been devoted to the modes of incorporation of Asians into the European labour market. To help fill this void, we decided to initiate a research network on Asian migrants and entrepreneurs in Europe.

This book owes its origin to a conference on 'Asian Immigrants and Entrepreneurs in the European Community' which took place in the city of Nijmegen (the Netherlands) on 9–11 May 2001. The conference was funded by the European Science Foundation (ESF) under the ESF SCSS Exploratory Workshop Scheme. It was the first workshop highlighting especially the role of Asian immigrants in European labour markets, including the development of Asian immigrant entrepreneurship. Initiators were the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI), the Nijmegen Centre of Border Research of the University of Nijmegen (now Radboud University Nijmegen) and the Economic and Social Science Institute of the Hans Boeckler Foundation in Dusseldorf (WSI), Germany. They acted on behalf of the European Network on Asian Immigrants. During the conference nineteen papers were presented by conference participants from ten European countries. Moreover a symposium was held during which Dan Hiebert, David Ley (both from the University of British Columbia), Ivan Light (University of California) and Jan Rath (University of Amsterdam) gave their valuable inputs with regard to the conference theme. We thank these persons and institutions for their support for the conference.

We are grateful to all participants whose enthusiasm convinced us to continue with a book project, and to the anonymous referees of the initial book

proposal who suggested expanding the subject to encompass the broader theme of Asian immigrants on the European labour market. We want to extend our gratitude to all the contributing authors whose quick acceptance of our invitation to contribute strengthened our idea of the usefulness of the project. Most of the authors updated or rewrote their contributions while some wrote completely new ones. Many thanks also to Tonny Nieuwstraten-Prins and Jacqueline van der Helm of NIDI for the technical editing and preparing the layout of the book, and to Jing Maglunob for editing the English of some chapters. Others whom we would like to thank for their contribution to the preparation of the ESF workshop and the ensuing book project are David McEvoy (Liverpool John Moores University), Natalia Ribas-Mateos (then at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona), Daniele Cologna (Synergia s.r.l., Milan), Marisha Maas and Marcel Nieling (both from the Department of Geography, Radboud University Nijmegen), Helga de Valk (NIDI) and Leon Vermeulen (NIDI). A special word of thanks goes to Vera Holman (NIDI) for her excellent logistic support during the whole project and for pointing out new information on Asian migrants. We appreciate the institutional support for the project from the Centre for Development Studies (ZELF) of the Geography Department of the Free University, Berlin, next to the Radboud University Nijmegen and NIDI.

Ernst Spaan  
Felicitas Hillmann  
Ton van Naerssen

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