

Immigrant students, schools and integration policies: the case of the Netherlands (Abstract italiano in calce)

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Introduction

Almost ten percent of the Dutch population has a non-Western migrant origin. The children of these migrant populations form more than 10 % of the schoolchildren, and as the migrant populations are concentrated in the big cities, they form more than 50 % of the schoolchildren in these cities. In this contribution I will examine the following questions, taking into account as far as possible data from the last 10/15 years:

- (1) Is there an ethnic segregation concerning schoolchildren in the Netherlands?
- (2) Is there a significant educational inequality, stable over time, concerning children of migrant populations?
- (3) What are the main policy measures introduced concerning these populations?
- (4) Relevant explanations and theories concerning the educational experience of migrant children in the Netherlands.

But before starting the discussion of these questions, it is necessary to give some background information concerning (a) the rather unique school system in the Netherlands, (b) more precise quantitative information about the populations concerned and (c) the sets of data which are available in the Netherlands.

Background information

A presentation of the problems of participation and integration of children of immigrant populations in the Dutch schools must be introduced with a description of the unique school system in the Netherlands. Indeed, in the Netherlands, parents have the freedom of school choice for their children. This freedom entails to begin the right of the parents to choose a particular school for their child, and if they are not satisfied they can enrol their child in another school. Secondly, this freedom of school also means that any association of parents has the right to set up a school, where their child can be enrolled. This school will be financed as all the other schools by the state, in other words by the tax-payers.

This situation has been established in 1920 (Röling, 1982), after many years of struggle between the main corporatist pillars of the Dutch society, the protestant community, the catholic community and the socialist community. Even if these pillars have lost much of their

former influence, no political party or movement has dared to formulate proposals to change the constitution, which guarantees this freedom of schools in article 25; even if there have been many critical voices about the costs such a system entails and about the undesirable consequences this possibility offers to all communities to set up their own schools, which has been done by the Islamic community during the last ten years.

This freedom is not absolute. In the contrary, any school set up, has to comply with some fixed standards of curriculum per year, of regular visits by the inspectorate and with general norms of a secure and safe environment. However, the inspectorate does not have any control concerning the religious program of the school. Moreover, the size of the school is a critical factor, any school should have at least 150 schoolchildren, and if there are less, the schools risks to be closed down.

At present about 1/3 of the schools are state schools, another third comprises the catholic schools, a bit less than a third is formed by the protestant schools. About 6 or 7 % of the parents choose for their children a school with a specific didactic or pedagogic approach, such as a Montessori-school, a Jenaplan-school, a Dalton-school, a Freinet schools or a – so-called – Free-school. There are also a few Jewish schools, some thirty Islamic schools and a few Hindou-schools in the Netherlands. However, the number of schools and the percentage of their affiliation does not say much about the number of schoolchildren enrolled in the different schools, because there are many ‘small’ schools, in particular in rural areas with a protestant or catholic affiliation, and many ‘big’ state schools in the cities.

In the Netherlands, the schools start with two years of ‘pre-school’ classes (age 4 and 5), followed by 6 years of primary school. After the primary school, a first selection is made, and schoolchildren are oriented either towards a more vocational training, or to a medium range of forms of secondary education, offering possibilities of serious professional education or towards a secondary education offering all the possibilities. The first year of secondary school, however, is called an orientation year. It offers the opportunity to switch to a higher or lower form of secondary school. In principle, there is an obligation to be enrolled in education till the age of 18, but for those following the vocational trajet, the last two years can be realised as apprentice, and involves following just some classes every week.

Another introductory remark is needed before getting down to the real discussion. It is about the composition and quantity of immigrant children in the Netherlands, and their concentration in big cities. In the Netherlands, with 16 million inhabitants, almost 10 % of the population has a background of migration, and comes originally from Non-western countries. However many of the 10 %, and especially children, are born in the Netherlands, or their parents have adopted the Dutch citizenship by naturalisation (CBS, 2002). At present the official state services use the terminology of ‘autochtonous’ and of ‘allochtonous’ populations, and the ‘allochtonous’ population is defined by the fact that one is part of it if at least one of the parents has not been born in the Netherlands. This terminology is rather contested, even in policy circles. I will use in this presentation the more neutral term ‘migrants’ or ‘children from migrant populations’. Because there are also quite a number of so-called Western migrants in the Netherlands, the term ‘ethnic minorities’ is also used for non-Western migrant populations. This terminology is also ambiguous, it was mainly created by researchers and policy makers in order to capture the low social-economic status of these populations.

There are two large groups of immigrants: firstly, the migrants from former Dutch colonies, such as Suriname and the Dutch Antilles (Curaçao, Aruba, etc.), and for a long time the Surinammers formed the largest group; secondly, there are the migrants coming to the Netherlands in the sixties and seventies of last century, originally as non-qualified workers. The most important groups came from Morocco and from Turkey. Many of them have settled permanently in the Netherlands, their families have joined them, and at present there are so-called second and third generation members. Apart from these two groups of migrants, there are thirdly the political refugees, and finally the illegal residents.

At present, the Turkish community, with more than 300.000 members is the largest group of the so-called 'allochtonous' populations, followed closely by the Surinammers, and in the third place come the Moroccans with more than 250.000 persons. Together with the Antillians, these migrant populations form two thirds of the legal migrant residents in the Netherlands with a non-Western origin.

The migrant populations are mainly concentrated in the four big cities of the Netherlands, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht. As the fertility rate of migrant population is still higher (but clearly diminishing) than of the long-established Dutch population, it is not astonishing that in these four cities a remarkable percentage of the schoolchildren have a migrant origin. In Amsterdam and Rotterdam, already more than 50 % of the schoolchildren come from migrant families, in The Hague and Utrecht it is around 40 %. In these four big cities, the majority of primary and secondary schools have therefore a high percentage of children with a migrant origin, and their number will only increase during the coming years. Only a minority of the schools in these cities has a predominately 'white' population. In the smaller cities (+/- 100.000 inhabitants) and especially in the rural areas the concentration of children with a migrant background is much less significant. In other words, the majority of the about 400 primary schools with more than 70 % of children with a migrant origin can be found in the big four cities, 200 of them with more than 90 % (SCP, 1999).

In the Netherlands, a quite astonishing terminology has appeared during the last twenty years. One speaks of 'Black' schools, if more than 50 % of the schoolchildren come from migrant families, and of 'White' schools if this percentage is low (less than 20 %). This terminology is at present generally used in the Netherlands, and despite its problematic connotations I will use this terminology in this presentation.

These indications should be sufficient to underline the fact that the Netherlands are definitely an country of immigration, at least during the last thirty years. This fact is clearly recognized by the Dutch government and by the different advisory and policy institutions (WRR, 2001).

Finally, some information about the institutions providing general data concerning migrants, their children and their education. First of all, there is the central office of statistics (CBS) which provides quite reliable quantitative data. Another very important source of information comes from the SCP, the 'social and cultural planning office' which was set up in 1973. This office has the task to carry out scientific explorations in order to get integrated descriptions of the social and cultural well-being in the Netherlands and to formulate policy aims. In particular, this office publishes every two years a substantial report on minorities, concentrating on schooling and work participation. In this presentation I will use in particular the reports of 1999 and 2001 (SCP 1999 and 2001). Moreover, there are several longitudinal

survey studies of educational trajects of minority children, and several recognized research centres on these questions at the universities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Utrecht.

Ethnic segregation

On this point some definite statements can be formulated. 42 % of the non-Western migrant populations live in the four big cities, they constitute a substantial percentage of the populations of these four cities, for example in 1998 Amsterdam with 30 %, Rotterdam 29 %, The Hague 27 % and Utrecht 19 %. These percentages increase if one considers the population of age 5 to 15. In this case the percentage of children of migrant populations (non-Western origin) was in 1998 for Amsterdam 51 %, Rotterdam 48 %, The Hague 41 % and Utrecht 36 %. Moreover, these migrant populations are concentrated in some quarters of these cities. Therefore it is not astonishing that in the four big cities one finds many 'black' schools, with almost no 'white' (non-migrant origin) children. In other words, ethnic segregation is a fact.

Two questions arise immediately. The first one is about the reasons of this concentration. Is it due to a deliberate choice of long-established Dutch families to enrol their children in 'white' schools? Are there any racist motives involved? Results of a research by Teunissen (1996) confirm the fact of segregation, but exclude to a large degree deliberate racist motives. The following factors explain almost completely the fact of segregation: first of all, the habits of settlement of migrants, choosing to live more or less together in quarters with rather cheap houses; secondly the general demographic trends, in other words the fact that migrant families have more children than the long-established Dutch families and thirdly the general tendency of suburbanisation, or the fact that many well-situated Dutch families have moved to areas outside the cities. To a much lesser degree, the free choice of parents to enrol their children in the school of their own choice plays a role, but the investigation has shown that in the majority of the cases, parents choose a school in another quarter of the city because of religious or pedagogic preferences. But this form of segregation points certainly to the creation of a 'new' social category, a kind of 'new' working class or – according to some authors – a 'new' underclass.

Another question that arises concerns the quality of the schools. Is it the case that the school results of children in 'black' schools are less good than the results in 'white' schools? For primary schools several investigations have shown that there is only minimal statistical relation (sometimes none) between the ethnic composition of the school and the school results of children in primary schools. The positive relation established in some investigations disappears completely if one takes into account the social environment of the children and the level of education of the parents. In any case there is no relation at all between school results and the percentage of migrant schoolchildren in primary schools, or in other words the hypothesis that schools with a higher percentage of migrant children predict less good results can be rejected. But all the research efforts show that there is a significant variation between schools; as well as among 'black' and 'white' schools there are some schools which are more efficient than others. (Forum, 1999, Inspectie van het Onderwijs, 2001, Verkuyten & Thijs, 2000, Vermeulen, 2001) I will come back to this point later on.

Finally, two other points which are of importance. The first point has to do with satisfaction and well-being. Do migrant children feel better or worse in 'white' schools or in 'black' schools? The results of the studies show that children of migrant populations are more

discriminated and feel less well in almost completely ‘white’ schools, because they are in general negated by the large majority of the ‘white’ schoolpopulation. On the other hand, almost completely ‘black’ schools are not really favorable for social integration. The second point concerns the preferences of the parents. Do migrant families prefer their children to go to a ‘black’ school or not? Hoogsteder, e.a. (2001) have explored this issue in a survey study. The results show that only a minority of Turkish and Moroccan parents prefer a ‘black’ school for their children (21 and 18 %) and and only some of them would prefer their children to go to an Islamic school (2 and 6 %) whereas in fact only 2 % of the Moroccan children are enrolled in an Islamic school. The large majority of the parents prefers a mixed kind of school for their children.

In conclusion, one can say that the existing segregation is not so much the result of a deliberate discrimination, but that the concentration of migrant populations in some quarters in big cities, and in particular of the schoolchildren of these populations is problematic. Even the Moroccan and Turkish parents would prefer schools for their children which are not completely ‘black’. However, the school results of the schools with a high percentage of migrant children are not at all alarming, and the children feel in general well.

School results and school efficiency

Is there a pronounced educational inequality for children of non-Western migrant origin in the Netherlands? The general answer is yes, such an inequality exists, but there are also some hopeful developements during the last years (Tesser & Iedema, 2001).

The first general result of recent survey studies shows that at the beginning of elementary schools children of migrant populations start with a great disadvantage. As far as competence with the Dutch language is concerned, and also competencies to handle concepts and principles of ordering, the children of migrant populations have a great disadvantage in comparison with children of long-established Dutch families. The lowest scores have been found with Moroccan and Turkish children, and to a lesser degree for the Surinammer children. During the years 1994 and 1998 there was hardly any progression for the Moroccan and Turkish children. The difference between ‘black’ and ‘white’ schools explain less than 10 % of these differences in initial competences.

Can this initial disadvantage be compensated during primary school, that is the central question. In other words, will the school stimulate the development in such a way that the important initial differences are more or less eliminated until the end of primary school (age 12 in the Netherlands) or not? The extensive research report from Tesser and Iedema (2001) provides quite nuanced answers.

The results can be presented in a simplified form in the following way: (if one takes the national average as norm, one can calculate the disadvantage in terms of schoolyears of the different groups of migrant children for the schoolyear 1998/’99)

Group/Subject	Language	Mathematics
Surinammers	- 1	- 0.25
Moroccans	- 1.75	- 0.50
Turkish	- 2.20	- 0.40

These results show that at the end of primary school the main groups of migrant children have almost no disadvantage any more concerning mathematics. This is the most hopeful result of these studies, because two years ago (SCP, 1999) for the schoolyear 1996/'97 the difference was almost two years for this subject.

For language competence the results show a slight general reduction of the disadvantage in comparison with earlier studies, but for young Surinammers the disadvantage has diminished by half.

As it is well known, to compare different groups with the national average is in fact quite problematic, because such a comparison does not take into account social stratification. This was always considered by some as problematic with respect to the working class, but it is still more problematic if one compares ethnic groups with a different socio-economic status, because in this case such comparisons may stimulate racist interpretations of the results. That is why the studies did also recalculate the results taking into account the level of education of the parents. Taking this factor into account the difference in performance is almost reduced by half, and in the case of mathematics the slight disadvantage disappears completely.

What is the effect of concentration? There is indeed an important difference between the 15 % of the most efficient schools and the 15 % of the less efficient schools, it is in terms of schoolyears 1 year. In the so-called 'black' school, with more than 50 % of migrant children, language competence is indeed lower than average, but in these schools the children have exactly the same results for mathematics than in completely 'white' schools.

In short, the children of migrant populations are not systematically left behind in a stable way. They profit from school, in particular in mathematics. The initial differences (which were 2 to 3 schoolyears) are more or less eliminated during primary school in this subject, in particular during the ages from 10 to 12 years. For language competences, the gain is more limited, and takes place above all between the ages 8 to 10.

As the initial disadvantage has not changed during the last 8 years, the authors suggest that one can attribute the gain to the functioning of the schools. The results suggest that Dutch primary schools have adapted better to the attempts of migrant populations and their children to profit from school, and that they succeed to reduce significantly the initial disadvantages.

How do children of migrant population continue after primary school? In 1993, two thirds of the young Moroccans and Turkish children went to a vocational trajet, offering at best very poor perspectives of qualified work. In 1999 less than 50 % went to a vocational trajet, and more children than before (in 1999 almost 40 %) continued in higher form of secondary education. The gain was even more pronounced for Surinammers.

In the following table I present in a simplified way the main results (from Tesser & Iedema, 2001):

Group / Type of secondary school	Vocational/ low type of secondary education	Higher types of secondary education
Dutch 1999	37 %	63 %
Dutch 1993	50 %	50 %
Surinammers/Antillians 1999	38 %	62 %

Surinammers/Antillians 1993	62 %	38 %
Turkish/Moroccans 1999	62 %	38 %
Turkish/Moroccans 1993	78 %	22 %

The most dramatic change occurs with the Surinammers and Antillians. The majority of these children have during the six years, between 1993 and 1999 gained access to the higher types of secondary education. But also for the Turkish and Moroccan children the transformation is significant, their participation in higher forms of secondary education has almost doubled during these six years.

However, it must also be said that quite a large number of Turkish and Moroccan students drop out and do not finish secondary school. About 20 % of these students never finishes the vocational education, 30 % drops out from the higher traject, but once they are in the highest traject of secondary school, preparing for university or for professional specialisation, the drop-out rate of Turkish and Moroccan students is the lowest: 6 %.

The conclusion of this section is first of all that there are substantial educational inequalities, but that these inequalities have been reduced substantially for some subjects (mathematics) and for certain groups (Surinammers and Antillians). In other words, the results of schools and of education of children and students from migrant groups in the Netherlands are showing a significant reduction of the original disadvantages.

Policy measures

The Netherlands recognized only twenty years ago that the immigrant populations (in particular the working migrants, the second group identified before) needs more attention concerning the quality of integration. The concept of integration is in any case a very contested concept, but it includes in general the following dimensions: social-economic, cultural (including religious ones) and political. In the Netherlands, as in general in the other member states of the European Union, the legal residents had the usual civil, economic and social rights, and since more than ten years also political rights, in the sense that they can participate in elections of the local government. The debate concerning integration of 'ethnic minorities' or migrants from non-Western countries centred around the question if these groups should be conceived as ethnic minorities (with the aim of a satisfactory integration) or as representatives of a kind of new 'underclass', with the typical characteristics of low income, bad jobs, limited education and restricted perspectives.

For schools (and in particular primary schools) the last perspective has been adopted, and particular funds have been attributed to schools with a large percentage of schoolchildren with a low social-economic status. In other words, these particular funds are not exclusively destined to migrant children but for all socio-economic disfavored groups. This funds have mainly be used in order to engage more teachers, either with the goal to reduce the size of the school classes or to provide an appropriate form of remedial teaching. Indeed all the researches cited above show that an increase in the task-oriented interactions between teachers and pupils have positive effects.

During the last years some new policy measures have been adopted. First of all, since 1998 the municipalities are the central managers of the policy concerning school policy, and in particular of the so-called 'disfavored groups'. The effects of this new policy cannot be

evaluated at the moment, but it is evident that many municipalities establish actively an educational monitor, and that they interact very actively with the local Inspectorate and the different types of schools. Efficiency, results and concrete, measurable consequences are the slogans used in the new management language, and one can only hope that these principles will have some stimulating effects in the near future.

But on the other hand, the central government has also promoted a policy attributing a greater autonomy to the schools concerning the use of their funds in suitable ways. This initiative can stimulate very interesting experiments, but as Tesser & Iedema (2001) remark this decision is at least partially contradictory with the policy of decentralisation, making the municipalities the main actors of the realisation of the policy concerning the education of socio-economically disfavored groups.

Here it necessary to recall that a lot of effort goes into the realisation of the bi-annual “Report on Minorities (SCP 1999, 2001) providing a very extensive scientific exploration of the state of affairs concerning education and work participation of the ‘ethnic minorities’. Moreover, there are several large research projects funded by the National Science Foundation (in particular priority programs concerning the education of ethnic minorities and the ‘multicultural and pluriform society’).

The extensive report of Tesser and Iedema (2001) suggests that policy efforts should be realised in order to enhance language performance during the ‘early and pre-school-education’ for the ages 4 and 5. This so-called pre-school years tend to be considered as more and more important, and a growing percentage of migrant children participate in this pre-school classes.

How to explain that schools have sometimes effects and sometimes not?

As mentioned earlier in this presentation, there is a very significant difference concerning school results between what is called ‘efficient schools’ and less ‘efficient schools’. In the Netherlands ‘efficient schools’ (in general calculated for primary schools) are defined in the following way: an efficient school is for two consecutive years part of the 30 % of the schools with the best school results of the schoolchildren. These results are published by the Inspectorate, and it is evident that the less ‘efficient schools’ are situated in the lower 30 %. Various research project (see references) have confirmed that a significant percentage of the school results (20 %) of all the schoolchildren (migrants or not) can be explained by the characteristics of ‘efficient schools’.

The main question is therefore to understand what are really the characteristics of ‘efficient’ schools. The following hypotheses have been suggested:

- (1) Efficient schools (in particular for migrant children) adopt strongly structured forms of education and learning, using the extra funds available for schools with a large percentage of migrant children. This hypothesis states that the much used ‘child-centred’ pedagogies do not work well with migrant children; on the contrary, a teacher-centred pedagogy has better effects.
- (2) A second hypothesis states that teachers should concentrate on the main subjects of the curriculum (language and mathematics), with a strictly structured approach, using general standards and regular controls of the pupils based on these standards.

- (3) A third hypothesis centres mainly on the quality of the direction of the school, and the qualification of the teachers. The director should be informed of recent developments, publications and discussions, and should stimulate the teaching staff in a suitable way by promoting high standards and expectations.
- (4) Other hypotheses underline the following points: (a) effective multi-cultural schools use more effectively the time by a good organisation of the classroom, with little loss of teaching- and reading-time; (b) efficient schools provide a quiet, orderly and secure social environment at school, in particular migrant children can profit from a feeling of personal security and protection.

The first two hypotheses are based on some particular presuppositions concerning children of migrant populations. Migrant parents use styles of socialisation, education and communication which are different from the ones used by the long-established Dutch parents, and a more teacher-centred approach with a strongly structured form of education and learning fits better with such a style in the home environment. The differences in styles between some migrant families have indeed been established convincingly, for example by Pels (1991) and Hermans (1995). The other hypotheses are based on quite sensible theories concerning teaching and learning environments, which cannot be refuted.

Unfortunately, these hypotheses are either too general in scope, and therefore almost self-evident, or they are based on cultural differences in styles of socialisation and communication (empirically verified), but conceived in a rather fixed way, as if the children of these migrant populations do not enter into children- and youth-cultures with partly other forms and norms of communication and types of interaction. A recent effort to test these different hypotheses by Overmaat & Ledoux (in press) has not resulted in a convincing verification of any of these hypotheses, as far as they could be formulated as empirically testable questions.

Several results of other studies and a more theoretical reflection suggest another explanation why some schools are more efficient than others and why in general children of migrant populations profit more from schools during recent years.

In a recent qualitative study, Crul (2000) has shown that the contact between the school and the parents is an important factor, and that the presence of helpful older brothers or sisters is a decisive factor when examining school results. Another suggestion comes from Tesser & Iedema (2001). They state that teachers should be able to concentrate on basic matters of teaching, but that the contact with the community and institutions outside the school (for example the home-work classes organised by the community or the Mosque are also important. The so-called 'school social services' should mediate between the school and these institutions and the community in general. These results and policy aims suggest that the evaluation of schools and the appreciation of the educational trajectories of migrant children cannot be explained exclusively by factors which are strictly associated with the schools. In other words, the different hypotheses formulated, which concentrate on pedagogical and didactic matters, are insufficient in scope.

In order to understand really the opportunities and possibilities of education of children of migrant populations, one has to consider the interactions between the schools (and certainly also the management and the methods used) and the different migrant populations (and their organizations). Home-work classes set up by the community can play an important role, and the fact that older brothers or sisters can have a decisive influence points to the fact that the

migrant populations attempt to adjust in certain ways to the Dutch school system. The research cited before, by Hoogsteder (2001) point also to the fact the parents of these children have high educational expectations for their children, even if they do not always know how to support concretely their children.

In short, the migrant populations, the parents and the children seem to play a more active role, they attempt to adjust their efforts to the Dutch school system. Schools, on the other hand, have acquired more experience with migrant children. The results of all studies show that the 'learning' difficulties (initial disadvantage, language competence, etc) are more and more handled in a realistic way. These problems are not any longer either neglected with a paternalistic tolerant attitude as in former years or simply rejected, and there are less over- (or under)estimations of the competencies of migrant children than in former years. In other words, the schools, the direction and the teachers have also changed, they have adapted their actions to the attempts of the migrant populations to profit from education.

My hypothesis is that the growing, but not always successful, adaption of the schools (as well on the level of management, and the pedagogy and didactics used) to the more or less suitable attempts of the migrant populations to adjust to the Dutch school system can help us to understand:

- (1) why children of migrant populations have better school results compared with some years ago, and
- (2) why some schools are more efficient than others. Indeed the more efficient schools succeed better to adapt their functioning to the attempts of the migrant population, that is the explanation I would like to suggest.

Concluding ...

Instead of a summary or some remarks about the directions which should be explored in the future in the future (that should anyway be evident by now), I would like to offer as conclusion an example of "good practice" of an 'efficient' multicultural school.

This multicultural school had introduced during the last Olympic summer games a new entity: the multicultural school itself! This entity participated in the competition for medals. The school counted for itself all the medals won by the countries of origin of all the schoolchildren. This rather funny calculation (which by the way subverts the usual competition between countries in terms of medals) was well understood by the children, and it worked because the children became very interested in the performance of the athletes from the countries involved and they discussed these matters intensely. This school finished third in the competition, but the real winner was the quality of the interactions in and around this multicultural school.

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Studenti immigrati, scuole e politiche di integrazione: il caso dell'Olanda (Abstract italiano)

Sul totale della popolazione olandese, gli immigrati di origine non occidentale sono poco meno del 10 per cento. I figli di questi immigrati rappresentano oltre un decimo della popolazione scolastica complessiva, ma nelle grandi città in cui sono concentrati i residenti di origine straniera circa il 50 per cento dell'utenza scolastica è composta da immigrati. Prima di affrontare le questioni che costituiscono il nucleo centrale di questa esposizione ne esamineremo dettagliatamente il contesto, e in particolare: (a) le peculiarità del sistema scolastico olandese, in cui la scelta di una scuola è totalmente libera, al punto che i genitori hanno la facoltà di associarsi per istituire scuole con le caratteristiche che ritengono più idonee; (b) le dimensioni delle popolazioni interessate (si pensi ad esempio che nelle quattro maggiori città olandesi vi sono centinaia di scuole in cui oltre il 70 per cento degli studenti appartengono a popolazioni immigrate di origine non occidentale); (c) le risorse informative disponibili in Olanda.

Le sezioni successive saranno dedicate all'analisi delle seguenti questioni:

1. È possibile ipotizzare l'esistenza di una segregazione etnica per gli allievi delle scuole olandesi? Apparentemente sì, anche se non sembra esservi all'origine alcuna forma di discriminazione preordinata. Tale situazione è comunque un chiaro indizio della formazione di una "nuova" classe o categoria sociale, ovvero - come affermano alcuni autori - di una nuova sottoclasse.
2. Vi è una disparità in termini di formazione scolastica, significativa e stabile nel corso del tempo, a danno dei figli delle popolazioni immigrate? Anche in questo caso la risposta è affermativa, benché gli studi sull'argomento mettano in evidenza le importanti trasformazioni verificatesi negli ultimi anni. È stato infatti osservato che al termine della scuola elementare tutti i gruppi di immigrati riescono a colmare quasi

completamente lo svantaggio per ciò che riguarda la matematica, mentre sul piano della competenza linguistica i progressi appaiono meno brillanti (con la sola eccezione degli studenti originari del Suriname).

3. Quali sono le principali iniziative di politica scolastica concernenti queste popolazioni? Le scuole con percentuali elevate di studenti immigrati da paesi non occidentali ricevono finanziamenti supplementari che vengono principalmente utilizzati per assumere più insegnanti, in modo da ridurre le dimensioni delle classi e fornire adeguati supporti integrativi agli alunni in difficoltà.
4. Una breve panoramica delle interpretazioni e delle teorie sull'esperienza scolastica delle popolazioni immigrate in Olanda. Il recente ridimensionamento dei ritardi formativi da parte degli alunni di origine straniera e la maggiore efficienza di certe scuole rispetto ad altre non sono spiegabili unicamente in termini di nuove forme di gestione o nuovi criteri pedagogico/didattici. Per interpretare correttamente tali fenomeni è necessario tenere in considerazione (1) gli sforzi compiuti dalle popolazioni immigranti per adattarsi nel miglior modo possibile alle opportunità offerte dal sistema scolastico olandese, e (2) gli sforzi compiuti dalle scuole per adattare se stesse alle forme di adattamento messe in atto dalle popolazioni immigrate e dalle loro istituzioni.