

‘Eurostars or struggling EU-migrants?’

**A case study of high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants on the Dutch labour
market**

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I hereby declare that I have developed and written this thesis on my own and without the use of any other than the cited sources and aids. I have also been informed of the completion and assessment rules of the MISOCO Program.

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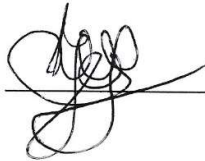
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Preface and Acknowledgments

My interest in this topic was first developed when I started working at a Spanish restaurant in the city of Utrecht in 2014, the same year that I started the MISOCO program. During my time at the Spanish restaurant I discovered that there were many Spanish EU-migrants living in the Netherlands and that often if they finished high education studies, they were working below their skill level. I became fascinated by their stories and after reading a lot and talking to many people, I discovered that in the Netherlands Southern EU-migrants after the economic crisis of 2008 and in specific, high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants, was a rather under-researched topic.

I would like to thank a few people that have been really helpful in this master thesis process and without them I would not have been able to finish this process. First of all, I would like to thank my participants for their openness in sharing their stories and experiences with me.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Background and Research Problem

The European Union as we know it today was for the first time developed by the EU member states in the 1992 Treaty of Maastricht (Treaty on the European Union, 1992). The treaty [reaffirmed] their objective to facilitate the free movement of persons, while ensuring the safety and security of their people (Treaty on the European Union, 1992, p.4). In other words, citizens and long term residents of the European Union could now work and reside freely within the EU (EU Directive, 2014). Consequently in 2012 about 6.6 million EU-migrants lived and worked in another EU-country than their own, representing 3.1% of the workers in the EU (European Commission, 2013b). The European Commission emphasized that these EU-citizens have the right to look for work, gain employment and receive assistance from employment services in other EU-host countries (Andor, 2014). Besides, EU-migrant workers have the right to be treated equally with regard to conditions of employment and work, as well as social and tax advantages similar to native EU-citizens of the same EU-country. As a result, EU-migrant workers can reside in this country for work purposes for themselves and their family members (Andor, 2014). Many EU members, however, face problems during their labour market access as part of their settlement process in other EU-countries and suffer from the non-recognition of their qualifications, discrimination and exploitation when looking for a job in another EU-country (EU Directive, 2014).

In 2008, the economic crisis in Europe has caused a significant rise in unemployment rates of many Southern EU-countries. As a consequence, the EU countries that were most stable during this crisis received an inflow of many EU-labour migrants (Andor, 2014). Countries that were most affected by the economic crisis, such as Spain and

Ireland, experienced an increasing outflow of EU-labour migrants. It could be argued therefore that labour migration within the EU plays a role in helping labour markets to respond to economic shocks (Andor, 2014). EU-labour migrants can namely help to increase the GDP and the functioning of the host country by bringing their skills and working in sectors and occupations where labour shortages need to be filled. EU-labour migrants also increasingly have high qualifications, about thirty-six percent of them had tertiary education in the year 2012 in comparison to twenty-two percent in the year 2000 (Andor, 2014).

The economic crisis of 2008 caused a high rise in the unemployment rates of many Southern European EU-countries and as a consequence many of them moved to Western EU countries to seek better employment possibilities (Triandafyllidou & Gropas, 2014, p.1616). Andor (2014) has emphasized that the recent increase in labour outflows from Southern EU-countries is characterised by, of others, an excessive share of tertiary graduates. This thus shows the lack of economic opportunities on the labour market in Southern EU-countries after the economic crisis of 2008. Although there are many studies that focus on the concept of brain drain caused by high-skilled citizens going away from Southern European countries after the economic crisis, a gap in the literature exists concerning the receiving context of high-skilled Southern European EU-migrants. The settlement process of these high-skilled Southern EU-migrants in their receiving EU-host countries and particularly their access to the labour market, remains under-researched. The problems that high-skilled Southern EU-migrants experience on the labour market are thus also understudied. The question rises what the experiences are of high-skilled Southern EU-migrants on the labour market in the receiving EU-context. Andor (2014) has shown that these high-educated Southern

EU-labour migrants are often over-qualified on the labour market in their EU-host countries. This group of Southern high-skilled EU-labour migrants could thus experience de-skilling in their EU-host countries. More research is necessary therefore to fill this gap about the experiences of Southern high-skilled EU-labour migrants on the labour market in their EU-host countries after the economic crisis of 2008.

Besides this gap in the literature about Southern EU-migrants on the labour market in their EU-host countries, Favell (2003) used the term 'eurostars' for the idea of EU-citizens as free and successful EU-migrants that could go anywhere in the European Union to work and live. In this master thesis research this idea is questioned that refers to high-skilled EU-migrants as 'eurostars' (Favell, 2003). Mainly due to their ascribed categories as 'high-skilled' and 'EU-migrants', they are often considered migrants that easily settle themselves in another EU-country. As mentioned above, however, many EU-migrants have problems entering the labour market in another EU-host country and they are often over-qualified on the labour market in their EU-host countries. There are many reports about EU-migrants, but often they do not show the exact problems that these immigrants face on the labour market (Siar, 2013, p.17). This thesis focuses on high-skilled EU-migrants in particular, to analyse if these migrants that are considered some of the most privileged migrants have the right to be called 'eurostars' because they can settle easily in other EU-countries. The definition of 'high-skilled' is controversial and subject to different interpretations depending on the context and the diverse actors that define it. In the second chapter of this study this concept will be analysed in more detail.

In an aim to contribute partly to revealing this empirical gap of the experiences of high-skilled Southern EU-migrants in their EU-host countries in particular after the economic crisis of 2008, a case study of high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants in the Netherlands and their experiences on accessing the Dutch labour market will be conducted. The reasons for choosing Spanish high-skilled EU-migrants in the context of the Netherlands will be revealed below in the section on the relevance. This research is a qualitative and explorative study with a micro-level perspective that analyses the experiences from an individual level in order to show the labour market access practices of high-skilled EU-migrants. Qualitative interviews are used as a method to reveal these experiences. Due to the focus of this study on an individual level and the qualitative nature of this study, it is difficult to make generalisations based on the results. The empirical findings of this research aims to contribute partly to the gap that exists about the situation of high-skilled Southern EU-migrants on the labour market in Western EU-countries after the economic crisis of 2008. Besides, this research aims to contribute to the general debate on high-skilled EU-migrants and their lives in other EU-countries.

1.2. Research Question

The research aims to find out the experiences of high-skilled Southern EU-migrants on the Dutch labour market. Based on the research problem that was presented above, this research will focus on answering the following research question:

“How do high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants that are living in the Netherlands experience their access to the Dutch labour market?”

In this thesis, the focus lies explicitly on high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants in order to reveal their experiences when accessing the Dutch labour market. Empirical research

will be used to show if their experiences fit this classification of ‘eurostars’ that can easily adjust themselves on the labour market in other EU-countries and also to contribute partly to the gap that exists in the literature of Southern EU-migrants in Western EU-countries after the economic crisis of 2008. In order to answer the research question, a conceptual framework will be outlined that contains concepts that relate to labour market access experiences. Since individual characteristics can shape individual migration trajectories, the concepts of cultural capital and social capital (Bourdieu, 1986) will be used to capture these individual characteristics and consequently contribute to explaining the experiences on accessing the Dutch labour market. Besides, the concept of de-skilling will be used in order to find out the ability of high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants to find a suitable job or in other words: a job that fits their educational background and work experience. De-skilling can thus reveal the causes of the inability of finding a suitable job on the Dutch labour market. These concepts will therefore be serving as a basis for the empirical research and will be used to answer the research question.

1.3. Relevance

Spain is chosen as the sending country, because after the economic crisis the outflow of Spanish citizens was higher than the inflow in comparison to other Southern EU countries (Domínguez-Mujica et al, 2015). Moreover, a comparative analysis has shown that Spain is among the Southern European countries with a high percentage of young, active and tertiary educated adults who are unemployed and working in a different country (Domínguez-Mujica et al, 2015). The Netherlands has been chosen as a receiving context, because it has received a high inflow of Spanish EU-migrants since the economic crisis in 2008 (CBS, 2012; Booi et al, 2014; Stichting Lize, 2014).

Besides, it is expected that this group of Spanish EU-migrants in the Netherlands will further increase (Stichting Lize, 2014). Even though little is known about this specific group of EU-migrants that are living in the Netherlands, available evidence indicates that they are experiencing problems on the Dutch labour market (Stichting Lize, 2014). Policymakers and organizations that work to improve the labour market situation for EU-migrants in the Netherlands, could use the information provided by this master thesis research.

1.4. Thesis Structure

The structure of this thesis follows the ideas as outlined above. The second chapter provides insight into the concepts that are used in this study: a theoretical deconstruction of the term ‘high-skilled’, the concept of de-skilling and an overview of the state-of-art of the concepts of cultural capital and social capital, that will all be used as a basis for the empirical research. The third chapter provides an overview of previous conducted research that concerns this thesis topic and an analysis of the literature that exists on high-skilled EU-migrants and their labour market access, the rights of EU-migrants in other EU-countries, high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants in Western EU-countries, Southern high-skilled EU-migrants in the Netherlands and the Netherlands as a receiving country of EU-migrants. Subsequently in this chapter the theoretical and empirical gap that exists in the existing literature is revealed. Chapter four describes the methodology that is used for this study and discusses it in detail. In chapter five the empirical findings of this master thesis research are presented. These empirical findings are related to the conceptual framework. The last section, chapter six, summarizes the results of the study and presents concluding remarks.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

In this chapter several main concepts applied in this study will be defined, such as high-skilled migrants, de-skilling, cultural and social capital. This study will consequently use these concepts to answer the main research question about the experiences of accessing the Dutch labour market for high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants.

2.1.High-skilled Migrants Defined

In the international migration sphere, the term high-skilled has often been connected with developed countries, whereas the term unskilled or low-skilled migrant has often been connected with developing countries (Scott, 2006, p.1106). The definition of 'high-skilled' thus depends on the context and interpretations in this specific context, or in other words: it is a socially constructed concept. The social construction of the definition of 'high-skilled', is shown by the interplay of three broad conceptual bases: the migrant, the state and employers (Koser & Salt, 1997, p.287). This will be explained further below.

First looking at the migrant as one of the three conceptual bases in the interplay in the social construction of the definition of high-skilled. Individual migrants can choose to move themselves with their possibilities, which is demonstrated by the concept 'brain exchange' (Salt, 1983, p.633). Migration is not always a choice, however, and individual migrants also move for reasons that are unrelated to their skills or expertise. Even though scholars such as Borjas (1996, p.298 in Eberhardt & Schwenken, p.99-100) have argued that high-skilled workers will flow to the labour market where they can get the highest salary for their skills, it is necessary to look beyond the rationally acting migrant towards the labour market, since other aspects play a role as well in the

migration process of high-skilled migrants (Nohl et al, 2014). This can be demonstrated by the concept of de-skilling which suggests that the skills of a migrant become lost in their new host country and they are working below their abilities (Koser & Salt, 1997). In the next section of this chapter the concept of de-skilling will be discussed in more detail.

Looking at the state as a conceptual base in the interplay, the state defines high-skilled migrants by their priority. Migrants are thus defined by the state as ‘high-skilled’ and admitted to the country when they are seen as useful for national economic purposes (Koser & Salt, 1997). Iredale (2001, p.13) states that the recognition of high-skilled professionals by the state seems to become more flexible when there is a need for specific professionals to fill the skilled labour shortages on the national labour market. The last conceptual base in the interplay is the employer. Employers seem to define ‘high-skilled’ in a similar way to the state: as specific skills or expertise of migrants that suits the requirements and strategies of their company (Koser & Salt, 1997, p.287). Bauder (2006) has also argued that professional organisations have their own process of valuing professional qualifications, and that these organisations consequently control the labour market by maintaining restrictive requirements for immigrants.

As seen in this paragraph, the definition of high-skilled should not be considered as fixed, but rather as one which is in a constant process of negotiation and each time constructed for the benefits of the actor that constructs it. The social construction of being ‘high-skilled’ as we have seen, is often an interplay between the migrant, the state and employers in a host country. The term ‘high-skilled’ is thus often rather constructed than taken for granted. Since the construction of the term ‘high-skilled’ is not an

objective of this study, however, the term will in this research be perceived as a given category. The term 'high-skilled' will refer exclusively to those who obtained an (applied) university degree or higher (Blöndal et al, 2002).

2.2. The Concept of De-skilling

De-skilling, or often also called, brain-waste, skill discounting or skill mismatch, can be explained as the misallocation of human resources, and measured by the degree to which the work of immigrants matches their skill levels (Dumont & Aujean, 2014, p.162). The labour market context in a host society makes migrants become over-qualified by the process of de-skilling. Skills are defined by Dumont and Aujean (2014) as: “the bundle of knowledge, attributes and capacities that can be learned and that enable an individual to successfully and consistently perform an activity or task, and can be built upon and extended through learning” (p.154). Skills can, for example, vary from technical knowledge to the power to persuade (Dumont & Aujean, 2014, p.154). High-skilled migrants consider their knowledge and skills as their main resource when emigrating and it is important for them that these resources are properly used also in their host country (Siar, 2013, p.3). High-skilled migrants therefore often have the expectation of being able to use their education and training in their host country, and to gain new skills for professional development (Siar, 2013, p.3).

On a micro level, the de-skilling of migrants is caused by factors such as: the imperfect transferability of qualifications, weaker perception by employers of the credentials and experience that the migrant has, the idea of employers that the migrant would not fit in the cultural context of the work environment, low social capital and low knowledge of the host country's language (Shinnaoui & Narchal, 2010, p.425; Pereira et al, 2015,

p.131; van Riemsdijk, 2013). Besides, de-skilling can also be seen as a transitional phase for migrants to adjust to the labour market standards of the host country (Siar, 2013; Nowicka, 2014). Nowicka (2014) has also examined diverse coping strategies of high-skilled migrants in order to prevent de-skilling over time. The discipline an immigrant is trying to access also matters, because immigrants with professions such as doctors or lawyers often have to take additional courses or exams before they are allowed to practice in a specific country (Iredale, 2001). Some professions are namely more mobile and internationally recognized than others (Ferro, 2004; Nohl et al, 2014) and professions in the information and communication technology sector are more easily transferred across national boundaries (Khadria 2001 in van Riemsdijk, 2013, p.376).

Research has revealed that high-skilled migrant women can face additional gendered structural barriers on the labour market in their host country. Examples are child-raising responsibilities or gendered discrimination by employers (Riaño & Baghdadi; Kofman, 2012). High-skilled migrant women who experience these gendered structural barriers in their host country are thus more likely to experience de-skilling in their host country, mainly because they can be limited to attend language courses, develop new social networks or re-skill themselves, if they are forced to take childcare responsibilities (Kofman, 2012). Besides, long periods out of the labour market generates lower self-confidence and takes away the professional identity, which can also cause high-skilled migrant women to experience deskilling (Kofman, 2012).

On a macro level, the causes of de-skilling can be found in the structure and state of the labour market in a host country (Pereira et al, 2015). Several aspects such as the

institutional infrastructures, social practices and cultural norms in the labour market of a host country, define the differences between national labour markets worldwide in terms of professional distinctive practices and expectations (Nohl et al, 2014, p.6). The collective bargaining about the value of specific skills and knowledge in the labour market, as well as the culturally developed expectations of employers and the routines and habits in the labour market play a role (Nohl et al, 2014, p.8). A specific example here that connects the macro and micro level, is the deficiency of migrants to understand the norms and recruitment practices in a host society (Shinnaoui & Narchal, 2010, p.425).

Looking at the consequences of de-skilling on a macro level, Siar (2013) highlighted that high-skilled migrants can end up not beneficial anymore to a host country due to their experience of de-skilling. Looking at the consequences on a micro level, particularly from a human rights perspective, Siar (2013, p.15) highlighted that de-skilling for migrants can be seen as a form of brain abuse and can result in economic losses as well as psychological and health problems. Besides, de-skilling causes stress during adjustment in the host society (Siar, 2013, p.15). OECD (2007 in van Riemsdijk, 2013, p.376) found that over time, many high-skilled migrants who are working in low-skilled jobs move closer towards the level of native-born workers with the same educational or work experience background.

To determine the degree of de-skilling of migrants in the host society, a subjective measure can be applied that looks at the migrant's perception of the skills he or she has, compared to the skills he or she uses at work in the host country (Dumont & Aujean, 2014, p.162). Moreover, the micro and macro level perspective of de-skilling need both

to be taken into account to create a complete picture of the labour market possibilities for high-skilled migrants and the possible experience of de-skilling by these high-skilled migrants on the labour market in their host country. On the whole, the aspects that were discussed in this paragraph are for a great deal part of either the cultural or social capital of migrants. The lack of opportunities to mobilize or having recognized the social or cultural capital in a specific context, can cause de-skilling. In the next two paragraphs the concepts of cultural and social capital will be explained in more detail.

2.3. The Concept of Cultural Capital

Human capital has been described by Bourdieu (1986) as “the acquired education of a person and the economic results of this human capital” (p.95). Education as conceptualized by human capital, is in this sense seen as a matter of financial investment and return (Nohl et al, 2014, p.7). Migration research in the area of human capital thus focusses only on the question whether migrants are able to receive a fair return on the investment in their human capital in their host country or in other words: the economic performance of high-skilled migrants (Nohl et al, 2014). The human capital theory emphasizes also that investment in education can lead to increased personal well-being and therefore high-skilled migrants with a lot of qualifications should be able to be equal to native workers with the same qualifications and training (Bauder, 2006). As we have seen in the previous section, however, the concept of de-skilling shows that this is not always the case. Besides, the concept of human capital does not take into account the context-based practices that contribute to the social structures in a society and the social constitution of migrants’ agency (Nohl et al, 2014, p.40). The human capital theory is thus not sufficient to analyse the diverse problems that high-skilled migrants experience on the labour market in their host country and

therefore the concept of cultural capital will be used in this study (Nohl et al, 2014, p.42).

Bourdieu explains cultural capital as the extension of human capital, that takes into account also the inheritance of the cultural capital from the family of a person that contributed to the development of his or her human capital (Bourdieu, 1986). The value of cultural capital lies according to Bourdieu in its recognition, which depends also on the ethnicity, gender and other classifications of an individual (Nohl et al, 2014). The structure and state of the labour market in a host country also plays a role in this validation process, as has been described earlier. The validation of cultural capital is thus not determined by objective structures, but rather by socially created and context-specific, subjective structures. Cultural capital according to Bourdieu can be divided into three different states. The institutionalized state contains the objectification of cultural capital, for example, certified educational qualifications (Bourdieu, 1986). Institutionalized cultural capital can thus also mean the non-recognition of educational qualifications, because they are achieved outside the country and not seen as equal to national qualifications (Nohl et al, 2014, p.9).

The second state is the embodied state of cultural capital, that refers to the inner cultural capital in the body and mind or implicit knowledge and skills, such as: language, value and competencies that are all tied to an individual and acquired through long socialization and educational processes (Bourdieu 1986; Nohl et al, 2014, p.9). Cultural capital is thus not just an addition to skills, but rather a comprehensive concept that shows the interconnectedness of cultural knowledge, skills and their recognition (Nohl et al, 2014, p.44). An example of the embodied state of cultural capital is given by

Nowicka (2014, p.181) in her research where she explains that Polish migrants in the United Kingdom have embodied 'Polishness' as a characteristic that contains hard-working, and flexible Polish migrants and in this way were able to use their skills. Here we can see that Polish migrants were able to give new value to their embodied skills in the context of the UK, even though their skills actually stayed the same. In order for these skills to be validated, however, validation mechanisms are necessary such as social networks that help facilitate access to certain jobs (Nowicka, 2014, p.182).

The last state of cultural capital is the objectified state such as the possession of material cultural goods (Bourdieu, 1986). The different states of cultural capital combined, such as the institutionalized and embodied state of cultural capital, are often the reason that migrants cannot find a suitable job on the labour market in their host country. For example, when the institutionalized state, such as foreign credentials, of a migrant's cultural capital is recognized on a national level, but the embodied state such as the migrant's style of working also needs to be recognized by employers in order to find a suitable job (Nohl et al, 2014, p.9). The other way around is also possible when the embodied cultural capital is recognized by employers, but the foreign credentials are not recognized on a national level (Nohl et al, 2014, p.9).

The value of the cultural capital and the possibilities for having this cultural capital recognized depend also on the specific context of a host country. On the one hand cultural capital can be devalued and migrants can experience de-skilling. On the other hand, cultural capital can also be overvalued, when for example, particular knowledge and abilities of migrants are recognized that are in contrast to the knowledge and abilities that native citizens have (Nohl et al, 2014). Language skills and social networks

can help to improve the value of cultural capital in the labour market of a host country (Nohl et al, 2014, p.9). Knowledge of the host country's language is important, because it is difficult to develop social contacts with native citizens without this knowledge (Rodriguez et al, 2012, p.660). Besides, local experience that demonstrates knowledge about the local setting and system of a host country is also often necessary to have cultural capital recognized (Bauder 2006 in Siar, 2013, p.11). Another way for high-skilled migrants to have their cultural capital recognized, is to adapt their knowledge and skills to labour market expectations, for example by learning host country-specific management strategies (Nohl et al, 2014, p.9). Cultural capital should thus be seen as a relational concept, because the recognition of cultural capital always depends on the context.

The relational character of cultural capital is not confined to space only, but also to time. Bourdieu (1986) says "the acquisition of cultural capital, especially in its embodied state, is an investment above all of time" (p.85). The struggle for the recognition of cultural capital is thus often temporally (Nohl et al, 2014, p.10). Migrants go through distinct phases in their migration experience, each shaped by a particular set of opportunities and constraints as individuals pursue their professional careers. The temporally situated experiences are often shaped by the specific phase of migration and settlement (Nohl et al, 2014, p.10). It therefore needs to be determined for each individual migrant separately what the exact fit is of his or her cultural capital to the labour market in the host country throughout diverse phases. In this study, the concept of cultural capital will be used as a comprehensive concept as explained above. The interconnectedness of the cultural knowledge and skills and their recognition of each individual high-skilled Spanish EU-migrant will be analysed in the context of the

Netherlands. In the next section, the focus will lie on the concept of social capital and the way this concept plays a role in the recognition of cultural capital.

2.4. The Concept of Social Capital

Nohl et al (2014) state:

[The recognition of] cultural capital depends on the relationship between skills and knowledge and the recognition of these two in the labour market of the host country, but this is structured by interrelated factors such as legal barriers, further education options, and also social networks. (p.13)

As was also stated in the previous section, the possibility to validate cultural capital depends on diverse factors, such as social networks. High-skilled migrants namely need social capital to find a suitable job in their host country, because many employers rely on their social network to recruit new workers (Rodriguez et al, 2012; Pereira et al, 2015). According to Bourdieu (1986) social capital is:

The aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition, or in other words to membership in a group, which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital, a 'credential', which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word. (p.88)

The relationships that Bourdieu (1986, p.89) writes about, only exist when material or symbolic exchanges are used to maintain the relationship. Relationships can also be maintained as social institutions that are guaranteed by a common name (family name or a school name), or they can be guaranteed because of proximity in physical, social or

economic space (Bourdieu, 1986, p.89). A network of relationships of a person is thus the product of investment strategies that are either collective or individual, and consciously or unconsciously aimed at establishing social relations. These social relations can then be transformed into relationships that are elective, necessary and have a subjectively felt obligation, like feelings of gratitude or respect of friendship (Bourdieu, 1986, p.89). Continuous series of exchanges and efforts of sociability are thus necessary to assure the reproduction of social relations (Bourdieu, 1986, p.90). Individuals can, as a consequence, use the resources from their social capital to achieve their individual interests.

In this study, the social capital of the high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants in the Netherlands will be analysed. Social capital is seen as a way to achieve the recognition of the cultural capital of a person, as explained previously. All these concepts will contribute to answering my research question that aims to show the experiences of high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants when accessing the Dutch labour market.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

In the aim to purposefully analyse the experiences of high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants when accessing the labour market in the Netherlands, the broader literature related to this topic is analysed here. Analysing the labour market access of high-skilled migrants in general is not a new research area. In this chapter an overview will be given of the previous research on labour market access of high-skilled migrants in their host countries. Moreover, the institutional framework of the European Union that promotes and protects worker mobility will be outlined. Lastly, the empirical research gap in the literature will be identified.

3.1. The Attraction of High-skilled Migrants and Their Labour Market Access

Several studies have shown that many policies by host countries focus on attracting high-skilled migrants, because of the underlying assumption that a ‘triple win’ situation can be created (Aure, 2013, p. 275; Riaño & Baghdadi, 2007; van Riemsdijk, 2013). In this ‘triple win’ situation, the movement and human capital of the high-skilled migrant could benefit the migrant him or herself, the sending country because of remittances and the receiving country for economic growth. Nohl et al (2014, p.3) explain that high-skilled migrants have also become an attractive target group for immigration policies, because of the increasing pressure of international competitiveness. Siar (2013,p.1) also found that many Western countries indeed prefer to receive migrants with higher education, skills, and professional training. Moreover, several studies have demonstrated that the assumption of governments for the attraction of high-skilled migrants is, beside the triple-win situation, that their high educational level will help them to integrate rapidly into the labour market (Iredale, 2001; Riaño & Baghdadi, 2007; van Riemsdijk, 2013).

Countries thus focus on the attraction of high-skilled migrants, but as Nohl et al (2014) state that “there is a discrepancy between the political agenda and social practice” (p.3). On the one hand, governments attract high-skilled migrants through targeted policies. On the other hand, many high-skilled migrants are experiencing problems on the labour market of their host country (Nohl et al, 2014, p.3). Nohl et al (2014) continues explaining that “the labour market inclusion of migrants is a complex process that is shaped by both the socioeconomic and legal status of migrants and the specific conditions of particular occupational sectors & labour market segments” (p.6). This complex process determines thus for a great deal the labour market access of high-skilled migrants and in specific, how they are able to use their cultural capital on this labour market. Besides specific policies for high-skilled migrants, several studies have emphasized that this group of migrants also experiences problems on the labour market. Castles, et al (2005) and Nohl et al (2014) have revealed that the labour market position for high-skilled migrants in a host country is often characterized by: low wages, job insecurity, hard-working conditions, severe obstacles when trying to apply for a job, and discrimination. Siar (2013, p.1) also demonstrated in her research that high-skilled migrants often experience de-skilling. Siar (2013) and Nohl et al (2014) both explain that when comparing high-skilled migrants to native citizens, there is a gap between economic rewards and professional achievements due to the non-recognition of credentials or prejudice towards locally acquired education or experience.

Looking at the reasons for high-skilled migrants to emigrate to another country reveals a diversity of pull factors related to the labour market. Siar (Siar, 2012 in Siar, 2013, p.3) demonstrated in her research towards Filipino high-skilled migrants in Oceania that they emigrated mainly for professional and career advancement. Astor et al (2005) revealed

that also physicians from diverse countries emigrated to find a suitable environment where they can utilize their specialized skills, get access to enhanced technology, and to work in an academic environment with more colleagues in the same field of interest. All these aspects thus reveal that even though economic reasons are important, there are also other possibly more important reasons for high-skilled migrants to emigrate. Ferro (2004, p.384) explains in her research on Romanian high-skilled migrants, that pull factors are often a combination of living and working conditions that together improves the 'quality of life' when living abroad. The push factors also play a role as demonstrated by Lorenzo et al (2007), such as: economic reasons such as low salary and also work overload. A combination of push and pull factors is always necessary to reveal the complete picture of the decision to migrate by high-skilled migrants, which is often strongly related to better employment possibilities.

3.2. EU Labour Mobility: EU-migrant Workers and Their Rights in the EU

With regard to labour mobility in the European Union, European Commissioner László Andor (2014) explains that this depends on the pull factors such as language, wage differentials and the economic performance of a host country. Push factors are high unemployment rates or a worsening political environment. When work opportunities during the economic crisis increased in Western European countries, such as Germany and the Netherlands, labour inflows into these countries mostly came from countries most affected by the crisis, such as Spain (Andor, 2014). As mentioned in the introduction, in 2012 about 6.6 million EU-migrants lived and worked in another EU-country than their own, representing 3.1% of the workers in the EU (European Commission, 2013b).

The European Union has diverse instruments for the recognition of educational and professional credentials anywhere in the European Union and created a framework for the free movement of skills (Nowicka, 2014, p.171). Despite these EU instruments for the recognition of skills and experience, EU-workers in another EU-country often suffer from discrimination, exploitation and the non-recognition of their qualifications (EU Directive, 2014; EPRS, 2013a). Besides, EU-workers are often over-qualified for the jobs they perform in their host countries. While the over-qualification rate for EU-migrants from Eastern-EU countries has decreased somewhat, the over-qualification rate has recently risen among those moving from Southern Europe. As a consequence, the application of this right to free movement was emphasized in article 45 of the consolidated treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU in EUR-lex, 2012): “Freedom of movement for workers shall be secured within the Union”. It was also stated that: “Such freedom of movement shall entail the abolition of any discrimination based on nationality between workers of the member states as regards employment, remuneration and other conditions of work and employment” (TFEU in EUR-lex, 2012).

According to the European Commission (European Commission, 2013a), there are still many complaints of EU-migrants experiencing discrimination on the basis of their nationality on the labour market in their host country. Examples include different recruitment conditions for EU-migrants, nationality conditions to access certain jobs, and different working conditions in practice for EU-migrants. Professional experience acquired in other EU-states is also often not taken into account. The European Commission (2012,p.37) acknowledge that there is a need for better protection of EU migrant workers when working in another EU Member State and EPRS (2013a &

2013b) also calls for an awareness of the rights and consistency in the application of these rights. Many employers and public authorities in EU-states are namely unaware of these rights. Consequently, the Eures (European Network of Public Employment Services) website was developed; an European job mobility portal where information is provided for both employers and EU job-seekers. In 2013 the European Commission proposed a directive of the European Parliament and council on “Measures Facilitating the Exercise of Rights Conferred on Workers in the Context of Freedom of Movement for Workers” (European Commission, 2013b; European Commission, 2013c). In this directive, member-states are required to create national contact points that provide information and assistance to EU-migrants, allow organisations and labour unions to launch administrative and juridical procedures on behalf of EU-migrants, and provide better information to EU-migrants and employers (European Commission, 2013b). This proposal was accepted in 2014 (Eur-lex, 2014).

3.3. High-skilled EU-migrants Accessing the Labour Market in the EU

Favell (2003) has conducted a qualitative study on high-skilled migration within the European Union. He discovers that there are still ‘hidden’ or ‘informal’ barriers to successful free movement within the EU – despite the withdrawal of formal barriers – and that these barriers are embedded into the specific context of particular nation states (Favell, 2003): “the dominantly national organization of access to ‘quality of life’ benefits might still constitute the major barrier to sustained intra-European migration, despite the growing economic and cultural opportunities of such movement”. In line with Favell (2003), several authors have demonstrated that high-skilled EU-migrants experience labour market barriers despite formal EU regulations (Rodriguez, et al, 2012; van Riemsdijk, 2013).

Looking specifically at Eastern-EU high-skilled migrants, van Riemsdijk (2013, p.386) highlights the de-skilling of Polish nurses on the labour market in Norway due to the devaluation of their qualifications. Polish degrees are seen as inferior to Norwegian ones, despite the often more advanced master Polish nursing degrees, in comparison to Norwegian nursing degrees (van Riemsdijk, 2013, p.382). Over time, however, Polish nurses become familiar with the Norwegian employment system, extend their professional network and learn about their rights and possibilities, and subsequently they find better jobs where they can make use of their skills. Similarly, Ferro (2004, p.389) found that Romanian high-skilled EU-migrants in other EU-countries experience de-skilling as a consequence of culture and language adjustments, and work and social inclusion challenges. Nowicka (2014, p.179) highlights in her research about Polish EU-migrants in the United Kingdom the transition of skills during the migration process. In her research she found that the credentials of Polish EU-migrants were formally recognized, but that their professional experience was not. In combination with the lack of English language skills, these Polish high-skilled EU-migrants often work in low positions in the UK. Besides, it is also shown that employment agencies recruit Polish EU-migrants in the UK primarily to fill positions where no skills are necessary and which are difficult to fill with native workers. Overall, these studies highlight the need for a recognition of the credentials of Eastern high-skilled EU-migrants in a formal way. Besides a formal recognition, however, Eastern EU-migrants also still need to adjust to the context-specific knowledge such as language and a different labour market. The case may be that high-skilled Southern EU-migrants have similar experiences as Eastern EU-migrants when accessing the labour market in other EU-countries, but research in this area is limited. In the next sub-chapter research that focused on

Southern EU-migrants and in particular, Spanish EU-migrants in the EU, will be analysed.

3.4. High-skilled Spanish EU-migrants Accessing the Labour Market in the EU

Looking at the immigration experience and access to the labour market of Spanish EU-migrants in their EU-host countries, Domínguez-Mujica et al (2015, p.13) reveal in their research that many high-skilled young Spanish migrants that participated in this research, regard to it as positive. Furthermore, they earn more than in Spain, are able to acquire additional training and are treated better by the companies that employ them. On the other hand, however, there are also negative signs of Spanish EU-migrants that are being over-qualified on the labour market in their host country, earn low salaries or discover that networking and relations are also necessary in their host country in order to find jobs. Overall Domínguez-Mujica et al (Domínguez-Mujica et al, 2015) conclude that, looking at the reasons of young Spaniards to leave Spain, the majority has positive experiences that fit their expectations of employment, professional improvement, personal emancipation and finding a degree of stability. Glorius (2015) states that migratory success always depends, however, on the social and cultural capital internalized by an individual migrant, besides country-specific institutional arrangements that also shape migration processes and experiences. It is therefore difficult to generalize the experiences of Spanish EU-migrants due to the many different individual trajectories. In the next section more about country-specific institutional arrangements in the Netherlands will be discussed.

Something that was also outlined in the survey research by Domínguez-Mujica et al (2015, p.13) is the critical tone towards the media's treatment of the high number of

out-migration of Spaniards. The media namely often represent Spanish migrants as either adventure seekers or victims, which is an oversimplification of the diverse reasons of Spanish EU-migrants to emigrate and their different experiences in EU-host countries. Glorius (2015) has presented in her study that Spanish EU-migrants in Germany often emigrated with the aim of finding employment or to study in the higher educational system. Besides, most of these Spanish EU-migrants are young, well-educated, have international experiences and are transnationally connected (Glorius, 2015, p.2).

3.5. The Netherlands as a Receiving Country of (EU) Immigrants

The Netherlands has been a receiving country of immigrants for a long time. Rath (2009) analysed the immigration policies in the Netherlands over the years. In 1960, immigration to the Netherlands increased (Rath, 2009, p.675). Labour shortages in labour-intensive sectors caused the recruitment of guest-workers from Mediterranean countries, such as Spain, Italy, Turkey and Morocco. When in 1973 the guest-worker agreements ended as a consequence of the economic recession, many guest-workers decided to stay in the Netherlands and brought their families over. Today immigration to the Netherlands consists mostly of families for family reunification, students, workers and professionals from EU and non-EU countries (Rath, 2009), as well as many asylum seekers and refugees from mainly Africa, Asia and the Middle-east. The social-economic council (SER) (2014, p.61) published a report where it is expected that the Netherlands will – similarly to other EU-countries – in the near future also experience problems with labour force due to ageing and that consequently there will be a shortage, especially in high-skilled sectors.

It has been demonstrated that the economic performance of migrants varies across Europe because of country-specific institutional arrangements that regulate labour market access (Büchel & Frick 2005 as cited in Nohl et al, 2014, p.4). Looking at the Netherlands as a host country of EU-migrants reveals that specific policy measures can hinder the labour market access for EU-migrants. A report by Fernhout et al (2013, p.24) about EU-labour migrants in the Netherlands highlights that EU citizens have the right of residence for a period of three months in another EU-member state, but after this they have to register themselves at the Immigration and Naturalization Service (IND). In a document by the ministry of social affairs & employment (Ministry of Social Affairs & Employment, 2014), the necessity is explained of EU-migrants to have a registered address in order to get a social security number, and that this number is necessary for an employment contract. In this same document, the rights and obligations of EU-migrant workers and self-employed workers that live in the Netherlands are also explained. In this document (Ministry of Social Affairs & Employment, 2014) it states:

When insufficient means of existence in the Netherlands or if you are an unreasonable burden to the social security system, your residence permit in the Netherlands can be ended and you need to leave the Netherlands in accordance with European legislation. (p.7)

Fernhout et al (2013, p.13) highlight in their report that the proposals of the coalition agreement of the Dutch government in 2012 and 2013 restrict the free movement and equal rights of EU-migrants in the Netherlands. In line with the document of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment that was just mentioned in these proposals it was stated (Coalition agreement Dutch government 2012 in Fernhout et al, 2013): “EU nationals and knowledge migrants ‘remain welcome’ if they are able to provide for their

own income by working, integrate quickly and help build the society” (p.13). Besides, Fernhout et al (2013, p.13) explain that a job-seeker has the right of residence for more than three months only when he can prove that he is still looking for a job and has a real opportunity to get a job. When EU-job seekers have sufficient resources from other sources than employment, they can be entitled to residence as a non-economically active person (Fernhout et al, 2013, p.24). It becomes clear here that EU-migrants that do not find employment often cannot stay in the Netherlands, and that an address is needed in order to find employment. Looking at an example of Greek EU-migrants, a study by Pratsinakis et al (in press) explains that EU-migrants are not supported by state institutions in the Netherlands. The responsibility for integration is placed on the migrants themselves, mainly as a result of the assumption that EU migrants do not have difficulties in their adaptation pathways (Pratsinakis et al, in press).

3.6. The Netherlands as a Receiving Country of Southern EU-migrants

As a consequence of the economic crisis in 2008 and the high unemployment rates in Southern-Europe, many Southern EU-migrants moved to the Netherlands. CBS (CBS 2013 in Stichting Lize, 2014) showed that more than 20.000 South-European EU-migrants came to the Netherlands in the last five years, which is a high increase and the expectation is that this will further increase. Booi et al (2014) reveal in an explorative study of EU-migrants in the municipality of Amsterdam that the group of Southern-EU migrants increased significantly in the last few years and that about 42% of this group is high-educated.

The Central Statistical Office of the Netherlands (CBS in Stichting Lize, 2014) revealed that most of the Southern EU-migrants that live in the municipality of the Hague, have

emigrated for work, family or study. Looking in specific at Spanish EU-migrants in the Netherlands, Stichting Lize (2014) explained that Spanish high-skilled EU-migrants mainly immigrate to find work. Stichting Lize (2014, p.16) and Booi et al (2014) both emphasized that a lot of Southern EU-migrants are self-employed. High-skilled Southern EU-migrants often start their own business, because they feel they cannot find a suitable job on the Dutch labour market. In general, about half of all the participants in this research are working under their educational level (Stichting Lize, 2014). A qualitative research by Labrianidis and Pratsinakis (2014) about Greek EU-migrants in Amsterdam revealed that they follow a variety of trajectories; from permanent settlement to short periods of residence in an aim to contribute to family income or to explore employment possibilities. Many of them cannot find jobs in Greece and prefer to stay in the Netherlands, even though they are often working below their educational level (Labrianidis & Pratsinakis, 2014, p.16). A forthcoming study by Pratsinakis et al (in press) explains that high-skilled Greek EU-migrants that are specialized in fields for which there is high demand can easily secure employment abroad. On the other hand, high-skilled Greek EU-migrants with poor language skills and lack of social networks find it difficult to find employment that matches their qualifications (Pratsinakis et al, in press).

Summary of literature review

The existing studies that focused on high-skilled migrants and high-skilled EU-migrants, have studied several aspects of the complex process of access to- and opportunities on the labour market in the host countries, shaped by the socioeconomic status combined with macro structures of a host country. The framework of EU-migrants' rights has been presented with a treaty and diverse studies by the European

Commission that aim to improve the rights of EU-labour migrants in the EU. Against this background, diverse studies have revealed the problems of high-skilled Eastern EU-migrants accessing the labour market in their Northern and Western EU-host countries. Research on high-skilled Southern EU-migrants and their access to the labour market in other EU-host countries is limited, but the results could be similar to studies about high-skilled Eastern EU-migrants in other EU-countries that were outlined above. The Netherlands as a receiving country of EU-migrants has also been examined, but few studies have focused on high-skilled Southern EU-migrants in the Netherlands and their labour market access and almost none have focused on high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants in the Netherlands. Making use of a sociological approach, this research therefore aims to contribute to fill this empirical gap in the literature on high-skilled Southern EU-migrants and in specific, Spanish high-skilled EU-migrants, and their labour market access in Western and Northern EU-countries.

Chapter 4: Methodology

In this chapter the choice of a qualitative research approach is justified. The research methods that were used for this study will be discussed and the way the field was accessed. The way the data was collected, the analysis was done and the limitations of this study will also be outlined.

Since the aim of this thesis is to discover the experiences of high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants when accessing the Dutch labour market by drawing on individual narratives, a qualitative research design seems most suitable to reach this aim. The focus thus lies on the labour market trajectories of high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants that migrate to the Netherlands and specifically on the labour market access in these trajectories. The method used for data collection is in-depth interviews. In total eleven qualitative interviews were conducted with thirteen people, since two of the interviews were with two people at the same time. In-depth interviews allow for the establishment of a trust relationship with the participant during the interview, which gives more opportunity for revealing the personal experiences of the participants (Hennik et al, 2011, p.109).

4.1. Recruitment of Participants

In order to establish a sample of participants, a non-random approach was used to recruit participants. Spanish EU-migrants that live in the Netherlands and are high-skilled or consider themselves as such, were purposely recruited in order to reveal their different experiences on accessing the Dutch labour market (Hennik et al, 2011, p.85). Several recruitment strategies have been used in order to establish a sample that is as diverse as possible considering the time scope of this master thesis. Consequently a snowball effect was used (Hennik et al, 2011, p.100) to find more participants.

First of all, participants were recruited through social media. Groups exist on Facebook specifically focused on Spanish migrants in the Netherlands and after having been in contact with several people from these groups by means of private messages, I asked them for an interview. Second of all, through a personal contact I came into contact with a Dutch language teacher that works for the organisation Casa Migrante in Amsterdam¹. After she provided information about my research in her Dutch language classes, I received a few responses from future participants. Furthermore, a family member that works at a language institute in the Netherlands also distributed information about my research which also gave me a few responses that later were established as participants. Likewise, my own personal contacts with Spanish EU-migrants in the Netherlands were also used to help me find more participants. Later on in the data collection process, the decision was made to purposely recruit younger Spanish high-skilled EU-migrants (25 to 30 years old) to see if their experiences differ from those of the older participants. These participants were also recruited through the same Facebook groups as mentioned earlier, as well as through contacts of personal contacts.

Finally, a sample of thirteen participants was established with whom eleven interviews were conducted, as explained earlier. Most of the participants are 30 years or older and only four of them are between 25 and 30 years old. Most of them were already in the Netherlands for a year or longer, with the exception of two participants that just arrived a few months ago. Nine of them are female and four are male. They had all studied at university and therefore have completed tertiary level education, with exception of one participant who studied at an applied university. Most of them finished both their

¹ Casa Migrante is an organisation in Amsterdam for Spanish speaking people in the Netherlands in diverse ways, such as social, legal and psychological support and translations (<http://casamigrante.nl/>, 2012).

bachelor and master degree, with the exception of one participant who only has a bachelor degree. They live in various places in the Netherlands, from the east of the Netherlands to the bigger cities, such as Amsterdam or Utrecht. Most of the participants live together with their Dutch partners, with the exception of three participants that live together with their Spanish boyfriend and the younger high-skilled Spanish participants that live by themselves. One interview was conducted with a high-skilled Spanish EU-migrant about her own experience, but at the same time also about her experience in her company that provides assistance to Spanish high-skilled EU-migrants with finding a job on the Dutch labour market.

4.2. Study Population and Data Collection

In total eleven interviews were conducted with thirteen participants (two of the interviews were with two people at the same time; either a couple or friends) in the months of January and February 2016. Four interviews were conducted in person in several cities in the Netherlands (Utrecht, Amsterdam and Nijmegen) at either their home or a public area where it was quiet enough to conduct the interview. The other seven interviews were conducted via Skype due to time or geographical constraints. Two interviews were conducted in Dutch, four in Spanish and the rest of them in English. All interviews were recorded after asking for permission from the participants and were subsequently transcribed. The Dutch and Spanish interview transcripts I have translated to English in preparation for the data analysis process. The participants were always informed beforehand about the purpose of the research and the interview (Hennik et al, 2011). Besides, anonymity of the participants is ensured by changing the names of the participants (Hennik et al, 2011, p.71). Full fake names were given to all participants that were consequently used in the interview transcripts as well as in the

data analysis chapter.

The questions were asked in an open and empathic way and a semi-structured interview guide was developed and used (p.109) (see Appendix 1) to address the main aspects leading to answer the research question. The interviews were, however, not limited to this interview guide. The interviews always started with a general question that was related to their trajectory to create a friendly atmosphere and to get them talking about their trajectory. In this way I first created narratives and consequently asked them more concrete questions on specific aspects, such as language skills, social contacts, study and work background and experience at work and when accessing the labour market in both Spain and the Netherlands. I let the participants talk, but always guided them back to my questions or asked follow-up questions. All the participants were friendly and open in their answers and explicitly told me that I could always e-mail or call them again if it was necessary. The beneficence of the research for the participants was also considered (Hennik et al, 2011, p.77) and since many of them expressed their interest in the final report, this will be sent to all of them. Besides, an attempt will be made to reach a greater audience by sending the results to diverse organisations (Hennik et al, 2011, p.77).

4.3. Analysis

In order to develop an analysis, a logically structured, issue-focused approach as outlined by Weiss (1995, p.154) was followed. In this issue-focused approach the aim is to learn about specific processes or issues, in this case the labour market access process of high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants on the Dutch labour market, by learning from all the participants of the study about this process where some contribute more than others.

An issue-focused approach is characterised by diverse areas that each have their own discussion, but are also logically connected to the other areas (Weiss, 1995). Within these there are specific issues that are discussed. All together these areas will then describe the experiences of accessing the Dutch labour market by high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants. In order to produce an issue-focused analysis there are four steps to be carried out, namely coding, sorting, local integration and inclusive integration (Weiss, 1995, p.156).

When the data collection was finished, all interviews were transcribed with the aid of the program Otranscribe² and as explained earlier, some of the transcriptions in Spanish or Dutch were afterwards translated to English. The coding and sorting process was carried out afterwards, where the data was identified, labelled and sorted into different codes (Nowicka, 2014; Weiss, 1995). The program Atlas.ti³ was used to code and sort the collected data. The codes revealed expectations before coming to the Netherlands, ways the labour market in the Netherlands was accessed, the experience of de-skilling and the role of several aspects such as language, discipline and social contacts in this process of accessing the Dutch labour market. After the coding process, the process of local integration (Weiss, 1995, p.158) started. In this process the codes and quotations were summarized in order to organize and integrate the data in a logical way and the exceptions from the main line were also attempted to be explained. During this process, a first attempt was also made to logically connect theory to the main lines and variations. The process of inclusive integration (Weiss, 1995, p. 160) followed, which consisted of bringing coherence and meaning to the separate areas of analysis that resulted from the previous process and a single coherent story was developed.

² <http://otranscribe.com/>

³ <http://atlasti.com/>

4.4. Limitations & Strengths of the Study

As explained previously, the recruitment of younger high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants was a bit difficult and therefore out of the fourteen participants only four younger high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants were interviewed. Besides, the study was limited in the sense of a restriction of time. Although two months were sufficient to collect enough data to write a master thesis research, more time would have allowed for the recruitment of an even more diverse group of participants. In this way consequently a broader picture of the experiences of high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants on the Dutch labour market could have been given.

The strength of the collected data was ensured by allowing the participants to choose the language of the interview which could either be Spanish, English or Dutch. In this way I made sure that the collected data was as detailed as possible and limitations of the data were minimized (Hennik et al, 2011, p.275) by allowing the participants to talk in the language they were most comfortable with. In the next chapter the focus will lie on the analysis of the collected data that is the product of the issue-focused analysis as explained in this chapter of methodology.

Chapter 5: Labour Market Access Experiences on the Dutch Labour Market

In this chapter I will present the empirical findings that are revealed as a result of the conducted fieldwork. The focus will lie on answering the main research question, the experiences of high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants when accessing the Dutch labour market. As mentioned, all the high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants that participated in this study have acquired a bachelor's degree and with exception of one participant, also a master's degree. All of them perceived themselves as being high-skilled migrants as a result of their acquired education, even though their skills were not always recognized on the Dutch labour market. This perception is in line with the definition given previously in chapter two by Blöndal et al (2002), that those who are high-skilled have obtained an (applied) university degree or higher. The data in this chapter is based on an issue-focused approach that looks at the diverse issues in the process of accessing the Dutch labour market with the means of the diverse trajectories of Spanish high-skilled EU-migrants that emigrated to the Netherlands.

5.1. Reasons to Leave Spain and to Choose the Netherlands

As Nohl et al (2014, p.10) emphasized, there are different phases in the migration experience that are each shaped by a particular set of opportunities and constraints as individuals pursue their professional careers. The beginning thus sets the basis for the following phases of migration and settlement in the host country (Nohl et al, 2014). Looking first at the reasons of emigration of high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants reveals a lot of diversity. Reasons of emigration often also show the intentions of settling down in the Netherlands. These settling intentions determine the further trajectory on the Dutch labour market, because high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants will often develop certain context-specific knowledge and skills depending on these intentions. Someone who is

determined to stay in the Netherlands for a longer period of time due to, for example, the wish to live with a partner that lives in the Netherlands, is often willing to learn the language and to gain knowledge about the structure of the Dutch labour market. These context-specific knowledge and skills can over time help to find a suitable job on the Dutch labour market, as we will see further on in this chapter. Ferro (2004, p.384) explained that pull factors are often a combination of living and working conditions that together improve the 'quality of life' when living abroad. Reasons of high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants to emigrate to the Netherlands are also a combination of factors, namely; to live with their Dutch or Spanish partner, the labour market situation in Spain and also to experience life in another country. Susana Chavarin explained:

“I have always wanted to go and live in another country and besides my boyfriend his work is to research, so in Spain the situation at the level of research and the work contracts for researchers are really bad so to go to a country that is more north was an option. Those two things contributed, my own feeling to go and live in another country and also the motivation to look for work that gives a better working contract for my boyfriend.”

(Susana Chavarin, 14-01-16)

Susana Chavarin is thus motivated to stay in the Netherlands at least for some time, and therefore she started learning the Dutch language. She is also gaining knowledge about accessing the Dutch labour market within her field of study in an attempt to eventually access the Dutch labour market with her study background. Another reason to emigrate is the instability of a Spanish job, which is easily substituted by people that do not have educational degrees, such as in the case of dentists in Spain. The dentist Jeronimo

Juarez explained:

“dentists in Spain, this is not a secured work in Spain, so every person can just start a dental clinic, open one themselves. Someone who does not know anything, for example.”

(Jeronimo Juarez, 30-01-16)

As Jeronimo explained, anybody can open a dental clinic in Spain and thus the job as a dentist is not secured. Jeronimo and his wife, who are both dentists, therefore do not like to practice their job as a dentist in Spain anymore. Many high-skilled migrants emigrate because of professional career advancement (Siar, 2013) and to find a suitable environment where they can use their specialized skills (Astor et al, 2005). Jeronimo Juarez emphasized that reasons for him to emigrate were the inability to grow on the labour market in Spain. Some Spanish dentists therefore often have the intention of staying in the Netherlands for a long time, and therefore also learn the Dutch language.

The younger Spanish high-skilled EU-migrants that participated in this study – about 25 to 30 years old – often move to the Netherlands with the intention of staying for a short period of time. They have similar reasons of coming to the Netherlands, such as the situation on the labour market in Spain combined with the experience of living in another country. The only difference is that these younger Spanish high-skilled EU-migrants do not come to live with their Dutch or Spanish partner. Arcadia Viernes explained:

“The problem in Spain related to finding work is that if you are educated and you studied, it is more difficult. You can always find work in a bar or somewhere, but not in your area of studies. For example, to find work as a psychologist [in Spain] like me is really difficult.”

(Arcadia Viernes, 15-02-16)

According to the younger participants thus finding a job on the Dutch labour market is possible, but finding a job in one’s area of study is difficult. Some interviewed young Spanish high-skilled EU migrants have therefore emphasized that since they cannot find suitable work in Spain anyway, they prefer to live in another country and experience another culture while doing a job that does not fit their educational level that they otherwise also would have done in Spain. Arcadia Viernes explained again:

“So that is why I have decided to come to the Netherlands, because instead of finding work in Spain as a waitress or to do another study, I prefer to do this in another country, have the experience and to learn another culture and language, for example.”

(Arcadia Viernes, 15-02-16)

The group of young high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants thus intend to stay for a short period of time and often do not learn the Dutch language, improve their English instead and take the opportunity to also learn other skills. Sometimes they even access the Dutch labour market by working only in the Spanish language. The older Spanish high-skilled EU-migrants that participated in this study on the other hand, often start learning the Dutch language right away and especially those who come to live with their Dutch

partner intend to learn the Dutch language as fast as possible. The ways of accessing the Dutch labour market thus differ depending on the intentions of staying in the Netherlands and the way the Dutch labour market was accessed in the first place, as we will also see further on in this chapter.

5.2. Accessing the Dutch Labour Market: Expectations Beforehand

In aim to answer the main research question, expectations beforehand about accessing the Dutch labour market and comparing these to the outcome after arrival will provide useful information to show the experiences of high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants when accessing the Dutch labour market. Bourdieu (1986) has demonstrated that the recognition of cultural capital depends on the context. Language skills, social networks and local experience can help to have cultural capital recognized in the context of a host country (Nohl et al, 2014; Rodriguez et al, 2012; Bauder, 2006), as we will see further on in this chapter. The interviews showed that high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants are often not expecting problems in the context of the Netherlands when accessing its labour market. The specific expectations of several high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants beforehand are often related to the area of work in the Dutch labour market that they attempt to access. A case of the engineer Paz Lujano demonstrates that his expectations were related to his discipline:

“I expected that a person like me, with this studies, would be really easy to find a job or not a super-job, but something worth to start. Even like a traineeship, I tried, but it didn't work out. (...) they are looking for specific people. I am an industrial engineer, but if I would be more specialized, I would get a job in two or three months.”

(Paz Lujano, 18-01-16)

Upon arrival in the Netherlands, Paz Lujano spent about eight months to find any kind of job and two years to find a job that relates to his study background. His expectations were thus based on his discipline, but he did not know anything about accessing this specific discipline on the Dutch labour market. This resulted in discomfort while trying to access the Dutch labour market due to his expectations beforehand. Besides, he experienced de-skilling on the Dutch labour market that he did not expect either, as we will see further on in this chapter also. The Spanish language teacher Rafael Cuellar explained that his expectations were also based on his discipline:

“(...) of course I thought that Spanish was a popular language, everyone wanted to learn a bit of Spanish. It is not Turkish or Chinese or something, it is Spanish and everyone who I know wants to learn Spanish. So I thought that sooner or later I would be able to do something.”

(Rafael Cuellar, 08-01-16)

Upon arrival in the Netherlands, this expectation was adjusted because it took Rafael six months to find a place where he could give Spanish language classes and he discovered that Spanish is not in the regular program at schools in the Netherlands. Rafael Cuellar thus found out also that he did not know anything about his discipline in the context of the Dutch labour market and consequently experienced dissatisfaction in his attempts of finding a suitable job on the Dutch labour market as a result of his expectations. These two cases of expectations beforehand that are based on accessing a specific discipline, but with a lack of knowledge about accessing this specific discipline in the Dutch context, show that the recognition of cultural capital is context-specific (Bourdieu, 1986). This example shows also that cultural capital are not only the formal

qualifications or in other words, the institutional state, but is also the embodied state that is, context-specific knowledge and skills (Bourdieu, 1986).

5.3. Accessing the Dutch Labour Market: The Validation of Cultural Capital

The validation of cultural capital depends on many classifications of an individual (Nohl et al, 2014). High-skilled Spanish EU-migrants are considered to benefit from their classifications as both high-skilled and EU-migrants. Besides, EU-migrants are often seen as a socially mobile group that can have their cultural capital validated anywhere due to the specific EU-instruments (Nowicka, 2014, p.171). In this section it becomes clear that Spanish high-skilled EU-migrants can benefit from these classifications in the validation of their cultural capital on the Dutch labour market or in other words, their ability to find a suitable job that fits their educational background and previous work experience.

The interviews revealed that the possibilities for high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants on the Dutch labour market depend a great deal on the discipline they attempt to access, because disciplines vary in their ease of access and have different self-developed requirements. The validation of degrees or the required language skills can, for example, differ for each discipline. Seina Bardales who has her own company where she helps Spanish high-skilled EU-migrants find a job on the Dutch labour market explained:

“If someone studied marketing or business administration or something like this, they can just come [to the NL] search for a job, and work. But of course, studies like psychology, nurses or all these things, they need to do some process. A compilation of the studies. (...) because it is not the same in both countries, they need to adapt to the process.”

(Seina Bardales, 05-02-16)

According to Seina Bardales then, the type of discipline one is attempting to access in the labour market determines the necessity of a compilation of the studies and thus has a greater say in how cultural capital is validated. As explained also by Iredale (2001), immigrants sometimes need to take additional courses or exams to be allowed to practice a specific discipline. The imperfect transferability of qualifications can also be a cause of de-skilling (van Riemsdijk, 2013), as we will see further on in this chapter.

Since cultural capital is a comprehensive concept with the interconnectedness of cultural knowledge, skills and their recognition (Nohl et al, 2014, p.44), the validation of cultural capital does not only depend on formal qualifications. The embodied state of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) is important also due to context-specific skills and knowledge that is necessary for the validation of cultural capital as a whole, such as language skills (Nohl et al, 2014, p.9). The quote from Seina Bardales (05-02-16) again illustrates this:

“I always tell them that, depending on which field, there are also a lot of possibilities in English. (...). But I also tell them: ‘If you would speak Dutch, the possibilities would increase a lot, they would double or triple’. So I think the language can be the main problem. (...) It depends on which field, of course. A psychologist comes, she cannot work in a hospital or in a clinic, because the clients would be mainly Dutch.”

(Seina Bardales, 05-02-16)

The explanation from Seina Bardales thus reveals that it often depends on the discipline what level of the Dutch or English language is needed to find a suitable job. Some disciplines can be accessed in English, for example the ones that are embedded in an international company. Others required Dutch language skills, for example when there is contact required with Dutch people all the time. A participant explained also that language is one of the most important factors in finding a job or a suitable job on the Dutch labour market for Spanish EU-migrants:

“The problem is that not many of us know how to speak English well and Dutch. (...) So, I think the problem is more about the languages. (...) If you speak really well English, it is easy to find work and maybe also to find nice work that fits your educational level, but this depends on the type of work. (...) Every time more in the NL, they ask for you to speak Dutch also and not only English. So it depends on the company, because for the multinationals if you speak English it is sufficient.”

(Alonzo Bustos, 10-02-16)

Alonzo Bustos thus explained that the problems of high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants on the Dutch labour market cannot be generalized, because this depends on the type of discipline someone is trying to access and the language level and skills that are needed for accessing this specific discipline. This thus shows the interconnectedness of both skills and other context-specific cultural knowledge, such as language, that contributes to the validation of these skills (Nohl et al, 2014) on the labour market. The same study background thus does not necessarily mean also the same labour market possibilities due to other required skills and knowledge. An example of two engineers explains this. The engineer Marisela Espina only needed three weeks to find a job that fits also her master studies:

“Three weeks [it took me to find the job], but I'm not a typical example, because my job is really specified.”

(Marisela Espina, 07-01-16)

Marisela explained that this is mainly due to her specialization in robotic engineering and that she is not a typical example of a Spanish high-skilled EU-migrant trying to find a job on the Dutch labour market. On the other hand, the engineer Paz Lujano did not find a suitable job on the Dutch labour market easily. He explained that this was mainly due to his lack of specialization within the engineering sector, combined with a lack of Dutch language skills and work experience in the Netherlands. After having worked for two years in low-skilled jobs that did not fit his educational background, he managed to find a traineeship that fits his educational background as an engineer. He emphasizes that he is sure that he will find a suitable job in the future:

“I know that if they don't renew me in the company after the traineeship, I believe that I am going to find something. Because I have more experience and I speak the language, and I already have my step in the field, in the engineering field.”

(Paz Lujano, 18-01-16)

He mentions that he now has local experience in the field of engineering, speaks the Dutch language, has knowledge about accessing the Dutch labour market and has developed social contacts in his area of work. The combination of these aspects give him the confidence that in the future he will also be able to find a suitable job on the Dutch labour market. Again this shows that context-specific skills and knowledge are necessary for the validation of cultural capital as a whole, besides also the formal qualifications (Nohl et al, 2014). As explained previously, whether or not someone can find a suitable job on the Dutch labour market depends greatly on the specific discipline that the individual wants to access. Interviews with the two engineers Marisela Espina and Paz Lujano have demonstrated that also within a specific discipline differences can exist, in this case depending on whether or not a specialization within a discipline was obtained.

Cultural capital can be devalued and migrants can experience de-skilling (Nohl et al, 2014), as will be analysed in more detail later in this chapter. On the other hand, cultural capital can also be overvalued. When particular knowledge and abilities of migrants are in contrast to, for example, that of native citizens (Nohl et al, 2014). Due to a shortage in a specific sector in the Netherlands these particular knowledge or abilities can then be overvalued. The dentistry sector shows that a shortage of dentists in the Netherlands caused Spanish dentists to be hired often with only a limited comprehension of the

Dutch language. The dentist Neta Ordonez explained that this is also due to the type of work in the dentistry sector:

“In our work, however, we do not have to talk a lot (...) dentistry does not require a lot of talking. If you compare it to, for example, lawyers or other work where you need to talk a lot, it is really different. Our work is more to understand and to transmit and more or less to see what the problem is or something.”

(Neta Ordonez, 30-01-16)

In this case we see again that the discipline determines the possibilities and that in this case the discipline determines that other context-specific skills are of less importance. As we have seen in the literature review, these experiences are similar to those of high-skilled Greek EU-migrants that attempt to access a discipline in high demand (Pratsinakis et al, in press). Moreover, it needs to be emphasized here that if the Dutch labour market needs specific high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants from a particular discipline, the level of the Dutch language suddenly does not seem to play an important role anymore. The discipline can thus determine the level of language that is required, but indirectly this is also a way of a specific discipline to exclude or include high-skilled EU-migrants. In the next section more about the role that social capital plays in the validation of cultural capital will be explained.

5.4. Social Capital in the Recognition of Cultural Capital

Social capital can also contribute to finding a job and have cultural capital recognized on the Dutch labour market (Nohl et al, 2014, p.13). Individuals can namely use their social capital to achieve individual interests by maintaining continuous series of

exchanges and efforts of sociability (Bourdieu, 1986). Besides, Rodriguez et al (2012) and Pereira et al (2015) both explained that many employers rely on their social network to recruit new workers. Many Spanish high-skilled EU-migrants also found their job through social contacts that live in the Netherlands and speak either Spanish or Dutch. Aura Estrella explained:

“(...) I found this work through contacts, a [Spanish] friend that I was working with at the Spanish restaurant, he started working at the clothing company as well, because he also knew somebody that was working there and they need people. He offered me and told me that they are looking for people.”

(Aura Estrella, 10-02-16)

Aura Estrella thus found a job through social contacts, although this was not a suitable job that fits her study background. As similar to Aura Estrella, Alonzo Bustos explained:

“I met a [Dutch] friend and we are always talking in English (...) he helped me a lot, because he is a lawyer and I started to work with him at his company. It was work only one day a week, but he helped me to get started in the Netherlands. He is Dutch, but he speaks also Spanish.”

(Alonzo Bustos, 10-02-16)

The story from Alonzo Bustos thus shows that social contacts do not only help people to find a job, but also to become acquainted with the Dutch labour market in general and

gain knowledge about how to access this labour market. In line with this experience, Paz Lujano explained also that he received help from social contacts in finding a suitable job on the Dutch labour market. He discovered that some studies are described with other terms in the Netherlands and therefore sometimes other terms need to be given to the same study on someone's CV that are better known in the Netherlands and on the Dutch labour market:

“I got help from a friend of us [a friend of him and his wife], she is a Human Resource (HR) manager, so she is used to do interviews and look for people, so she told me: You really need to focus in terms that the people like to hear (...) people do not understand these kind of studies in the Netherlands”

(Paz Lujano, 18-01-16)

Paz Lujano thus explained that he got help from a friend of him and his wife with developing better known terms about his study background and work experience on his CV. This example of Paz Lujano explains that as we have seen previously, high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants often do not have knowledge about accessing a specific discipline in the context of the Dutch labour market. Social contacts can thus help to overcome this gap in knowledge and contribute to finding a suitable job on the Dutch labour market in a specific discipline. Consequently, social capital can thus contribute to the validation of cultural capital on the Dutch labour market.

Social contacts that are working in the same discipline that someone attempts to access, can even be more useful in finding a job in this same discipline. The clothing designer Gracia Exposito explained that she found a suitable job through contacts, because she

was already working in her discipline, although this was a job below her skills. She explained:

“She contacted me and she said: I have a really good friend and she is having her own brand with two more bosses, like they are three partners. And they are really looking for somebody like you, for the design department”

(Gracia Exposito, 20-01-16)

Gracia Exposito was thus able to develop social contacts in the discipline she already wanted to access that eventually helped her to find a suitable job. She is an exceptional case, however, because not all high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants get the opportunity to work right away in a job within their discipline. Even though this job was still below her educational background, it was already in her discipline, and this helped her to find a suitable job later on.

Interviews with the dentists Jeronimo Juarez and Neta Ordonez (30-01-16) revealed that social contacts that already were developed when still in Spain can also be important. Both of them namely found work in Dutch dental clinics through Spanish friends that were already living in the Netherlands and working in the same discipline, which is in line with the previously mentioned explanation of Rodriguez et al (2012) and Pereira et al (2015) that emphasized that many employers rely on their social network to recruit new workers. In general, all cases that were outlined in this section have emphasized that their social contacts were helpful in finding a job or a suitable job. Besides, these cases show that it always depends on the knowledge, discipline and contacts of the social contacts if these contacts contribute to help Spanish high-skilled EU-migrants

find a job or a suitable job on the Dutch labour market. In the next section more about the inability of finding a suitable job and working below someone's educational level, or in other words the experience of de-skilling, will be explained.

5.5. Accessing the Dutch Labour Market: The Experience of De-skilling

Since high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants often do not find a suitable job at first, they first access a job that does not fit their educational level or previous work experience. In other words, this is called de-skilling or the misallocation of human resources, which means that someone is over-qualified on the Dutch labour market (Dumont & Aujean, 2014, p.162). De-skilling can be caused by the lack of opportunities to recognize cultural capital in a specific context (Bourdieu, 1986). As explained in the previous chapter, de-skilling on a micro level has several causes. One of them is low social capital (Shinnaoui & Narchal, 2010, p.425; Pereira et al, 2015, p.131; van Riemsdijk, 2013). In the previous section it has already been emphasized that social contacts can help high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants to find a suitable job on the Dutch labour market.

Poor knowledge of a host country's language can also be a cause of de-skilling (Shinnaoui & Narchal, 2010, p.425; Pereira et al, 2015, p.131; van Riemsdijk, 2013). As we have seen previously, many Spanish high-skilled EU-migrants who cannot find a suitable job due to lack of language skills, start working at jobs where they do not need to speak the Dutch language. Sometimes they also lack English language skills and access the Dutch labour market in Spanish, for instance when working in a Spanish restaurant, giving Spanish classes or babysitting for a Spanish family. Often they emphasize that this is always better than experiencing de-skilling in Spain, because in

the Netherlands they often earn more money in the same kind of jobs and they can also develop other skills, such as Dutch or English language skills. As explained earlier, Arcadia Viernes (15-02-16) her aim was to develop other skills while working below her educational level and experience de-skilling, because she felt she still had more opportunities in the Netherlands than in Spain for developing herself. She thus knew already that she would probably be working below her educational level on the Dutch labour market before she came to the Netherlands.

De-skilling can also be seen as a transitional phase for migrants to adjust to the standards of the host country (Siar, 2013; Nowicka, 2014). As explained earlier, many high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants still need to learn language skills or other skills and, gain local experience or knowledge. The interviews revealed that most of the high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants explained, however, that their situation of de-skilling has turned out to be surprisingly positive and they are often convinced that over time they will be able to find more suitable positions. Aura Estrella explained her positive experience of de-skilling:

“I work in a clothing store now and the truth is that I never could have imagined, because I also did not study anything that is related to this, that I was interested in this that I am doing now.”

(Aura Estrella, 10-02-16)

Aura also emphasized that she is happy with what she is doing now and that she likes to stay longer in the Netherlands to perfect her English language skills, to be able to express herself in Dutch and that she is convinced that with this experience she can

easily find work in Spain also when she would return. Seina Bardales who has a company where she helps Spanish people to find a job in the Netherlands explained also:

“Normally, they do not mind to start a bit lower when they arrive. So a lot of times a good start for them is the customer service, and then maybe, if they have a good CV, after a while they go to their own field. (...) So they start working in Spanish or English, and then at the same time they start also with their Dutch courses.”

(Seina Bardales, 05-02-16)

Negative experiences of de-skilling, however, also do exist and often this contributes to whether or not someone is able to continue working below the educational level for a while. Alonzo Bustos explained:

“(...) the work in the kitchen of the restaurant is really intense. (...) if there is no work and he does not need me, I can only work for four hours and I do not earn a lot of money. So everything depends on the boss.”

(Alonzo Bustos, 10-02-16)

The case of Alonzo Bustos shows that de-skilling can indeed result in economic losses and causes stress during adjustment in the host society, as explained by Siar (2013, p.15). Stress is in this case caused by the economic losses, because if there are not enough hours to work this causes stress whether or not there will be sufficient money at

the end of the month. Another negative experience of de-skilling from a young high-skilled Spanish EU-migrant Martha Penate explained this:

“My aim was only to improve my English, so I was not picky to find work and because I had experience in a restaurant in the kitchen, I found work easily (...). It is not the work of my life, of course. I am not a professional cook, so it is just a way to pay my bills here, and to do something while I am learning English. (...) but there are times when I am really, really tired and I feel that my work costs me too much time and energy. It is not my passion, it is not my work that I want to do in my life.”

(Martha Penata, 10-02-16)

In this case the negative experience of de-skilling is dependent on the type of work someone needs to do. As explained previously, the first intentions of accessing the Dutch labour market determine whether or not someone starts to learn context-specific knowledge and skills. If someone started learning the Dutch language and gained more knowledge about the Dutch labour market, over time it may be possible to find a more suitable job. As was explained earlier, the younger category of high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants of which Alonzo Bustos is part, often do not plan to stay in the Netherlands too long and therefore often do not acquire knowledge and skills that are necessary to have their cultural capital validated. Often they have a job that does not fit their educational background and experience de-skilling in order to reach other goals, such as improving their English language skills. The chances that a Spanish high-skilled EU-migrant over-time is able to find a suitable job on the Dutch labour market depends thus partly on the intentions of staying in the Netherlands and accessing the Dutch labour market.

High-skilled migrant women can also face additional gendered structural barriers on the labour market in their host country that can cause them to experience de-skilling, such as child-raising responsibilities (Riaño & Baghdadi, 2007; Kofman, 2012). Ramona Alvaro explained:

“I was looking for work, but I could not find anything and it was also really hard to find childcare, because I was a bit late with that. You have to plan everything beforehand, so it was full already. So then we thought: You know what, I will just stay at home for a few years to be with my child.”

(Ramona Alvaro, 27-01-16)

In this case it becomes clear that Ramona did not look for a job on the Dutch labour market, because she needed to take care of her child at home due to her tardily in arranging childcare in the Netherlands. Consequently, she only started to learn the Dutch language after already being in the Netherlands for a few years and she started to access the Dutch labour market when her child was old enough to go to school. Similar to the category of younger Spanish high-skilled EU-migrants she thus started to develop the necessary skills and knowledge to find a suitable job on the Dutch labour market relatively late. In her opinion, however, her experience of de-skilling is more caused by the fact that she only has a bachelor and not a master degree in philosophy. In this case thus her institutionalized cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) mattered more than other context-specific knowledge or skills that she lacked first due to her child-raising responsibilities that did not allow her the time to develop those.

5.6. Coping Strategies in Attempts of Accessing the Dutch Labour Market

In this section the diverse coping strategies of high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants that experience problems with accessing the Dutch labour market are analysed. Nowicka (2014) has highlighted diverse coping strategies in order to prevent de-skilling over time, such as acquiring local experience in a specific discipline, obtaining additional educational qualifications or giving new value to someone's origin as revealed by the example of 'Polishness' earlier in chapter one of this study (Nowicka, 2014, p.181). Many high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants cope with their situation on the Dutch labour market by finding a job below their educational level and consequently experiencing de-skilling on the Dutch labour market, as has been explained in the previous section. In order to prevent de-skilling in the long term and to be able to find a suitable job that fits the educational background and previous work experience, however, diverse coping strategies are developed. Acquiring local knowledge (Nowicka, 2014), for instance about the Dutch labour market, and learning the Dutch language are coping strategies of Susana Chavarin:

“I think the basic thing is to be patient and to study more Dutch, so the volunteer work I am doing now is a really good opportunity for me, because the team I am working in, they know that my level is not good enough and I do not know the system here, but they are helping me and I am also there and am doing that. It is a really great help for me.”

(Susana Chavarin, 14-01-16)

Susana thus acquires local experience and knowledge about her field which is social work, by doing volunteer work in an organisation and at the same time also improving

her Dutch language at this volunteer work. This is also a way of coping with her situation on the Dutch labour market, because she would like to find a more suitable job in her field of study or work and in this way she attempts to improve her skills and knowledge that can make this possible in the future.

Besides, accessing the Dutch labour market by focusing on the Spanish community in the Netherlands is also a coping strategy that is practiced by Spanish high-skilled EU-migrants, especially when they do not speak the English or Dutch language. As explained previously, some high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants work in a Spanish restaurant or babysit for a Spanish family where they only need to speak the Spanish language. Some others started their own company that focuses only on the Spanish community in the Netherlands. Susana Chavarin, for example, has her own company in practicing gestalt therapy. She offers gestalt therapy in the cities of Amsterdam, Utrecht and Nijmegen only in the Spanish, Catalan or Italian language (Susana Chavarin, 14-01-16). She thus focuses only on the Spanish and also the Italian speaking community of migrants that reside in the Netherlands. Looking at the Spanish people in the Netherlands that have started their own company that focusses on Spanish speaking people, competition has also developed within this category. Specialization is sometimes necessary to fight this competition. Alonzo Bustos (10-02-16) who is developing his own company in guided tours for Spanish people in Amsterdam, explained:

“(...) in the labour market there are already other people who give guided tours in Spanish. But I want to specialize myself in one in specific, so only in museums and perhaps also to give guided visits especially for gay people. Only in Amsterdam.”

(Alonzo Bustos, 10-02-16)

Alonzo Bustos will thus specialize himself in a specific area of giving guided tours to Spanish people, because there already exist other companies that offer guided tours just for Spanish-speaking people. In this way he attempts to fight the competition within the group of Spanish people in the Netherlands that started their own company that focusses explicitly on Spanish speaking people.

Besides starting one's own company that focuses on the Spanish community, other Spanish high-skilled EU-migrants that speak either English or Dutch also developed their own company where they focus on the Dutch society as a whole. Rafael Cuellar (08-01-16) explained that he set up his own company to be able to reach educational institutions or companies in the Netherlands and promote himself in giving Spanish classes, where he did not need to be dependent on the possibility of job offers from these institutions.

Another way of coping with the situation on the Dutch labour market, is to start studying again in the Netherlands. Arcadia Viernes (15-02-16) explained that she felt like learning something else in the Netherlands rather than just working and improving her English, so she thought the best way was to start another master. She explained:

“(...) because I was working for two years here in the Netherlands, and I thought: at least, because I have work and a house here, I can benefit from this and do something before I go back to Spain. So I thought the best way was to do a master and to improve my English.”

(Arcadia Viernes, 15-02-16)

Since Arcadia is a younger high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants who does not aim to stay for a long period in the Netherlands, she also experienced de-skilling. Even though Arcadia already has a master degree in psychology, she decided to attend another master in the Netherlands to gain more knowledge and also improve her English as a way of coping with her experience of de-skilling. She worked only in a Spanish restaurant in the Netherlands and felt that she wants to at least gain some other knowledge before going back to Spain. Another way of coping with the labour market situation of high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants in the Netherlands, can also be to return to Spain. In the next section more about reasons of returning to Spain will be outlined.

5.7. Return to Spain?

The interviews revealed that when Spanish high-skilled EU-migrants decide to return to Spain this is often not only based on their dissatisfaction with their abilities on the Dutch labour market. It is also based on factors such as family, friends or cultural aspects of the life in Spain that they miss in their life in the Netherlands. Besides, the reason for returning to Spain or to stay in the Netherlands for a few years longer is often also related to the development of the labour market situation in Spain. Some Spanish high-skilled EU-migrants plan to stay permanently in the Netherlands mainly due to the severe labour market situation in Spain, their wish to live with their Dutch partner in the Netherlands or their satisfaction with their labour market possibilities in the Netherlands in their discipline. The dentist Jeronimo Juarez explained when asking him in the interview if he wants to return to Spain:

“Actually, not really. Only for holidays. Here we have possibilities that we do not have in Spain. I see the Netherlands as a country that is more stable, more regular during all this time and not like one time good and the other time bad [like in Spain], at least this feeling I do not have at the moment.”

(Jeronimo Juarez, 30-01-16)

Jeronimo thus plans to stay in the Netherlands with his Spanish wife who is also a dentist and gives the stable labour market in the Netherlands as their main reason to stay in the Netherlands. Some others, often the younger high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants, will only stay in the Netherlands for a few more years to earn some more money, get more experience or improve their level of the English or Dutch language. Martha Penate explained:

“Yes, my plan was to work here in the Netherlands a bit and then go back to Spain to do a master. But the situation in Spain on the labour market is really bad, so maybe it is better to not go back to Spain. So at the moment I will stay here and do this master from here [online, in Spanish].”

(Martha Penate, 10-02-16)

Martha thus explained that she first intended to stay only for a short period of time in the Netherlands, but since the situation on the labour market in Spain is still difficult she decided to stay in the Netherlands longer and get her master degree online from Spain. This is her way of coping with de-skilling on the labour market in the Netherlands, because at the same time she improves her English also and she earns some money on the Dutch labour market. In this way she thus also copes with the severe labour market situation in Spain, because she knows that returning to Spain will not give her more

opportunities in terms of career or possibilities to improve other skills such as her English language skills.

This chapter started with an attempt to answer the research question ‘‘How do high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants that are living in the Netherlands experience their access to the Dutch labour market?’’ through the conceptual framework that has been outlined in chapter two of this study. The variety of trajectories of the Spanish high-skilled EU-migrants that participated in this study and their different experiences of attempts to access the Dutch labour market, have shown that the concepts of cultural capital and social capital play a major role in answering this research question as part of this case study. In the next chapter these main findings will be summarized and discussed in more depth to answer the main research question and it will be explained why these high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants should not be considered ‘eurostars’.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

One aim of this research was to contribute to filling the literature gap that exists about the experiences of high-skilled Southern EU-migrants on the labour market in Western EU-countries, particularly after the economic crisis in Europe in 2008. Another aim of this research was to question the classification of high-skilled EU-migrants as privileged migrants or in other words ‘eurostars’ (Favell, 2003) that can easily adjust themselves to the labour market in their new EU host country. To fulfil the aims of this study, a micro-level, qualitative, empirical case study was developed, that looks at Spanish high-skilled EU-migrants and their experiences when accessing the Dutch labour market.

Looking to answer the research question, “*How do high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants that are living in the Netherlands experience their access to the Dutch labour market?*”, it became clear during the analysis of the collected empirical data that there are many different trajectories and ways that high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants experience their access to the labour market. In this conclusion the focus lies on the main aspects that play a role in these experiences. The analysis was aided by the use of the concepts of cultural capital and social capital (Bourdieu, 1986), as well as de-skilling. The concept of cultural capital has been used as the most central concept and the applicability of this concept to the topic, gave this study the understanding of the diverse experiences of high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants in their attempts of accessing the Dutch labour market.

The analysis revealed that the experiences of accessing the Dutch labour market are partly shaped by the reasons for Spanish high-skilled EU-migrants to migrate to the Netherlands and their settlement intentions. The younger high-skilled Spanish EU-

migrants often plan to stay in the Netherlands for only a short period and therefore often do not attempt to gain context-specific knowledge and skills, such as Dutch language skills. Consequently, their cultural capital is not validated on the Dutch labour market due to a lack of these skills or knowledge. This group of Spanish high-skilled EU-migrants thus often do not find a job that fits their educational background and are more likely to experience de-skilling as a consequence. On the other hand, most of the older high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants aim to stay longer and therefore aim to find a suitable job in the long term, that fits the educational background and previous work experience. They therefore start learning context-specific knowledge and skills straight away and in this way they are more likely to sooner or later find a suitable job.

There are diverse ways for the validation of the cultural capital of high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants on the Dutch labour market. In the first place, knowledge about accessing a specific discipline on the Dutch labour market is important. In addition, knowledge about the English or Dutch language also plays an important role in the validation of cultural capital. The type of discipline that the participants in this study attempt to access determines for a great deal their possibilities, because each discipline has its visible and invisible requirements. Besides, a discipline can also determine requirements as a result of a shortage and exclude or include high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants. As the study revealed, in specialized fields such as dentistry, where the Netherlands experiences a shortage of skilled professionals, cultural capital can be overvalued (Nohl et al, 2014). Overvaluation of cultural capital can cause other context-specific skills and knowledge to be considered less important.

Since migrants can use their resources from their social capital to pursue their own interests, social capital can contribute to the validation of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Spanish high-skilled EU-migrants were able to find jobs through social contacts; using them to gain access to more knowledge about the Dutch labour market or a specific discipline. Social capital also helped them to find a suitable job and have their cultural capital validated (Nohl et al, 2014). However, there were limitations to the contacts as well. Their usefulness depended on whether the contacts themselves possessed the relevant knowledge on the discipline and the contacts he or she had.

With regard to de-skilling, many high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants have experienced this on the Dutch labour market due to a lack of opportunities to have their cultural capital recognized (Bourdieu, 1986). After a while, Spanish high-skilled EU-migrants often find a job that suits their educational background, but this depends on the way the labour market was accessed at arrival. High-skilled Spanish EU-migrants have different coping strategies in attempts to enter the Dutch labour market or to find a suitable job on this labour market, such as; focusing on the Spanish community, starting to study again or starting their own company. Thus, interestingly, de-skilling is not always experienced as a negative, because it has often been emphasized that it is better to experience de-skilling in the Netherlands than in Spain. Among the reasons cited are, more opportunities to develop skills and knowledge in the Netherlands and higher salaries. De-skilling however, can also be experienced as a negative, such as when the amount of hours of a job are uncertain or when the work is really tough. In the literature reviewed, positive experiences of de-skilling were not found. More research is therefore necessary to investigate this further, to show the other side of experiencing de-skilling and situations where these rather positive experiences might occur.

This case study research has attempted to contribute to existing studies on labour migration, by revealing the experiences of Southern high-skilled EU-migrants on accessing the Dutch labour market. By doing so, the study at least partly fills the gap that exists about Southern EU-migrants in their Western EU host countries after the economic crisis of 2008. Concluding from this study, the experiences of high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants show similarities in their attempts of accessing the Dutch labour market to the experiences of high-skilled Eastern EU-migrants in Western EU-host countries that were outlined in the review of the literature. As has been analysed, the experience of accessing the Dutch labour market for high-skilled Spanish EU-migrants is almost never an easy process. As explained in the introduction, high-skilled EU-migrants are often referred to as ‘eurostars’ (Favell, 2003) that are easily able to settle themselves in another EU-country and do not experience any struggles when accessing its labour market. These results show, however, that this idea of high-skilled EU-migrants is questionable. At the same time, the findings are also in line with Favell’s (2003) explanation of the existing labour market barriers for EU-migrants - as embedded in the specific context of particular EU-states - despite the withdrawal of formal barriers. Future research should therefore, focus on comparing high-skilled Southern EU-migrants to high-skilled native Dutch citizens on the Dutch labour market in order to provide a more comprehensive picture. A comparison between the experiences of high-skilled Southern EU-migrants on the labour market in various Western EU-countries could also provide useful insights.

The Dutch state only minimally supports EU-migrants and sees EU-migrants themselves as responsible for their labour market access and, besides a few documents with information for EU-migrants, no specific policy exists that especially focused on

EU-migrants. If the Netherlands wants to benefit from high-skilled EU-migrants on the Dutch labour market, it is necessary to develop a policy that focuses on providing support during the settlement process of EU-migrants in the Netherlands. As described earlier, a report by SER (2014) cautions that the Netherlands could in the future experience problems with their labour force due to ageing, in particular in the high-skilled sectors, which makes it even more beneficial to invest in easier access for high-skilled EU-migrants to the Dutch labour market. First of all, however, the Netherlands needs to acknowledge the experiences and diverse problems that EU-migrants and high-skilled EU-migrants in particular can face or are facing on the Dutch labour market. As mentioned in the introduction, reports about immigrants often do not show the exact problems that they encounter on the labour market (Siar, 2013, p.17) and consequently no policy is developed that focuses on the prevention of these problems. More research is thus necessary that analyses the exact needs of EU-migrants on the Dutch labour market. While it would be interesting to examine how policy with regard to EU-migrants evolves in the future, it seems nonetheless unlikely that policy makers in the Netherlands will have much attention for this area in the near future, due to more visible problems related to immigrants at this moment.

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Appendix 1: Interview guide

Introduction

Introducing myself, the study and aim of this interview. Thanking for this interview and asking for permission to record the interview. Explaining that the audio recording will be treated confidentially, anonymously and used for the purpose of my research only.

Introductory questions

- How did your life look like before coming to the NL?
- What made you decide to come to the NL?

Study & work background before period in the NL

2. What is your study background (in Spain or somewhere else)?

Probe: field of study, place of study & length of studying

3. What is your job history in Spain? (If applicable)

Probe: Sector, length & experience at the job.

4. What was your experience when accessing the Spanish labour market (If applicable: before & after economic crisis in 2008)?

Probe: Things that changed for you, related to your labour market possibilities.

Migration to the Netherlands

5. What were your expectations of job opportunities in the Netherlands before moving here?

Probe: Opinion about possibilities to find a job or previous ideas of how to find a job

5.1. What were these expectations based on?

6. How long have you been living in the NL?

Experience on accessing the Dutch labour market & work experience in the Netherlands

7. What jobs have you had in the Netherlands so far?

Probe: Experience when trying to access the job/applying, sector, length of each job, type of contract and experience at the job itself. Does it relate to your qualifications?

8. How long did it take you to find a job in the Netherlands?

9. What is your experience searching for jobs in the NL?

9.1. Did you receive any help?

Probe: Help from social contacts (family/friends), help from organizations, other help?

10. Do you have any experience with being self-employed in the Netherlands?

11. What is your experience with cultural differences on the Dutch labour market?

12. What is your experience with discrimination when searching for a job or in the job?

13. What is your opinion about job search & finding jobs in the Netherlands?

14. What can you say about the differences between the labour market in the Netherlands & Spain?

Probe: Reasons to find or not find a job in the NL related to these differences?

Current situation in the NL

15. Do you have a job in the NL at the moment?

Probe: If not: How would you find one? What are your options?

Probe: If yes: How do you feel about your current job?

16. Does your current job fits with your educational level?

16.1. **If applicable:** Why do you think it is hard for you to find a job that fits your educational level? Or why was it not hard to find a job that fits your educational level?

16.2. **If applicable:** How do you cope with your situation in the NL?

16.3. **If applicable:** How would you improve your skills to find a new job?

17. Do you want to return to Spain?

Can I ask you some small questions now? (Ask if not answered yet!)

Age?

Married/children? Dutch partner?

Level of English/Dutch language?

Do you maybe have any questions for me?

Thank you very much for this interview.