

# SUMMARY

Migration and Classification: Towards a Multiple Migration Idiom

## SUMMARY

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In various countries, public authorities, research institutes and civil-society organisations are struggling to classify migrants and their children. When and how can we classify according to origin? Making a distinction according to migrant groups can be useful when it comes to monitoring problems, developing policy and determining its effectiveness. However, such a classification is justified only if there is no alternative and the advantages outweigh the disadvantages.

In France, registering origin or ethnicity is taboo. In Germany, reference is made to people with a migration background (*Migrationshintergrund*), which also covers children of migrants. English-speaking countries refer to 'first, second and third+ generations of migrants'. Most other countries refer to 'migrants' and occasionally to 'descendants of migrants'. The Netherlands is the only country that makes a distinction in its statistics on the basis of the country of birth of someone's parents.

The categorisation and labelling commonly used in the Dutch migration debate are outdated. The term '*alloctonen*', used to describe people with at least one parent born abroad, and the term '*autoctonen*', used for people whose parents were born in the Netherlands, are no longer appropriate. The same applies to the distinction between 'western' and 'non-western'. Migrants are nowadays so different as regards country of origin and the reason for migration that they can no longer be covered by these single umbrella terms. Furthermore, these labels create a sense of exclusion and subordination.

The area of research or the policy issue must determine the terminology, not the reverse. Alternative classifications could be labour migrants, family migrants or asylum migrants. What is needed is a multiple and variable distinction according to origin groups (e.g. 'residents with a Dutch, Turkish, Polish background'). When describing the total population make-up, the Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR), in consultation with Statistics Netherlands (CBS), refers to 'residents with a Dutch and a migration background'.

### 1. ELEMENTS OF CLASSIFICATION

## 1

Classification according to origin consists of various elements. Registration is the recording and storing of data relating to residents. Data acquisition is the way in which this information is collected. Clustering or categorisation is the classification of this data into groups in order to reduce complexity. Finally, labelling is the allocation of terms to describe clusters. Every element of classification according to origin is open to discussion as regards the way in which the government operates. Different countries make different choices.

**Box 1: Classification elements according to origin***Registration*

This is understood to mean the recording and storing of data relating to residents by the government. Do countries record the origins of their residents? France, for instance, does not, but the Netherlands and the United Kingdom do. The way in which countries register the data differs. In the Netherlands, the country of origin can be traced at individual level, while registration in the United Kingdom is restricted to the macro-level.

*Data acquisition*

This is understood to mean the way in which the government collects information about the ethnicity of its residents. Generally speaking, two methods can be distinguished which occur in many variants. The first is the allocation of an ethnicity or origin to a person by the government on the basis of objective criteria (e.g. the country of birth). That is what happens in the Netherlands. The second method is self-reporting, with persons determining themselves to which ethnic group they belong. That happens, for instance, during a census in the US.

*Clustering*

Clustering or categorisation is the classification into groups on the basis of this data. There are many countries of origin and a great many ethnicities. Government departments, such as national statistics offices, often cannot avoid combining certain ethnic groups or countries of origin in order to arrive at workable classifications. These classifications may be geographical and based, for instance, on continents, but also on cultural proximity or on racial criteria, as happens in the US, Canada ('visible minority population') and New Zealand, for example.

*Labelling*

This is understood to mean the allocation of specific terms to specific clusters. These are therefore terms and concepts used by the government to denote the different groups. Usually, governments try to use terminology that is as neutral as possible. They often opt for terms that do not refer to the nationality of individuals, so that no rights and obligations can be derived from them. 'Westerners' and 'non-westerners' are examples of such labels.

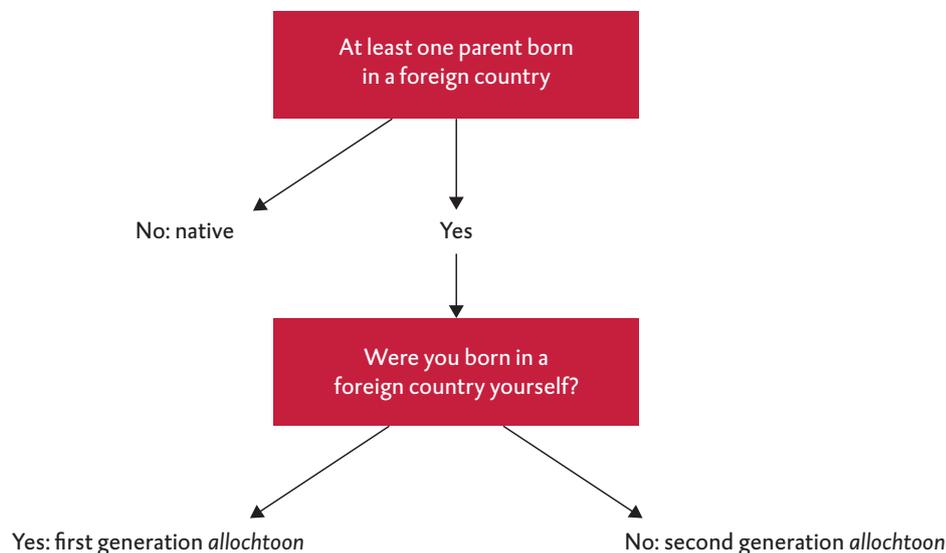
The aim of this investigation is to contribute to the development of a multiple migration idiom that is more appropriate to the present migration diversity. In the descriptive part of the investigation, we consider the current classification practice in the Netherlands and other European countries, the criticisms of that practice and the alternatives. In the evaluation, we formulate assessment frameworks to determine when it is meaningful to classify according to origin and what requirements should then be imposed on clustering and labelling. The current migration diversity requires a diversity of classifications.

## 2. CURRENT CLASSIFICATION PRACTICE IN THE NETHERLANDS

# 2

How has the Dutch classification practice developed? In 1971, the Dutch sociologist Hilda Verwey-Jonker introduced the terms ‘allochtonen’ and ‘autochtonen’. ‘Allochtoon’ was an alternative to ‘minorities’ and ‘foreigners’, which were regarded as stigmatising. ‘Allochtoon’ literally means ‘from another country’ or ‘of another soil’ and ‘autochtoon’ means ‘domestic/local’; the words derive from the Greek *allos* (other), *autos* (self, own) and *chthoon* (country, soil). The term took root after publication of the WRR report *Allochtonenbeleid* in 1989. Statistics Netherlands started using the term ‘allochtoon’ in official statistics (see figure). Someone is *autochtoon* if both their parents were born in the Netherlands, regardless of where they themselves were born. An *allochtoon* is defined as a person who lives in the Netherlands but with at least one parent who was born abroad. An *allochtoon* who was themselves born abroad is classed as being a member of the first generation. An *allochtoon* who was born in the Netherlands is a member of the second generation.

### Methodical presentation of the distinction between natives and allochtonen of the first and second generation according to the Statistics Netherlands (CBS) definition



However, the category ‘allochtonen’ also included many people whom politicians and civil servants did not class as belonging to the target group, such as migrants (and their children) from EU Member States, expats and repats from the former Dutch East Indies (Groenendijk 2007). Statistics Netherlands added the distinction ‘western as opposed to non-western’ (see figure). The western countries of origin included all countries in Europe (except Turkey), North America, Oceania, Japan, Indonesia /Dutch East Indies and the former Asiatic Soviet republics, while the non-western countries included Turkey, all countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia with the exception of Japan, Indonesia and the Asiatic Soviet republics. The country of origin is determined as follows: if both a person’s parents were born in the Netherlands, the Netherlands is regarded as that person’s country of origin (regardless of where they themselves were born). All other persons are initially classified according to their own country of birth. However, if that country is the Netherlands, as is the case with ‘second-generation migrants’, the country of birth of the mother of the person in question determines their country of origin. If that country is also the Netherlands, the country of birth of the father is decisive.

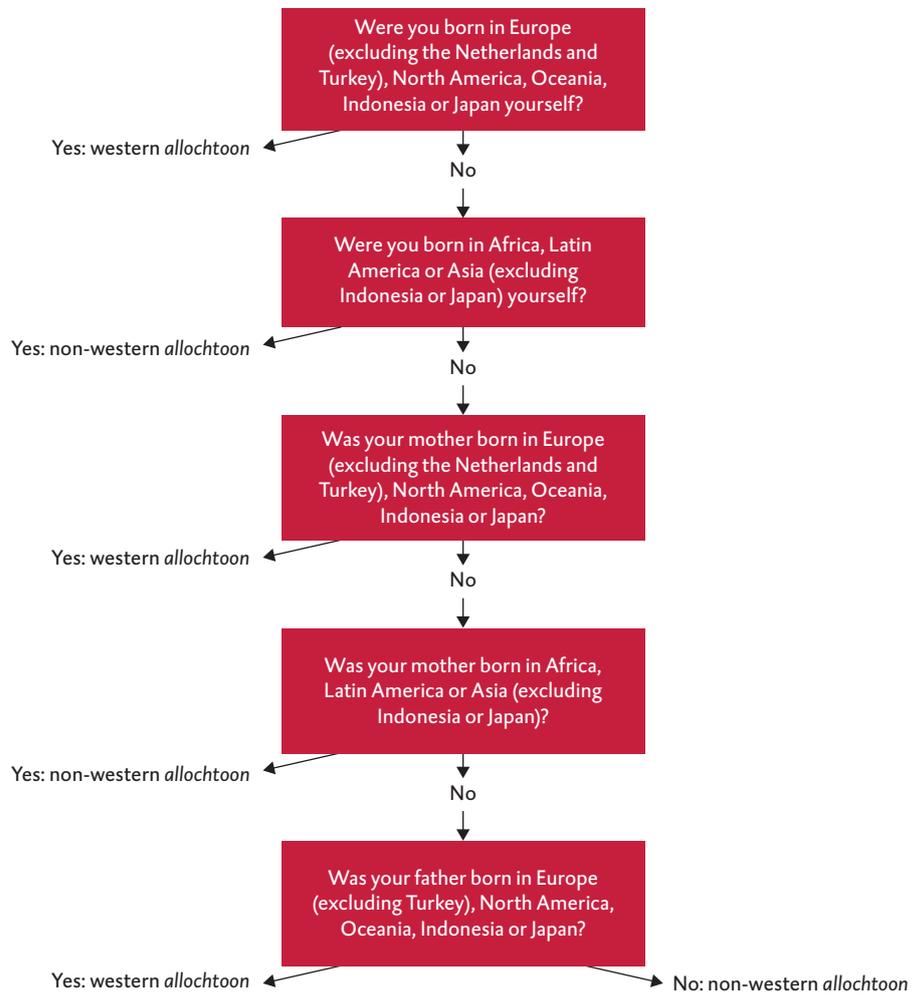
In Dutch academic, political and civil society circles, a continuing debate is about the use of the terms ‘allochtoon and autochtoon’. One of the main problems with the terms is that they are apparently neutral container terms, but have become charged in everyday use. As the term *allochtoon* is predominantly used when discussing social problems, it has acquired a negative connotation. Moreover, children of migrants feel that they can never escape from being branded *allochtoon*; referring to people of migrant origin as *allochtoon*, even those who are from the second and sometimes even third generation, means

that the children and grandchildren are forever marked out as being ‘from another country’. These terms do create distance rather than proximity and only serve to emphasise the oppositions between different population groups (Groenendijk 2007: Schinkel 2008).

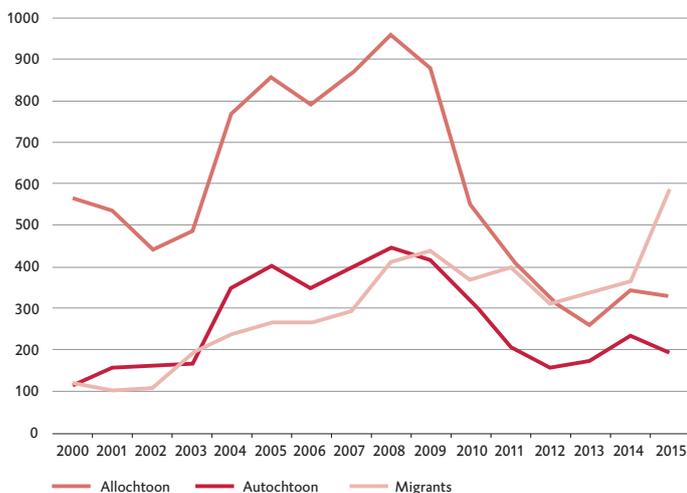
Since 2008, the terms ‘allochtoon’ and ‘autochtoon’ have been used less often in newspapers and parliamentary documents. Public authorities and organisations are instead opting for other terms, such as ‘migrants’ or ‘Turkish Dutch’. There are no widely used alternatives.

Little research has been carried out into what people to whom the term ‘allochtoon’ applies think of it. Investigations by the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP) have shown that a majority of the ‘first generation’ see themselves as ‘allochtonen’. Among the ‘second generation’, that is far less the case: less than half of them see themselves as allochtonen. There are also wide differences between migrant groups. Migrants seem to consider themselves less as allochtonen the more at home they feel in the Netherlands, the fewer the problems they have with the Dutch language, and the better their labour market position. Many consider the term ‘allochtoon’ to be negative and charged.

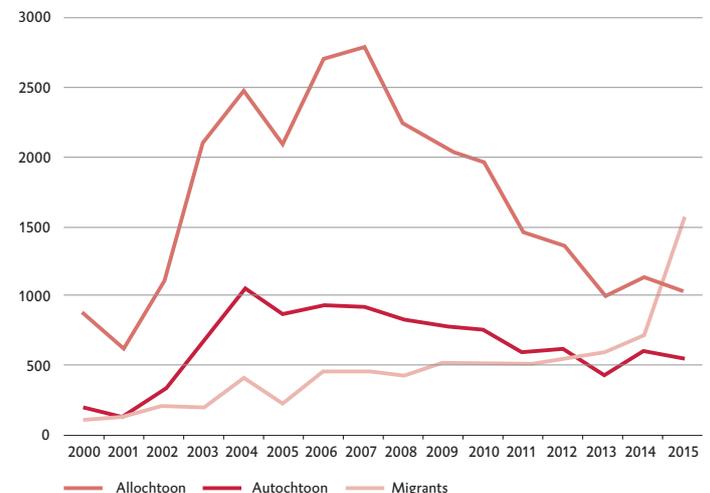
### Methodical presentation of the distinction between western and non-western allochtonen according to the Statistics Netherlands (CBS) definition



### Search terms in parliamentary documents between 2000 and 2015



### Search terms in newspaper bank (LexisNexis) between 2000 and 2015

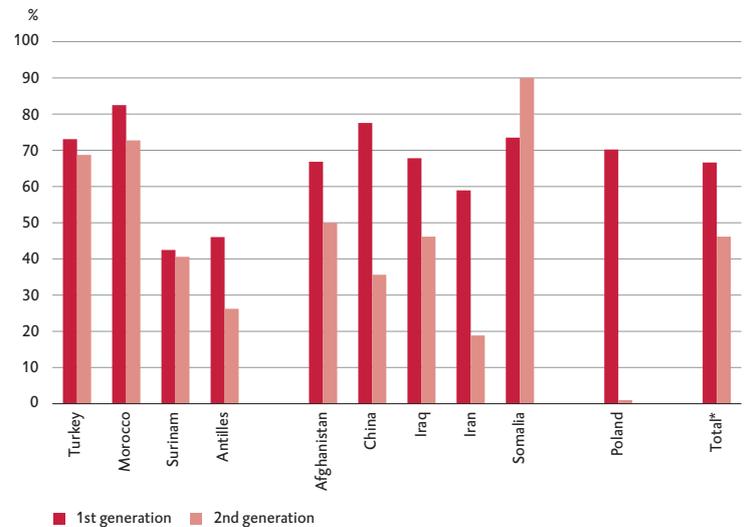


Also the terms ‘western’ and ‘non-western’ are heavily debated. One of the problems with these terms is that they can be interpreted as denoting a cultural ranking rather than a neutral juxtaposition. Statistics Netherlands (CBS) devised this classification in order to introduce finer subdivisions in the migrant population. However, while this distinction may appear to be geographical in nature, it is in reality a cultural distinction which evokes colonial associations. While it is intended to reflect cultural differences that are relevant for policy, it is actually a classification by ethnicity which has a discriminatory effect (Hirsch Ballin 2014: 22). CBS includes countries with a predominantly Western European population culture in the category ‘western’ countries of origin; this category includes the countries of Europe and North America, but also former colonies with a population originating mainly from Western Europe, such as Australia and New Zealand. Former colonies which do not have a predominantly Western European population or culture, such as the countries of Latin America, Africa and most countries in Asia, are classed as ‘non-western’, even if they lie to the geographical west of the Netherlands.

The terms ‘western’ and ‘non-western’ are not subtle enough to provide a true reflection of the social reality in our society. In the 21st century, migrants come to the Netherlands from all parts of the world. They vary greatly in education level, socio-economic position, migration motives and length of stay. Umbrella terms such as ‘western’ and ‘non-western’ are therefore no longer informative. According to Statistics Netherlands (CBS) data, for example, the top ten countries of birth of immigrants who came to the Netherlands in 2015 and who were not born in the Netherlands were successively: Poland, Syria, Germany, the former Soviet Union, India, China, the UK, the US, Italy and Bulgaria.<sup>1</sup> The top ten of countries of birth of immigrants living in the Netherlands as at 1 January 2016 is presented in the figure.

<sup>1</sup> Incidentally, for most immigrants who came to the Netherlands in 2015, the Netherlands was their country of birth.

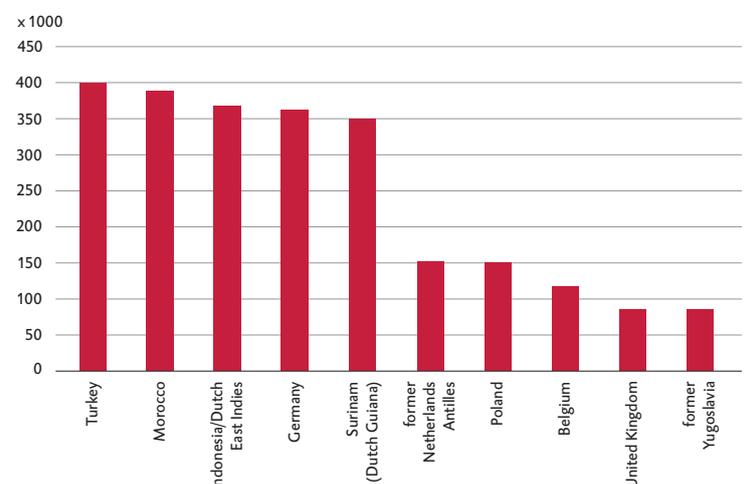
### Percentage of migrants who regard themselves as *allochtoon* according to country of birth and generation



### Percentage of migrants of the first generation who regard themselves as *allochtoon* according to country of birth and several integration indicators (%)

	Feel at home in the Netherlands	Do not (always) feel at home in the Netherlands	Have no problems using Dutch in a conversation	Have problems (occasionally) using Dutch in a conversation	Have work/self-employed	No labour market participation
Afghans	63%	81%	61%	70%	62%	71%
Antilleans	38%	62%	42%	59%	48%	43%
Chinese	69%	91%	63%	81%	77%	78%
Iraqis	64%	83%	64%	70%	61%	72%
Iranians	52%	77%	51%	65%	54%	65%
Moroccans	79%	87%	74%	87%	77%	86%
Poles	59%	84%	47%	76%	69%	73%
Somalis	70%	86%	69%	76%	69%	76%
Surinamese	40%	49%	41%	56%	47%	33%
Turks	65%	84%	62%	77%	70%	74%
<b>Total</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>70%</b>

### Top ten of countries of birth of immigrants who live in the Netherlands at 1 January 2016



### 3. CLASSIFICATION IN OTHER COUNTRIES AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

The Netherlands is one of the few countries where the national statistics office registers both the country of birth of persons and that of their parents. Moreover, the Netherlands is the only country that makes a distinction in its statistics on the basis of the country of birth of someone's parents. Most other countries refer to 'migrants' and occasionally to 'descendants of migrants'.

There are various classification practices in use by the statistics offices of European countries and international organisations, such as the UN, Eurostat, the OECD and IOM. There is no European consensus regarding the classification of origin groups. The differences relate mainly to how the children of migrants are referred to (Bijl and Verweij 2012). Although there are key differences, the Scandinavian countries use similar terminology, as do English-speaking countries.

# 3

#### 1. Belgium

European countries differ considerably in how they classify migrants. In Belgium, even Flanders and Wallonia each have their own approach to terminology and the statistics relating to migrant populations. Flanders tends to follow the approach taken in the Netherlands, while Wallonia favours the French approach (Perrin, Dal and Poulain 2015).

In Flanders, reference is made to persons of *allochtoon*, foreign or alien origin, with the definitions not being clear-cut. For the benefit of uniform monitoring, the Diversity Commission therefore issued an advisory report in 2014 in order to make the definition of *allochtonen* more specific.<sup>2</sup> That definition was adopted in 2003 as follows: 'Persons with a non-EU nationality or persons of whom at least one parent or two grandparents are nationals of a non-EU country'. This refers explicitly to persons outside the then 15 EU Member States, before the accession of Central and Eastern European countries in 2004, 2007 and 2013. The Flemish Migration and Integration Monitor 2015 does not use the term '*allochtoon*' but refers to 'foreign nationals' and 'people of foreign origin'.<sup>3</sup> Like the City of Ghent, many public authorities refer to 'persons with a migration background'.

#### 2. France

French government documents refer to migrants and their descendants. Registering origin or ethnicity remains a taboo and including ethnic or racial categories in the census is prohibited by law (Simon 2008, Léonard 2014). The French approach to classification and to the integration of migrants in general is based on the Republican model, reflecting the revolutionary ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity. It prescribes a form of 'colour blindness' in which every type of ethnic or racial categorisation in official statistics and policy is rejected (Amiriaux and Simon 2006).

For the French, this is a matter of principle (Favell 1998). It is forbidden by law to collect data relating to persons that might reveal 'directly or indirectly the racial or ethnic background' of those persons (Section 8 of the French Data Protection Act). The French government considers references to ethnic or cultural categories to be contrary to political unity in France, particularly because it could be construed as contravening the French desire for assimilation on the basis of the Republican notion. On several occasions, the French constitutional court has opposed proposals to collect ethnic data for certain purposes. In the main, France takes an area-based approach when it comes to policy for schools and districts with many migrant groups. These are the so-called '*Zones urbaines prioritaires*' and the '*Zones éducation prioritaires*'. These areas are also referred to as *banlieues*, which are characterised by a considerable 'territorial stigma' (cf. Bourdieu et al. 1993 and 1999, Wacquant 2008).

2 [www.serv.be/sites/default/files/documenten/COMD\\_ADV\\_monitoring\\_allochtonen\\_20140704.pdf](http://www.serv.be/sites/default/files/documenten/COMD_ADV_monitoring_allochtonen_20140704.pdf)

3 [www.vlaanderen.be/sites/svr/publicaties/Publicaties/monitoren/2016-01-06-vmim2015.pdf](http://www.vlaanderen.be/sites/svr/publicaties/Publicaties/monitoren/2016-01-06-vmim2015.pdf)

### 3. Germany

In Germany, reference is made to people with a migration background (*Migrationshintergrund*), which also covers children of migrants. This term was introduced by the *Statistisches Bundesamt* in 2005. According to Groenendijk (2011), the terminology is similar to the immigrant-national distinction, although the German term is really more neutral. This is because the German distinction is based on migration, and the immigrant and national distinction on the country of origin. No distinction is made between western and non-western, as is the case in the Netherlands. Finally, the official statistics of persons with a migration background also contain their nationality. These statistics show that the majority of persons with a migration background are German nationals.

### 4. Scandinavian countries

In Scandinavian countries, the terminology used for immigrants and their children is largely similar. In Finland, Norway and Sweden, reference is made to 'persons of foreign origin'. In Denmark and Sweden, reference is also made to 'descendants of migrants or immigrants'. In contrast to the other Scandinavian countries, Finland explicitly refers for statistical purposes to 'individuals who migrate' rather than 'migrants'.

### 5. English-speaking countries

A striking similarity between English-speaking countries is that the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States and Australia use the same terminology to refer to migrants and their children: first, second and third+ generations of migrants. Despite these terms, however, it is more customary in the United Kingdom to refer to ethnic minorities, including in policy.<sup>4</sup> In Australia and the United States, too, the term 'minorities' is used in addition to 'immigrants'. Finally, reference is also made in Canada to 'visible minorities'. Statistics Canada defines this category as 'persons who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour and who do not report being aboriginal'.

In their population censuses, English-speaking countries request ethnic self-identification. In the United Kingdom, for example, it is possible to choose from five broad categories (white, mixed, Asian/Asian-British, black/African/Caribbean/black-British or other) and to specify the category or to give personal substance to it. The advantage is that no labels are imposed and people can choose for themselves to which group they belong. A disadvantage is that the temporal comparability of the groups is lost, so that the development of a group over time can no longer be measured (Ham and Van der Meer 2012).

### 6. European and international organisations

European and international organisations define migrants and their descendants in different ways. The UN has developed the United Nations Global Migration Database (UNMGD) containing data relating to international migrants for the short and long term (less or more than a year away from home). According to the UN and the OECD, international migrants are persons who were born abroad or persons who have a nationality other than that of the country in which they live. The data are based on official statistics supplied by the countries themselves. European and international organisations (UN, Eurostat, the OECD and IOM) collect data relating to migrants, but not to the children of migrants. Eurostat and the OECD have data available relating to the children of migrants only if the statistical offices of the countries in question are able to supply these data themselves.

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<sup>4</sup> *Advancing Outcomes for All Minorities: Experiences of Mainstreaming Immigrant Integration Policy in the United Kingdom*. Migration Policy Institute Europe 2014.

#### 4. FUNCTIONS AND DOWNSIDES OF CLASSIFICATION ACCORDING TO ORIGIN

# 4

In the evaluation part of the investigation, the first issue to be considered is whether classifications really need to be reviewed and whether it would not be better to abandon classification according to origin altogether. In France, no registrations are made on the basis of origin or ethnicity. It is actually forbidden by law to include ethnic and racial categories in the census (Simon 2008; Léonard 2014). That ensures that the government does not itself contribute to performative effects.

However, this radical solution also imposes restrictions on research and policy. According to Simon (2008: 8), this ‘colour blindness’ in official statistics results in ‘opting for ignorance’. Consequently, it becomes very difficult for the government to gain an insight into discrimination or disadvantages associated with origin. This is acknowledged in France, too, where since 2010 it has been possible to collect ethnic data solely for scientific research. The term ‘immigrants’ is also being increasingly used, particularly for the category of people born outside France. In some cases, researchers reconstruct ethnic data on the basis of information about the country of birth (including information on someone’s parents) and nationality. Nevertheless, the lack of data relating to the origin of citizens is an important obstacle to anti-discrimination policy (Simon 2008). Moreover, there is a discrepancy between the taboo relating to classification according to origin by the government and the widespread use of ethnic and cultural categorisations among the French public and in the political debate, as well as in the practices of the French police (Body-Gendrot 2010).

Like age, education level and income, origin may be relevant for a better understanding of social problems. For instance, differences between origin groups relating to labour market position (Chiswick and Wang 2016; Koopmans 2016) or criminality (Blom and Jennissen 2014; Piquero 2015) only disappear to a limited extent after correcting for background variables such as education level and income. This does not mean that origin is a separate ‘explanation’ in itself, but according to Leerkes (2012) it does encourage research into significant causes, such as discrimination and cultural differences.

Examples include the role of ethnicity as an explanation for educational disadvantage. According to the Dutch Inspectorate of Education (2013), origin, together with parental education level, is still far and away the most decisive reason for learning disadvantages and weak school performance (Dutch Inspectorate of Education 2001, Bosker and Guldemond 2004, Mooij et al. 2012, Driessen 2013). For instance, children of migrants perform less well in language acquisition than Dutch pupils with similar parental education levels (Dutch Inspectorate of Education 2013: 22).

Origin is also relevant for medical research. For instance, the prevalence of certain diseases, such as diabetes, has an ethnic aspect (Burchard et al. 2003). In addition to the number of cases, the cause, progression and perception of many diseases may also vary according to ethnic group (Wieringa et al. 2005). This also applies to the effects of many therapies. On the other hand, a causal relationship between ethnic differences prompted by genetic factors and socio-economic phenomena has not been convincingly demonstrated.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> It would be going too far, however, to rule out in advance that something like this exists. Nevertheless, there are virtually no indications in the international literature of a possible link between ethnicity and congenital risk factors that could lead to an increase in the tendency to display deviant behaviour. There are, however, studies which show that different versions of the serotonin transporter gene 5-HTTLPR can be distributed in different ways among the various ethnic groups (Ng et al. 2006). This also applies for the dopamine receptor gene DRD4 (Kidd et al., 2014). Variations in these genes are associated with many types of psychological disorders, differences in personality traits and behavioural problems (Gonda, 2009; Dmitrieva et al., (2011). The causal relationships are complex, however. The genes referred to here do contribute to the development of the brain, but do so in interaction with environmental factors. The brain development contributes to the manner of cognitive and emotional information processing, which in turn influences the risk of aggression and antisocial behaviour. This always takes place in combination with environmental factors.

The situation is different for cultural differences. Although the phenomenon ‘culture’ is notoriously difficult to define and operationalise, social scientists and economists firmly believe that culture has an independent influence on people’s behaviour (Kacen and Lee 2002, Bellido et al. 2016). This provides a scientific basis for focusing attention on origin.

## 5. ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK FOR WHEN AND HOW TO CLASSIFY

# 5

We take the view that the total rejection of applying a distinction according to origin imposes restrictions on research and policy. ‘Colour blindness’ in official statistics leads to a poor insight into disadvantages in terms of education, the labour market and health. Making a distinction according to migrant groups can be useful for monitoring problems, developing policy and determining its effectiveness.

In order to determine whether classifications are meaningful, it is useful to formulate an assessment framework. Classification according to origin is justified only if it serves a legitimate objective (legitimacy requirement), if it demonstrably contributes to that objective (functionality requirement), if the objective cannot be achieved in some other way (subsidiarity requirement) and if the advantages of classification outweigh the negative effects (proportionality requirement).

### When must a classification be made according to origin?

1. Does it serve a legitimate purpose (legitimacy)?
2. Does it contribute to achieving the objective (functionality)?
3. Can the objective be achieved in some other way (subsidiarity)?
4. Do the advantages outweigh the disadvantages (proportionality)?

If classifying according to origin is justified, informative and performative requirements must be taken into account in the use of clusters and terms. The informative requirements are that clusters and terms must offer sufficient empirical refinement, must guarantee the continuity and validity of the underlying classifications and must cause as little confusion as possible. The performative requirements are that the terms must have the least possible excluding effects, must not evoke any negative associations and must as far as possible have a coordinating rather than a ranking effect.

### How to classify?

When assessing the suitability of clusters and terms, two types of requirements are important:

1. Informative requirements: clusters and terms must
  - a. offer sufficient empirical refinement;
  - b. guarantee the continuity and validity of the underlying classifications;
  - c. cause as little conceptual confusion as possible.
2. performative requirements: the terms must
  - a. have as little excluding effect as possible;
  - b. not raise any negative associations;
  - c. have a coordinating and not subordinating effect as far as possible.

## 6. TOWARDS A MULTIPLE MIGRATION IDIOM

For the purposes of its own research on migration diversity, the WRR applies the following rule: classify according to origin only if there is no alternative and the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. The labels *autochtoon* and *allochtoon* are no longer appropriate. The label 'allochtoon' is technically incorrect for the descendants of migrants, it has an excluding effect and evokes negative associations. The distinction 'western versus non-western' is no longer practicable. The differences within these two groups are wide and the distinction has a ranking effect. However, a single alternative two-way classification is not meaningful given the huge diversity regarding countries of origin.

What is needed is a multiple migration idiom. The area of research or the policy issue must determine the terminology, not the reverse. Alternative classifications could be labour migrants, family migrants or asylum migrants, or residents with a Dutch, Turkish, Polish background, etc. Researchers or policymakers can use various labels and indexes to cluster countries of origin – such as the Parliamentary Powers Index if a researcher is interested in whether or not migrants originate from countries with a liberal democratic tradition, or the Human Development Index if researchers wish to make a distinction according to the prosperity level of the countries of origin.

We will use general terms as little as possible. Where that is difficult to avoid, for example in the case of population statistics, we will refer to 'residents with a migration background' and 'residents with a Dutch background'. Children of migrants can also be covered by 'residents with a migration background'.

# 6

### Case study: distinction according to origin in education

In education, researchers and regulators regularly map out differences according to origin in relation to educational disadvantage, intake and progression figures, school drop-out and job opportunities. For instance, the Inspectorate of Education writes that the second generation of non-western immigrant pupils, in particular, less frequently go on to higher education than in the past. Making a distinction here seems justified given that, according to the Education Council of the Netherlands, origin together with parental education level are still the decisive factors when it comes to learning disadvantage, for example as regards language acquisition. However, the distinction between 'western' and 'non-western' pupils in this case is neither informative nor relevant. Which pupils in particular are experiencing problems? Not all groups of 'non-western' pupils will be experiencing problems to the same extent. In some cases, children of migrants from Eastern Europe will also need extra support. And what factors exactly are causing the problems? Can the problems be explained by the fact that the parents speak another language at home or that they are used to another type of teaching? A distinction based on language groups (Slavonic, Arabic, etc.) or on the development level of the countries of origin will then be more appropriate.

### Case study: ethnic risk factors in the case of diabetes

Diabetes is a disease that is becoming more and more prevalent in the Netherlands. After correcting for characteristics such as age and BMI, ethnicity also seems to be an independent risk factor. For instance, people with a Surinamese, Turkish and Moroccan background in the Netherlands have an increased risk of diabetes, even after correcting for a number of background characteristics. Mapping out ethnic risk factors for developing diabetes is a legitimate objective, because it is highly probable that in this case genetic or culturally determined nutritional characteristics are important. For many people in the target group, this objective justifies the possible pejorative means of ethnic classification. It therefore seems acceptable in this case to draw a distinction according to Turkish, Moroccan and Surinamese background.

*New labels too may wear thin...*

Although the classification of diversity proposed here is an improvement compared with the current terminology, these new classifications and labels may themselves take on negative connotations over time. Nonetheless, it is helpful if the classifications do not unnecessarily reinforce the social contrasts between established citizens and newcomers. An issue for discussion is the classification of the second generation. Should children of migrants also be covered by the term 'persons with a migration background' or should we limit this to the first generation only?

#### CONCLUSION: TOWARDS A MULTIPLE MIGRATION IDIOM

## CONCLUSION

- 1) *Classification according to origin: if there is no alternative*
  - Does it serve a justified purpose?
  - Does it contribute to achieving the objective?
  - Can the objective be achieved in some other way?
  - Do the advantages outweigh the disadvantages?
- 2) *Migration diversity requires a diversity of clusters and terms*
  - The labels 'autochtoon' and 'allochtoon' are no longer appropriate.
  - The distinction between western and non-western is no longer tenable.
  - A single alternative generic cluster is not meaningful.
  - The area of research or the policy issue must determine the terminology, not the reverse. Alternative classifications could be e.g. labour migrants, family migrants, or asylum migrants, or residents with a Dutch, Turkish, Polish background.
  - Residents with a migration background and with a Dutch background in case of population statistics.
  - Children of migrants can be covered by the term 'persons with a migration background'.

**For more information about the WRR migration diversity project, go to:**

<https://english.wrr.nl/topics/migration-diversity>

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