

The relationship between ethnic origin and crime: empirical findings

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Integration policy in the Netherlands

Objective = Shared citizenship

“Full and equal participation of immigrants in society”

How?

- acquisition of Dutch language and knowledge of society
- interethnic contacts → mutual understanding:
- accessibility of social domains on an equal basis

Netherlands Integration Monitor

- National data: Social Statistics Database = virtual census by linking registers on individual level. Total Dutch population (N = 16.2 million).
- All migrant groups, both 1st and 2nd generation; small, new groups
- Longitudinal data → trends & cohorts



Indicators (1)

Performance in education:

1. success rates in primary and in secondary-school examinations;
2. school drop-out in secondary education;
3. extent of entry into higher education;
4. choice of type of study in higher education;
5. graduation from higher education

Labour market position:

1. level and rate of labour market participation (employee or self-employed);
2. use of social benefits by newcomer cohorts;
3. trends in labour market participation;
4. number of migrant employees in different branches of industry, trade and the public sector;

Indicators (2)

Social contacts:

1. the number of mixed marriages;
2. marriages with partners from the country of origin;
3. ethnic composition of residential areas, schools and companies and institutions

Health care:

1. Contacts with primary health care

Crime:

1. suspects being questioned by the police;
2. type of offence;
3. recidivism



Statistics on crime

Victimisation studies:

- every year 25% of population victim of crime (4.7 Mio offences against citizens in Netherlands).
 - 35% reported to police;
 - ± 400.000 suspects interrogated → 195.000 suspects registered → **large 'dark number'**
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1. Police statistics – suspects
2. Prosecution statistics
3. Conviction statistics - found guilty
4. Correctional (prison) statistics



Prevalence (%) of general recidivism among offenders age 12-17, sentenced in 1997; by group of origin and number of years after 1997

	N	after 1 year	2	4	6	after 8 years
Turkey	207	18,4	33,8	49,3	57,0	62,1
Morocco	752	36,6	55,2	70,6	75,5	77,4
Surinam	307	25,7	41,7	55,4	63,8	68,4
Antilles	311	31,5	54,3	69,8	74,9	80,6
other non-wstrn migr	538	23,6	36,4	47,6	53,7	55,0
Dutch origin	12.197					
(incl. 2nd gen. migrants)		19,5	33,2	47,5	55,4	60,4

Source: WODC (Recidivemonitor 2005)



Data

National database of suspects from all 25 regional HKS (police) files of the National Criminal Intelligence Service (DNRI).

This database (2003) has been linked to the *Social Statistical Database* (SSB) of Statistics Netherlands, which also contains information from the *municipal personal records database* (GBA).



The data concern suspects of crime and not those convicted of crimes.

But: an estimated 90% of suspects are offered an out-of-court settlement by the Prosecutor, or are found guilty in court at a later stage.

So: these are serious cases of suspected crime!



Research questions

1. number of suspects of crime among the population groups of Dutch origin and foreign origin
2. demographic and socio-economic features of these suspected offenders?

Percentage of suspects in 2003 by group of origin, age category and sex

	total	12-17 years		18-24 years		25-44 years	
		male	female	male	female	male	female
Total	1.4	3.1	0.7	5.5	0.8	2.8	0.5
....of which							
of Dutch origin	1.1	2.3	0.5	4.3	0.6	2.2	0.4
of foreign origin	2.7	6.1	1.4	9.2	1.6	5.1	0.9

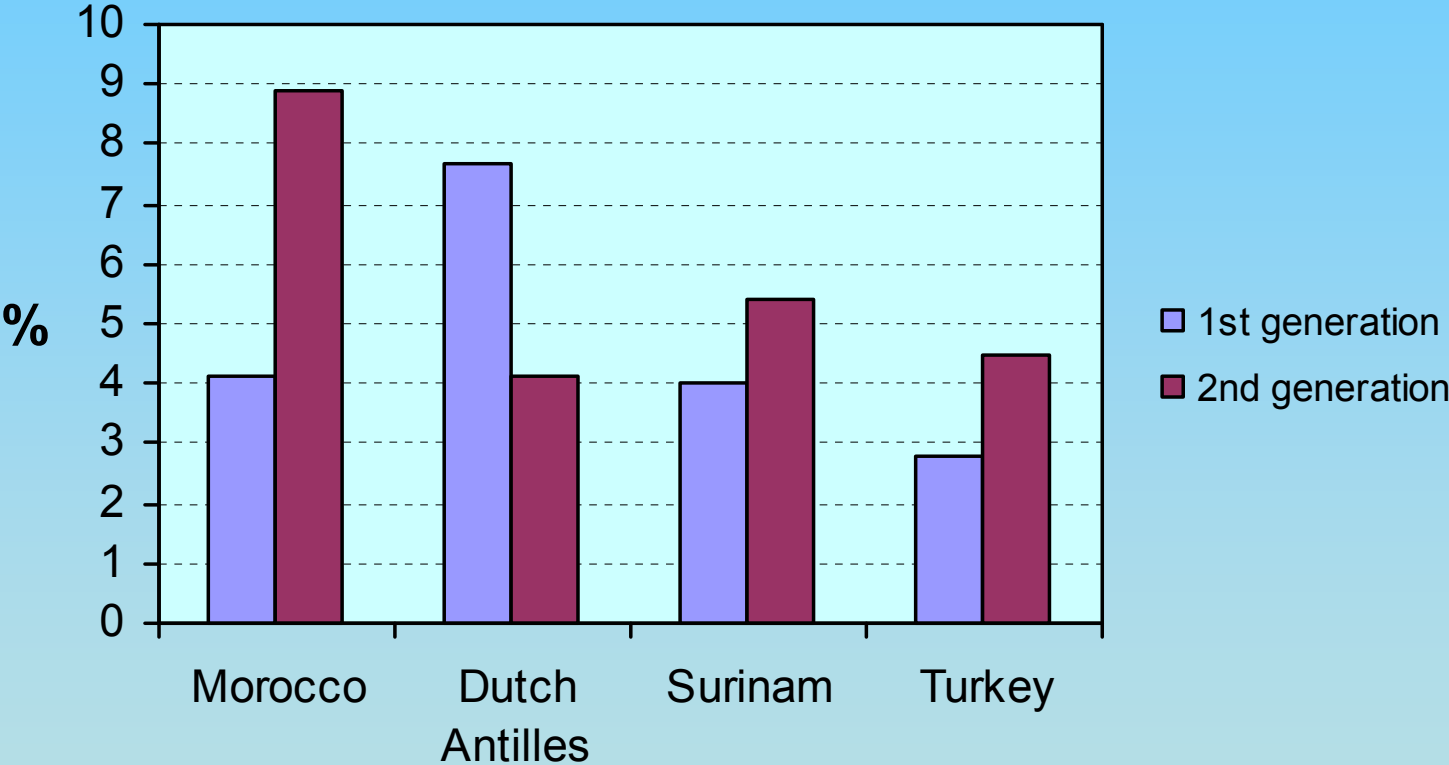
Percentage of suspects in 2003 by country of origin, age category and sex

	total	12-17 years		18-24 years		25-44 years	
		male	female	male	female	male	female
Dutch origin	1.1	2.3	0.5	4.3	0.6	2.2	0.4
foreign origin	2.7	6.1	1.4	9.2	1.6	5.1	0.9
...of which							
Morocco	5.5	12.1	2.2	19.5	2.4	7.9	1.0
Dutch Antilles	6.9	10.1	3.0	13.2	4.1	12.6	3.3
Turkey	3.2	5.7	0.6	9.0	0.7	6.2	0.5
Surinam	4.4	6.9	2.1	12.0	2.4	8.5	1.6

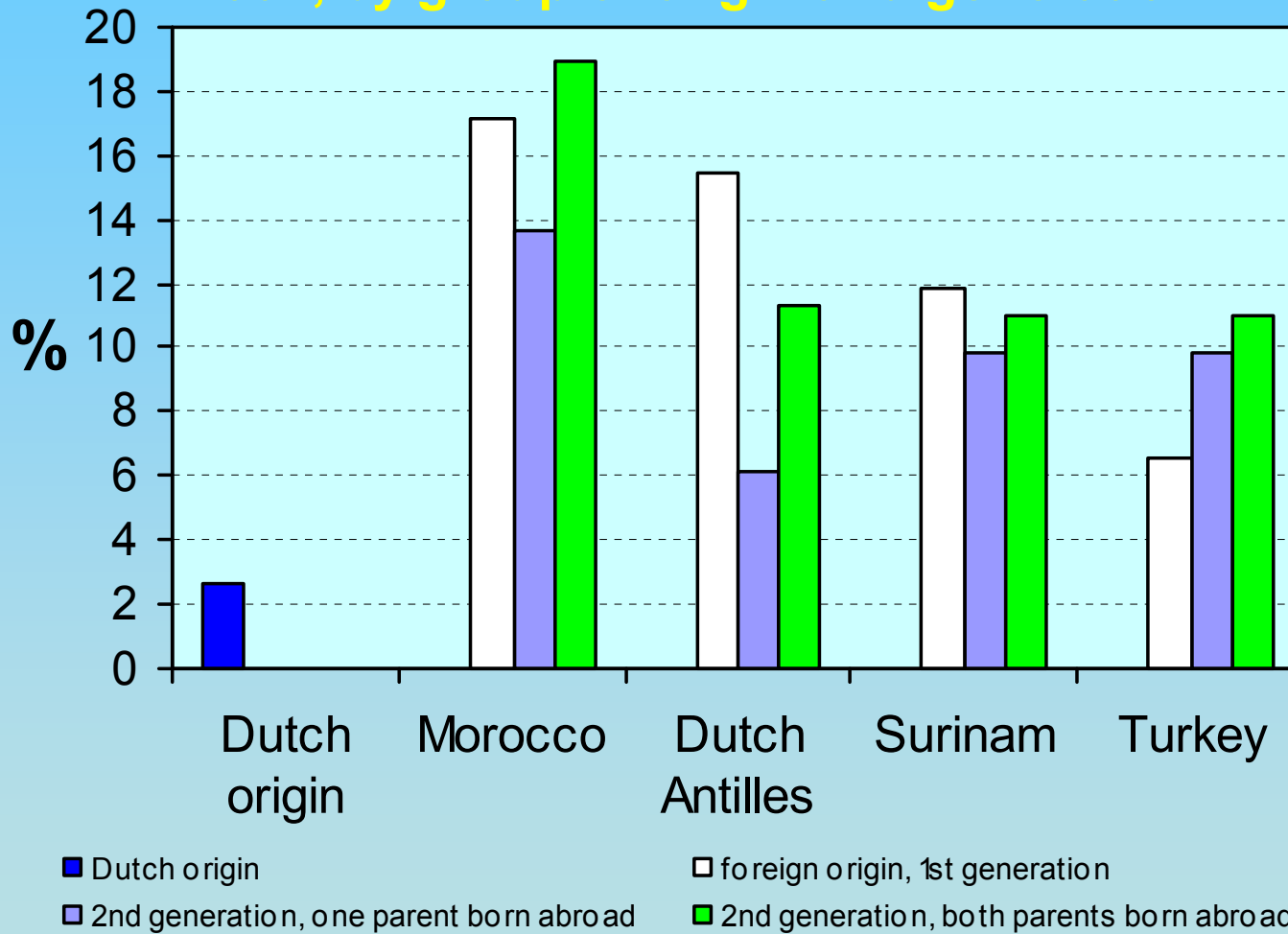
Percentage of suspects in 2003 by group of origin, generation, age category and sex

	total	12-17 years	18-24 years	25-44 years
Dutch origin	1.1	1.4	2.5	1.3
foreign origin	2.7	3.8	5.4	3.0
...of which				
1st generation	2.8	4.2	5.2	3.3
western	1.3	2.5	2.8	1.7
non-western	3.7	4.9	6.0	3.9
2nd generation	2.6	3.6	5.5	2.3
western	1.5	2.2	3.3	1.8
non-western	5.3	4.3	7.1	4.6

Percentage suspects (age 12-79) in 2003, by group of origin and generation



Percentage male suspects (age 18-24) in 2002, by group of origin and generation



Demographic and socio-economic features of suspects

First, simple relationships were investigated, after which **multi-variate analyses** were carried out to gain an understanding of how strongly each of these features, and in particular the origin of the suspects, are related to the incidence of being recorded as a suspect by the police.

The purpose of these latter analyses was to examine to what extent the underlying circumstances that are potentially conducive to crime – such as a weak socio-economic status – could offer a better explanation for a higher crime rate of the suspect population.

Multi-variate analyses: results

After controlling for background features that are known to explain (being a suspect of) crime such as age, sex, type of household, educational qualifications, income level, dependence on benefit, percentage of those in the neighbourhood belonging to non-Western immigrant groups, **the relationship with origin is still very strong.**

Odds ratio: (Dutch origin is reference category)

Morocco	1 st generation:	1.9
	2 nd gen.:	3.1
Antilles	1 st generation:	3.6
	2 nd gen.:	1.7
Surinam	1 st generation:	2.4
	2 nd gen.:	2.0
Turkey	1 st generation:	1.4
	2 nd gen.:	2.0

How can we explain the differences?

- differences in risk factors (e.g. raising children; respect for parents)
- accumulation of risk factors
- dose - response relationship
- many risk factors do not provide a sufficient explanation
- social capital approach
- insight in underlying processes and mechanisms among the various groups
- learn from the migrant groups that 'do well'



Conclusions

1. the real existing differences between groups of foreign and Dutch origin can be half 'explained' because of differences in age and sex. Moreover, by taking account of socio-economic features, another significant number of differences disappear.
2. The conclusion that members of immigrant groups are generally more frequently suspected of crime is a firm conclusion, but our study shows that only considering this factor is rather one-sided.
3. The second generation of members of non-Western immigrant groups perform relatively badly, in contrast to what is often thought. Positive exceptions are Asians and second-generation immigrants from South and Central America. Some of these groups even have *lower* crime rates than the Dutch.

Conclusions

4. those of the second generation with both parents of foreign origin are (relatively) frequently recorded as suspects by the police compared to those who have one parent of Dutch origin and one of foreign origin. This raises the question whether parental involvement and participation in Dutch society is a protective factor against criminal behaviour of their children.
5. There are marked differences between immigrant groups as regards the distribution of suspects according to age and across the generations. This means that a more precise study of these groups must be made to find out exactly what is going on in order to explain patterns of crime.