Scholars in exile in the Netherlands
When humanitarian support encounters neoliberal reform practices

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Academics in many parts of the world are facing increasingly uncertain and insecure conditions. They are threatened for their ideas, research, and social position because of the critical questions they ask. The protection of these people, many of whom are in exile, and of academic freedom in general, is of paramount importance. The right of every human being to think, ask questions, and exchange ideas is the basis for science and a free and thriving society. Hosting at-risk and exiled scholars is not only a sign of solidarity; their presence also enriches academia. This chapter discusses the Dutch academic system and charts the support programs in place in the Netherlands. We show how these programs enable highly qualified, forcibly displaced, and at-risk scholars to continue their academic careers and research activities. We do so by recounting some of their personal experiences.

In response to violations of academic freedom and to increase the diversity in Dutch academia, a number of initiatives have been established by various institutions in the Netherlands to provide support. In this chapter, we argue that these initiatives should be understood within the context of the broader, transforming academia in the Netherlands, rather than as isolated solidarity or even charity efforts. Specifically, we thematize the intensive neoliberalization of the Dutch and global academic system, which has led to a fiercely competitive environment and immense pressure to publish and compete for research grants.[1] This trend puts pressure on all scholars in

1 Politicization of the Dutch academia is also an important topic, but it is beyond the scope of this chapter.

the Dutch academic field. It is, however, important to ask how it affects at-risk scholars who are already placed in disadvantaged positions in the Netherlands.

In the following, we map out the support landscape relevant to scholars at risk. While presenting the opportunities – for both the scholars and the host academia/society – we also discuss the challenges. In doing so, we rely on qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. We use data from existing reports and studies on the recent transformation of Dutch higher education and from nine in-depth semi-structured interviews that we conducted. We spoke to five at-risk and displaced scholars, as well as two people from supporting institutions (non-governmental organizations [NGOs]) and two from different universities in the Netherlands. In all nine interviews, particular attention was paid to the privacy and anonymity of the respondents and to digital security.

The interviewed scholars' backgrounds ranged from being a librarian and a women's rights activist, a professor of cultural anthropology, and an architect from the Middle East/western Asian region to a professor and researcher in the field of public international law from southern Africa. They had been in the Netherlands from two years (in the case of a scholar who felt forced to return home due to a lack of opportunities in Dutch academia) to seven years. We combined the different data sets to analyze the institutional landscape in the Netherlands and the lived experiences of exiled scholars.

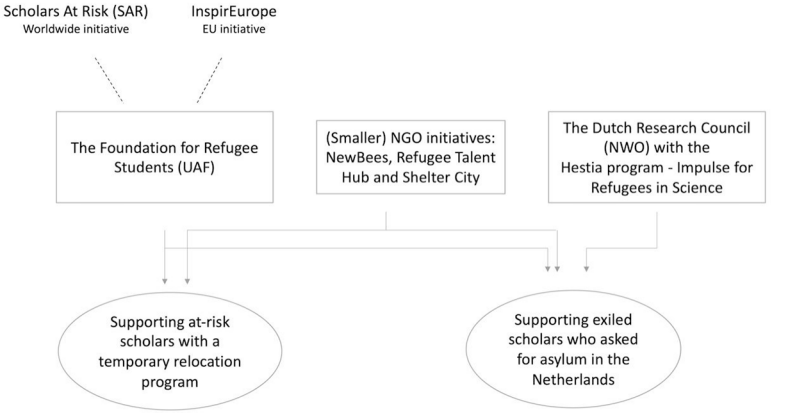
The chapter is structured as follows. First, we present an overview of existing support programs in the Netherlands that host and integrate exiled and at-risk scholars. Next, we introduce the Dutch context by providing background information on the country's higher education institution (HEI) sector and its transformation over recent decades. This is followed by a discussion on the opportunities and challenges faced by at-risk scholars during their stay in the Netherlands. In doing so, we underline the challenges posed by the market-oriented Dutch higher education system to academics in general and to at-risk scholars in particular.

Support programs in the Netherlands

In response to worsening violations of academic freedom worldwide, several initiatives have been introduced by universities and NGOs in the Netherlands to support threatened and at-risk academics. These initiatives are based

on the principle of international humanitarian responsibility and academic solidarity. Figure 1 illustrates some of the key support programs and institutions.

Figure 1. *Relation among programs/initiatives supporting at-risk scholars in the Netherlands.*



Scholars at Risk program

The Scholars at Risk (SAR) program is not a Dutch program but an international network of 440 HEIs from 40 countries. This network partners with the European University Association and has national sections in 13 European countries of which the Netherlands is one – together with Belgium, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom (SAR, n.d.-a). SAR is committed to protecting and supporting at-risk scholars by providing them with sanctuary and assistance. Temporary research and teaching positions, ranging from three months to two years, are arranged for threatened scholars. During this time, scholars may teach, research, lecture, or study. More than 300 researchers around the world receive support from SAR each year. In addition to helping to arrange work positions, SAR provides advisory services for scholars and their hosts. It also has an advocacy function, namely, defending threatened academics and raising awareness of their causes.

The SAR program in the Netherlands was established in 2009 by HEIs in the Netherlands and Belgium, with the purpose of offering threatened scholars (who have PhDs and teaching and/or research experience at an HEI) the opportunity to temporarily continue their work or studies in a safe environment. When the situation in the country of origin becomes or is considered safe again, the scholars are expected to return. The SAR program arranges temporary research and teaching positions at various institutions and provides advice and referral services (SAR, n.d-b; UAF, 2020).

Scholars who join the SAR programs receive at least one year of secured financial and employment conditions, including help integrating into the labor market. Our interviewees said that they appreciated the program allowing them to return to a life of relative normality after their traumatizing experiences and offering them social stability and international work experience (personal interview with at-risk scholar, December 2020; SUCRE, 2018).

Foundation for Refugee Students UAF

As an intermediary support organization, the UAF coordinates the SAR scheme and provides refugee scholars with funding (via SAR New York) and support. In addition, the UAF has been supporting, as its main activity, refugee and asylum-seeking students and professionals (including scholars) in their studies and job searches in the Dutch labor market since 1948. Support is offered through personal guidance and workshops, and the UAF provides financial assistance to and lobbies on behalf of this group. Its main activities are focused solely on refugees and asylum seekers. This means that the support receivers must have applied for asylum in Europe and obtained a Dutch residence permit.

In 2020, the UAF assisted 3,778 refugees through a modular guidance program that matched their qualifications and educational or career plans. Of this group, 47% were studying, 9% were seeking employment, and the remaining 44% were preparing for studies by doing a language course, receiving mentoring or doing a pre-bachelor program (Schakeljaar, literally "switch year"). The UAF facilitated 37 placements of at-risk scholars via the SAR program in 2020 (UAF, 2021).

Each year, the UAF helps with the placement and training of 25 to 30 people within the SAR program. Most exiled and at-risk scholars in the

Netherlands come from Syria, Iraq, Iran, or Turkey (E. Amadi Salumu, personal communication, September 4, 2020).

In 2020, the UAF and nine partner organizations across Europe launched the InspirEurope program – an initiative to support researchers who are at risk due to discrimination, persecution, or violence and to lay the foundations for a sustainable network that would increase opportunities for these researchers in academic and non-academic sectors throughout Europe. As a Europe-wide network, the program complements national programs and offers opportunities to gain new insights. For instance, it highlights the challenges faced by at-risk researchers posed by European policymaking and offers an appropriate context for solutions to address them. It also facilitates knowledge transfer between existing and new support initiatives and between academic and non-academic sectors in member countries. As a network, it offers more career prospects for at-risk researchers in the form of improved chances of receiving funding or finding employment. It also provides space for the greater involvement of central, eastern and southern European stakeholders in support measures.

The Hestia program of the Dutch Research Council (NWO)

During an interview with E. Amadi Salumu of the UAF on September 4, 2020, he explained that the overall focus in the Netherlands shifted to hosting scholars who held asylum seekers' residence permits. One of the programs targeting this group of at-risk scholars is the Hestia – Impulse for Refugees in Science program of the Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek (NWO; Dutch Research Council). The Hestia program makes it possible for the leader and/or main applicant of a research project based at a Dutch university to apply for funding for a refugee with an academic background to join the project. Such appointments are for 18 months, or 24 months in the case of part-time appointments. The program finished its third pilot phase in 2020 and is regarded by the Research Council as an immense success:

> There is a great need to continue the program in its unchanged form because it is functioning very positively and the acquisition of a scholarship in competition has received a very positive response. After all, that is the measure of success within Anglo-Saxon academia at the moment. So this immediately shows that the laureate has the skills that are required in

> the academy and that the person is competitive et cetera. Universities are therefore also very positively engaged with the laureates of the Hestia program and in many cases also offer an extension. For example, to write follow-up research applications for PhD positions. (M. van Dijk, personal communication, November 11, 2020)

During the three pilot phases, a total of 116 refugee scholars applied to join the Hestia program. Of these, 32 scholars were selected, and they and their research teams received research grants. During the same interview, we were told that almost all of the refugee scholars who were selected were able to continue their professional careers through more funding possibilities or PhD positions.

Non-governmental initiatives: NewBees, Refugee Talent Hub, and Shelter City

There are several other initiatives in the Netherlands from which at-risk or exiled scholars can benefit, even though they do not have their focus specifically on exiled scholars but more broadly on refugees. NewBees, for example, matches newcomers, including refugees, to traineeships with local entrepreneurs and organizations. Here, newcomers gain experience in workshops and practical experience in a workplace under the supervision of NewBees' matchers. Similarly, the Refugee Talent Hub organizes small-scale meetings for refugees and employers, with the aim of fostering employment. Even though these programs have proved to be valuable to their target groups, only people who have been granted asylum can participate, and the programs do not have the specific focus on or expertise in at-risk scholars aspiring to enter Dutch academia.

Another example is the Shelter City program, which offers a three-month refuge to human rights defenders who report and stand up against human rights violations in their home countries. During the program, the human rights defenders receive capacity-building tools and training and can increase their networks while advocating for their causes. The program serves human rights defenders broadly and has also supported at-risk scholars who report on human rights violations. The three-month relocation program does not intend to provide a longer-term exile but appeals to those who want to catch their breath and make connections abroad before returning home to continue their human rights work. During their stay in the Netherlands,

the human rights defenders and scholars step onto the public stage: they talk to journalists and politicians and visit partner organizations and other stakeholders. Higher international visibility through these activities is intended to protect them from being threatened, intimidated, or even killed by opponents. Since the establishment of the first Shelter City in 2012, the initiative has been expanded to a network of 17 cities and has since hosted more than 200 human rights defenders.

Having sketched the support landscape in the Netherlands, we will now discuss a few of the key aspects that drew our attention while speaking to our interviewees.

Dutch academic system as the host environment

Being displaced, at-risk scholars seek a safe environment for themselves and their families, as well as an appropriate position that will allow them to continue their academic work. While driven by solidarity motivations when supporting these scholars, HEIs also gain new capacities and knowledge through the hosting arrangement. Hosting or employing highly qualified at-risk scholars can be very beneficial, leading to a more diverse and richer set of skills in specialized research teams and in HEIs in general. Yet, such a win-win situation is not always a given reality. The logic of support programs often creates an image of exiled scholars as victims who need to be saved rather than producers of knowledge contributing to the host institutions' research agendas. However, others hold a different view, as stated in the SUCRE report (2018): "HEIs are not charity organizations and threatened researchers are not simply looking for mercy." Hence, the relationships of the parties involved are more complex than it might seem at first sight, as a number of challenges may arise during the hosting cycle.

It is important to situate these relationships in the changing Dutch and global higher education context. In the Netherlands, the higher education system has two segments, consisting of university education and higher professional education institutions. There are currently 13 traditional research universities in the Netherlands that together enroll around 200,000 students annually (Maassen et al., 2011). The higher professional education sector consists of 42 institutions (hogescholen), which enroll more than 350,000 students annually (Maassen et al., 2011).

The Dutch government used to implement detailed planning and exert tight control over the inputs of institutions of higher education and their resources, students and staff. This changed in 1985 following the introduction of a new government strategy regarding higher education in the Netherlands (Hoger Onderwijs: Autonomie en Kwaliteit [Higher Education Autonomy and Quality]) (Maassen et al., 2011; van Vught, 1997). The new strategy adopted by the Ministry of Education and Science departed from the traditional centralized control model. The main aim of the reform was to strengthen the autonomy of HEIs, increase their adaptive capacity and flexibility to respond to the needs of society, and raise the levels of quality and differentiation of the system (Ministry of Education and Science, 1985). Strengthening institutional autonomy was seen as a major element in improving the functioning of the higher education system. Thus, universities also had to develop more direct links with external funding sources. HEIs are expected to better address the needs of society and – very importantly – diversify income sources, compensating for the cuts in the governmental budget for higher education.

The Dutch government's decreased role in providing higher education as a public good allowed market principles to find their way into the management of higher education. The result was an increasingly commodified higher education and research system in the Netherlands. For the last 20 years, the student population in the Netherlands has been growing, while the budgets of universities have not (ReThink UvA, 2015). It has therefore become more important to attract funding from external sources. De Boer et al. (2007) reported that from 1992 to 2003, the total revenues from activities with third parties (contract activities) increased from 548 to 1,257 million euros.

Research output, productivity, and assessment of HEIs are now being measured primarily in quantitative terms. Even though changes have been proposed and practiced in some universities to give due recognition to teaching and other forms of impact, academics are still being de facto assessed by the number of grants, amount of external funding acquired, number of (high-ranking journal) publications, citation indices, and impact factors. The Science in Transition initiative (2013), an organization consisting of Dutch scholars, has lamented that researchers have become economically dependent on their publications and that academic success depends on the number of publications instead of the societal relevance of research.

As a result of the reform, Dutch universities have been in a state of transition, with the aim of becoming the world's top "knowledge economy" (Maassen et al., 2011). This transition is characterized by immense pressure

to become more efficient and produce higher outputs. Ties have been built with society and the business sector to transform the economy and to become an incubator for top academic talents. In that sense, universities have been denationalized and transformed from state agencies into public corporations (Maassen, 2008).

Although the marketplace approach has brought universities more resources, a higher number of and arguably "better" students, a larger capacity for advancing knowledge, and a more productive role in the Dutch economy, it has in many ways also diminished the sovereignty of universities over their own activities, as they have been weakened in their mission to serve the public. Universities' independence from the government has growing commercial entanglements. The new "modernized" model emphasizes leadership, management, and entrepreneurship. Research and higher education are identified as key instruments for economic performance and growth and for mastering global competition. Traditional values such as individual academic freedom and internal democracy have, on the other hand, been given less importance.

How do at-risk and displaced scholars, who are mostly placed in a less advantageous position in the system, experience this highly competitive setting? The reflections of one of our at-risk and exiled scholars illustrates this tension clearly. Our interviewee, a scholar from southern Africa,[2] shared with us his opinions on the opportunities, challenges, and contradictions in the Dutch academic system:

> Is the academic freedom here in the Netherlands good enough to host academics from other countries? Problems also exist in the Netherlands relating to the capitalization of academia but also the politicization. What is politically correct? What can you say and what can you not say? . . . This affects Dutch scholars but even more us, immigrant scholars, because we are already in a disadvantaged position. (At-risk scholar in the field of cultural anthropology who has worked in Dutch academia for five years)

2 Due to the relatively small number of scholars in exile in the Netherlands, we have chosen not to disclose the specific backgrounds of our interviewees to ensure anonymity.

Recognition of knowledge and credentials

The criteria of academic success vary from country to country. The academic system that the exiled scholars were used to in their home countries can be different in many ways from that in the Netherlands. All the articles they wrote and all the courses they developed and taught in their home countries can become invisible in Dutch academia. To start anew, they need to compete in a mostly English-speaking environment, where the value of a researcher depends solely on a list of EU-credited degrees and certificates and the number of research papers (preferably written in English or Dutch) they publish.

This loss of earlier achievements is often overlooked by host universities, funding institutions, and foundations. Such a competitive system takes a high toll on all academics, but a much greater one on at-risk and exiled scholars who have been forced to flee political persecution in their home countries. The latter must satisfy the host country's requirements for credentials within a relatively brief period of time before they can obtain a position in Dutch academia, where their valuable (alternative) views and international experiences and skills can be recognized.

Regarding the recognition of expertise, we learned about prejudices in Dutch academia faced by our scholar interviewees. Some expressed frustration that they felt limited to only contributing to research areas related to their ethnicity:

> [w]hen there was something about Africa [at the Dutch HEI], they expected you to concentrate on this knowledge and it limits you on other possibilities that you would like to work on . . . I work in the area of public international law . . . so I want to continue developing my work in international law, and not be restricted to some elections somewhere in Africa or any situation on climate change in Kenya. I should be allowed to continue my specialization and be allowed to even challenge my international law colleagues. (At-risk scholar in the field of international public law who has worked in Dutch academia for five years).

In this way, the development of knowledge is restricted. At-risk scholars should be allowed to choose the areas they would like to work in and not be limited to a set of topics that are not part of their specialization.

Another important topic that was mentioned in the interviews was the problem of the "politicization of knowledge":

> What is politically correct? What can you say and what can you not say? So that is what I see, for example, at conferences with people who are African. They are not so free to share their opinions in the plenary session. Often during break times, we have our own session where we discuss issues frankly. We then discuss how things might be wrong in the plenary session or how others might have missed the point there. During plenary sessions, it cannot feel safe enough to speak out. You feel forced to say what is politically correct and you have to be careful about what you are saying. (At-risk scholar in the field of international public law who has worked in Dutch academia for five years).

Temporal dimensions

During the personal interviews, we learned that time-related challenges are paramount among exiled scholars. These have to do with how support programs are often limited to the short term. Many of our interviewees said that when they arrived in the Netherlands, they felt pressured to immediately make plans for their future, at the time when they were both struggling with the new context and suffering from the past. There are special and very helpful scholarships and funding opportunities for academics in this situation, but they typically cover only one or two years, as is the case in many European host countries.

Most scholars have to adapt to a very different normality compared with that in their home contexts. They face intercultural challenges and unfamiliarity with local customs and the languages used in the Dutch academic system. All this is time-consuming and may overshadow the relief of having reached a safe place and their enthusiasm for working in academia again. In one interview, an exiled and at-risk scholar said that it had taken her around three years to be able to work more productively in the Netherlands:

> It was a pity for me. I was in a place full of knowledge, full of academic relationships, but I was not able to make good use of this. It would be my dream to go back to [the host HEI] and make better use of this. I was going through the darkest times in my life and was even suicidal. At that time, it was not possible to take exams. (At-risk scholar and women's rights activist who has worked in Dutch academia for seven years)

Exiled and at-risk scholars need additional support to integrate into the Netherlands both during and especially after their fellowships or temporarily funded positions. They have to successfully integrate into a foreign country and academic environment, become part of new disciplinary and interdisciplinary networks, and learn to write funding applications while also publishing articles. This needs to happen in a fiercely competitive academic environment, as discussed earlier. Additionally, a contact person working with exiled scholars who joined the SAR program said during a personal interview that the main problem is often not the academic system itself, but the trauma of loss and having to start over:

> When they come to the Netherlands, they usually don't immediately start publishing, or hand in assignments or book chapters. A man who recently came to the Netherlands and who I support, only shows up for one in every three appointments since he has a lot on his mind and is still living in another world. He was a somebody in his country [lawyer] and in the Netherlands he is back at the bottom of the pile. (personal interview with Head of executive services HEI, November 4, 2020)

Therefore, it is often unrealistic, or even inconsiderate, to expect exiled scholars to be able to compete in a different academic labor market and the Dutch knowledge economy, which is highly competitive even for Dutch academics and especially for those with prior traumatizing experiences. The time limits set on them add another layer of pressure.

Inclusion beyond work

HEIs that are committed to supporting exiled and at-risk scholars usually provide services to help them enter the academic system. Some services extend beyond the work realm to enhance newcomers' settling in process. Most of these services, however, focus only on the early phase (i.e., the first 4–6 weeks), namely by providing help with visa and residency issues, housing, and registration formalities. As international offices or Human Resources departments are usually busy with many more clients, support often ends after the initial phase, and it is up to the exiled scholars to ask for additional help. This, however, requires persistence and assertiveness, which does not come naturally to everybody, especially scholars from other cultural backgrounds who are recovering from traumas.

On arrival in the Netherlands, the main concern of at-risk scholars is often housing and settling into the country and Dutch academia. Yet, the difficulty of going back to "normality" for these persecuted scholars is often underestimated. When at-risk scholars come to the Netherlands, they may have lots of expectations, but in reality, they can do very little at the beginning because they might be dealing with trauma, grief, and loss during their involuntary exile. They might experience loneliness, the feeling of being lost, and the loss of status and career prospects. Therefore, many scholars need additional support to get back on their feet. However, returning to a safe everyday life routine in the Netherlands is not only linked to bureaucratic paperwork, but can also be a huge challenge after a period of continuous unrest and traumatic experiences. Finding a skilled mentor can then be a helpful relief for exiled scholars.

At some HEIs, at-risk scholars are also introduced to a contact person who provides close supervision, answers any questions they might have, and introduces them to the Netherlands. Our interviews revealed that at-risk scholars have very different experiences in this regard. Some felt that their contact person was very hospitable and connected them to their HEI and Dutch society, even calling them their "Dutch best friend," while others had very little contact with their contact person, leaving them with a feeling of being alone and frustrated:

> Starting in the Dutch academic system was not easy. I was just given a desk and a computer and they said you can work from here . . . overall I mostly worked on publications and they just left me to do what I wanted to do, so that easily leaves you frustrated . . . You have to create opportunities for yourself but it would be great if you came and could immediately become part of something. (At-risk scholar in the field of cultural anthropology who has worked in Dutch academia for five years)

Special staff with sufficient time resources to follow up placements and host exiled and at-risk scholars must be appointed, and HEIs need continuous support when hosting such scholars. This underlines the importance of supporting not only these scholars but also the academic hosts who, often for the first time in their careers, are encountering the challenge of hosting people with very different sets of experiences and, most likely, who have also experienced traumas. As mentioned, all new scholars entering an HEI need some time to settle into their new environment. This group of exiled and at-risk scholars is affected by many additional challenges, such as adjusting

to a new language and academic culture, dealing with their past traumas, and bringing their families over to join them. Thus, academic hosts must be made aware of the challenges and responsibilities associated with taking up the role of mentor and helping exiled scholars (and their family members) regain a sense of peace and normalcy after their traumatic experiences and to settle into a safe place and resume working in positions that match their academic training, until either a return to the home country is possible or the scholars and their families have managed to feel at home in the host country. It was mentioned in the interviews that the UAF was very good at offering support as they provided the resources to help the scholars settle into their new environment. This support is, however, limited to more practical matters, and the main task of finding a job and getting into academia is something that needs to be done at the level of the host HEI. The contact person of the HEI is therefore an essential mediator.

Financial issues

While the interviewed at-risk scholars said that they fully appreciated the privileged situation of being temporarily in a safe place and able to continue working in academia, many nevertheless suffer from their precarious status and unstable financial situation. It was mentioned that there is a feeling among migrant scholars of being underpaid:

> When I came here I was offered a position, but the money I was earning was even less than the money that I received as a stipend from the UAF. The stipend is already barely enough to survive on here, and anything less than that is just slavery. So this is something I had to discuss with my immediate supervisor and at the moment they are looking into it. . . . I don't want to say that my Dutch colleagues think that Dutch education is superior but . . . let's say the systems are different such as making use of [a web-based learning management system]. These are things that I still had to learn. So maybe they are then thinking that they have to start working with me at an entry-level position. (At-risk scholar in the field of international public law who has worked in Dutch academia for five years)

As mentioned, existing programs and funds supporting at-risk scholars can be highly lauded for their goodwill. However, academic systems such as those in the Netherlands have increasingly precarious employment situations with,

for example, insufficient funding possibilities, a lack of security and short-termism. This also makes it increasingly difficult to support exiled and at-risk scholars, whose disadvantaged position often prevents them from claiming their rights:

> With people like us, we have been fighting our whole lives. And we just get tired . . . as was also the case with me. When I got the contract, I just said "Okay, that is fine." I will get whatever they give me, and after I get some more experience, I will see if I can move to the next step in life. Because you also feel as if they are doing you a favor by including you in academia. So being in situations like this can also prohibit you in claiming your rights. (At-risk scholar in the field of international public law who has worked in Dutch academia for five years)

Uncertainty around support programs at risk

In April 2021, the UAF discontinued the SAR program, meaning that it will no longer support scholars who have not sought asylum in the Netherlands. A representative of a Dutch HEI (personal communication, November 4, 2020) told us that the decision was made due to the ways PhD candidates are employed by universities in the Netherlands. Instead of receiving allowances, candidates are employed by their universities at which they carry out their research and teaching duties. In general, this system offers protection for PhD researchers who are employed by universities. However, it is also a source of confusion regarding the tax situation within the framework of the SAR program. The allowances that at-risk scholars receive from the SAR program are subject to the more regularly used bursary conditions. Even though at-risk scholars who joined the SAR program have a formal guest researcher status at their HEI, the allowances they receive are not taxed, which means they are not eligible to benefit from Dutch social security schemes. Moreover, the Dutch tax authorities are often not clear about the regulations that apply to the SAR allowances. This became a burden for the universities. To relieve this burden, the UAF was chosen by SAR as a partner, so the former could be the central point in making an agreement with the tax authorities as well as providing scholars with counseling. However, in 2020, the UAF decided it was too risky to continue this structure, as it might be charged with employing at-risk scholars on a temporary basis.

There were discussions about whether universities should assume the role of the UAF, meaning that they would also need to offer guidance, provide training, and be responsible for administering the allowances. However, past experiences of similar constructs have not been positive, as this puts additional workload and pressure on the HEIs. They have to deal with the Dutch tax authority and related counseling for scholars on their own, rather than having the UAF as the central point. As this was considered to be undesirable, a long search started for another organization to implement the SAR program. In a later conversation with a colleague at the UAF (E. Amadi Salumu, personal communication, September 10, 2021), it was mentioned that Nuffic, the Dutch organization for internationalization in education, is consulting with SAR New York on its implementation in the Netherlands. The future remains uncertain.

Conclusion

Although the vision and process of internationalization in the Netherlands, along with the country's position as one of the world's top five knowledge economies (UNDP, 2020), are strongly hyped by the Dutch government, the country's academic system is far from inclusive. When confronted with the reality many exiled scholars face in the Netherlands, we might then ask whether the free academic space in the Netherlands is shrinking. As we have shown in this chapter, constraints are felt not only by academics from faraway countries: the increasingly marketized academic world, pressure to publish in high-impact journals, and competition for research grants are all harsh realities that create precarity among academics, especially young scholars in disciplines that are less well funded.

It seems that in the Netherlands, more support programs for exiled and at-risk scholars that focus on integration and offer ways for such scholars to obtain research grants have been created. However, these programs focus on at-risk scholars who hold asylum seekers' residence permits. Especially with the current problems trying to keep the SAR program active in the Netherlands, scholars who seek temporary relocation and do not want to apply for asylum, or who need to temporarily relocate to live in safety and have some time to breathe, are left behind.

There are also challenges related to finding and retaining adequate positions in the highly competitive research labor market. The limited amount

of time that at-risk scholars have to carry out research and/or teach, settle into a new country professionally and privately, recover from stress and possible traumas, learn Dutch, and find follow-up employment is especially challenging. Moreover, for many exiled scholars coping with trauma is among the main challenges. Therefore, funding programs should be supplemented with mentoring programs as well as inclusive and supportive research environments. At-risk scholars need to be introduced to academic networks and receive support applying for research grants and permanent positions.

In order to enable inclusion of at-risk scholars, the structural problems of the academic system both in the Netherlands and abroad must be dealt with. Market-oriented academic systems force academics to be entrepreneurial and compete with each other, which often reduces their readiness to collaborate with fellow academics who are seen as less competitive. One of the groups of scholars who are most seriously affected by this competition and precarity in academic labor are those who are already threatened, namely at-risk and displaced scholars. This leads to two pertinent questions: How should internationalization, inclusion and solidarity be practiced? And how can we envision more genuine and inclusive knowledge co-creation? These questions are important for the sake not only of at-risk scholars but also of academia as a whole.

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