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Longitudinal database on immigrants

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Paper for the EAPS Population Conference, 21 – 24 June 2006,
Liverpool, United Kingdom

Abstract

It has become more difficult for asylum migrants to find a job. About 30 percent of male immigrants who arrived in the Netherlands in 1999 had a job in 2003. For asylum migrants who came to the country in 1995, 40 percent had a job four years later. The lower labour participation of more recent immigrants is related to the less favourable situation on the Dutch labour market. Family reunion migrants and (especially) family forming migrants are more likely to find work than asylum migrants. This is partly because asylum procedures often take such a long time to be completed and because asylum seekers are only allowed to work under strict conditions before they have a residence permit. Until 1998, they were not allowed to work at all. On the other hand, dependence on social benefits shows a more favourable picture for recent asylum migrants than for those who have been living in the Netherlands for a longer time. Nearly 35 percent of male asylum migrants who arrived in the Netherlands in 1995 were claiming benefit, mostly income support, four years later. For asylum migrants arriving in 1999, 30 percent had a benefit four years later.

1. Introduction

Immigration of non-Dutch nationals to the Netherlands comprises mainly asylum migrants, family forming migrants (marriage migrants), family reunion migrants and labour migrants. Others arrive in the Netherlands for reasons of study, as au pair, trainee or for a medical treatment. There is a lot of discussion about the integration of

(non-western) immigrants and their descendants.

Indicators of integration often mentioned are related to, for example, level of education, having a job, dependence on social benefits and the significance of social contacts between native Dutch people and foreign born people (especially mixed marriages).

In this paper labour participation and dependence on social benefits of immigrants who registered in the municipal population registers between 1990 and 2003 will be analysed. From their arrival in the Netherlands, annual changes in the labour market position of asylum migrants, family reunion migrants and family forming migrants will be described.

The socioeconomic position of immigrants can be well explained from relevant labour market characteristics of the persons involved such as level of education and job experience. Immigrants from western countries often come to the Netherlands as (higher educated) labour migrants. As a result, they are claiming social benefits to a less extent. Non-western immigrants often arrive as family migrants or asylum migrants, have a relatively low level of education and more often claim social benefits. There is a big difference in the labour market position between labour migrants and asylum migrants when they arrive in the Netherlands. Labour migrants arrive for work, whereas asylum migrants had to go through a time-consuming asylum procedure in the 1990s and were not allowed to work at all or (since 1998) only under strict conditions. Asylum migrants and family migrants do need a certain period of time after they arrive in the Netherlands in order to take language and integration courses.

The socioeconomic position of immigrants will be described on the basis of data from the so-called *Panel of immigrants*, a longitudinal database with socioeconomic data on immigrants.

2. Panel of immigrants

Our longitudinal database on immigrants includes immigrants who arrived in the Netherlands between 1990 and 2003, with the exception of those immigrants who left the country, have been naturalised or died before 1 January 1998. Information on the labour market position of these immigrants is available for the period 1999 - 2003. A distinction can be made between variables like age, sex, country of birth and the reason for the migration.

The distinction between reasons for migration, such as asylum, labour, family reunion and marriage, is based on administrative data from Central Register of non-Dutch nationals from the Ministry of Justice in the Netherlands. This data has, at the individual level, been linked with data from the Dutch local population registers. In the next step, this combined database is linked to the *Social Statistics Dataset* (SSD). The SSD is primarily based on register information and data from business and household surveys which is not available in registers. The registers contain demographic data, income tax data, data on labour market participation, the dependence on social security benefits, participation in education and housing facilities.

By combining several registers, and by linking information on persons, jobs and social benefits over several years, people can be followed up for a couple of years.

The combined database offers opportunities to analyse the labour market position of immigrants and the dynamics in these positions. Not every person is represented in every year of the analysis. There is, of course, outflow from the panel due to return migration and mortality and there is inflow into the panel from immigrants.

Our analysis is based on three socioeconomic categories – people with a job, people depending on social benefits and others – in accordance with the main source of income in the year concerned. For example, someone who had a benefit for part of the year but who received most of his or her income from work in that year is classed as having a job, not as having a benefit.

3. Immigrants by migration motive

Asylum migrants

Not everyone who applies for asylum in the Netherlands is granted residence here. Those who are allowed to stay and are therefore officially asylum migrants are usually only registered in the municipal population register some time after their application for asylum.

They are registered in the municipal population register at the moment they receive a residence permit and leave the reception centre. Asylum seekers who live in a reception centre for longer than six months are also registered in the municipal population register.

Labour migrants

In the discussions on labour migration one often thinks about the ‘guest workers’ in the sixties who came from Turkey, Morocco and other Mediterranean countries. Especially in the second half of the 1960s thousands of immigrants from these countries came to the Netherlands to make a living. In recent years labour migrants mainly arrive from Western European countries and other prosperous countries such as Japan and the United States. The majority of the labour migrants in the Netherlands is coming from countries of the European Union, especially the United Kingdom and Germany.

Family reunion migrants

Family reunion migration is migration to the Netherlands where the family already existed before the migration, and where one or more family members join an immigrant who arrived earlier. Family migration is often preceded by labour migration (family reunion of Turks and Moroccans is a well-known example in the Netherlands), or by asylum migration. If family members (for example of a labour migrant) immigrate in the same year as the labour migrant, these family members are considered to be accompanying family members. In this paper, they are regarded as family reunionists.

Family forming migration (marriage migration)

Marriage migrants are people who come to the Netherlands to marry or cohabit with an immigrant who arrived earlier. Relatively many Turks and Moroccans seek a marriage partner in their country of origin. Relationship formation is also an important motive for people immigrating from neighbouring countries. Marriage migration is only permitted if the person living in the Netherlands has sufficient income and appropriate housing.

Studenten

The number of students coming to the Netherlands is rising sharply. The transition to a *bachelor/master*-structure in September 2002 and the related international orientation of universities and colleges for higher education might have attracted increasing numbers of students to the Netherlands. In 2003 almost 12 percent of the total number of non-Dutch immigrants came to the Netherlands to study here.

4. Immigrant cohorts by socio-economic category and year of arrival

The labour market position of labour migrants, asylum migrants, family reunion migrants and marriage migrants will be discussed in the next paragraphs. It involves 15-64 year-olds immigrants who have been registered as immigrants in the municipal population registers between 1990 and 2003. We distinguish between people with a job (employed persons or self-employed), people with a benefit (unemployment benefit, income support, disability benefit or otherwise) and other people (including people with no income at all).

The classification by socioeconomic category is based on the main source of income in the year concerned. For example, someone who had a benefit for part of the year but who received most of his or her income from work in that year is classed as having a job, not as having a benefit. Of course, the opposite is also possible.

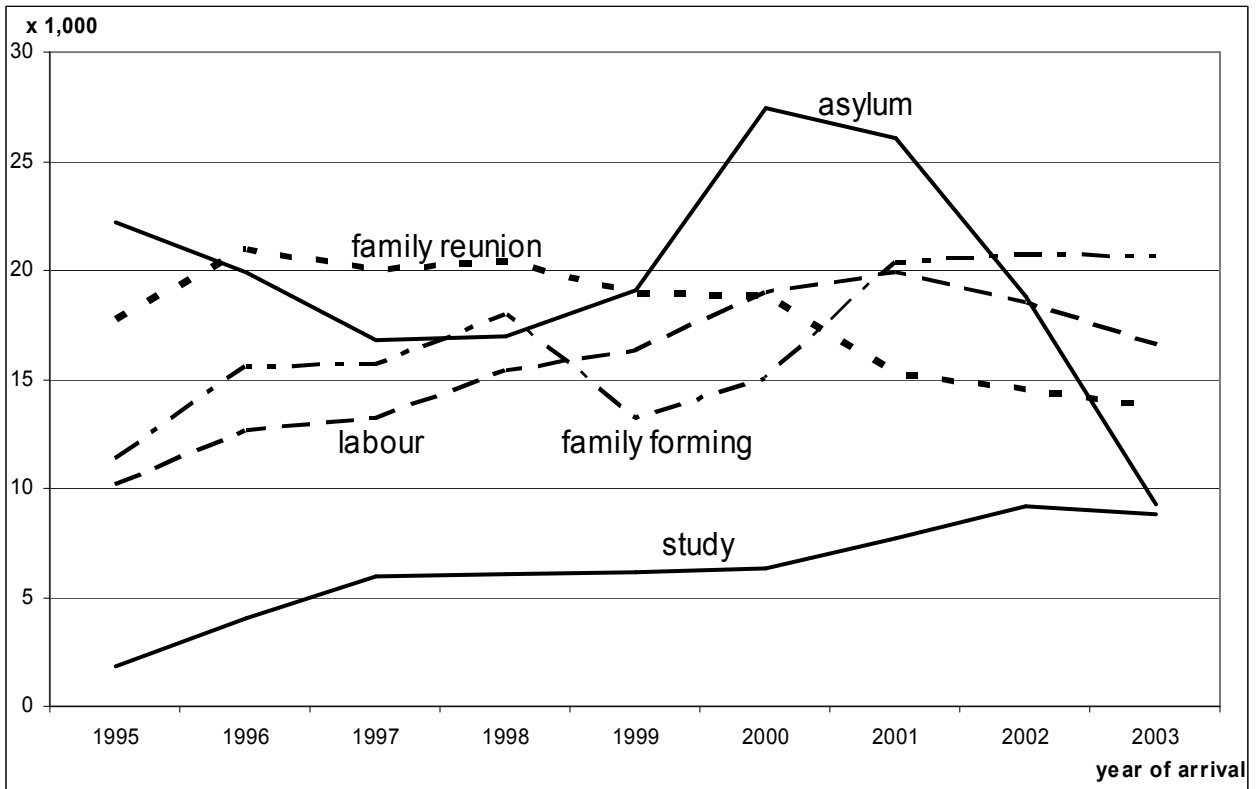
Recent immigrants with a benefit usually have income support. As immigrants are generally young, the number of persons with a disability benefit is small. Considering the fact they do not have any employment record in the Netherlands, the same applies to the number of persons with an unemployment benefit.

5. Labour migrants

As a result of the economic boom at the end of the nineties, the number of labour migrants nearly doubled from 10.2 thousand in 1995 to 20.0 thousand in 2001 (*graph 1*). Partly due to the less favourable economic situation in the years that followed, 16.6 thousand labour migrants came to the Netherlands in 2003. About 60 percent of the labour migrants came from one of the EU-countries, especially from the United Kingdom and Germany. Furthermore, 10 percent of the labour migrants arrived from one of the non-European OECD-countries (Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand and the United States).

Graph 1

Immigration of non-Dutch nationals by migration motive, 1995-2003

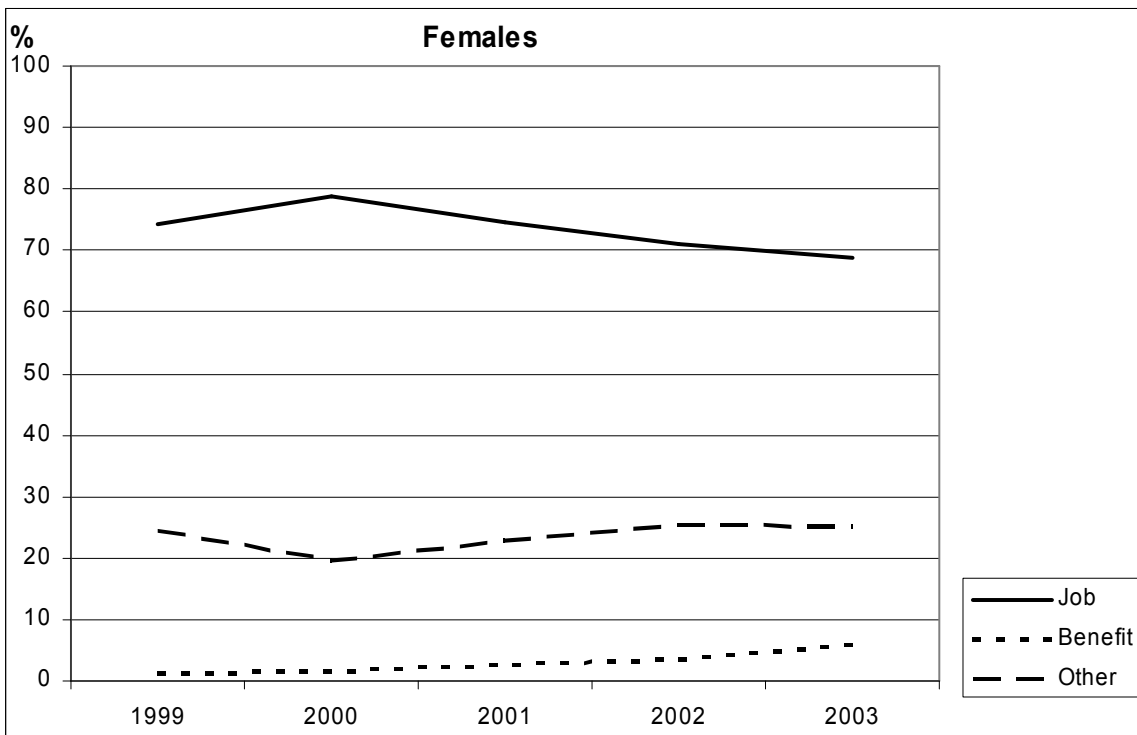
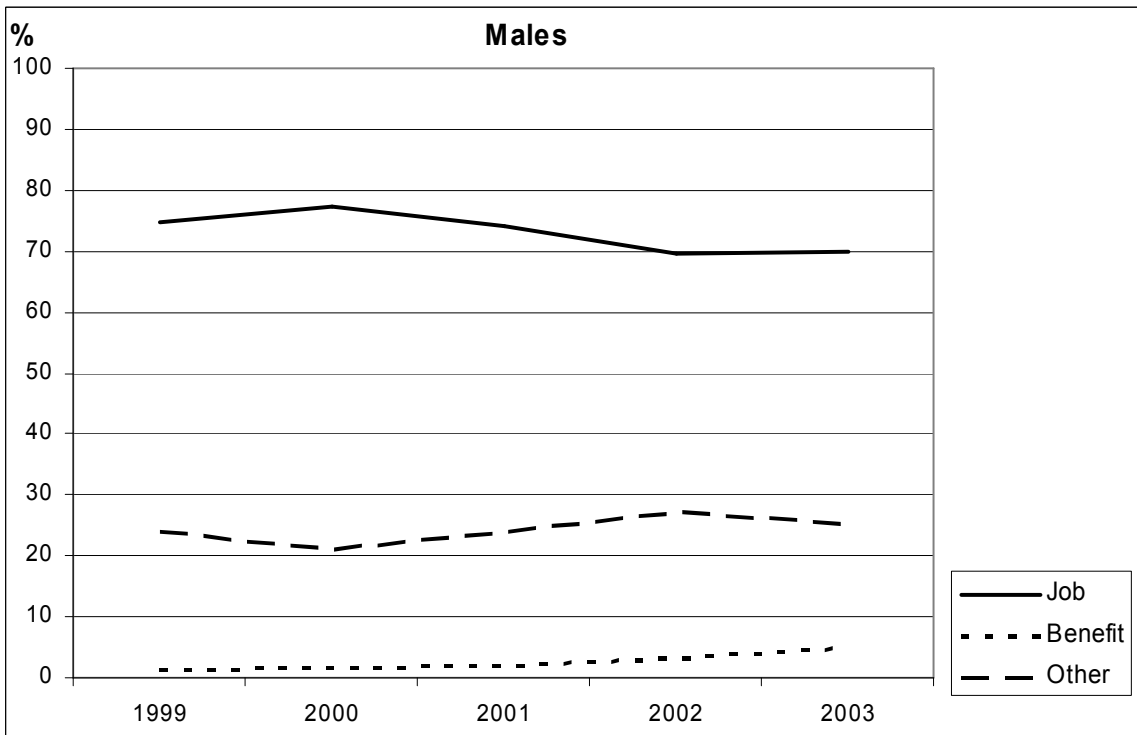


Source: Central Register of non-Dutch nationals, compilation by Statistics Netherlands.

From *graph 2* it appears that for a substantial part of the labour migrants who came to the Netherlands in 1999, 'labour' is not the main source of income. This is quite remarkable because these immigrants came to the Netherlands for that reason. One reason might be the fact that the Immigration and Naturalisation Service registers accompanying family members of labour migrants as labour migrants (without a job), not as family migrants.

Graph 2

Labour migrants by socioeconomic category, year of arrival 1999



6. Asylum migrants

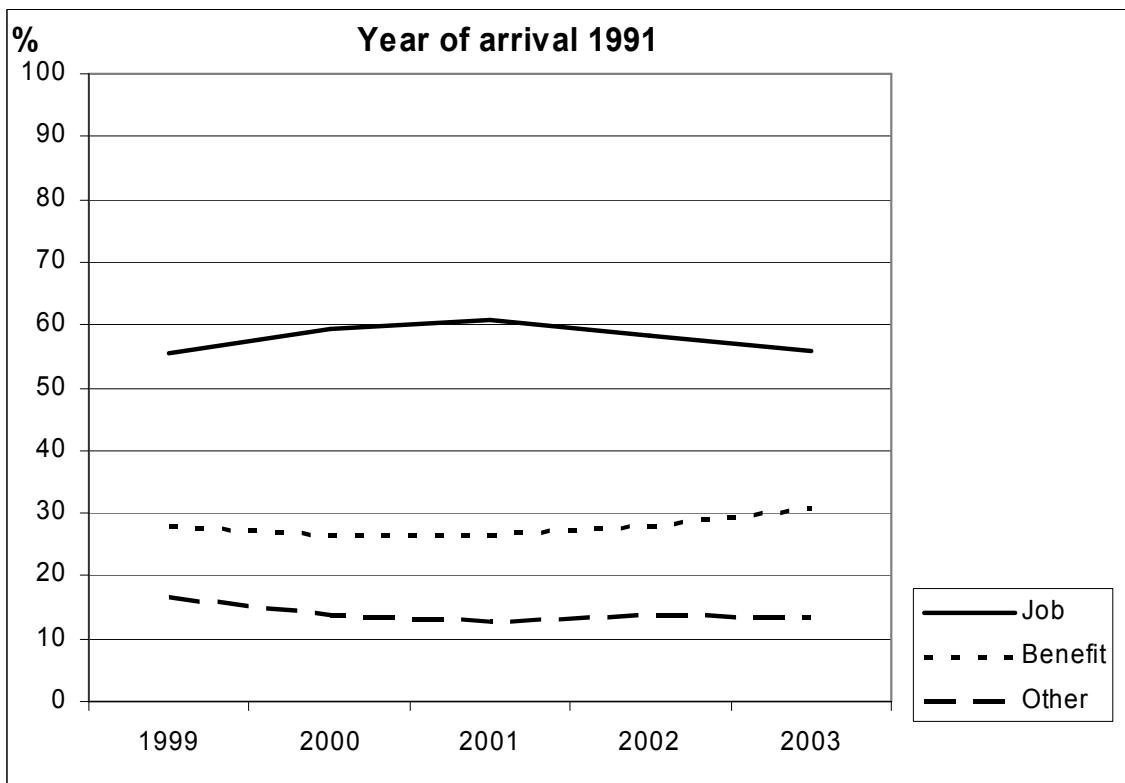
Not everyone who applies for asylum in the Netherlands is granted residence here. Those who are allowed to stay and are therefore officially asylum migrants are usually only registered in the municipal population register some time after their application for asylum.

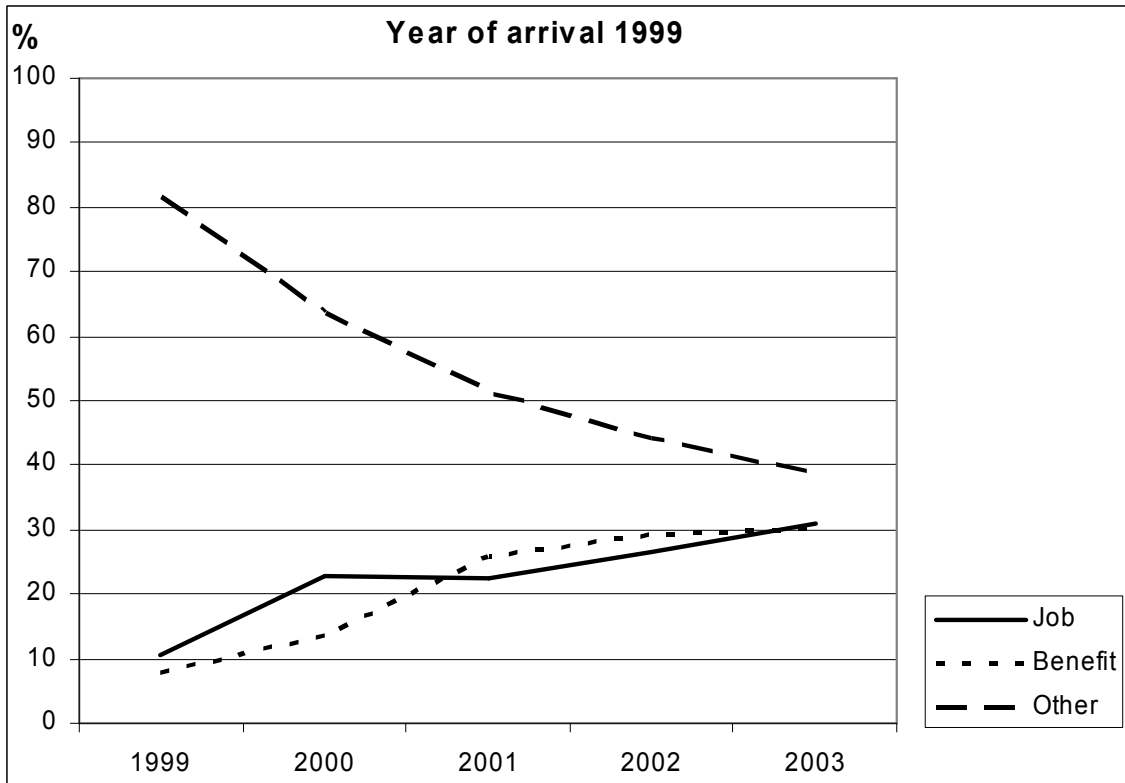
At the end of the nineties, the number of asylum migrants increased to 28 thousand in 2000 (graph 1). After that, their numbers fell sharply, partly because of developments in the main countries of origin (Afghanistan, Iraq), partly because of tightened rules for admittance of asylum seekers in the Netherlands. In 2003, 9 thousand asylum migrants were registered in the Netherlands. Rules concerning asylum seekers and their admittance constantly change. Until 1998, asylum seekers without a residence permit were not allowed to work. Since 1998, asylum seekers without a residence permit are allowed to work for a certain period only and only in some sectors of the labour market, such as seasonal work in agriculture.

Graphs 3 and 4 show the labour market position of male and female asylum migrants who have been registered in the municipal population registers in 1991 and 1999 respectively.

Graph 3

Male asylum migrants by socio-economic category, year of arrival 1991 and 1999





More than 60 percent of the male asylum migrants who registered in 1991 had a job ten years later (2000, 2001; graph 3). For females this was 40 percent (graph 4). In 2003 labour participation of males and females was a little lower, probably related to the less favourable situation on the Dutch labour market.

Dependence on social benefits shows a more favourable picture for recent asylum migrants (year of arrival 1999) than for those who have been living here for a longer time. This might have been the result of asylum seekers being granted a different status.

Relatively many provisional residence permits were granted in 1998 and 1999. In 1998 nearly half of asylum seekers were granted a provisional status. Unlike asylum seekers with a so-called A status (refuge status), they were not eligible for income support benefit.

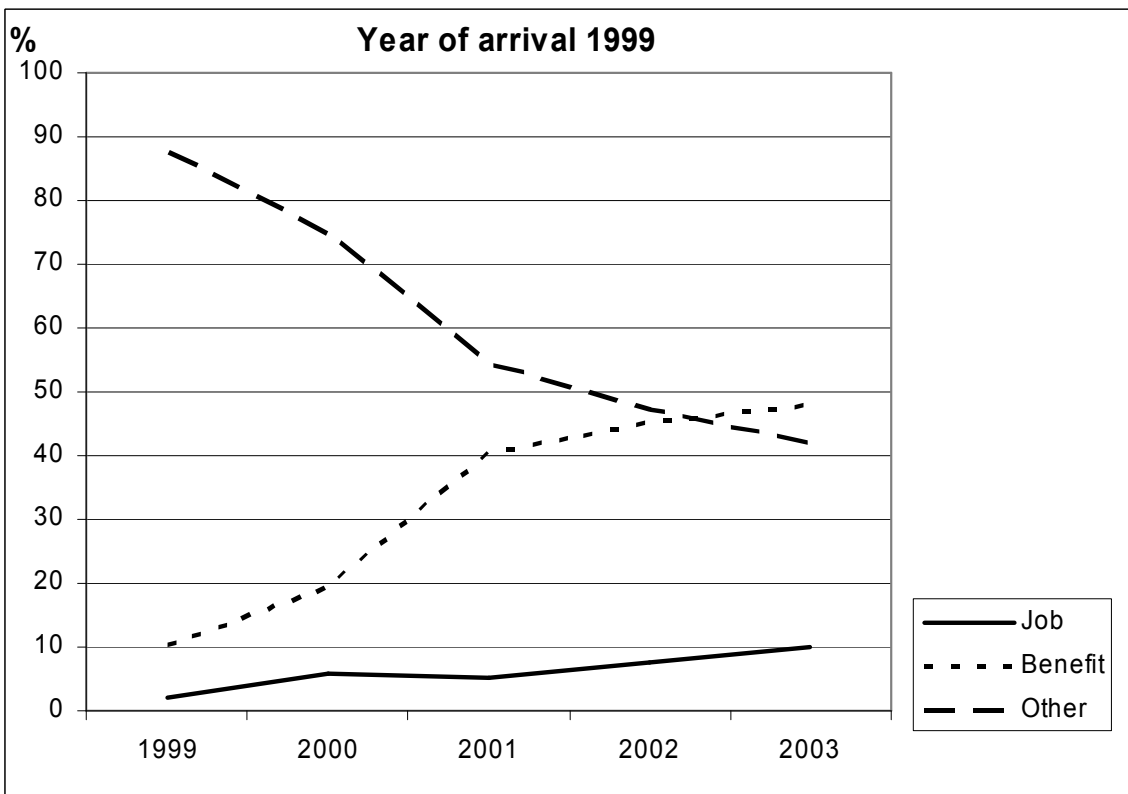
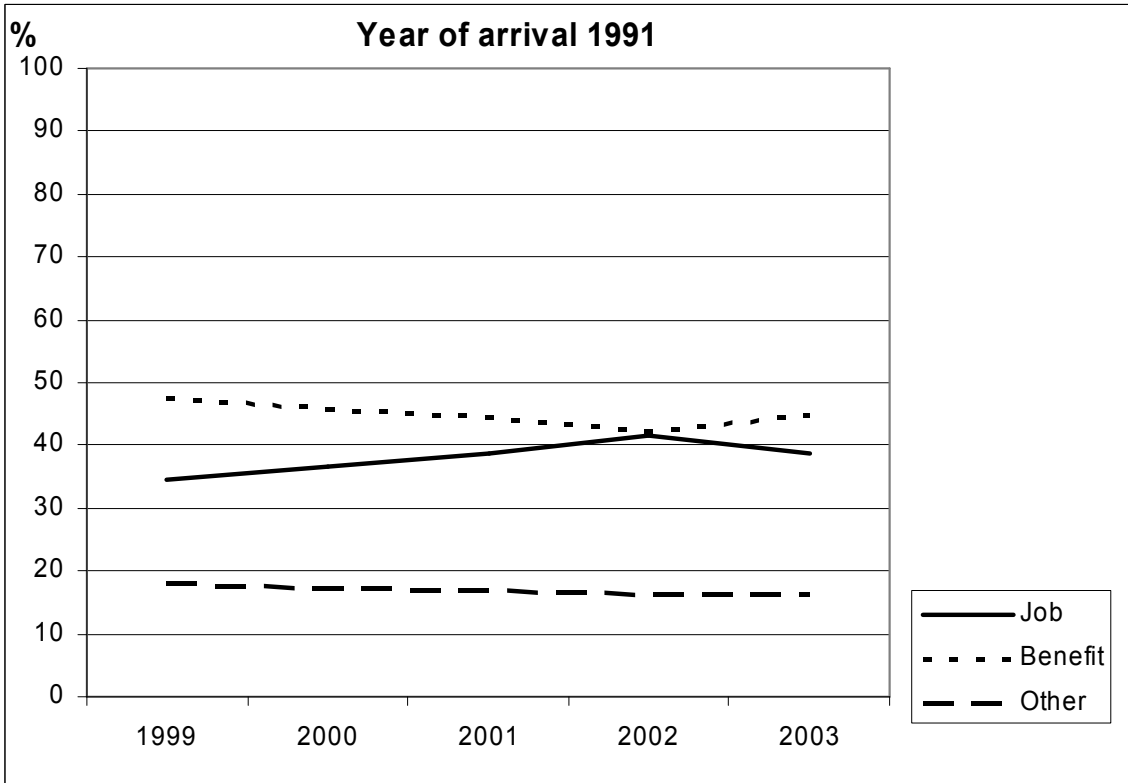
In 2001 the Foreigners Act was amended and asylum seekers who had a provisional status received a residence permit for a certain period. They were then also eligible for income support. This explains that, for both male and female asylum migrants who came here in 1999, dependence on benefit rose from 2000 to 2001.

The relatively low labour participation of asylum migrants who arrived in the Netherlands in 1999 may, apart from the less favourable economic situation in the Netherlands, also be related with asylum seekers being granted a different status.

In the first two years of their residence in the Netherlands, asylum migrants with a provisional residence permit were only allowed to do seasonal work for a maximum period of 12 weeks a year. It was only in the third year of their stay in the Netherlands that they were allowed full access to the Dutch labour market. Besides it is possible that, due to stricter regulations with respect to the admittance of asylum seekers, more and more asylum seekers get traumatised and face more problems to find a job.

Graph 4

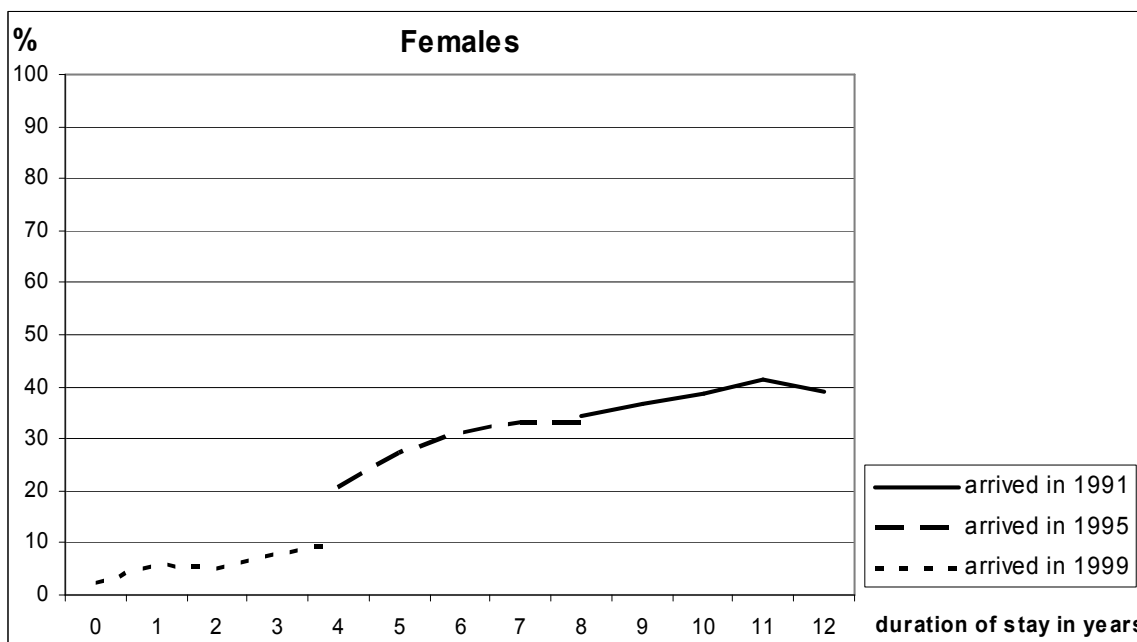
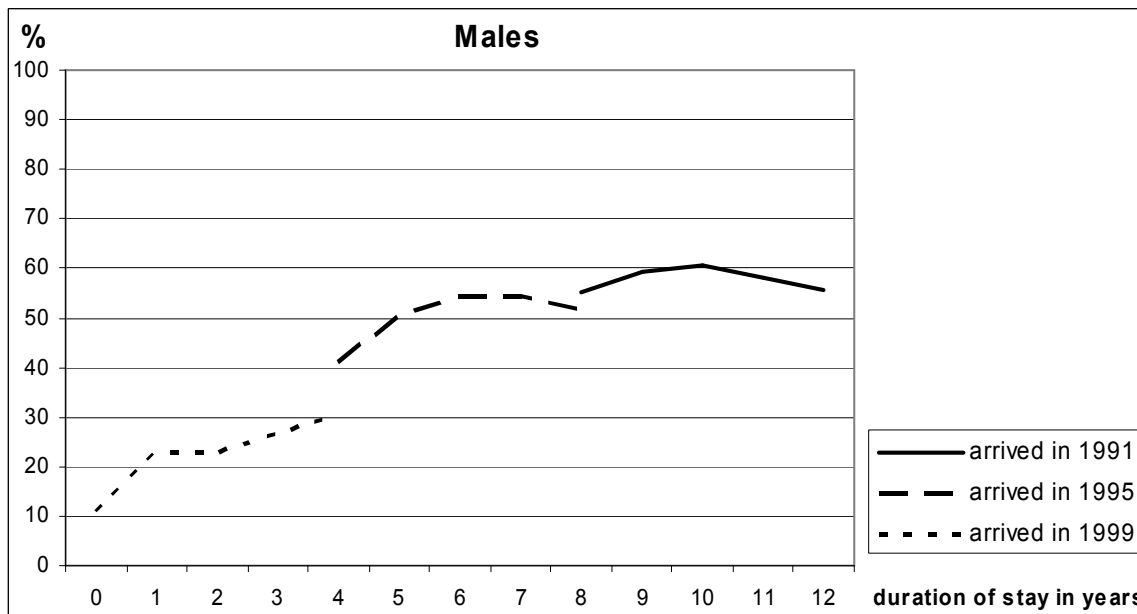
Female asylum migrants by socioeconomic category, year of arrival 1991 and 1999



Graph 5 shows the share of asylum migrants with a job by duration of stay in the Netherlands. For males and females respectively, asylum migrants with a job who arrived in 1991, 1995 and 1999 are presented.

Graph 5

Asylum migrants with job by duration of stay in the Netherlands



About 30 percent of male asylum migrants who arrived in the Netherlands in 1999 had a job in 2003, that means after a four year's stay. For male immigrants who came to the country in 1995, 40 percent had a job four years later. The impact of the less favourable economic situation in the Netherlands after 2001 also emerges from labour participation

rates of females: 20 percent of female asylum migrants who arrived in 1995 had a job after four years, whereas only 10 percent of female asylum migrants who came to the Netherlands in 1999 had a job four years later.

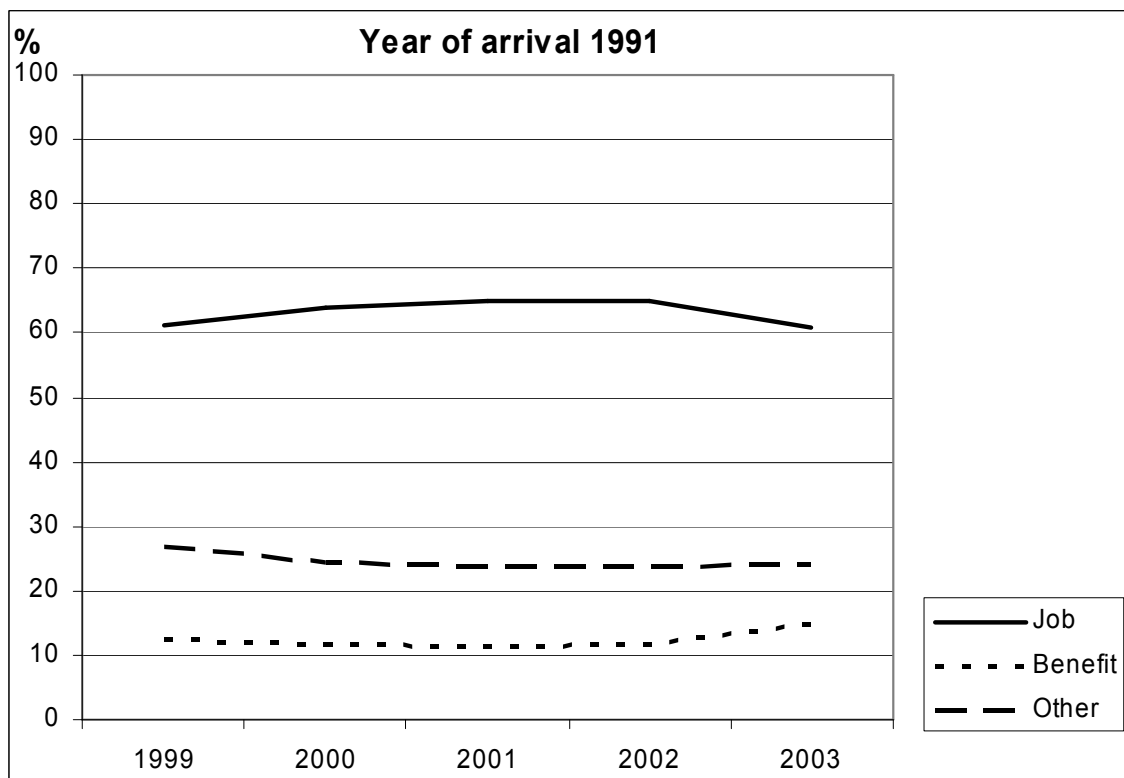
For comparison: 78 percent of male native Dutch people had a job in 2003. For female native Dutch this was 57 percent. However, this is not really a 'fair' comparison. Especially non-western immigrants do need a period of about two or three years in order to learn the Dutch language and (since 1998) to take an integration course.

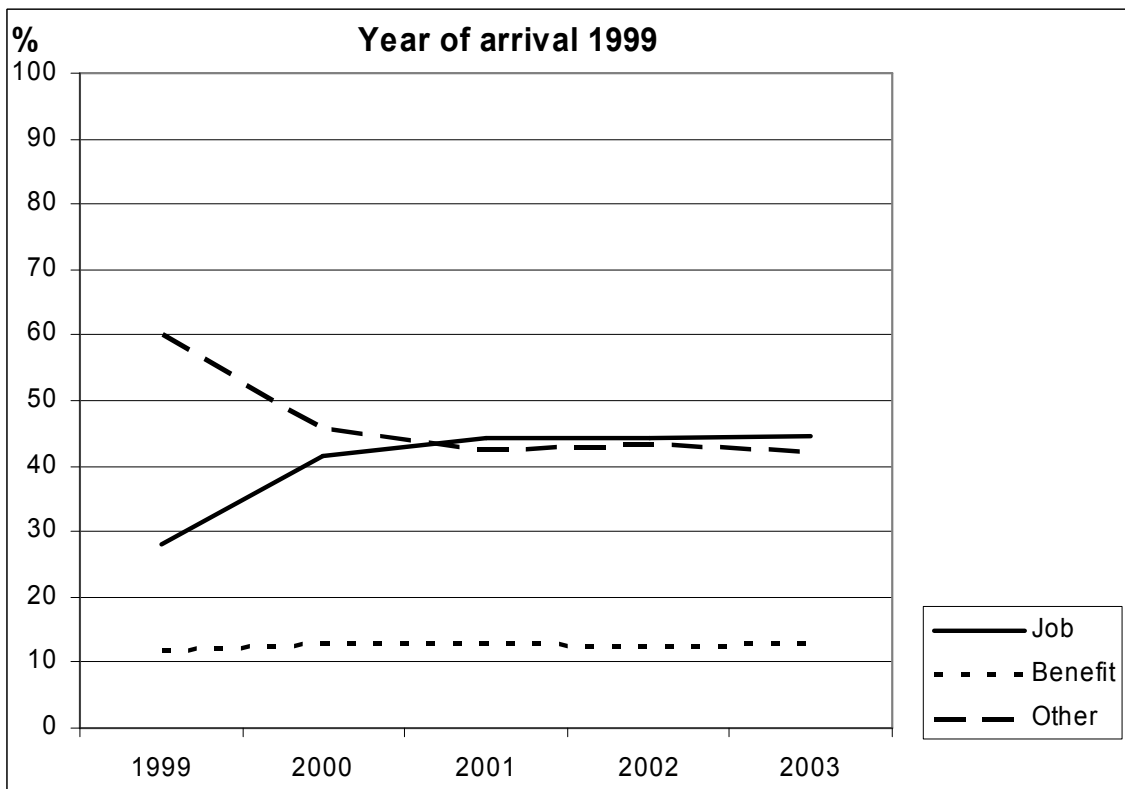
7. Family reunion immigrants

Since 1996 the number of family reunion migrants has decreased. In 1996 20.9 thousand family reunionists came to the Netherlands (including accompanying family members). In 2003 their number had fallen with 40 percent to 13.7 thousand (graph 1). Almost 30 percent of the family reunionists came from one of the countries of the European Union. Another 20 percent immigrated from Turkey or Morocco.

Graph 6

Male family reunion migrants by socioeconomic category, year of arrival 1991 and 1999



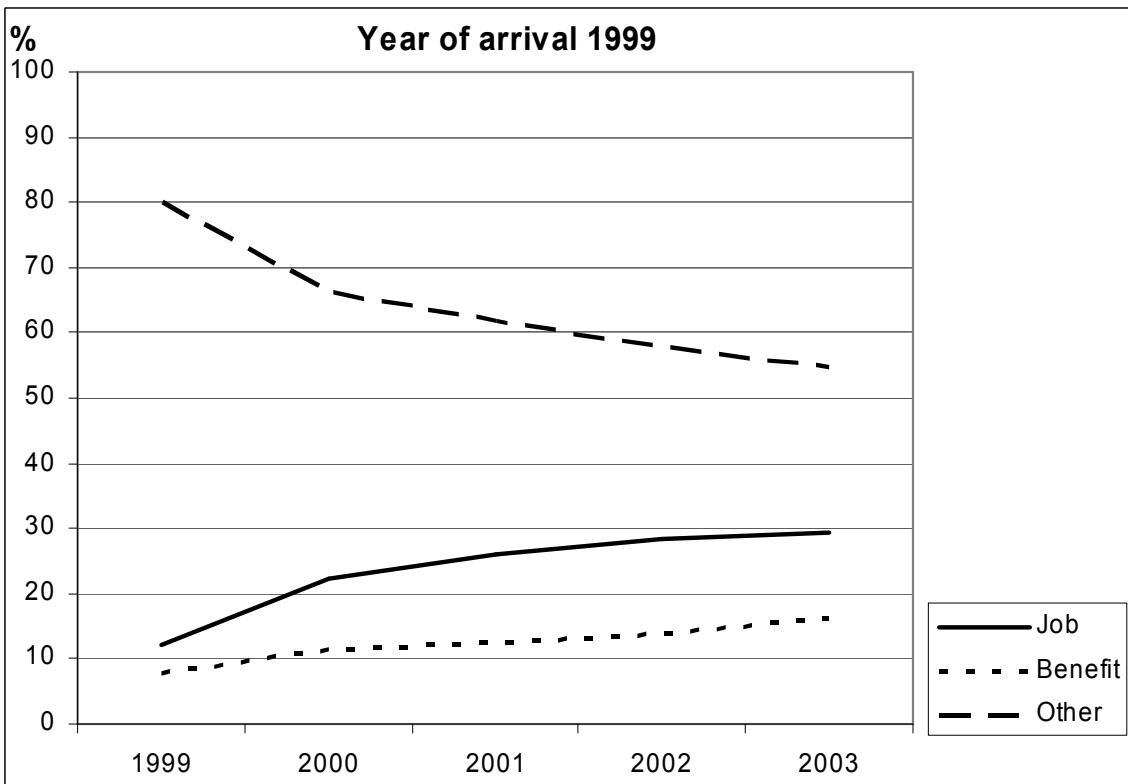
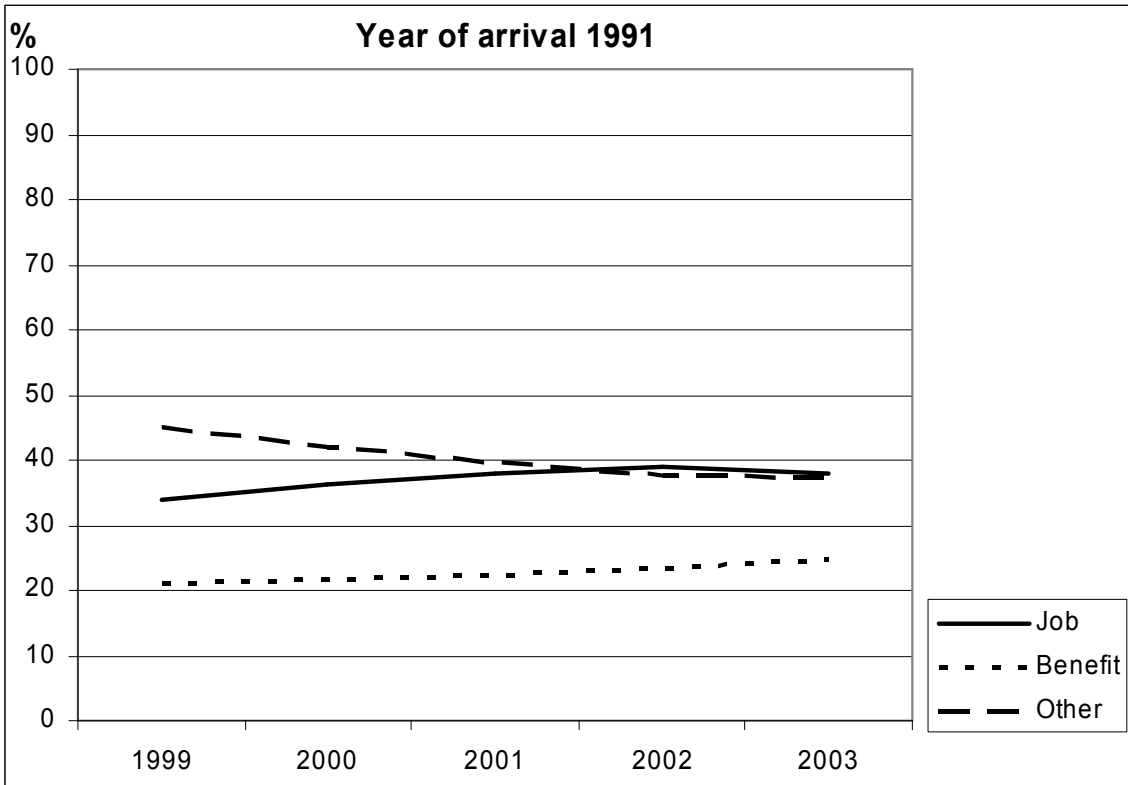


Every two out of three male family reunionists who came to the Netherlands in 1991 had a job ten years later (*graph 6*). For females this was 40 percent (*graph 7*). The lower labour participation of more recent family reunionists is probably related to the less favourable situation on the Dutch labour market.

More than 10 percent of male family reunionists were claiming benefit from the moment they arrived in the Netherlands. This seems to contravene the rules which prescribe that, in order to be considered as a family reunionist, one has to be able to support oneself. Some immigrants, however, such as people aged 57.5 and older and family reunionists of refugees and disabled persons, face less strict rules regarding income. Furthermore it is possible an immigrant has arrived at the beginning of a year and claims benefit at the end of the year.

Graph 7

Female family reunion migrants by socioeconomic category, year of arrival 1991 and 1999



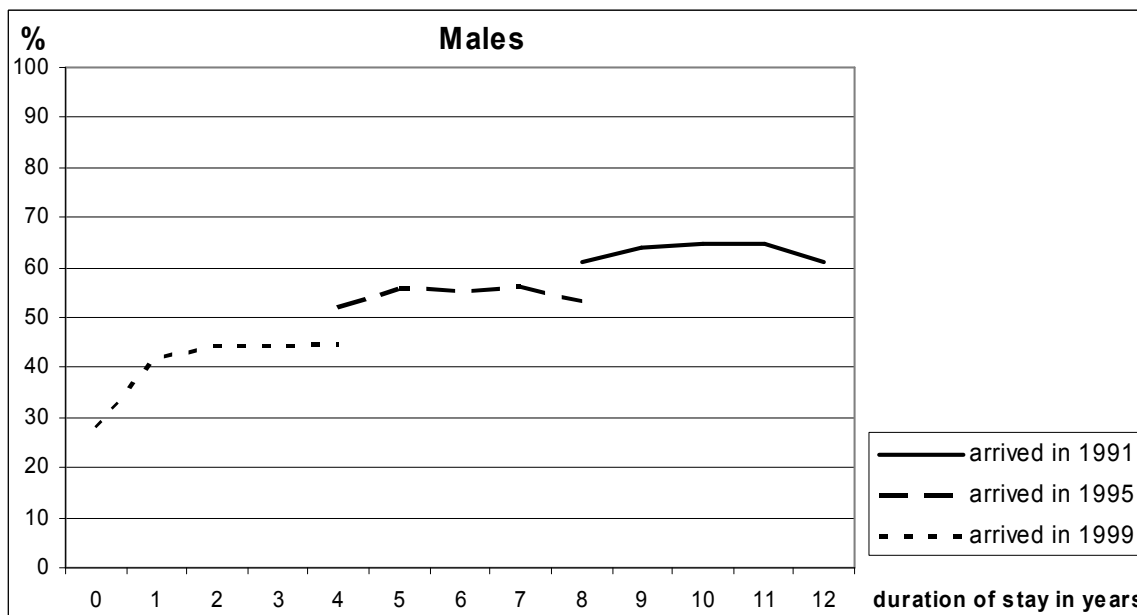
As with male family reunionists, labour participation rates of female family reunionists who came to the Netherlands at the end of the 1990s are lower than those of females who immigrated in more recent years, although the difference is smaller than that of male immigrants.

The less favourable economic situation in the Netherlands after 2001 is reflected in *graph 8* which presents the patterns of labour participation by duration of stay in the Netherlands for male family reunionists who came to the Netherlands in 1991, 1995 and 1999 respectively.

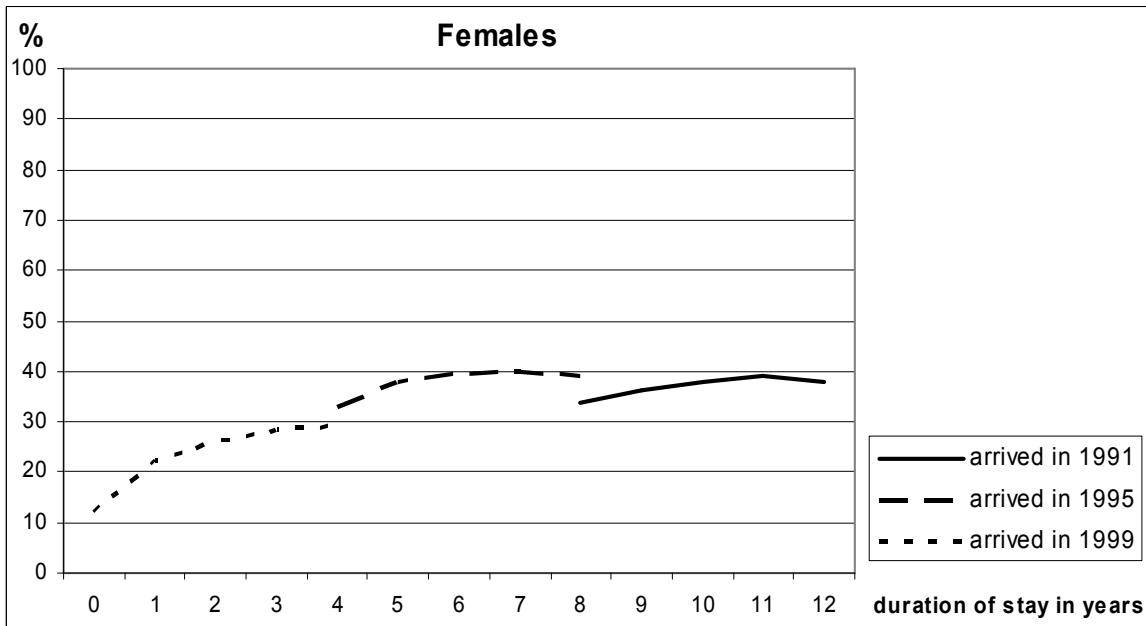
It is obvious that labour participation of more recent immigrants, in case of the same duration of stay, is much lower than that of immigrants who have been living here for a longer time. After a dazzling start when economy was booming, labour participation of male family reunionists who arrived in the Netherlands in 1999 came to a halt on a level below 50 percent.

Graph 8

Family reunion migrants with job by duration of stay in the Netherlands



The patterns for females are slightly different than those for males. Labour participation of female family reunionists who came to the Netherlands in 1995 is *higher* than that of females who arrived in the Netherlands in 1991. For males, this is just the other way around.



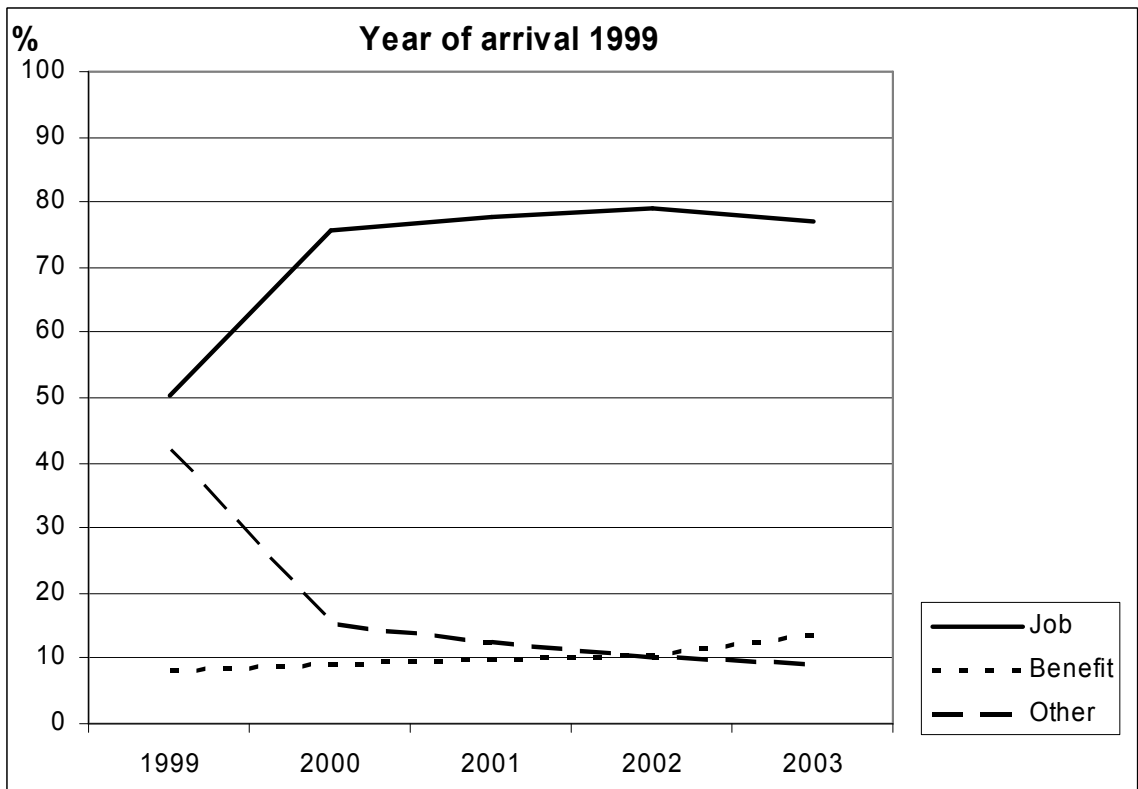
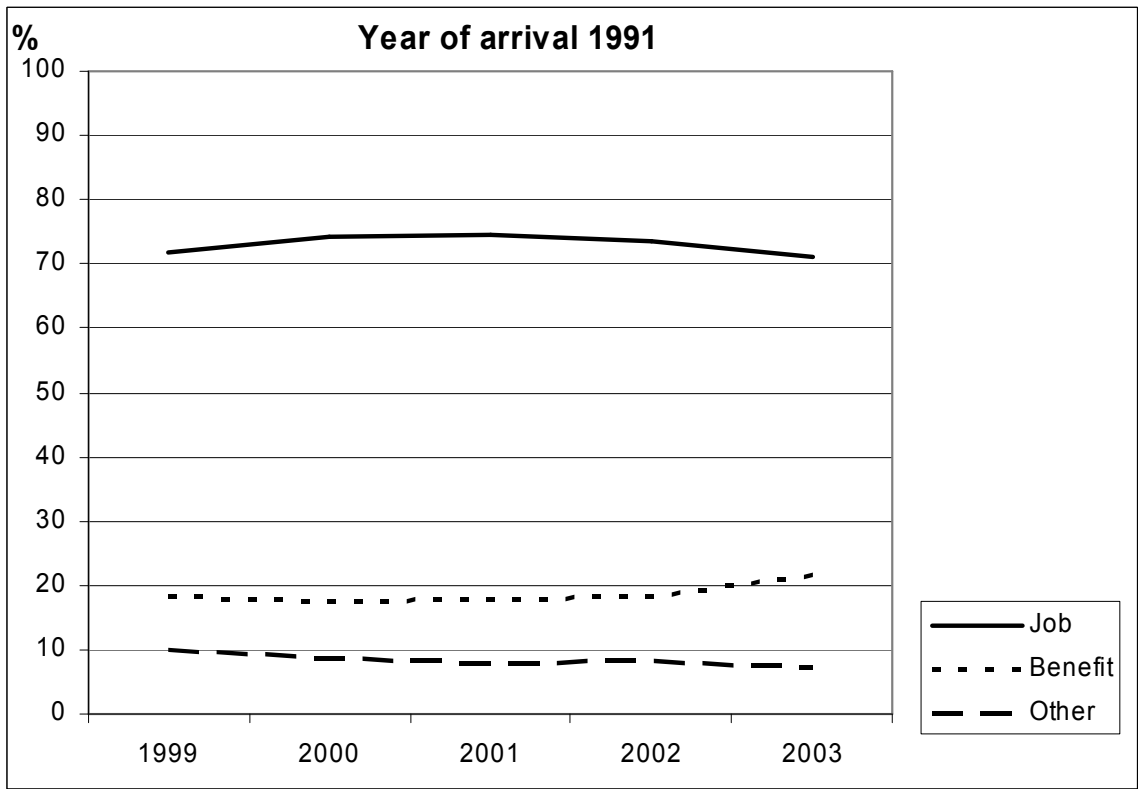
In graph 8, effects of duration of stay and the economic situation in the Netherlands are interwoven. On the one hand the positive effect of duration of stay is obvious. On the other hand we see (among males) a downward turn off which is related to the less favourable economic situation since 2001.

8. Family forming migration (marriage migration)

In 2003 family forming migrants made up the largest single group non-Dutch immigrants in the Netherlands. One out of four immigrants (20.7 thousand) in that year came to the Netherlands to marry or cohabit. In 2003, as in the mid-1990s, Turkey and Morocco, the most important countries of origin of marriage migrants. One third of the marriage migrants arrives from one of these two countries. Not only first generation, but second generation Turks and Moroccans as well, often marry or cohabit with a partner from their country of origin.

Graph 9

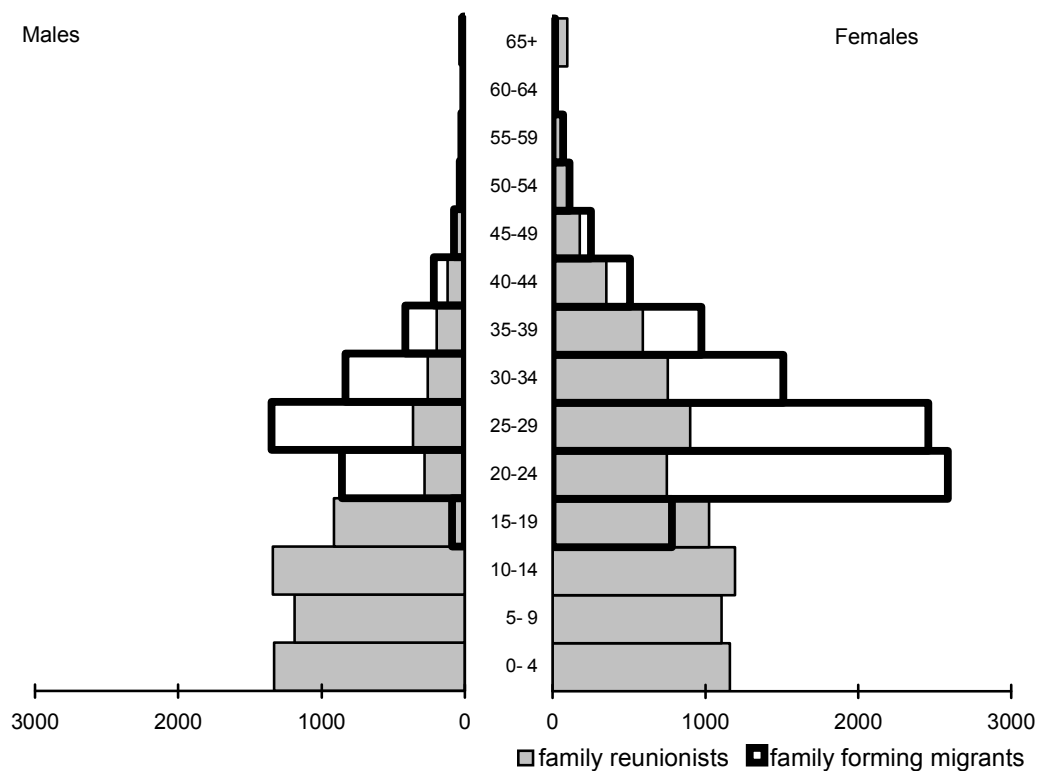
Male family forming migrants by socioeconomic category, year of arrival 1991 and 1999



About 70 to 80 percent of male marriage migrants have a job (*graph 9*). This percentage is considerably higher than that of family reunionists. This might be related to a better position on the labour market of marriage migrants when they arrive in the Netherlands, because they often join native Dutch people or foreign born people of the second generation, whereas family reunionists usually join a first generation foreign born person. The very modest effect of duration of stay on labour market position is remarkable. After a one year's stay the patterns of labour and benefit hardly change. Due to the different age structures of family reunionists and marriage migrants, the category 'other' (people without any income at all and students, whether with a job on the side or not) is much smaller among marriage migrants than among family reunionists. Among the latter are many children who still go to school, whereas a large majority of marriage migrants are young adults who finished their studies (*graph 10*).

Graph 10

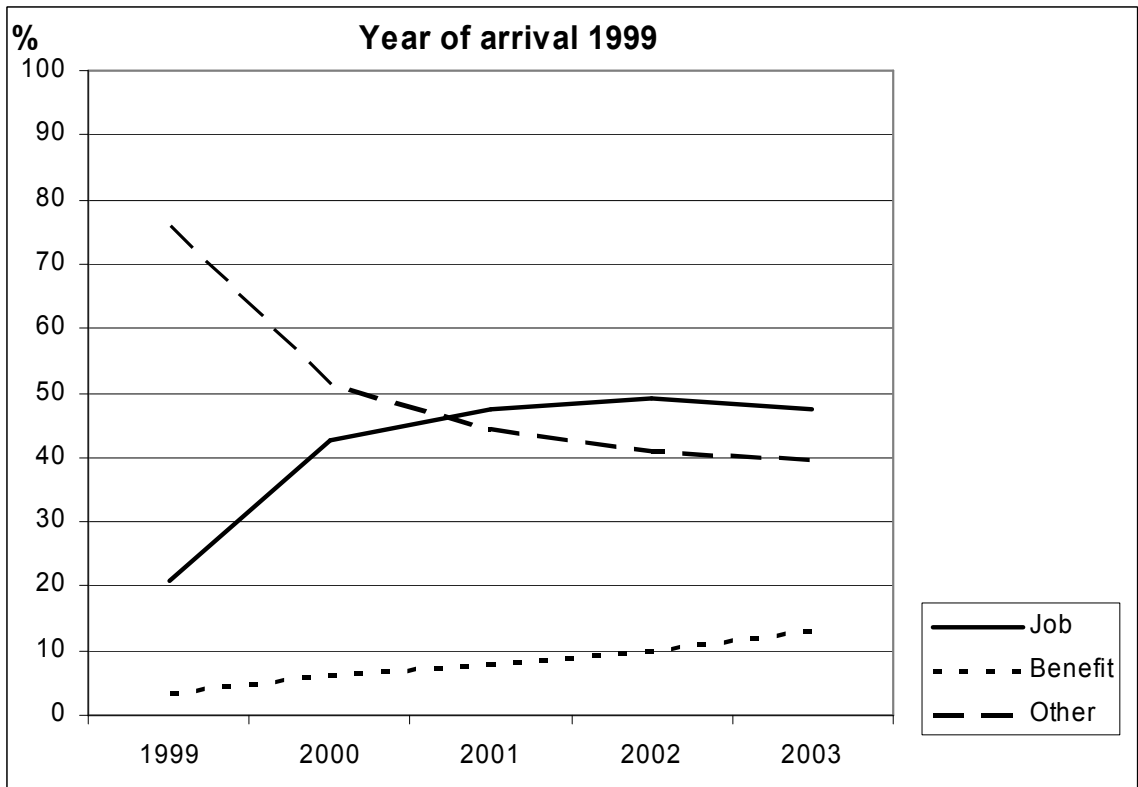
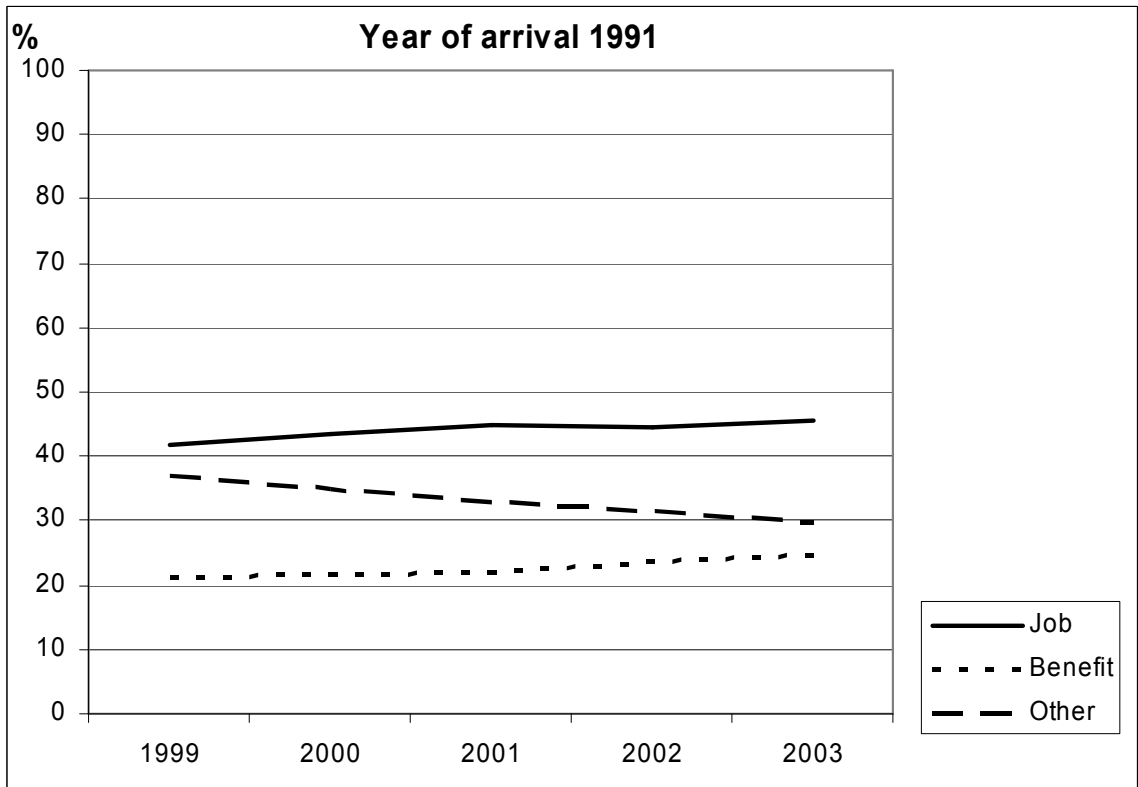
Age structure of family reunion and family forming migrants, year of arrival 1999



The same patterns in labour participation apply to female marriage migrants (*graph 11*). Labour participation of female marriage migrants who came to the Netherlands in 1999 has come to a halt, after a considerable increase in the first few years after their arrival.

Graph 11

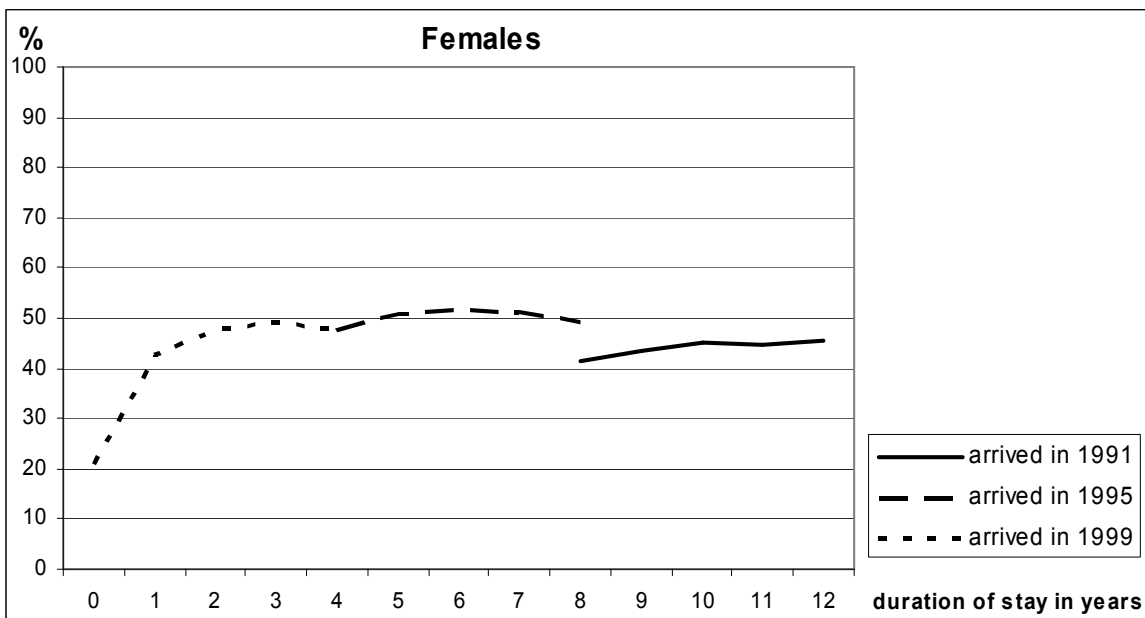
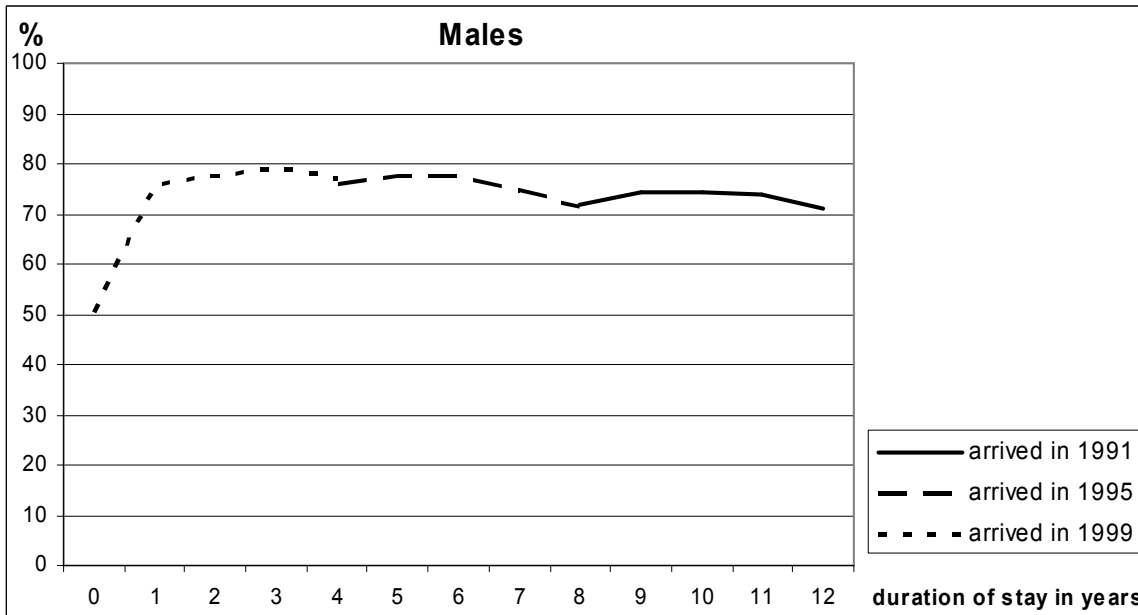
Female family forming migrants by socioeconomic category, year of arrival 1991 and 1999



In case of the same duration of stay, labour participation rates of three different cohorts of marriage migrants are almost equal (*graph 12*). However, labour participation of female marriage migrants who arrived in the Netherlands in 1991 is a little lower than that of females who came to the country in 1995.

Graph 12

Family forming migrants with job by duration of stay in the Netherlands

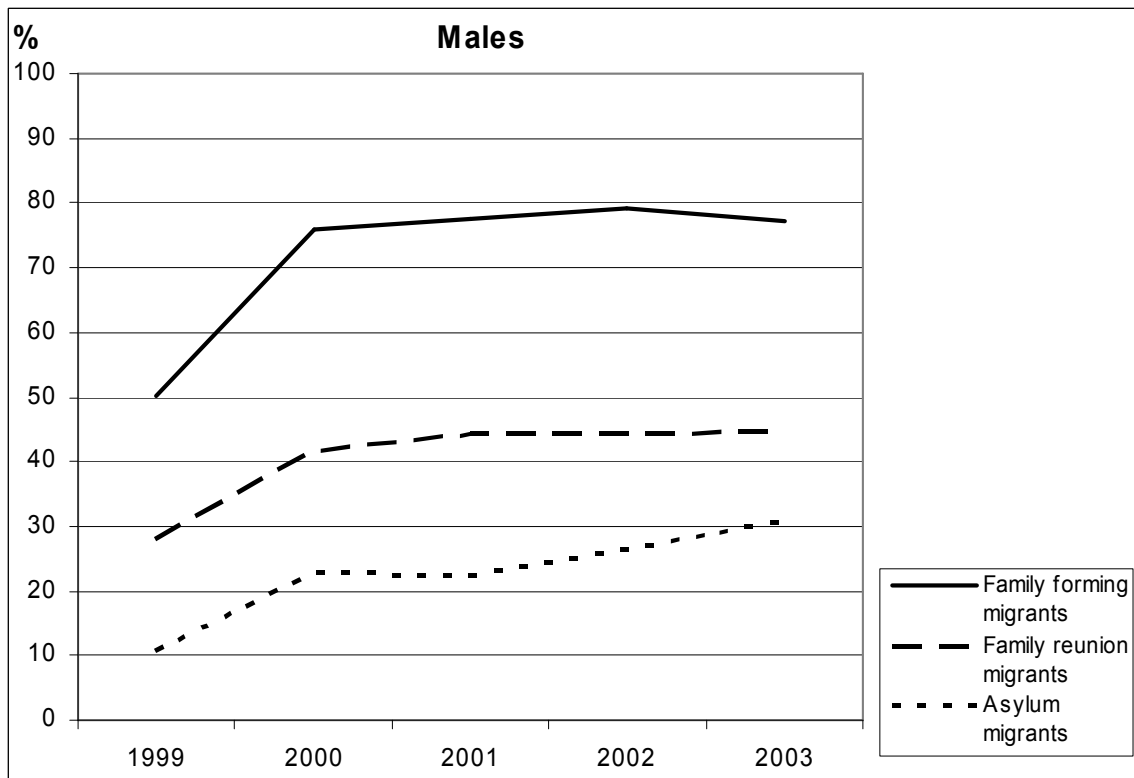


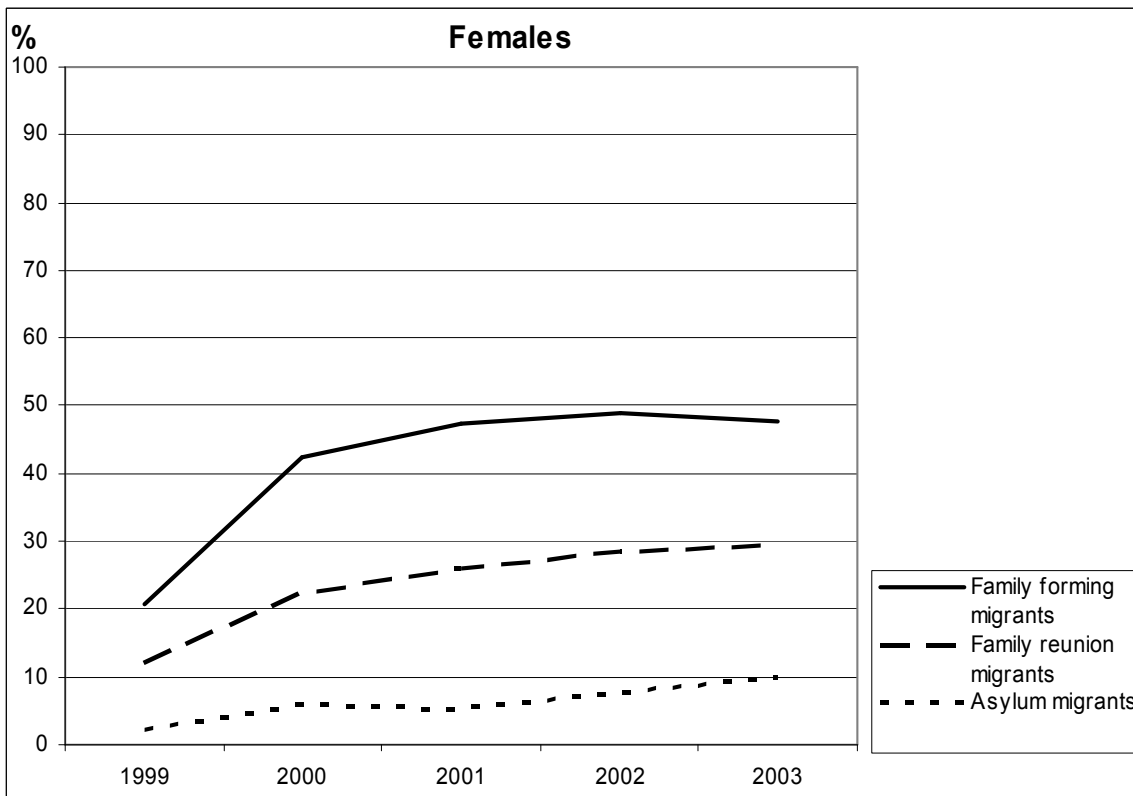
9. Categories of immigrants compared

Labour participation of asylum migrants, family reunion migrants and family forming migrants who came to the Netherlands in 1999 is presented in *graph 13*. Labour migrants have been left aside in this graph.

Graph 13

Immigrants with a job, by migration motive, year of arrival 1999





Family reunion migrants and (especially) marriage migrants are more likely to find work than asylum migrants. This is partly because asylum procedures often take such a long time to be completed and because asylum seekers are only allowed to work under strict conditions before they have a residence permit. Besides, refugees are a select group with probably more health problems.

In the long run, asylum migrants do make up some of this lost ground on the labour market compared with family reunionists. The arrears on marriage migrants remain about the same size however.

Labour participation of male marriage migrants is considerably higher than that of family reunionists. As mentioned before, this might be related to a better position on the labour market of marriage migrants when they arrive in the Netherlands, because they often join native Dutch people or foreign born people of the second generation.

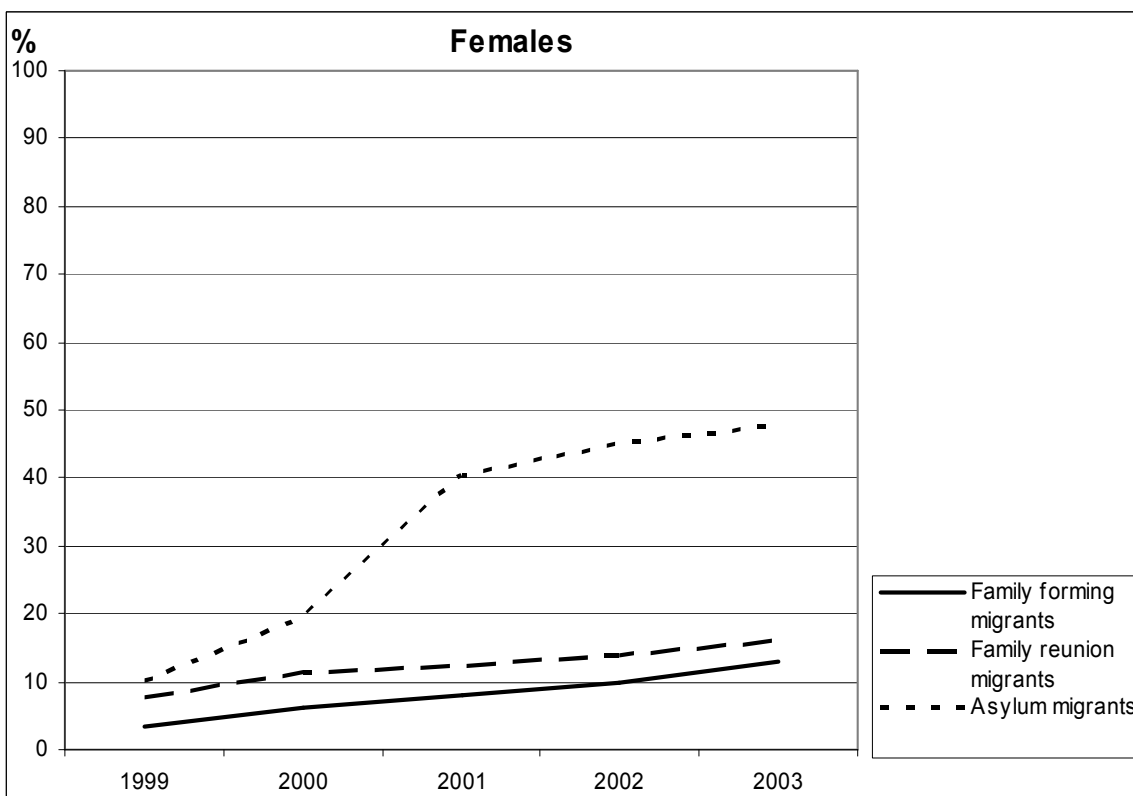
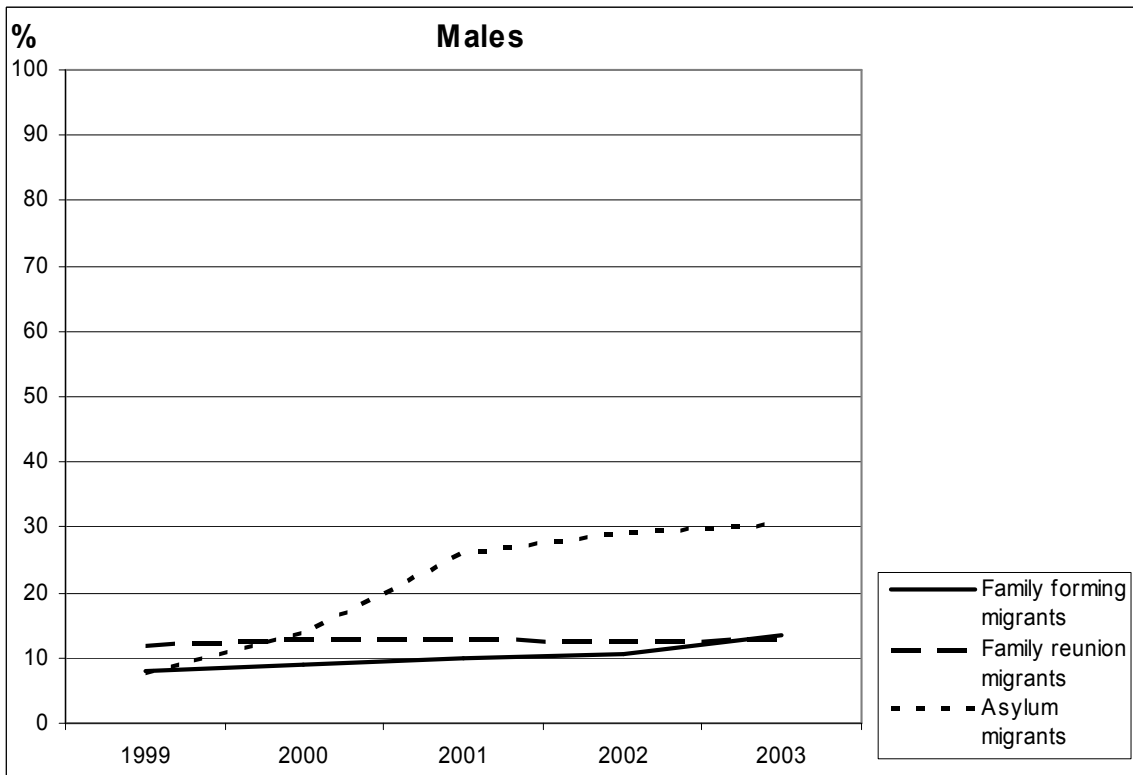
Furthermore, age structures of family reunionists and marriage migrants are completely different (graph 10). Family reunionists are relatively young. If we limit our analysis to family reunionists aged 30 and older, for males the difference in labour participation between family reunionists and marriage migrants disappears to a large extent. For females, however, the difference remains the same.

In the long run, dependence on social benefits of asylum migrants remains considerably higher than that of family reunionists. Around 30 percent of male asylum migrants who arrived in the Netherlands in 1999 were claiming benefit four years later (*graph 14*). Among male family reunionists and marriage migrants this percentage is 13 and 14 respectively. Nearly 50 percent of female asylum migrants who came to the country in 1999 had a benefit four years later. This is three times as high as the percentage among female family reunionists and marriage migrants.

For comparison: nearly 13 percent of native Dutch people were claiming benefit in 2003. Two thirds of native Dutch people have a disability benefit. Among foreign born people, income support is the most occurring benefit.

Graph 14

Immigrants with benefit, by migration motive, year of arrival 1999



When interpreting differences in labour participation and dependence on social benefits the various backgrounds of the migration categories should be taken into account. In the past, asylum procedures sometimes took a number of years to be completed, and during that time applicants only had limited possibilities of paid work. This position cannot be compared with that of family reunion and marriage migrants. The (future) partner of an immigrant coming to the Netherlands must be able to provide for him- or herself and for the new immigrant. Some marriage migrants come from western countries such as Germany and Belgium. Besides, one in three marriage migrants arrive to marry a native Dutch person. Furthermore it has to be taken into account that immigrants need a certain period to learn the Dutch language and to take integration courses which might explain the low labour participation of (especially) non-western immigrants the year after they arrive in the Netherlands.

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