

Living together, working together: concentrations amongst German immigrants in the Netherlands in the nineteenth century

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ABSTRACT. German immigrants who came to the Netherlands in the nineteenth century did not concentrate in ‘Little Germanys’ within Dutch towns, as they did in some other countries. Some concentrations amongst German immigrants can, however, be pointed out. Contrary to what perhaps might be expected, it was not a common religion or a shared regional background that explains these concentrations. A shared profession does explain some, but only if the nature of a particular profession allowed or encouraged concentration.

German immigrants in the United States tended to concentrate in certain neighbourhoods or places. They did so more than any other group of immigrants.¹ In part, this concentration resulted from the group-wise migration of people who sought the religious freedom in the United States that was denied to them in their German homeland. These migrants established small German communities. Larger cities often also had their ‘Little Germanys’. The ‘Little Germanys’ were not only ethnically homogeneous, but also socially. The concentrations of Germans in American towns can be explained in terms of class rather than of ethnicity. German neighbourhoods were usually working-class.²

This article is about German migrants who came to the Netherlands in the nineteenth century. There were some concentrations of German migrants within Dutch towns, but these concentrations were not ‘Little Germanys’.³ In the second part of the nineteenth century, more than 40 per cent of the Germans in New York were concentrated in what was

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called 'Little Germany'. Within this neighbourhood there were wards where Germans comprised 33–64 per cent of the population.⁴ Concentrations were more common in smaller Dutch towns, which offered employment opportunities to a certain type of German immigrant only. For example, in 1849 we find a concentration of about 40 per cent of the male German migrants who went to the town of Schiedam living together in one of the neighbourhoods of this small Dutch town.⁵ This town attracted men (90 per cent of the immigrants there were men) to work for one of the town's numerous distilleries. In towns in which employment opportunities were more diverse – as was the case in all large cities – there was less concentration within certain neighbourhoods.

The concentrations that can be found in larger cities consisted of immigrants who had a common regional background, belonged to the same religion and worked in the same profession. This does not mean that the reverse was true: not all immigrants with the same regional background, the same religion or the same profession concentrated in a neighbourhood. In order to determine the conditions under which concentrations of German immigrants did occur, I studied German migration to Utrecht. Utrecht was and is one of the largest cities in the Netherlands. Utrecht was big enough to attract considerable numbers of immigrants, yet small enough to allow an in-depth analysis of the whole immigrant population.

I. SOURCE MATERIAL AND MIGRATION PATTERNS

I studied residential patterns amongst German immigrants who came to Utrecht in the second half of the nineteenth century.⁶ My description rests upon a reconstruction of the German community using population registers.⁷ These population registers were introduced in the Netherlands in 1850 and formed the basis for a continuous registration of all people.⁸ The registers were kept locally. They were based on censuses that were held every ten years. Everybody who moved after the census date was to report to the registrar's office. In that case his or her name was crossed out in the register, together with the names of other members of the household if they also moved. The crossed-out names remain readable in the register. If a person or family moved to a new address within the town, the names were re-entered on a different page in the registers. Every half year registrars visited all the houses to check whether changes had been reported correctly. Furthermore, data in the population registers were checked when people came to the city's administration to report a birth, death or marriage. People moving from one town to another could not be registered in the new town without a written statement from their previous town or village indicating that they had reported their move. In the period

from 1850 to 1859 this administration resulted in Utrecht in ledgers containing 11,580 large pages bound in 26 thick volumes. In the period from 1900 to 1912 there were 150 such volumes.

The population registers list name, address, date and place of birth, province of birth (for the Dutch-born population) or country of birth (for the foreign-born population), religion, marital status, occupation and date of death, as well as previous and new addresses. The registers indicate dates of divorces and the abandonment of women (men who were abandoned by their wives were not registered as such). The records state the relationship between the various members of the household (that is, head of the household, spouse, children, grandchildren, parents and in-laws, but also domestic servants, hired hands (*knecht*), pupils, lodgers). In some Dutch towns the registers were organized alphabetically by the name of the head of the household. In Utrecht, however, they were organized by street, making it possible to trace the footsteps of the registrar as he went from house to house. People registered next to each other in the ledgers lived next to each other in the town. The registers thus offer a unique opportunity to detect immigrant communities.

The registration of the place of birth of the German migrants to Utrecht was not always correct. German places with names similar to Dutch places might be registered as Dutch in the population registers. An immigrant born in the German village of Cappeln was, for instance, incorrectly registered as born in the Dutch village of Cappelle. This mistake was frequently made and comes to light when entries in the population registers are compared with data from birth, marriage and death certificates. I systematically made such comparisons and corrected my data accordingly. I found that the converse error was never made: Dutch villages were never mistaken for German ones.

Information in the population registers about people's profession is not always reliable. The first reason for this is that changes in profession were only recorded when people moved. Professions were reviewed in the census years, but as long as a person stayed at one address the registrar did not check whether the profession was still correct. As a result, people who never moved appear to have had very stable professions.

A second reason for information about professions not always being reliable is that the registrars made the assumption that married women were not in the labour market. Tax data show that a considerable number of married women, who were registered in the population registers as without a profession, did have a job and consequently paid the related job tax.⁹ Job tax was only paid on a limited number of occupations. In the second half of the nineteenth century the number of jobs for which job tax had to be paid was reduced. Traders had to pay the tax until its abolition

in 1893.¹⁰ As a result, the job-tax data could only be used to verify the information in the population registers in a restricted number of cases. From these data it is clear that many of the married women who were recorded as being without a profession in the population registers did in fact have a job. It is very likely that this was true for many more married women in occupations that were not taxed. For unmarried women the population registers usually do specify an occupation.

I traced all 2,188 people born in German regions and living in Utrecht between 1849 and 1879 included in the population registers. According to the official census, 535 German immigrants lived in Utrecht in 1849. When corrected for the under-registration noted above, which resulted from the confusion of German and Dutch places of birth, this number rises to 714. In 1879, the official number in the census had risen to 629. When this figure is corrected for the confusion of places of birth it rises to 834. The figure of 2,188 relates to individuals living in Utrecht at any point between 1849 and 1879. An individual may have lived in Utrecht throughout the whole period, but he or she may also have lived in Utrecht for longer or shorter spells, alternating with months or years of absence.

'Germany' did not exist as such in most of this period. I have taken the borders of the German Empire as it was just before the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine in 1871. This means that immigrants from Alsace-Lorraine are excluded from the research, and immigrants from Schleswig and Holstein, annexed in 1866, are included. I have followed these immigrants as they moved from one house to the next within Utrecht until 1912. In that year the method of registration changed from books to cards which were arranged alphabetically by the name of the head of the household. As a result concentrations could be less easily mapped.

Not all immigrants could be followed until 1912, because some people moved out of Utrecht or died before that year. In case of a death, the widow or widower, children or grandchildren – if present – were followed until 1912. There were large differences between groups of immigrants in relation to the possibility of actually following a person over a longer period. Differences were related to the jobs immigrants worked in, to their status within those jobs and to their age. Younger migrants and migrants working in a dependent position moved more frequently than did older and more independent immigrants. For instance most German prostitutes – who were young and depended on the brothel-keeper for whom they worked – moved away within half a year. They went to other towns in the Netherlands and sometimes to Belgium or Germany. Their frequent migration rested on the assumption that their customers wanted to see new faces regularly. Many of the prostitutes returned after a few months or years, worked in Utrecht for some time, and left again. Whereas the

prostitutes moved frequently, the brothel-keepers stayed in Utrecht for decades.¹¹

With shop assistants we see a similar mode of migration. The assistants mostly stayed for a short period, frequently moving to other Dutch towns for some time and then returning to Utrecht. The shopkeepers themselves were less mobile. About 13 per cent of the German migrants followed the so-called circular migration pattern that we find for prostitutes and shop assistants. This circular migration was related to age. With the male shop assistants it usually lasted until they set up a shop of their own in their early thirties; with the prostitutes circular migration continued until death caught up with them, usually also when they were in their thirties.

German stucco-workers moved seasonally. Stucco-work could not be done in the winter. This meant that most stucco-workers came in the spring and went back to their native Germany in the autumn. The stucco-work could not be done until the very end of a building phase. As a result, the demand for stucco-workers within the season had sudden peaks. This explains why stucco-workers travelled regularly within the Netherlands. Groups of as many as 40 workers might travel between the major towns in response to changing demand. Their employers and masters usually stayed in one place. Some of the German traders in Utrecht moved seasonally back and forth between their places of birth and Utrecht as the stucco-workers did. Seven per cent of the migration can be labelled as seasonal.

Domestic servants, perhaps contrary to expectations, tended to stay in Utrecht for long spells. If they moved away from Utrecht it was often with the family for whom they worked. It is striking how loyal German domestic servants were to their employer. Whereas Utrecht-born domestic servants changed employers frequently – a new employer every six months was not uncommon, a new employer after one year was a rule – some German domestic servants stayed with their employers for many years. Individual instances of German servants staying more than 20 years can be documented.¹² With them we find the traditional type of linear migration, whereby immigrants moved from their place of birth to a place of destination and spent the rest of their days there. However, this type of migration was not very common. Only 1 per cent of all the immigrants followed this type of migration. Stepwise migration, whereby an immigrant went from the place of birth to a larger place of residence, and from there to an even larger and more distant place, was found for 3 per cent of the German immigrants.

The majority of the immigrants had a migration pattern that cannot easily be labelled. This can be illustrated by the example of Johan Böker, whose life can be reconstructed on the basis of population-register data. He came to Utrecht from his native Sudlohn (just across the German–Dutch

border in Münsterland) when he was 20, together with his sister who was five years younger. The siblings shared a house for a while. He married when he was 25, had a son a year later, and became a widower. His spinster sister-in-law and her unmarried brother cared for his infant son. Not long after the death of his wife, Böker fathered a child by his sister-in-law and thereupon disappeared to the Dutch East Indies. He returned after 18 years, married his sister-in-law when he was 49 and spent the last 20 years of his life with her in Utrecht, where he died at the age of 68. Böker never returned to his native Sudlohn and lived most of his life in Utrecht. The life of Böker was perhaps a bit atypical, but his migration pattern was not. Countless similar stories can be told. This migration pattern cannot be captured in the common typologies of migration: linear, seasonal, stepwise or circular.¹³ These migrants had left their place of birth forever, but did not live in Utrecht permanently. Long spells of presence alternated with long periods of absence. The immigrant did not return to his or her place of birth (as in seasonal or circular migration), nor settle in a new permanent place after a short period (as with linear or stepwise migration). Instead, the immigrant experienced a searching type of migration spanning several years and vast distances, which ended some years or even decades later when the immigrant decided to settle or died. About 70 per cent of the German immigrants in Utrecht experienced this searching mode of migration.

As this description of migration patterns may have made clear, there was considerable variability in the number of years that migrants could be followed in the population registers. The continuous presence of employers, masters and domestic servants contrasted with the irregular presence of shop assistants, prostitutes or traders.

II. THE LARGEST MINORITY

In the nineteenth century, German immigrants were by far the largest minority in Utrecht (as in the rest of the Netherlands); 60 per cent of its immigrants were born in German regions. In the middle of the nineteenth century, there were more than 40,000 Germans in the Netherlands. In Utrecht, as in the Netherlands as a whole, German migrants constituted 1 per cent of the population in the official statistics. As has been mentioned above, some German immigrants in Utrecht were incorrectly registered as Dutch because their German places of birth were mistaken for Dutch places with similar-sounding names. For the period from 1850 to 1859 I used birth, death and marriage records as well as tax sources to check the extent to which this mistake was made. On the basis of this research it can be said safely that German immigrants constituted at least 1.5 per cent of

the population, rather than the official 1 per cent. The percentage was probably even higher.

Utrecht, which is located in the centre of the Netherlands, lies on a branch of the river Rhine, which gave the city easy access to the German hinterland. Large vessels could sail from the German town of Cologne to Utrecht, where goods were transhipped into smaller vessels for further distribution within the Netherlands. Because of its central position, Utrecht was an important centre for trade and commerce. In the second half of the nineteenth century, Utrecht became the centre of the Dutch railway system. From 1856 it had a railway connection with Prussia. In 1849, Utrecht had a population of 50,000. This increased to almost three times that number by 1920.

In Utrecht, men and women were more or less equally represented within the German community. In both census years, 1849 and 1879, the sex ratio was just under 1.3. This means that there were 1.3 times as many German men as German women. In Amsterdam and Rotterdam there were twice as many German men as German women in 1849. In 1879 the ratio was 1.5, which means both cities had managed to attract more women than in 1849.

Although the sex ratio in Utrecht was the same in both census years, the number of men coming to Utrecht over this 30-year period was larger than the number of women. This difference was especially evident in the second part of the 20-year period. Between 1850 and 1859 there were in total 957 German immigrants in Utrecht, of whom 535 were men and 422 women (a ratio of 1.3). In the second period, from 1860 to 1879, 1,231 additional immigrants came: 747 men and 484 women (sex ratio 1.5). A higher turnover amongst the male immigrants explains why the sex ratio in both census years was 1.3. German men – and mainly the shop assistants amongst them – stayed for shorter periods in Utrecht than their female counterparts.

Migration to Utrecht mostly consisted of young adults, rather than of families with children. This is evident from age pyramids (see Figure 1). The birthplaces of the German immigrants were very varied. Nevertheless, some concentrations can be identified (see Figure 2). The majority of the German immigrants came from regions bordering the Netherlands. From the Westerwald in Nassau – a bit further away from the border – came traders in stoneware jars and pitchers. The Westerwald was an important region of origin of both men and women who immigrated to Utrecht. From the region around the river Ems – Oldenburgs Münsterland – came shopkeepers and shop assistants. The shopkeepers, who sold textiles and cloth, were almost all men. The assistants were both men and women, but the former outnumbered the latter.

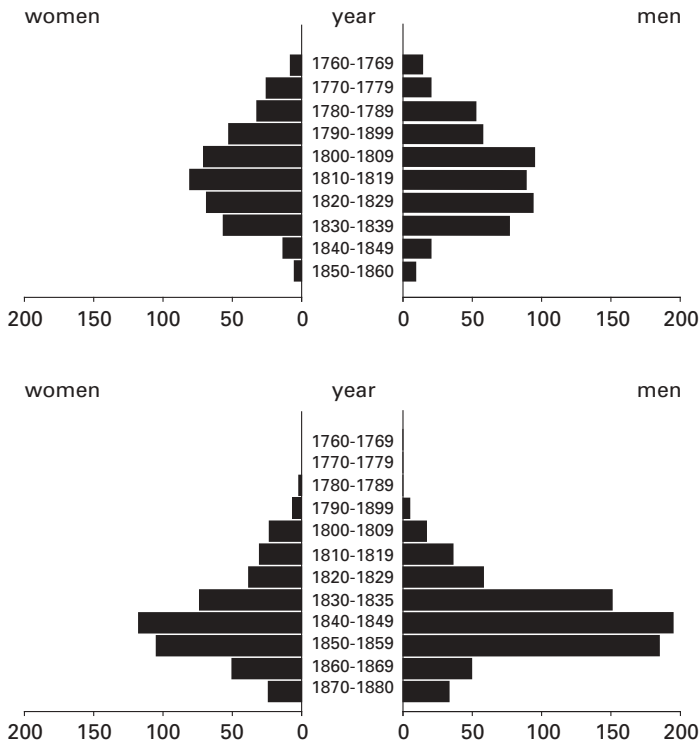


FIGURE 1. (a) Numbers of Germans living in Utrecht, by year of birth, 1849–1859, and (b) numbers of new German immigrants to Utrecht, by year of birth, 1860–1879. (Source: Marlou Schrover, *Een kolonie van Duitsers. Groepsvorming onder Duitse immigranten in Utrecht in de negentiende eeuw* (Amsterdam, 2002), reproduced with permission of the publisher, Aksant.)

From the Ruhr area came file-makers and from a specific part of Oldenburg stucco-workers; these were all men. From the region near the German–Dutch border where the Rhine enters the Netherlands – the region around Cleves, referred to here as Clevesland – came domestic servants. Most German prostitutes came from a region somewhat to the north of this area.

Between 1850 and 1859, 53 per cent of the German immigrants were Protestant, 45 per cent Catholic, and 2 per cent Jewish. Of the Protestants, 45 per cent were Lutheran and 55 per cent Calvinist. In the second period – from 1860 to 1879 – the percentages of Protestants and Catholics reversed: 45 per cent were Protestant, 53 per cent Catholic, and 2 per cent Jewish. The change was caused by the arrival of large numbers of Catholic shop assistants.

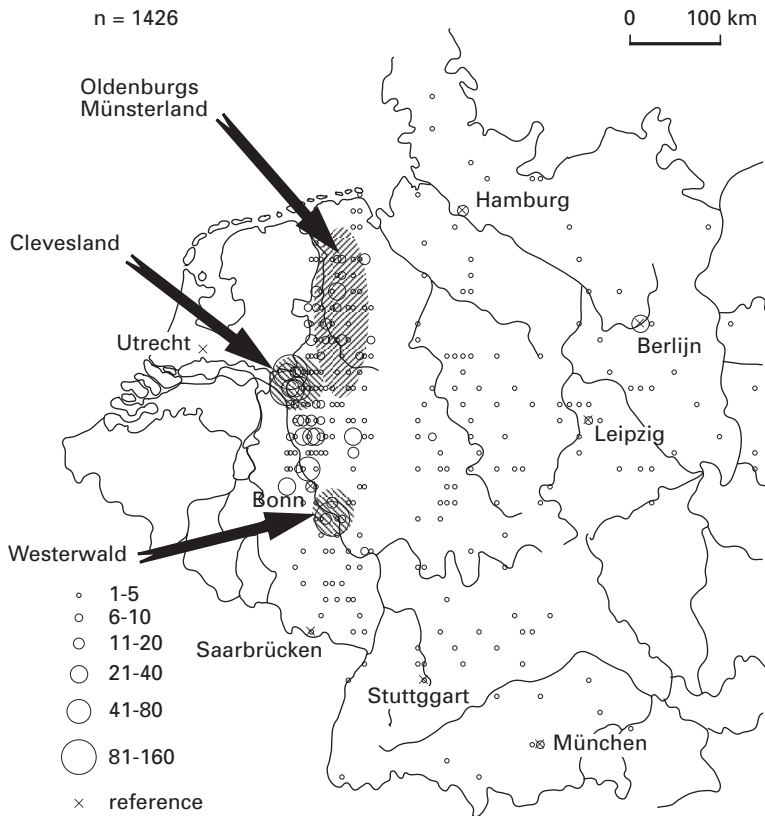


FIGURE 2. Places of birth of German immigrants to Utrecht, 1849–1859 (N=1,426). (Source: Marlou Schrover, *Een kolonie van Duitsers. Groepsvorming onder Duitse immigranten in Utrecht in de negentiende eeuw* (Amsterdam, 2002), reproduced with permission of the publisher, Aksant.)

Forty-three per cent of the German immigrants married. Most German migrants (40 per cent) were involved in German–German marriages, 2 per cent married somebody born in Utrecht, 37 per cent somebody born elsewhere in the Netherlands. Striking are the remaining marriages (21 per cent), which were with people born outside the Netherlands, but not in Germany: from France, the Dutch East Indies, Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg, Denmark and Austria. The Belgian community was the largest other immigrant community in Utrecht, and it was only half the size of the German one.

About half of the German–German marriages had taken place in Germany before migration. The other half were marriages between a

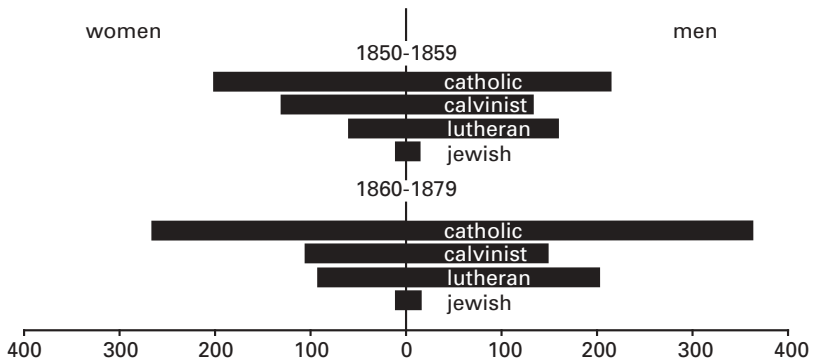


FIGURE 3. Religions of German men and women living in Utrecht, 1850–1859 and 1860–1879. (Source: Marlou Schrover, *Een kolonie van Duitsers. Groepsvorming onder Duitse immigranten in Utrecht in de negentiende eeuw* (Amsterdam, 2002), reproduced with permission of the publisher, Aksant.)

German man and a German woman living in Utrecht. Endogamy was most prevalent within the group of Westerwalder traders. A quarter of the Westerwalders married, 85 per cent of them within the group.¹⁴ Of the Münsterland shopkeepers and their assistants, 17 per cent married, 68 per cent of them taking a non-German partner. Of the domestic servants only 6 per cent married, none with a German partner. However, their partners, like themselves, were usually Catholic. It is not surprising that they did not marry people from their own region, because there were very few male migrants from Clevesland, the place of origin of most of the domestic servants. File-makers and stucco-workers likewise married non-German partners. Hardly any women migrated from their regions of origin. Most file-makers and stucco-workers were unmarried when they came to Utrecht. The stucco-workers, some of whom returned to their German regions of origin in the winter, may have married there, but they did not then return to Utrecht alone or with their wives. All the file-makers in Utrecht were Lutheran, although the region from which they originated was not ubiquitously Lutheran. The file-makers married other Lutherans. The stucco-workers, who were also all Lutheran, showed no particular tendency to select their partners from among Lutherans. The railway workers, who came from all over Germany, married Dutch women. The prostitutes did not marry. Religious endogamy was strongest amongst the Catholics and the small minority of the German Jews, and weakest amongst the Lutherans.

German immigrants married at a later age than the Utrecht population at large (the median for German women was 28 as against 25 for

Utrecht-born women, and 29 for German men as against 24 for Utrecht-born men). The problem with these figures is, however, that they are not fully comparable. Data on the age at marriage are missing for those immigrants who married prior to their migration, and probably those were the ones who had married at a younger age. Furthermore, within the Utrecht population, people involved in trade tended to marry at a later age than average. Since the German community included many people involved in trade this too could explain the age difference.

Of the German–non-German marriages, 1 per cent ended in divorce and 5 per cent in abandonment. For the Utrecht population as a whole these figures were lower (less than 1 and 1 per cent, respectively), but as with the marital age these figures are not strictly comparable because divorce and abandonment were class-related.

The German immigrants in Utrecht certainly did not belong to one class. There were very rich and very poor German immigrants. Some groups that have already been mentioned stand out. Westerwald traders formed 35 per cent of the immigrant community (consisting half of men and half of women). Münsterland shopkeepers and their assistants formed 20 per cent (of whom 75 per cent were men and 25 per cent women). File-makers, stucco-workers, railway employees (all men) and domestic servants (all women) each formed 5 per cent. The rest of the German immigrant population (25 per cent) worked in numerous different professions.

German men and women did not work in the same professions as the Utrecht population as a whole (see Figure 4). German immigrants worked in all sectors of the economy, but more than proportionally in trade and commerce. This was true both for men and women. German men and women worked less than proportionally in industry.

The difference with the Utrecht population as a whole is much larger for German women than for German men. German women were almost absent from industry. Dutch women in Utrecht worked in the clothing industry, washing and ironing clothes and as cigar-makers. German women were absent from these professions. For German men two professions were particularly important: stucco-work and file-making. All the stucco-workers and file-makers in Utrecht were German.

German immigrants worked more often in trade than the Utrecht population at large. Again the difference is most striking for German women. For them trade was more important than it was for their Dutch counterparts. Within the trade sector, German and Dutch women did not work in the same professions. German women worked as tradeswomen and as shop assistants. Dutch women worked mostly as shopkeepers.

A considerable number of German women worked as domestic servants. Domestic service was, however, unlike in the US at that time, not an



FIGURE 4. Economic activities of German immigrants to Utrecht, 1849–1879, and the Utrecht population at large. (Source: Marlou Schrover, *Een kolonie van Duitsers. Groepsvorming onder Duitse immigranten in Utrecht in de negentiende eeuw* (Amsterdam, 2002), reproduced with permission of the publisher, Aksant.)

immigrant niche.¹⁵ Although a substantial proportion of female German migrants worked as domestic servants, the German women in no way formed an important proportion of the total number of domestic servants: less than 1 per cent. The German domestic servants did not work for different types of families than non-German domestics; they did not work exclusively for richer or poorer families. Nearly all German domestic servants were Catholic, yet they did not work only for Catholic families. Just 1 per cent worked for German families. The wealthy German families in Utrecht did not specially employ German domestics.

Transport was more important to German men and women than it was to the Utrecht population at large. Within this sector, German immigrants clustered in certain jobs. German men worked almost exclusively

for the railways. They mostly held white-collar jobs (the so-called functionaries). They were not involved in railway construction or any of the cargo-handling. They worked in administrative jobs at the railways' head offices, as conductors and drivers on the trains and as overseers on the platforms. German women were involved in catering – as pub-owners – and in prostitution. Pub-owners, barmaids and prostitutes were classed in the census as in the transport sector.¹⁶

Most of the German immigrants worked in the same profession over longer periods of time. Some of the male shop assistants did move on to become shop owners. Stucco-workers and file-makers were relatively faithful to their jobs. To a considerable degree, these jobs even proved to be 'hereditary'; sons of stucco-workers and file-makers continued in the profession of their fathers. The stoneware traders likewise handed down their profession to their children and grandchildren.

The absence of German immigrants in the booming cigar industry in Utrecht is striking. This large and new industry employed a large number of men and women, but no German immigrants. The few German men and women who frequently changed their profession – some of the traders in general goods, musicians, waiters and barmaids for instance – did not drift towards this new industry, although it was in constant need of personnel.¹⁷

German immigrants were also absent from professions that were regarded as typically German at other times and in other places. This is for instance the case with the bakers. German bakers dominated this profession in Amsterdam.¹⁸ In 1887, London had 4,000 master bakers, at least 2,000 of whom were German.¹⁹ In 1846, 165 of the 468 bakers in Copenhagen were German.²⁰ In 1869, a quarter of the bakers in Russian St Petersburg were German.²¹ In 1880, Manhattan counted 1,200 German bakers out of a total of 2,400 bakers.²² In Utrecht there were 2 German bakers in 1849, out of a total of 284. In most of the other places the migration of bakers predated the nineteenth century. In Utrecht, we do not find any German bakers in the eighteenth century, or before.²³ Some German bakers tried their luck in the first half of the nineteenth century, but apparently with little success.²⁴ We find similar developments in the textile industry. German men and women were involved in the selling of clothes, but not in their production, although there was a demand for workers in this sector.²⁵

Having mapped out the German community in general terms, I will look more closely at residential patterns. Concentrations were obvious in two cases: the traders in stoneware from the Westerwald and the shopkeepers from Münsterland. The Westerwalder stoneware traders were concentrated in a few streets outside the town's walls. The large shops of the shopkeepers from Münsterland could be found on the main shopping

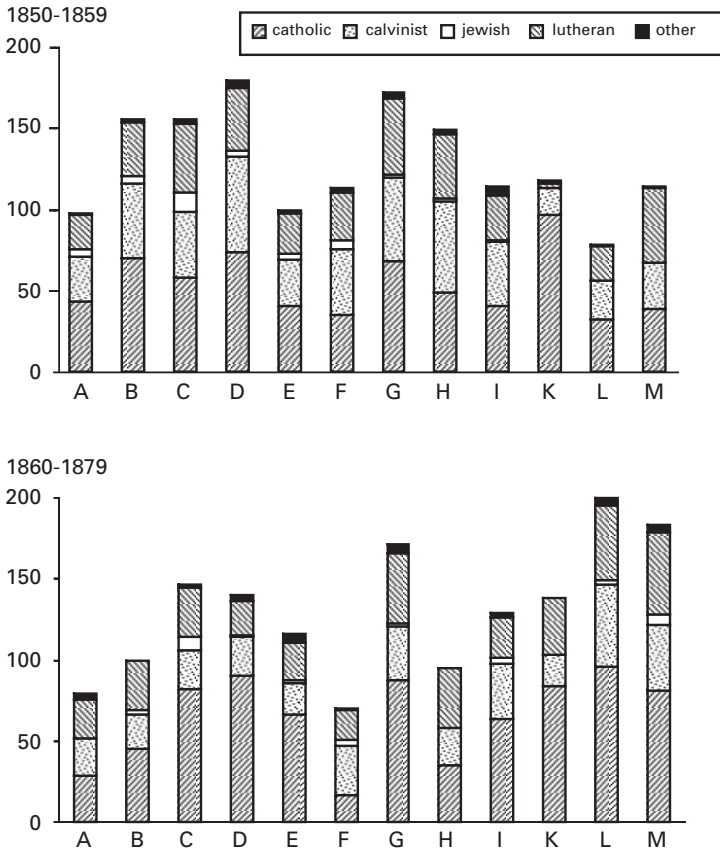


FIGURE 5. Religions of Germans living in Utrecht by town district, 1850–1859 and 1860–1879. (Note: see description of districts in the text.) (Source: Marlou Schrover, *Een kolonie van Duitsers. Groepsvorming onder Duitse immigranten in Utrecht in de negentiende eeuw* (Amsterdam, 2002), reproduced with permission of the publisher, Aksant.)

street and some adjacent streets. The assistants who worked in these large shops – both men and women – were housed in boarding houses above and next to the shops.

III. CONCENTRATIONS

It was definitely not the case that people of the same religion clustered in the same parts of town. We find German Catholics, Lutherans and Calvinists in all districts of the town (see Figure 5). Even the very small minority of Jewish immigrants did not concentrate in one neighbourhood. Immigrants with the same regional background did not necessarily

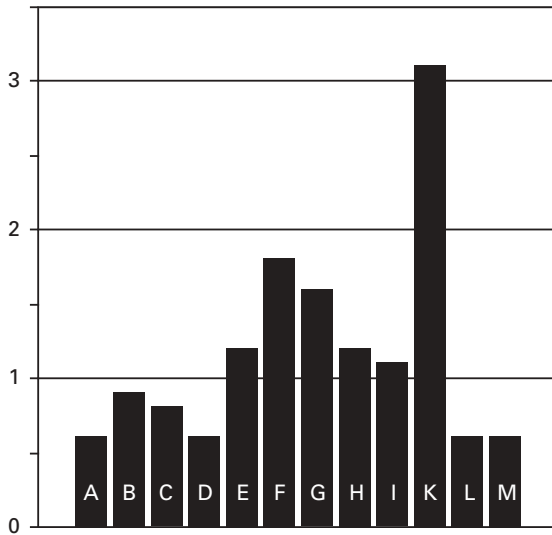


FIGURE 6. Percentages of Germans per district of Utrecht according to the census of 1849 (as a percentage of each district's population). (Source: Marlou Schrover, *Een kolonie van Duitsers. Groepsvorming onder Duitse immigranten in Utrecht in de negentiende eeuw* (Amsterdam, 2002), reproduced with permission of the publisher, Aksant.)

concentrate in a specific neighbourhood either. In Utrecht we find, for example, several people from the German town of Elberfeld. These German immigrants, however, did not live near each other and did not work in the same profession. We do, however, find some concentrations of Germans in certain parts of the town.

Since Napoleonic times, Utrecht was divided into twelve districts. Districts A to H lay within the (former) city walls. Districts I, K, L and M were situated outside the walls.²⁶ Although the various districts were not socially homogeneous, H, G and especially F stand out as the richer neighbourhoods, C and K as poorer districts. By the middle of the nineteenth century, houses had been built in all the vacant space within the inner city. Expansion could only be found outside the by now demolished, walls. In the inner city the number of houses remained stable at about 6,000.²⁷ Outside the former city walls the number of houses increased from about 2,000 in 1850 to over 9,000 in 1890. In the inner city the population remained more or less stable. Outside the former walls the population grew from 11,000 in 1850 to 50,000 40 years later. At the end of the nineteenth century more people lived outside the former walls than within them.

Figure 6 shows the percentages of Germans per district. As this figure shows, Germans comprised less than the average of 1 per cent of the

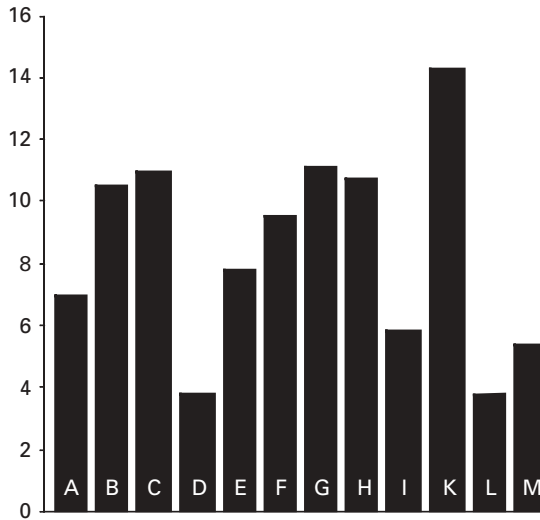


FIGURE 7. Distribution of German immigrants in Utrecht over the various districts according to the census of 1849 (as a percentage of the German immigrant population, N=500). (Note: N is the official number of Germans counted in the census of 1849 minus those Germans living in institutions, such as hospitals.) (Source: Marlou Schrover, *Een kolonie van Duitsers. Groepsvorming onder Duitse immigranten in Utrecht in de negentiende eeuw* (Amsterdam, 2002), reproduced with permission of the publisher, Aksant.)

population in six districts. Five districts had between 1 and 2 per cent Germans. District K, where the Westerwalders lived, stands out in housing the largest percentage of Germans (over 3 per cent). This percentage is not a faithful representation of the real concentration of Germans. District K was a large and sprawling district outside the former city walls. In this neighbourhood we find farms and brick factories. The Westerwalders all lived in a few streets, where they comprised 80 per cent of the population.

The German shopkeepers had their shops on the main shopping street in Utrecht called the Oudegracht. Concentration in this street is not directly evident in Figure 7 because the street's most central part – where the shops were located – runs through several town districts (the left side of the street lies in the districts C, D and E and the right side in districts F and G). These districts cannot be grouped together because this would mean clustering the data of five of the eight districts within the former city walls. Moreover, these districts housed other German immigrants as well, who did not live on the Oudegracht and did not work as shopkeepers or shop assistants. Thus again the real concentration of Germans was stronger. Figure 7 shows how the German immigrant community was

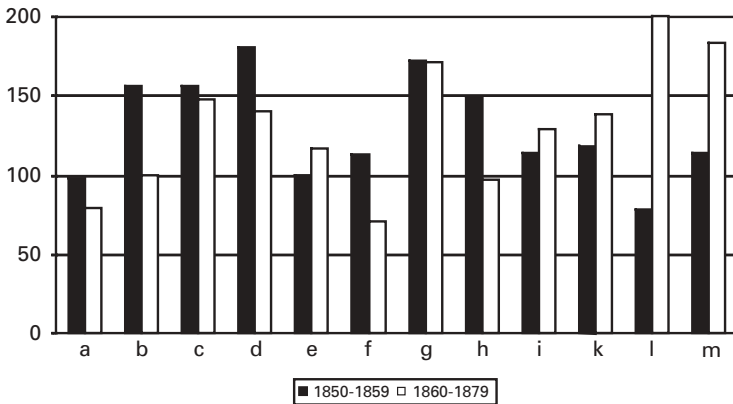


FIGURE 8. Turnover per district: the number of Germans in districts A to M of Utrecht in the periods 1850–1859 and 1860–1879. (Source: Marlou Schrover, *Een kolonie van Duitsers. Groepsvorming onder Duitse immigranten in Utrecht in de negentiende eeuw* (Amsterdam, 2002), reproduced with permission of the publisher, Aksant.)

distributed over the various town districts. In 1849 more than 14 per cent of the Germans lived in district K.

Figure 8 shows the turnover per district. As the figure shows, the districts within the former city walls – A to H – saw a decrease in the number of Germans. In the second period (from 1860 to 1879) many of the newcomers found a first home upon arrival in districts L and M, and to a lesser extent in I and K. These new and large districts offered opportunities that were not available within the city centre. The turnover in districts L and M was largest. Of the immigrants who settled there in the period from 1860 to 1879, 50 per cent moved on to different housing elsewhere within a year. Districts K and I had a lower turnover. In district I this may be because the houses were generally better than in districts L and M. Most Germans in district K belonged to the very stable Westervelder community.

As has been said above, population registers indicate the relationship between the head of the household and other members of the household. This makes it possible to determine the extent to which concentrations were kin networks. Of the 2,188 German immigrants living in Utrecht between 1849 and 1879, 221 lived with an adult family member (over the age of 15) in the same house (10 per cent). In most cases these were adult siblings living together. In 197 of the 221 cases (89 per cent) men or women lived with adult siblings. The rest lived with more distant relatives such as uncles and aunts, nephews and nieces or cousins. Brothers and sisters living together was more common than distant relatives. Out of the 197

people living with adult siblings, 78 were two or more brothers living together, and 75 were brothers and sisters living together. Combinations of two sisters were less common (44).

Men and women differed in the types of kin with whom they lived. Unmarried men tended to live with their unmarried brothers who worked in the same profession. For instance, there were several brothers who worked as stucco-workers and lived in the same household. Some of these brothers formed their own separate households. Others lived with their employer. The most common configuration was two or three men, who worked as traders or owned a shop, forming a household together. After a few years the brothers married and set up separate households. We do not find fraternities like this in a female configuration.

There were 70 young unmarried women who moved into the household of their older and already married sisters or brothers. Usually these women were recorded in the population registers as being without a profession. Amongst the men, we seldom find an unmarried brother moving into the household of a married brother or sister. Women living with an older sister or brother usually moved out of this household to marry. The young unmarried women did not move out of their sibling's household to become, for instance, shop assistants or domestic servants. The kinship ties were, apparently, in these cases not mobilized towards finding work, but rather to finding a husband.

Some of the file-makers and stucco-workers lived with their employers or in lodgings provided by their employers. The nature of file-making enforced spatial concentration. File-makers were supplied with iron rods, probably from Germany. These would have been transported by water. The file-makers used water-powered grindstones and the use of water power was only an option in one part of the town. Furthermore, they needed water for cooling the files while they were being processed. In the course of the production process the file-makers polluted the water with chemicals. These characteristics of the industry confined the file-makers to a neighbourhood near the water at the north side of the town in district M, when the river had already passed the city, rather than at the south side where the river entered the town.

The stucco-workers all came from the Duchy of Oldenburg (not the town). A few masters lived in Utrecht permanently. In the summer season they recruited a large group of workers from a few villages south of the town of Oldenburg. The seasonally migrating stucco-workers, who also travelled within the Netherlands during the season as we have seen, were housed by their employers. This explains the concentration amongst them.

In contrast, railway workers lived in many areas of the town. Married railway workers did on occasion board younger unmarried male

colleagues. Almost all the German prostitutes worked for one German woman who owned a brothel in the centre of the town.

Westerwalder traders concentrated in a neighbourhood consisting of small and dilapidated houses. I have described this community at some length elsewhere.²⁸ Westerwalder traders came from the so-called high Westerwald, mostly from the neighbouring villages of Ransbach and Baumbach. With the Westerwalder migrants we encounter the phenomenon Kamphoefner has labelled 'transplanted' villages.²⁹

The Westerwalders – contrary to many of the other German immigrants – did often migrate with their families. Westerwalders' families tended to be large. Westerwalders married young and had many children. Small houses and large families meant that there was little possibility of taking in kin or lodgers. The Westerwalders clustered together in a few streets where they formed a tightly knit group connected by many and complicated family ties. Within this community, siblings were next-door neighbours, but they did not live under the same roof. In this case cohabitation was not important and residential proximity was. There were hardly any Westerwalders living outside this small neighbourhood. Newcomers from the Westerwald found housing within this neighbourhood without having previously lived elsewhere in the town.

The neighbourhood in which the Westerwalders concentrated was located near the water. Down the river goods were transported to them from their native Westerwald. The goods they sold – stoneware jars and pitchers – could only be produced in the Westerwald because they required a special type of clay that was only found there. Apart from small houses, the neighbourhood that they lived in also had several large storage houses where goods could be stored. Until 1866 a tax had to be paid for goods brought into Utrecht. Since the Westerwalders sold their goods not only in Utrecht but also elsewhere, it was advantageous to store goods just outside the (former) city wall where the tax was not levied.

The Westerwalder community was much larger than could be expected in a town the size of Utrecht. Although the town was a centre of trade, it could not support hundreds of pedlars in stoneware, even if they went from Utrecht to other towns as well. At a certain point in time the community itself, rather than the possibilities for gainful trade, may have become an attraction for Westerwalder immigrants who hoped to find some support there from relatives or former neighbours from their native villages.

The German shopkeepers in Utrecht came from the Catholic Münsterland in Oldenburg. In the town centre, there were some very large shops built and owned by German immigrants. The shopkeepers housed their assistants in large boarding houses next to or above the shops. In the boarding houses we find not only German assistants but also assistants

from Belgium, France, England and the Netherlands. The German shop assistants mostly came from Münsterland and, like their employers, were all Catholic. Their region of origin was much larger than that of the Westerwalders. Moreover, the course of time the region of origin expanded. The turnover amongst the shop assistants was high. In a 30-year period, 253 shop assistants passed through one of the boarding houses belonging to the German immigrant Sinkel. As has been said above, some of the assistants stayed only for a few months, then moved on to other Dutch towns and returned for another stay of a few months. Other assistants lived in the boarding house for longer periods, but seldom for more than four years. Sinkel's boarding house could accommodate 70 assistants at a time (both men and women). This was the largest boarding house in Utrecht. Others had a capacity to house 10 to 12 at a time. The percentage of Germans amongst the shop assistants differed per shop and over time. In the boarding houses of shops that existed longer, the percentage of Germans was lower (declining from 50 to 10 per cent).

The shop assistants had long working hours, also working in the evenings and on Sundays. Within the boarding houses the landlord monitored their movements. Assistants had to be in before ten in the evening and it was seen to that they went to church on Sunday. The assistants had free food and lodging, but almost no pay. For the female assistants the boarding houses offered a safe environment from which to explore their new surroundings, while at the same time the profession of shop assistant was looked upon more highly than that of domestic servant. For male assistants, the time in the boarding houses was usually a step towards setting up a shop of their own. The advantage for the employer was that he had a cheap and reliable workforce.

In Utrecht there were about 100 German domestic servants. German domestic servants, like other domestic servants, lived with the families for whom they worked. German domestic servants did not concentrate in certain neighbourhoods. They could be found in all parts of the town, although understandably more in the somewhat richer streets. The population registers show that both the domestic servants who came straight from German regions and those who had previously lived elsewhere in the Netherlands moved in directly with their new employers, without previously living in temporary housing. There were no boarding houses for domestics.

The fact that almost all domestic servants came from the same region suggests that family ties or other connections were important for finding work. Domestics, who had access to the family's silverware, will have found work more easily if they came with a recommendation. One in six of the domestic servants had female relatives within Utrecht. In most cases

these were sisters working as domestic servants in different households (9 per cent had a sister in Utrecht but did not live with her under the same roof; 6 per cent of the domestics lived for some time with a sister in the household of her employer).

IV. CONCLUSION

Much more can be said about the German community in Utrecht than this article allows. Here the choice has been to focus on the concentration of Germans in specific neighbourhoods. The explanation for the absence of 'Little Germanys' lies in the heterogeneity of the German immigrant community. This community was not homogeneous in religious, ethnical or class terms.

Although 'Little Germanys' did not exist, some concentrations did occur. From the above account it should be clear that a common religion or a shared regional background did not automatically lead to concentrations. Neither were concentrations simply class-related. A combination of religion and regional background with a shared profession sometimes did result in concentrations, but not in all cases. We do not find concentrations amongst the domestic servants. Although they had a shared religion, regional background and profession, their job made it impossible for them to live near each other. The railway workers did not have a shared religion, or a common regional background. They could have gained some advantage by living near the railway station or near the railways' head offices. Some did indeed choose to do so, but others lived elsewhere in town and they moved very frequently.

With the Westerwalders the nature of their trade enforced residential proximity. Family migration and the possibility for men and women to work within the same profession increased group coherence. In the case of the file-makers the nature of their profession was also important in placing their business on the north side of the town. Some of the file-makers were housed by their employers. The residence patterns of the shopkeepers and their assistants were influenced by a combination of factors. The shops were concentrated on the major shopping street; boarding houses were built with the shops. Long hours made it convenient for the employees to be housed near the shops. Offering board and bed gave the shopkeepers control over the mobile population. With the stucco-workers we find similar factors, but the size of the group was smaller in accordance with the smaller demand for stucco-workers.

In summary, I found that a common regional background and a shared religion are not sufficient to explain concentrations of immigrant housing. I found that having a shared occupation was an important factor, but

only if that occupation itself encouraged concentration within a certain neighbourhood.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Aaron S. Fogleman, 'Immigration, German immigration and eighteenth-century America', in Eberhard Reichmann, La Vern J. Rippley and Jörg Nagler eds., *Emigration and settlement patterns of German communities in North America* (Indianapolis, 1995), 3–22, 11.
- 2 Robert Paul McCaffery, *Islands of Deutschtum: German-Americans in Manchester, New Hampshire and Lawrence, Massachusetts, 1870–1942* (New York, 1996), 5.
- 3 This article is based on my book, Marlou Schrover, *Een kolonie van Duitsers. Groepsvorming onder Duitse immigranten in Utrecht in de negentiende eeuw* (Amsterdam, 2002). See also Clé Lesger, Leo Lucassen and Marlou Schrover, 'Is there life outside the migrant network? German immigrants in 19th century Netherlands and the need for a more balanced migration typology', *Annales de Démographie Historique* (2002), 29–50; Marlou Schrover, 'Women and long distance trade migration in the nineteenth-century Netherlands', in Pamela Sharpe ed., *Women, gender and labour migration* (London, 2001), 85–107; Marlou Schrover, 'Immigrant business and niche formation in a historical perspective: the Netherlands in the nineteenth century', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 27, 2 (April 2001), 295–311; Marlou Schrover, 'German communities in nineteenth-century Utrecht; factors influencing the settlement process', *IMIS-Beiträge* 14 (2000), 45–74.
- 4 Stanley Nadel, *Little Germany: ethnicity, religion, and class in New York City, 1845–84* (Urbana and Chicago, 1990), 32. See also Panikos Panayi, *German immigrants in Britain during the nineteenth century 1815–1914* (Oxford and Washington, 1995); Robert Paul McCaffery, *Islands of Deutschtum: German-Americans in Manchester, New Hampshire and Lawrence, Massachusetts, 1870–1942* (New York, 1996); and Gesa Snell, *Deutsche Immigranten in Kopenhagen 1800–1870. Eine Minderheit zwischen Akzeptanz und Ablehnung* (Münster, 1999).
- 5 Neighbourhoods are administrative districts, as administrators in the population registers and census-takers in the census defined them.
- 6 Schrover, *Een kolonie van Duitsers*, 95.
- 7 The population registers are kept in the municipal archive, Utrecht.
- 8 For a detailed description of the population registers, see Marlou Schrover, 'Registratie van vreemdelingen in het bevolkingsregister (1850–1920)', in Marlou Schrover ed., *Bronnen betreffende de registratie van vreemdelingen in Nederland in de negentiende en twintigste eeuw* (The Hague, 2002).
- 9 For the tax data see the Utrecht Archive, city archive 4, 5/250/60.
- 10 Schrover, *Een kolonie van Duitsers*, 74.
- 11 Prostitution was not illegal in the Netherlands. Women working as prostitutes (and over the age of 21) were separately registered by the police. Their health was checked every month and all their moves were recorded precisely. In the police registers it was also recorded if a prostitute fell ill, contracted a venereal disease, delivered a child or died. The average number of women working as prostitutes was 24, their average age at death 31. Women may of course have disappeared from the registers because they changed profession, for instance became brothel-keepers (90 per cent of the brothels were kept by women). See Schrover, *Een kolonie van Duitsers*, 199.
- 12 Comparison is difficult because German domestic servants were on average older than Dutch domestic servants were. It was mostly the younger domestic servants who

- changed employer every year. Amongst the domestic servants born and working in Utrecht at age 16, 80 per cent changed employer within a year. Cases of German domestic servants serving more than 20 years all relate to those who came to Utrecht when they were over 25.
- 13 Charles Tilly, 'Transplanted network', in Virginia Yans-McLaughlin ed., *Immigration reconsidered: history, sociology, and politics* (New York and Oxford, 1990), 79–95.
 - 14 The American historian L. A. Kattner found that some German immigrants tended to marry immigrants from the same region of origin more than other German immigrants did. She identified Germans from Nassau as an example for a group with a strong regional endogamy. See Lauren Ann Kattner, 'Land and marriage: German regional reflections in four Texas towns, 1845–1860', in Eberhard Reichmann, La Vern J. Rippley and Jörg Nagler eds., *Emigration and settlement patterns of German communities in North America* (Indianapolis, 1995), 237–57, 237, 240.
 - 15 Joy K. Lintelman, 'Making services serve themselves: immigrant women and domestic service in North America, 1850–1920', in Dirk Hoerder and Jörg Nagler eds., *People in transit: German migrations in comparative perspective, 1820–1930* (Cambridge, 1995), 249–65.
 - 16 It was women working in prostitution who were primarily responsible for the significantly greater number of German women in the transport sector.
 - 17 The employers complained endlessly that they could not get enough workers. In 1859 the biggest factory had to decline orders because it could not get workers; see Schrover, *Een kolonie van Duitsers*, 202.
 - 18 Ad Knotter, *Economische transformatie en stedelijke arbeidsmarkt. Amsterdam in de tweede helft van de negentiende eeuw* (Amsterdam, 1991); Jan Erik Burger and Peter Berntsen, 'De Duitse immigratie naar Amsterdam in de 19e eeuw', *Ons Amsterdam* 38, 3 (March 1986), 59–64, 62.
 - 19 Panayi, *German immigrants in Britain*, 131.
 - 20 Snell, *Deutsche Immigranten in Kopenhagen*, 102, 105.
 - 21 Snell, *Deutsche Immigranten in Kopenhagen*, 105.
 - 22 Dorothee Schneider, 'The German bakers of New York city: between ethnic particularism and working-class consciousness', in Camille Guerin-Gonzales and Carl Strikwerda eds., *The politics of immigrant workers: labor activism and migration in the world economy since 1830* (New York and London, 1993), 49–70, 50.
 - 23 R. Rommes, *Oost, west, Utrecht best? Driehonderd jaar migratie en immigranten in de stad Utrecht (begin 16^e – begin 19^e eeuw)* (Utrecht, 1998).
 - 24 Jelle-Jaap van Lottum, 'Nieuwkomers in Nederland in de eerste helft van de 19e eeuw. Een onderzoek op basis van de volkstellingen in Utrecht van 1829 en 1839', unpublished thesis, Free University (VU), Amsterdam, 2002, 98.
 - 25 In the 1870s newspapers in Utrecht frequently advertised jobs for tailors and similar professions. See Schrover, *Een kolonie van Duitsers*, 216.
 - 26 The letter J was not used because of the risk of confusion with the letter I.
 - 27 Carl Denig, *Utrecht van het ancien régime tot nieuwe tijd. De bewoning van de Utrechtse binnenstad in haar ruimtelijke structuur, 1793–1891* (Utrecht, 1995).
 - 28 Schrover, 'Women and long distance trade migration in the nineteenth-century Netherlands', 85–107; Schrover, 'Immigrant business and niche formation in a historical perspective, 295–311'; Schrover, 'German communities in nineteenth-century Utrecht', 45–74.
 - 29 See Walter D. Kamphoefner, *The Westfalians: from Germany to Missouri* (Princeton, 1987).