

**Mainstreaming education in the Dutch multicultural society:
the case in Rotterdam with high concentration of non-Western immigrant
background children**

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1. Introduction

The main aim of this research is to explore the educational policy and practices implemented in the Netherlands aiming for mainstreaming all children regardless of their immigrant/refugee background. As the future Japanese society is expected becoming more diversified with citizens of a variety of socio-cultural and socio-economic background, this research has focused on the extremely diverse society where a huge influx of low SES migrants has taken place especially after WWII. Suggestive implications from this research would contribute to unprecedented diversity in Japan.

For this purpose, the focus has been placed on Dutch urban schools where all kinds of disadvantages have been concentrated. The population with migrant background in the whole country counts 22.6% including the 1st and 2nd generation only (CBS 2018). As many school children today are even 4th generation, all four major cities have extremely high concentration of these children (approx. 65% in Amsterdam as of 2010) associated with intensive enrollment at local primary schools. Already pointed out, these children still have persistent educational disadvantages although their families reside in the Netherlands generation after generation (Sueoka 2014).

2. Method

This research employs the ethnographic methodology. Participant observation and interviews to the school management team, teachers and researchers were conducted at several different primary/secondary schools and the university. The schools were selected among many others with a view of deprivation to meet the research question. As in the context described above, the way of better integrating migrants into the mainstream society has been always tried to find as the key national strategy. Accordingly, the schools with high concentration of these children were selected as the case studies. The data presented here have been collected intermittently between 2011 and 2018.

3. Results and Discussion

Reflecting the long-standing trial-and-error strategy in the country, it now seems to have the policy broadly in two aspects in terms of school practices. First is for the children

newly arrived, and the second for oldcomers. As another huge influx of migrants not only from Africa and Middle East as before but also from neighboring EU countries has taken place, the policy and practices in particular for newly arrived children are now being sought.

3-1. Policy for newly arrived migrant children

There are several types of reception system according to the period of time residing in the Netherlands, the Dutch proficiency level and the age. As the multitracking school system is employed in the Netherlands, the students of the age of secondary school must take the exam to be allocated into an appropriate school. While the children of the age of primary school are allocated into one of the four types of reception system first, and the assessment is given after 1 year to decide how better transition to the mainstream school can be realized. All of the special reception schools/classes are the preparatory period for children to better adjust in the Dutch school and society afterwards.

3-2. Policy for oldcomers' children

As many schools have been with extreme high concentration of non-Western immigrant background children for some time now, each municipality has its own unique policy. In Rotterdam, the city is now in a great effort toward the 'Skill city' and 'Capital network society' for the 21th century, and the school practices are strongly related to this. The special program has been employed at particular schools in a designated area, considered as the most disadvantaged area in the country relating to the national history after WWII. The schools offer more classes and activities with extending school hours in addition to regular lessons and thorough instruction of Dutch language and arithmetic. In short, more practical subjects are offered by devoting external human resources and public funding. One of the main goals in the project is to develop the social emotional skills of children.

Viewed from different perspectives, it seems to be partly linked to the policy trend like in many other EU countries that strongly promotes the work-based learning in order to improve the employability of high-risk immigrant background youth (EC 2013). The point here is that this trend is observed at the primary school not at the secondary school. Considering the age of 12 when children are put into multitracking system, it may have a risk functioning to direct them into the vocational track if placing too much attention to the school-to-work transition at primary school. To be further discussed in the presentation.

*A list of references, detailed school profiles and data are to be given on the day handouts.

Keyword: Diversity, Mainstreaming education, Low SES children, Employability