

The Integration Matrix Reloaded: From ethnic fixations to established vs. outsiders dynamics in the Netherlands

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Abstract

In the Netherlands, an increasingly critical debate has emerged about the government's top-down ethnic categorization procedures and about the assumption that analyses of integration should be based on internally homogeneous (and dichotomous) ethno-cultural blocks. While the concerns mount, no unified alternative framework for studying integration has emerged. Informed by Brubaker's work on 'groupism', we provide an analysis of the current approach and outline an alternative vision of social divisions, exclusion, and inclusion in the Netherlands. More specifically, we offer a framework that can help researchers consider easing away from ethnic reification and the attendant analytic promotion of highly subjective notions of 'ethnic groups' and taking steps toward analyses founded on more objective, 'first order' social scientific categories. Making use of Elias's work on established and outsider dynamics, and dealing substantively with education, we flesh out how an alternative approach to in- and exclusion in contemporary Dutch society might be put to use. The goal, in short, is to assist researchers interested in a path leading to more grounded, relational, and processual approaches to integration.

Keywords

Ethnicity, Migrant minorities, Integration, Essentialism, The Netherlands

Introduction

From the 1970s on, integration in the Netherlands increasingly came to be discussed mainly in terms of ‘migrant minorities’ becoming part of ‘Dutch society’ dominated by ‘natives’. Echoing similar trends in societies across Europe (Rex 1991, Vertovec 1997), putative members of what became known as the *various* ‘allochthonous’ sub-groups (e.g., ‘the Turks’, ‘Moroccans’, ‘Surinamese’ and ‘Antilleans’) on one hand, and alleged members of the *single* ‘autochthonous’ group on the other, came to be identified through the government’s top-down classification system as the constituents of discrete ‘ethnic communities’ making up an increasingly ‘multi-cultural’ society.

In terms of alleviating suffering and strife for at least a quarter century, one might suggest that the results were spectacularly positive. As the historical sociologist Orlando Patterson (1997: 15-16) put it, ‘With the possible exception of the Netherlands...there does not exist a single case in modern or earlier history that comes anywhere near the record of America in changing majority attitudes, in guaranteeing legal and political rights, and in expanding socioeconomic opportunities for its disadvantaged minorities.’ Of course, Patterson wrote these lines before openly xenophobic (social) nationalist politicians started getting more electoral support in the Netherlands than in many other Western European countries and, therefore, before talk of inherently ‘tolerant Holland’ started sounding at best anachronistic (cf. Sniderman and Hagendorn 2007). Having said this, child poverty rates in the Netherlands remain at roughly half what they are in the US (SCP 2012) and there have been no major conflicts such as those that intermittently rip through the *banlieue* of France—a country where ethnic registration by government officials is prohibited and, therefore, statistics related to ethnicity are relatively scarce.

In terms of helping facilitate an ongoing state-led humanitarian wonder based largely on economic redistribution, one might argue, now would be a terrible time to break open the existing top-down classification scheme for the following reason: *even if* this categorisation system is out of step with the fluidity and hybridity of life on the ground, those effectively grouped as ethnic minorities are finally starting to do as well in education, work, and other domains as those who show up in statistics as their native Dutch counterparts. If you want to use *rigorous* techniques to deny (racist) right wing ‘ethno-political entrepreneurs’ (Brubaker et al. 2006) their favourite arguments about the ‘lagging’ migrant minorities (and to be able to pinpoint where discrimination hurts minorities), then keep the old system intact for at least another generation. On both scientific and political grounds, then, one might argue that a strong dose of *strategic essentialism* and continuation of the government’s top-down scheme is part of the price countries with relatively extensive welfare state policies and provisions need to continue paying for civility.

For better or for worse, in the Netherlands today a growing number influential scholars have now begun making clear, very publically, that they no longer buy such arguments (e.g. Entzinger and Scheffer 2012, Ham and Van der Meer 2012). Their rather remarkable change of heart appears to be related to how children born in the Netherlands to citizens themselves born in the Netherlands have been classified as ‘third generation non-western’—and, albeit implicitly, *still* as allochthonous—due to the birthplace of *one or more of their grandparents*. But whether or not this specific classificatory move is what sparked it, as we shall see below, there has been an increasingly critical debate about the government’s top-down ethnic categorisation procedures and about the long unchallenged assumption that analyses of integration should be based on internally homogeneous (and dichotomous) ethno-cultural blocks.

No matter where one stands with regard to this feverish debate, one thing is clear: nothing even approaching a unified *alternative framework* for studying integration has emerged out of it so far. As long as no alternative view and categorisation scheme is presented in coherent fashion, researchers cannot make informed choices about sticking with the paradigm that has been dominant for over a generation or shifting to another one.

This is where we hope to make a contribution. We provide an analysis of (some of the probable costs associated with retaining) the current approach and outline an alternative vision of social divisions, exclusion, and inclusion in the Netherlands. Our alternative view is informed by Rogers Brubaker's concern about 'groupism' and the fact that 'Ethnic common sense—the tendency to partition the social world into putatively deeply constituted, quasi-natural intrinsic kinds—is a key part of what we want to explain, not what we want to explain things *with*; it belongs to our data, not to our analytic tool kit' (2002: 165, italics in original). More specifically, we offer a framework that can help researchers consider easing away from ethnic reification and the attendant analytic promotion of highly subjective notions of 'ethnic groups' and taking steps toward analyses founded on more objective, 'first order' social scientific categories (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 7). Making use of Elias's work on *established and outsider dynamics*, and dealing substantively with education, we flesh out how an alternative approach to in- and exclusion in contemporary Dutch society might be put to use.

As our opening comments indicate, we do not claim that the approach outlined here is *necessarily* appropriate for all investigations into current Dutch society. And we certainly do not claim that the alternative we offer is necessarily suitable for the interrogation of processes of integration and exclusion across all other times and national contexts. For example, we are open to the possibility that centuries of racialised exclusion makes 'importing' what we suggest problematic in the case of United States (cf. Desmond and Emirbayer 2009) as well as, perhaps, the United Kingdom (cf. Gilroy 2000: 33, 49). We do however believe that—while buttressing and systematising some of the earlier critiques offered by researchers active in the Netherlands (e.g., Duyvendak and De Zwart 2012; Geschiere 2009a, 2009b; Lucassen and Willems 2010; Pauille 2006; Verkaik 2010)—we can assist researchers interested in a path leading to more grounded, relational, and processual approaches to integration both in and outside the Netherlands.

The rest of this article is structured as follows. The first substantive section takes a closer look at the consolidation, challenging, and continuing defence of an ethnic classification system and accompanying approach to integration. Focusing on how researchers have dealt with crime, the second section demonstrates the far-reaching consequences of sticking with a set of classifications and an underlying approach that has already reinforced the *ethnopolitical project* of essentialising quasi-natural 'groups' informed to some degree by pseudo-biological ideas about 'race' and 'racial orders' (cf. Baumann 1996; Brubaker and Laitin 1998; Goldberg 1994, Kalir 2010). The third section elaborates an alternative analytical framework which, as the conclusion argues, could have profound consequences for ways of conducting research on integration in the Low Lands and beyond.

The rise and reign of an ethnicity-first approach

We cannot attempt anything approaching an exhaustive overview of the chain of events leading to the analytic privileging of 'ethnic' categories in the Dutch integration debate. By describing the 'main conjectural, unfolding interactions of

originally separately determined processes' (Skocpol 1979: 320 n 16) we nonetheless attempt in extremely pithy fashion to contextualise the ascendancy of a paradigm that can be associated with groupism in the domain of ethnicity.

While migration to the Low Countries has been going on for centuries (Lucassen and Lucassen 2011), it was only against the backdrop of high unemployment, rapid de-industrialisation, and the oil crisis that the 'ethnic' identification apparatus was set in motion during the 1970s. Despite pushback from critics as important as an especially prescient Minister of Justice—who warned about problems related to constructing and policing ethnic boundaries, classifying migrants (mixed) offspring, and escaping ethnic minority classifications—Dutch parliamentarians decided at that point that institutionalising a top-down ethnic classification system was justified given the perceived urgency of issues with which they were faced (De Zwart 2012). Gradually, a sealed-off ethnic (group) identification system emerged. In its current manifestation, this system is founded (1) on information about country of birth registered by civil servants at the municipal level and (2) on definitions of terms generated and disseminated by a (quasi-)governmental agency known as Statistics Netherlands—or, in Dutch, het Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek.

It can be claimed that in its incipient phase, the ethnic group identifying and constructing regime was shaped not by any strategic reasoning but, rather, by naïve essentialist thinking about primordial and durably distinct ethnic entities. By this we mean the pre-scientific notion that ethnicities somehow exist as things in the world outside of any historically specific and dynamic social constructions. According to this view, ethnic classification schemes would be purely neutral devices as they simply name that which was already there and already destined to remain distinct from one generation to the next. Bracketing for now concerns about how this far darker side of essentialism might relate to the effects of Dutch colonialism specifically (Essed and Trienekens 2008) and the quasi-racialisation of 'the west' and 'the rest' more generally (Thomas 2011: 11-12)—and shelving for now how underlying mental habits might be connected to a century of 'pillarisation' (roughly 1860-1960) that experts have described convincingly in terms of the 'ethnicisation of religious difference'¹ (Van Rooden 1996: 167; see also Knippenberg 1996)—we can assume for the purpose of this article that what we are dealing with in the 1970s and 80s is an example of strategic essentialism. Fully aware that they were at least co-creating and reinforcing schemes of classification, it can be argued that the Dutch policymakers felt they had pressing reasons to treat some of the networks of (socioeconomically) disadvantaged migrants as distinctly ethnicised 'target groups' (Duyvendak and Scholten 2011).

According to this reading, tactical and prudent reasoning led to the tidy and therefore *efficient* reification of 'ethnic' populations whose integration and experiences of being discriminated against could be monitored—and to whom (perceived urgently needed) governmental assistance could be expeditiously delivered. It is conceivable that, when it was adopted in the 1970s and 1980s, the classification system could have been further justified on the basis of self-identification. If they had been offered a chance, that is, many of the newcomers might have self-identified in terms of the ethnic categories into which they were thrust even if they did not see themselves predominantly in terms of 'mutually interacting, mutually recognising, mutually oriented' ethnic *groups* (Brubaker 2002: 169).

In the subsequent decades, however, two potential challenges to the strategic construction and use of discrete ethnic entities as proxies for 'target groups' gradually

emerged in the Netherlands. First, since the 1980s, the government has increasingly abandoned redistributive efforts based on the alleged attributes of different ‘minority groups’ (cf. De Zwart 2012, RMO 2012). Second, in the 1990s (scholarly) debates about integration came to be centred not on migrants but on their *native-born offspring*—i.e., in the language appropriated and disseminated by Statistics Netherlands, the ‘second generation allochtonous’ citizens who were, in many cases, the products of what might be called ‘mixed couples’. Revealingly, researchers at Statistics Netherlands consider couples ‘mixed’ only if one party is *autochtoon* and the other *allochtoon*. In other words, a ‘Surinamese’ mother and ‘Turkish’ father do not constitute a ‘mixed’ couple, but a ‘Surinamese’ and ‘Dutch’ partnership do.²

Extending top-down ethnic registration and classification to the ‘second generation’ was nevertheless defended—most importantly in several Statistics Netherlands publications—in terms of the need to continue monitoring the progress of the different ‘groups’ of ‘(second generation) allochtonous’ citizens vis-à-vis the standards set by ‘autochthonous’ citizens (Yanow and Van der Haar 2013). According to this official line of reasoning, such monitoring would help not just gauge the effect of (previous) policies but also shed light on any effects of ‘ethnic discrimination’ (or, by extension, anything else—e.g., ostensibly ‘group’ specific cultural attributes, that might be associated with specific ‘ethnic penalties’ or ‘ethnic bonuses’).

While they never amounted to a significant challenge to the system, it was at this point that the criticisms started to mount. On grounds that had, as Rath (2001) argues, little if anything to do with empirical evidence or theoretical developments in their fields (but a lot to do with government subsidisation of research projects, professorships, and even entire organisations such as the Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies which he directed for many years), in the 1980s and 90s leading researchers treated ‘ethnic groups’ as categorising concepts on par with—if not indeed as causally more significant than—those associated with socioeconomic indicators. Instead of opposing what governmental organisations were doing or how officials were framing integration, this insider claims, the *qualitative and quantitative* scholars influencing academic debates on integration played along en masse.

Here it becomes more difficult to maintain that strategic rather than naïve reasoning was behind the articulation and uncritical acceptance of the prevailing reifications. The classification system was nonetheless extended and the ethnicity-first approach was even more deeply engrained in both (unconscious) minds and (informal) institutional practices. During the 1990s—i.e., during the decade in which the integration debate politically became ‘the debate’ in part because the space for explicitly xenophobic social nationalist ethno-political entrepreneurs was opening for the first time in recent Dutch history—the formal classification scheme provided by Statistics Netherlands was adapted such that ‘western allochtones’ could now be distinguished from ‘non-western allochtones’. According to this new distinction, a ‘non-western allochtoon’ is a person ‘coming from or having a parent coming from countries in Africa, Latin-America, Asia (excluding Indonesia and Japan) or Turkey.’³ The big integration-related question in the Netherlands became this: Compared to the (putatively white) autochthonous natives, how are the various groups of second generation, non-western ethnic minorities doing in, for example, ‘their’ so called ‘black’ schools?

Early in the first decade of the new millennium, officials at Statistics Netherlands began categorising children as ‘third generation non-western’ if *one or more* of their grandparents was, according to municipal records, born in a ‘non-western’ country. Given Statistics Netherlands’ previously standardised definition of

autochthony (two parents born in the Netherlands), the children identified by means of this new category had to be *formally* considered ‘autochthonous’. Yet the main implication about the ethnic status of those captured with this new category, ‘third generation non-western’, was hard to miss. In a publication entitled *Allochtonen in Nederland*, Statistics Netherlands (2003: 33) justified the introduction of their new category by citing the need to interrogate the degrees to which ‘allochtons and their children’ integrate and the effects of ‘(integration) policies’. After sharing that the vast majority of children identified as ‘third generation non-western’ have ‘one or more’ grandparents from non-western country, and that only a small percentage have ‘three or four’, they also mentioned that, due to their latest efforts, distinctions could be made between ‘Turkish’, ‘Moroccan’, ‘Surinamese’ and ‘Antillean/Aruban’ members of this more general third generation grouping (Statistics Netherlands 2003: 31-32).

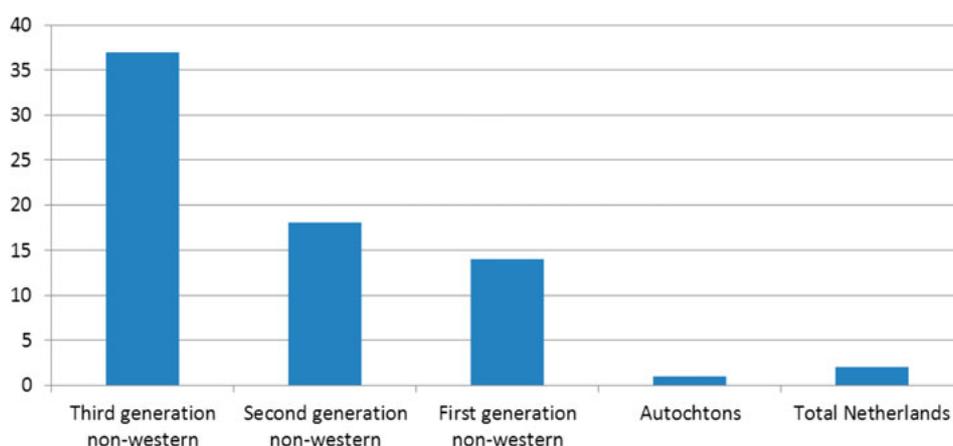


Figure 1. Percentage of growth among different population groups from January 1st 2000 to 2003. Source: Authors translated and adopted from Statistics Netherlands (2003, 33).

Before passing judgment here, let us take a closer look at what is being reified, justified, showcased, and left out. What we see here is not ‘merely’ the launching of a new category. This, rather, is the evolution of an essentially dichotomizing overall scheme. Keeping all the ethnicised ‘others’ apart required that ‘they’ be re-labelled only as *non-western* when, with the introduction of the new category, the older *non-western allochtons* linguistic device could no longer be used to draw distinctions with what are generally understood to be *white natives*. Furthermore, the authors claim that—due to what appears to be administrative constraints that are not flashed out for the reader—such information gathering and estimating are only ‘possible’ in cases involving one or more grandparents born in ‘non-western’ countries (Statistics Netherlands 2003: 31). In other words, the putatively third generation *western* children—again, generally understood to be (more) white—cannot be cordoned off from the rest of the (genuinely) ‘autochthonous’ citizenry.

No matter what one makes of first and presumed ‘second generation’ category members, for social scientists there is a straightforward *empirical* argument for rejecting this extension of a dichotomising scheme and all the ‘ethnic’ re-categorisation that came with it: the indicators of ‘third generation’ groupness have *nothing even approaching clear underlying empirical referents*. How could children born in the Netherlands—who may not even know for example their one grandparent from Suriname, raised by their three supposedly native/white grandparents and their two native born parents—be categorised as ‘third generation non-western’ or, in the

interest of greater precision, *third generation Surinamese*? As our opening remarks indicted, even here one can still make the (political) argument that the essentialising categorisation scheme remains strategic. Classifying the child in our example third generation Surinamese is roughly akin, however, to forcibly dividing the supposedly ‘white natives (*blanke autochtonen*) at Statistics Netherlands into ‘Saxon farmers’ or ‘Alpine types’ because *one or more of their grandparents* were classified along these lines by professors at major Dutch universities in the 1930s and 40s.⁴

Today, even some of the academics, civil servants, and journalists responsible for devising and popularising the dominant categorisation scheme have begun to argue publically that the old approach has outlived its fruitfulness (e.g., Ham and Van der Meer 2011; Entzinger and Scheffer 2012). A host of individuals and indeed entire organisations seem to have deduced that some kind of threshold of acceptability has been passed. Far from being opposed to formal modelling or quantification—let alone to categorising—these concerned citizens simply cannot any longer make peace with ‘ethnic’ reification as it is done in the Netherlands. As a report published by the Dutch Interdisciplinary Institute of Demography (Ham and Van der Meer 2012: 65) concluded:

The ethnic categories that were invented and used by Statistics Netherlands since the 1990s have been enormously successful from a statistical point of view, but have lost their effectiveness with time. They are now describing a reality that does not (any longer) exist. They have further led towards the formation of ‘ethnic spectacles’ that have created an ethnic reflex that is now activated in every incident and social problem.

Yet by far the most obvious example here is a recent report for the Minister of Integration, written by the Council for Societal Development (an independent policy think tank known in the Netherlands as the RMO). Building on the primary insights that notions of ‘ethnicity’ are inextricably linked to ideas about ‘race’ and ‘culture’ (RMO 2012: 6), this report urges that the government disband its static system of closed ethnic classification and base integration policy on fundamentally different categories. Given that the government’s ‘integration policies’ are no longer based on ethnic minority status, the report warns that the rationale for ongoing ethnic registration and classification is shifting towards concern about ‘security’ issues. This despite the increasing awareness that there is no ‘valid empirical . . . relation between ethnicity and deprivation (or security)’ (RMO 2012: 12). Furthermore, the authors point out that the steady stream of government reports, academic articles, books, and journalistic coverage that logically follows from the current classification system ends up stigmatising people (Cf. Steele 2010, Von Hippel 2010: 1469-70). Without even mentioning problems associated with the ethnicisation of putatively ‘third generation’ citizens, the RMO report argues not only that the current system fails to adequately reflect (new) social developments but also that it has lost both its political function and administrative/moral justification.

The authors see that putting an end to the present system will force some researchers to ‘let go of the current identification and categorising method’ and that generating their own data (on ethnicity) will ‘cost more time and investment’ (RMO 2012: 15-16). This is hardly a negative, the authors however suggest, because ending the current system ‘will lead to thinking about whether or not ethnicity is a relevant factor in a given investigation and what precisely the concept stands for [in the first place]’ (ibid). Aiming straight for those conducting certain kinds of variable-based

statistical research, the authors conclude that all ‘categorising, and certainly ethnic [categorising], is not static and should always be subject to debate and change. Now the opposite is taking place: changes to categories are being obstructed because this would result in less uniformity and continuity of research’ (ibid).

The current system is presently under attack in part because more qualitative researchers have publically buttressed the RMO’s criticisms while further detailing how a new ethnic classification system (based on shifting, ‘bottom-up’ self-identifications) might work (Duyvendak and De Zwart 2012)—even if this ‘frustrates...statisticians and policy makers’ because it ‘pollutes their databanks’. At the same time, leading quantitative researchers have launched counter-attacks against the RMO arguing that extant inequalities between ‘white autochtones (*blanke autochtonen*)’ and members of (second generation) ‘migrant groups’—and strategic concerns about interrogating them rigorously—continue to justify the current top-down state-led identification system (Van der Werfhorst 2012).

By means of examining the workings and effects of the ethnicity-based approach, we want to demonstrate why its costs may be greater than any of its (alleged or implied) benefits. While any number of other qualitative or quantitative studies might have been drawn from to make these points, due to space constraints we limit ourselves to just one.

Crime and the reinforcement of naturalising myths

In September 2010 a team of researchers—including a professor at the Utrecht University—produced a report for Risbo (an independent research institute affiliated with the Faculty of Social Sciences at Erasmus University, Rotterdam) focusing on ‘Moroccan-Dutch’ youth (12 to 24 years olds) in 22 municipalities across the Netherlands. The researchers start by explaining that their entire investigation is based on the definitions standardised by Statistics Netherlands, mainly, but also by the SCP (Social Cultural Planning Bureau), another (quasi-) governmental agency (Risbo 2010a: 7). The data from 22 municipalities is then used to compare how ‘autochthonous’ and ‘Moroccan-Dutch’ populations were, respectively, under- and over-represented among those suspected of committing crimes (as well as among drop outs and the unemployed).

To their credit, the researchers did not make any explicit claims about causality. They certainly cannot be accused of explicitly claiming that ethnicity had anything to do with fuelling any over- or under-representations. But the researchers not only failed to control in any way for socioeconomic status, but they failed to clarify why researchers hoping to publish their findings in leading journals are forced to do this.

While the crime-related over-representations of Moroccan-Dutch youth are displayed in the main text, the raw numbers related to involvement with police in the report’s various appendices clearly indicate that the vast majority of those suspected of crimes are ‘autochtones.’⁵ Even from inside the groupist framework the researchers used, this fact might be said to beg the following question: What *kinds* of natives and Moroccan-Dutch youth are getting involved with the judicial system? As usual, however—to use the title of a highly exceptional SCP report that proved the de facto rule—the ‘Disadvantaged autochtons’ remained a ‘forgotten group’ (SCP 2003). Perhaps better said, the non-ethnicised established and non-ethnicised outsiders remained the forgotten categories.

The researchers’ findings were selectively presented on a website set up to facilitate communication between bureaucrats in various municipalities throughout

the Netherlands. The posting on the report was showcased with a banner on the homepage under the title: 'Problematic Moroccans mapped out'.⁶ Now there seemed to be no doubt about what was driving the over- and under- representations broadcast in the main text; nor did there seem to be any doubt about what should be done:

The national government, the Union of Dutch Municipalities, and the 22 municipalities agree that it is time for action. The collective approach known as 'The procedure for at risk Moroccan-Dutch youth' must start producing benefits within two years. This report is the first of an ongoing yearly monitor that will continue to map out the problem. The frequently discussed tough approach must, in combination with the expansion of chances on the job market, lead to steadily improved numbers.

The idea that socioeconomic disadvantage or emotionally destabilising family ties might account for the undesirable outcomes better than anything related to 'ethnic groups' seems not to be worth mentioning. Assuming for a moment that the relevant definitions and underlying logic were warranted, there is no mention of what would appear to be most urgent: a similar 'solution' targeting the *autochthonous* youth associated with the lion's share of undesirable outcomes.

The Risbo's report was picked up in two respected national newspapers. While both of them mentioned that the levels of over-representation varied widely across different municipalities, neither the *De Volkskrant*⁷ nor *Trouw*⁸ raised the possibility that the reported overrepresentations might result mainly from socioeconomic positions let alone that, in terms of raw numbers, that 'native Dutch' youth were responsible for the vast majority of the negative outcomes. *De Telegraaf*, a right-wing tabloid with a greater national reach, had already picked up the story with the publication of one of the Risbo's earlier reports on a single city (Den Bosch). The headline, 'Moroccans: Stop the soft approach'⁹ was based on the response of an individual depicted as a representative of the 'Moroccan community' who seemed to finally grasp, after 'yet another' reminder about the 'over-representation' of 'Moroccan youth' in undesirable statistics, that a 'soft approach' would only lead to more 'chaos.' As the reporter put it, 'The Moroccan community also recognises it now: entire generations of Moroccan youth will continue growing up as scum (tuig) unless Dutch norms and values are maintained very strictly on the street.' The article in *De Telegraaf* was used on various websites to promote radically culturalist and ethno-centric propaganda.¹⁰

Here we find researchers associated with major universities following the lead of government agencies and adding legitimacy to the 'ethnic mythology' (Davis 1998) of journalists who shape, in turn, the environments in which policymakers have to speak and act. What we find here is a configuration more reminiscent of an iron triangle than of three autonomous fields. The entire complex works effectively to reinforce potentially fleeting feelings about clear demarcations between culturally superior natives and non-western (Muslim) immigrant minorities constituting what are widely referred to as 'black' schools and crime-ridden neighbourhoods.

To be sure, experts on crime in the Netherlands agree that the over-representations of those grouped by means of certain 'ethnic' categories *cannot* always be fully explained away by controlling for class. Yet there is no consensus about how one should 'control for class'.¹¹ And, more to the point, there is anything but consensus about what explains the rest of the variance. Therefore, to his recent discussion of the (Risbo's) 'shocking' figures on second generation minorities, Frank

Bovenkerk (2009)—a long-time professor of criminology in the Netherlands—went to some trouble to make clear that there is no conclusive evidence that anything related to ‘ethnicity’ is driving the over-representations. In another recent overview, the contributing editors of a leading Dutch criminology journal came to exactly the same core conclusion in a volume dedicated specifically to this very issue (Van der Leun et al. 2010).

Bovenkerk, furthermore, notes that we simply do not know whether ‘selective’ policing and discriminatory adjudication play significant roles in (re)producing what *look* like ‘ethnic’ imbalances (cf. Weenink 2009). He warns against ‘rushing’ to what he sees as the ‘typically Dutch’ habit of explaining ‘the rest’ of the variance with empirically unfounded ‘ethnicity’-meets-culture explanations (Bovenkerk 2009: 28). Bovenkerk emphasises that the first thing criminologists find when they venture to places like Morocco in search of ‘solutions’ is that the members of the ‘problem group’ they had in mind are ‘not Moroccan but Dutch. The delinquent youth do not come from rural Northern Africa but, [locals] say, are products of Northern European cities’ (ibid.: 20). Remarking that scores of ethnic communities might be identified in the Netherlands, and breaking with naively ‘culturalist’ approaches based on assumptions about homogenous and stable ‘peoples’ (*volken*), Bovenkerk suggests seeing ‘new forms of ethnicity [as] dynamic, heterogeneous, and generative of a great variety of culturally hybrid people’ (ibid.: 20).

In addition to attacking the ‘essentialism’ he associates with a previous wave of research fixating on the seemingly frozen ‘cultures’ of discrete groups of second generation minorities, Bovenkerk (2009: 14, 17-20) goes on to demonstrate that *lower class backgrounds and low levels of social control* (at the family level) are clearly predictive of involvement in criminal activity. In short, he suggests, the roots of the over-representations that can seem to be ‘ethnically’ determined are to be sought not in the blanket-like ‘cultures’ that can be attributed to entire ‘ethnic groups’ but, first and foremost, in the poverty and low levels of social control operative in specific, and indeed very problematic (familial) networks. With regard to ‘the Antilleans’, whom many criminologists have habitually treated as the most problematic of all ‘groups’, Bovenkerk (2009: 17) suggests drawing a clear distinction between ‘middle class populations’ that ‘are doing well’ and ‘lower working class’ segments ‘that are not’. As he puts it, there is ‘little contact’ between these two categories and no reason to suggest that all ‘Antilleans’ are poor, lacking in social organisation, or especially criminal.

What then to make of the Risbo report’s treatment of crime in Dutch cities? In order to fuel misguided ways of thinking, one might argue, the researchers did not need to make any causal claims about the over representation of Moroccan (-Dutch) youth. All that was required was that they offer summary statistics based on the anecdotal evidence suggesting that trans-generational differences between neatly enclosed ‘ethnic’ entities are theoretically adequate concepts. Doing this and keeping quiet about how poverty and immersion in poorly regulated social networks might predict such integration-related outcomes better than any categories based on ‘ethnicity’ was enough. Perhaps integration-minded researchers will interpret such studies as reasons to take a good look at a genuinely different way of doing business.

Start here: established-outsider dynamics

In part to clarify that we do not support simply switching to a view based on class, we want to demonstrate why Elias and Scotson’s (1994 [1964]) study of an acutely divided community in the British midlands influenced our thinking about integration

in places like the Netherlands. The study, *The Established and the Outsiders*, took place during a phase of English history in which the demand for workers in local factories stimulated significant waves of internal migration. Over the course of one or two generations, residents of a working class neighbourhood in the mid-sized city had evolved into a closely-knit network capable of regulating each other's ritualised reactions, feelings, and normative perceptions through, most importantly, gossip and access to positions in local organisations. Then a new wave of residents arrived. While the newcomers exhibited no significant differences in terms of ethnicity, religion or any mix of power resources used in most sociological accounts, they did not know each other and lacked any means of protecting themselves from the stigmatising—and group consolidating—classifications of the longer-term inhabitants. Because of the particular power imbalance that arose, the longer-term residents were capable of effectively naming, shaming, and otherwise closing ranks against the loosely connected 'intruders'. The differences that made a difference in this case, as Elias and Scotson demonstrated, had to do with the established group's relatively high degrees of social control and internal cohesion.

Here we see researchers basing their analysis *not* on their informants own (essentialist) categories but, rather, on their own highly objective account of the distribution of, and means of further appropriating, scarce material and symbolic resources. In Bourdieu's technical jargon, their analysis is based on various amounts and species of field-specific capital.) The shifting distributions and indeed the existence of these power resources can only be grasped when the social configuration (i.e., the object of analysis) is viewed as a dynamic whole. Within overall configurations of power, that which White (1997: 60) calls *processes-in-relations* were what allowed 'the established' not just to achieve dominance but to come into existence as a group in the first place. The strong sense of *groupness* arose, that is, out of emerging forms of interdependence marked most importantly by unequal distributions of power resources that would not have functioned as capitals in many other settings.

It was in this emergent, objective configuration of power that otherwise random and highly subjective views became mundane. The worst attributes of individual newcomers were collectively seen as the flaws of all intruders; the best qualities of the most respected members of the dominant group were extended to all members of this category. While Elias and Scotson revealed that occupancy of the socially dominant positions comes at a price, the book's pathos relates mainly to the fact that the (children of the) newcomers ended up measuring themselves with the yardstick provided by their symbolic overseers. Through the sneaky pedagogic force exerted by the entire 'field of relational dynamics' (Elias 1994 [1939]: 389), those occupying less powerful positions were effectively forced to take for granted the otherwise absurd belief that 'they' were members of a distinct sub-cultural 'group' and indeed that they were representatives of an inherently inferior 'sort' of human being (e.g., less clean, more criminal).

Crucially then, the divide between the two mutually constituting groups had nothing to do with diverging socioeconomic positions (or any of the other 'usual suspects' related to religion, gender, race, or sexual orientation). And the last thing we should take away from the study is that agents' subjective views and essentialising classifications did not matter. Elias and Scotson showed that these people were victimising each other and suffering most immediately because of their own mental representations. The question this raises is not whether subjective beliefs matter. The important question raised is: *where to start?* what can become an adequate analysis of

what matters by means of avoiding—as the Durkheim of *The Rules of Sociological Method* might have put it—any conflation of social scientific concepts and the folk categories of the people being studied. To get, ‘in the end’, to the strongly distinguishing factors that were indeed painfully real in their consequences once they were defined as real in peoples socialised (unconscious) minds, the researchers had to push aside their informants’ practical understandings and classificatory schemes while constructing their own *foundational* account of the distribution of most relevant resources (degrees of social control/cohesion) that functioned as objective constraints enabling various types of symbolic interactions and position-takings. The take-away, then, is that even in such conflicted settings in which senses of *groupness* have already become strong and solidified, we must find a way to distinguish clearly between first and second order concepts and corresponding moments of analysis.

Following Max Weber¹², Elias (1994: xxvi) further clarified the idea that if one goes back far enough into the emergence and evolution of such established-outsider ‘figurations’, one is bound to find more objective distributions of material and symbolic power resources at the root of all naturalising myths about ‘ethnic’ (as well as racial and caste-related) groups. In short, long before we started pondering terms like *groupism and symbolic violence*, Elias encouraged fellow social scientists to avoid taking such putatively ethnicised divisions at face value. He urged us, instead, to adopt thoroughly relational and processual points of analytic departure and to engage in extensive (historical) investigations of the shifting power ratios and forms of interdependence that ultimately undergird all (pseudo-biological and/or ethnicised) fantasies about inherently superior (or charismatic) and inferior (or disgraced) ‘groups’.

Let us now return to integration in the Netherlands. The main thing to keep in mind is this: It is only after establishing our analytical lines of division that we can discern empirically whether—and if so, how—our own first order visions of social divisions relate to any number of more subjective ones, such as those used to construct ‘ethnic groups’ or ‘real natives’. As in Elias and Scotson’s case study, the fact that English newcomers and their children perceived themselves to constitute a distinct inferior ‘group’ does not evidence the collective ‘essence’ of such a ‘group’, but it rather highlights the ways in which symbolic power, social dynamics and public discourses can powerfully fashion people’s visions of divisions and their notions of belonging to certain ‘groups’. In terms of the Dutch case study, observing that some Dutch citizens and their children may refer to themselves as *allochtons*, while other Dutch citizens and their children think of themselves as members in a homogeneous *native* population, says little about the essence of such a distinction in terms of socioeconomic, cultural, and all other potential characteristics.

If we set out to show how more subjective folk notions of (self-)identifications and ethnic hierarchies relate to *our own primary analytical categories* of more established and more marginalised citizens, this should be done in a moment of analysis that, however important, remains secondary. We can speak, therefore, of more established *or* more marginalised people who—in certain situations—might classify themselves as, for example, ‘native’ or ‘Turkish’ or ‘Japanese-Dutch’.

If we do break with our analytical categories and attempt to bring in the active constructions of the people we study, it is crucial that we do not *cue up* any specific emic or folk categories, whether ethnicity-related or not.¹³ At this point, researchers might discover and explore any number of (conversationally) situated self-identifications, including those that may not fit the pigeonholes that neatly systematised the ethnicity-based research considered above. Those that we have

reason to see mainly in terms of comparatively high levels of access to more established positions in specific fields might identify themselves as (second generation) Surinamese or (purely) autochthonous. But they might also identify themselves as entrepreneur, Limburger, unemployed, half Mexican/half Jewish, well-dressed Amsterdamer or as gay Turkish Rotterdammer. To the degree that we are genuinely interested in what matters subjectively to the people we study, in this phase of research we should be just as open to more established and more marginalised peoples' (self-)identifications based on more or less enduring feelings about sexual, political, linguistic, economic, regional, religious, or aesthetic differences as we are to their ideas related to (hybrid) ethnicities. If those of us committed to variable-based statistical research must put people in 'ethnic' boxes, the data collection processes and categorisation schemes should remain as democratic, grounded, and open (to change) as possible. No one said rigor would be easy.

In the interest of clarifying further how this alternative vision might be applied, let us turn now briefly to the field of education. For decades, countless integration-related studies focusing on schools in the Netherlands have prioritised differences among 'groups' of 'non-western' (second generation) ethnic minorities who comprise 'black' schools and 'native Dutch' who constitute 'white' ones (see Vink 2010). Crul and Doornik's (2003) study of the 'Turkish and Moroccan second generation' might serve as an example of an influential study based on qualitative methods. Privileging ethnic (group) categories undeniably allows them to shed light on interesting outcomes related to overcoming socioeconomic hardship through the educational system. This says nothing, however, about what they do not show (and, therefore, effectively obscure). And the great irony here is that for decades sophisticated quantitative researchers working in the dominant paradigm have shown that 'ethnic' divisions play rather small, ambiguous, and often counter-intuitive roles in the field of education. When and where researchers have even begun controlling for socioeconomic status, they have determined time and again that 'ethnic' minority and majority status (and, by extension, the putatively distinct cultures corresponding to these groups) do not take us very far in terms of explaining differences in students' outcomes.

One of the most useful findings in the Dutch research literature on schooling is that the children of poorly educated 'allochthonous' parents tend to *do better* in terms of educational outcomes than do children of equally poorly educated 'autochthonous' parents. As Hustinx and Meijnen (2001: 6), who spotlighted this tendency, put it: 'To a significant degree, we can say that there is less of a [negative] social milieu effect for minorities' (cf. Dronkers and Levels 2005; Jungbluth 2007). Wholly in line with these earlier studies, Van der Werfhorst and Van Tubergen (2007: 432, 434) sum up their findings on secondary schooling in the Netherlands in this way: '[E]thnic minorities attend lower levels of education and score lower on achievement tests. These ethnic differences, however, are attributable to social class background... [T]aking into account the lower parental education and occupational class, ethnic differences in achievement vanish, and differences in secondary school type almost disappear. What remains of the differences in educational level is not an ethnic penalty, but an ethnic advantage: Turks, Moroccans, Surinamese and Antilleans choose higher types of secondary schooling than natives with comparable class backgrounds.'

While it has been hiding in plain sight for some time, we can now state the basic insight with the potential to transform integration research in the Netherlands: In the fundamentally important field of education, lower class students typically

positioned symbolically as white natives tend not to be established. Middle class students who by so many accounts are (still) inherently Turkish or Surinamese (or not purely white and authentically native due, for example, to a grandparent's place of birth) are generally more established. Building on the strongest exemplars of the one that came before it, a new paradigm for integration research in the Netherlands can be achieved. As thousands of more or less established children that some (bureaucrats) may steadfastly depict for example as 'third generation Turks'—and, on the other hand, as 'natives'—work their way through the Dutch school system, researchers in the Netherlands can accept the implications of years of research and relegate the second generation/native split to at best secondary analytic status. Refusing to prioritise ethnic categories on empirical grounds can be combined with sincere curiosity and readiness to be surprised about what is actually driving established-outsider dynamics in educational and other fields. For those open to making such a move, what we suggest is basing analyses on openness not only to socioeconomic background but to any number of potential principles of division such as those relating to distinguishing levels of social control or emotional self-control (cf. Elias 1994; Moffitt et al. 2011).

Conclusion

'Taxonomies which have sprung straight from the statisticians' social unconscious, [are] associating things that ought to be separated [...] and separating things that could be associated' (Bourdieu 1984: 21)

Regardless of whether or not a neat correspondence ever existed in the Netherlands between the state's top-down ethnic categories and migrants' self-identification as belonging to such alleged groups, it is notable, as many scholars stressed, that counter to the prevalent (international) image that paints the Netherlands as an exemplar of multiculturalism, 'the Dutch agenda in dealing with ethnic minorities was never driven by the principle that justice demands equal cultural recognition, as in conventional multiculturalism' (De Zwart 2012: 302). Understanding that 'multiculturalism in the Netherlands started as a strategy to promote quick and efficient redistribution among designated ethnic groups for the purpose of pacification' (ibid.), should mitigate the surprised shown by many observers at the supposedly recent crumbling down of the Dutch multicultural model and its replacement with uncompromising assimilationist policies. Identity politics in the Netherlands, unlike in many other Western countries, hardly emerged from collective demands by organized ethnic/migrant *groups*. Dutch identity politics is much more the result of the governmental 'shoe-boxing' of migrants, their children and grandchildren, into sealed off top-down ethnic categories, which could be first used for redistributive policies and later for assimilationist ones. As De Zwart (2012: 311) plainly establishes, '*Allochtoon* is not a movement identity; nobody likes to be called *allochtoon*, and many also dislike being classified, by others, as "Moroccan", "Antillean" and so on. The image of these identities is tainted by an endless stream of reports and news about "integration problems", not by successes in a struggle for recognition.'

A recent report on discontentment related to 'multiculturalism' among residents of Amsterdam—which spurred debate among politicians at the municipal level¹⁴—contained a preface noting that sticking to the standardised ethnic definitions meant presenting someone who might not have been born in Amsterdam as an 'autochthonous Amsterdamer' while depicting someone perhaps born and raised in

Amsterdam as a ‘Moroccan Amsterdamer’. Until further notice, the authors remarked, ‘this is the best of all bad solutions and an inelegant representation of reality for which *the researchers want to excuse themselves*.’ Alienated from the very products they churn out, the hired hands are reduced to distancing themselves from the dominant classifications before going on and, in the absence of an alternative, putting the old categories to work yet again. Left out of the *mea culpa*, of course, is that hundreds of such reports reinforce—and extend scientific legitimacy to—deeply culturalist bureaucratic and journalistic discourses that not only overemphasise ethnicity, but also conceal what matters most, while they imply fixed notions of ethno-racial groupness and national belonging (cf. Balibar 1991).

For those interested in more than tinkering with the old model, we have suggested a fundamentally different way to advance research relevant to processes of in- and exclusion. While we advocated giving adequate—and potentially even central—place in *empirical analyses* to (reified or fluid) ethnic self-identifications, we demonstrated why we as researchers might avoid conflating such folk notions with *our own first order conceptual devices*. We argued that in an analytically separable and indeed primary phase of more objectivist research, relatively ‘established’ and comparably more marginalised people and positions should be conceptualised as emergent properties emanating from ongoing dynamics within relatively autonomous domains of life. These identified core categories—which do not inherently suggest anything about being part of a ‘group’ in the sense of a ‘bounded collectivity with a sense of solidarity, corporate identity and capacity for concerted action’ (Brubaker 2002: 169)—should be re-constructed as new distributions of power resources become effective (or are discovered) in the various fields of life worthy of our attention as integration scholars.

The main drawback to the alternative we suggest is that using it might lead researchers to downplay or otherwise neglect the role of evolving ethno-racial orders in specific spheres of life or in overall national contexts. The key word here, however, is *might*. As we saw in Elias’s work, *beginning* the analysis with first order concepts because of the epistemic leverage this ultimately conveys does not in any way necessarily imply underemphasising in accounts of actual social dynamics either (1) agents’ own practical ways of feeling, thinking or behaving in the observable foreground, or (2) how collective fantasies about ethnicity/race may pre-structure shared background understandings. Here, as Elias’s work on established-outsider dynamics indicates, it can be helpful to keep in mind that perceptions of skin colour, ideas about (cultural) ancestry, and feelings about nationalised belonging do not ‘by themselves’ do anything. Lethal or not, they only come into play along with other social and psychological forces which should be analysed primarily through objectivising accounts of shifting distributions of power resources rather than in terms of agents’ feelings and cognitions (Hage 2000: 33-36).

Even as there is much more empirical work to do in researching processes-in-relations relevant, for example, to who gets involved in criminal justice systems and who does well in school, we know this much about the most stark and verifiable differences: They *tend* to be between *all* children born into outsider positions and *all* the children of established parents. No matter how they might envision themselves (ethnically), the children of relatively well educated, financially secure, emotionally stable, and socially ‘connected’ citizens tend not to need help being integrated because, generally speaking, they already are. Similarly, tens of thousands of children born into networks of poorly educated, financially insecure, emotionally unstable and socially isolated adults are above all outsiders, who will generally need help

integrating into non-marginalised positions within Dutch society whether or not, in a residual moment of analysis, these disinherited children classify themselves as ‘white natives’ with all four grandparents from the Netherlands (or other western countries). Looking ahead, whether or not Statistics Netherlands singles out and makes data available on third or even *fourth* generation ‘non-westerners’, researchers interested in improving their grasp on the *durable inequalities* (Tilly 1996), can and should generate their own independent schemes of classification rather than be swayed by (seemingly strategic) reasons to see integration mainly in terms of discrete *ethno-cultural blocks*.

For the reasons mentioned at the outset, even—or *especially*—in the age of ‘third generation non-westerners’, many researchers active in the Netherlands will decide that the status quo should be defended. Indeed many of them will conclude that the top-down ethnicity ‘identifying’ system and underlying view of integration should remain a source of (national) pride. However strategic doing so may have been in the past, extending the view and classification system that has held sway in the Netherlands for a generation must by now be seen as dangerous. Most importantly, it risks putting reified ethnic categories on par with far more penetrating and reliable ones. It is highly plausible that doing precisely this has already led, at least indirectly, to the reinforcement and legitimisation of the slide from (well-intended) ethnicity-making governmental policies to the overly culturalist and quasi-racialised freezing of ‘emergent ethnicity’ (Phizacklea and Miles 1980) in political and public realms. One can argue against reconfiguring the research game. But in doing so, one should be fully cognizant that to downplay objectively more important principles of social division while essentialising (if not exaggerating) ‘ethnicity’ amounts to playing with fire. Given the thinly veiled primordialism (if not open xenophobia) of political parties from Greece to Finland—and, of course, on the rabid right in many other countries around the world—we see our work on the Dutch case not ‘merely’ as part of a turn towards more reflexive, relational, and processual approaches, but also as part of a sorely needed international comparative effort to demonstrate how the use of more empirically grounded analytical categories can reconfigure scientific research on social inclusion.

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¹ Here as elsewhere, unless in *italics* and left in original form, all Dutch terms have been translated by the authors.

² For the registration method of Statistics Netherlands, see www.cbs.nl/NR/rdonlyres/F03BA3D4-B5E3-4068-B087-EA5BD7B5D889/0/2007k4b15p25art.pdf. On mixed couples in the Netherlands, see Hondius (1999). For a transatlantic and historical comparative perspective to mixing, see Marx (1998: 65-76).

³ For more details on the definition by Statistics Netherlands, see www.cbs.nl/nl-NL/menu/themas/dossiers/allochtonen/methoden/begrippen/default.htm?ConceptID=1013 (retrieved 12.07.2012).

⁴ While doing this, De Vries et al's (1945 [1938]) *Volke van Nederland (The Dutch People)* used close ups of peoples' faces to 'document' the existence of different sub-sorts. For disturbing parallels with ethno-racialized reifications in the US, Germany and Rwanda, see Marx (1997: 70), Fredrickson (2002: 123-25, 164-65) and De Swaan (1997) respectively.

⁵ For example, across the 22 municipalities, the number of 'Moroccan-Dutch' crime suspects is 8,295 or 14.35% of the overall total, while the number of 'autochthonous' crime suspects is 24,803 or 42.93% of the grand total (see appendix for details).

⁶ 'Probleem Marokkanen in kaart gebracht', see www.gemeente.nu/web/Actueel/Actueel-home.htm. (retrieved 27.9.2010).

⁷ 'Grote verschillen Marokkaanse jeugd: Vergelijkend onderzoek naar criminaliteitscijfers gemeenten' 25.9.2010

⁸ 'Criminaliteit Marokkaanse jeugd verschild' 27.9.2010

⁹ 'Marokkanen: Stop softe aanpak' 25.9.2008

¹⁰ See, for example, <http://forum.fok.nl/topic/1201443/1/25> and www.trotsopnederland.com/index.php?pageID=3&messageID=67 (both retrieved 29.10.2010).

¹¹ See Conely (1999) on why researchers should be required to go back more than just one generation (before rushing to their race-meets-culture explanations based on minimalist 'controlling' for just one generation of class positions).

¹² Long before Elias studied with Alfred Weber and presented in Marianne Weber's famous Heildberg salon, Max Weber (1978: 394-5) had shown convincingly that, 'All in all, the notion of 'ethnically' determined social action subsumes phenomena that a rigorous sociological analysis...would have to distinguish carefully... It is certain that in this process [of precise analysis] the collective term 'ethnic' would be abandoned, for it is unsuitable for a really rigorous analysis. The concept of the 'ethnic' group...dissolves if we define our terms exactly.'

¹³ As Eriksen (1993: 161) put it: 'If one goes out to look for ethnicity, one will 'find' it and thereby contribute to constructing it.' On how *not* to cue up ethnicity, see Brubaker et al.'s (2006: 380-85) 'A note on data'.

¹⁴ De Rode Hoed (2009: 4, *italics added*). On political spinoff, see www.stichtingvoorbeeld.nl/project.php?num=16 (retrieved 26.9.2012)