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Forecasting the population with a foreign background in the Netherlands

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FORECASTING THE POPULATION WITH A FOREIGN BACKGROUND IN THE NETHERLANDS

Summary: Every other year Statistics Netherlands publish long-term population forecasts distinguishing the population by sex and single years of age. In addition, the population is differentiated by foreign background. Persons are considered to have a foreign background if they were born abroad and have at least one parent who was also born abroad (first generation) or if they were born in the Netherlands and have at least one parent who was born abroad (second generation). In all, Dutch forecast distinguishes twelve different population groups. Forecasting the population with a foreign background requires assumptions on fertility, mortality and international migration, all distinguished by foreign background. This paper discusses the main characteristics of the forecast as well as the main assumptions underlying the Dutch 2004-based forecast.

Keywords: population forecast, population with a foreign background, migration

1. Introduction

Every other year Statistics Netherlands publish long-term population forecasts distinguishing population by sex and age. The target year of the forecast horizon is 2050. Population numbers are calculated by sex and single years of age (0..99+). In addition to the forecast of the total population, a long-term forecast of the population with a foreign background and a household forecast are published at about the same time. The household forecast distinguishes both population numbers by household position and the number of households by size and type. The household positions that are distinguished are 'living at the parental home', 'living alone', 'living with a partner without children', 'living with a partner with children', 'lone parent', 'living in an institution' (e.g. nursery home), and 'other'. These household positions can be broken down by marital status. Households can be distinguished by size (one up to five and more persons) and by type. The following types are used: 'one-person households', 'couples without children', 'couples with children', 'one-parent families', and 'other'. Families with children can be broken down by the number of children.

The first population forecasts of Statistics Netherlands date back from the 1950s of the previous century. Since 1996 Statistics Netherlands also publish forecasts of the population with a foreign background. At present twelve different population groups are distinguished.

This paper discusses the main characteristics of the forecast of the population with a foreign background. Section 2 provides a description of the classification of the foreign population in Dutch statistics. Section 3 describes the main characteristics of the forecast

model. Sections 4 and 5 summarise the main assumptions underlying the most recent forecast on international migration and fertility respectively. Finally, a summary of the main results is given.

2. Classification of the population with a foreign background

As from August 1999 Statistics Netherlands employs a standard definition for the classification of the population with a foreign background in the Netherlands. The classification meets a wide range of user needs, while allowing practical data collection. The classification is completely based on the country of birth of the person and the country of birth of his or her parents.

The population with a foreign background is defined by Statistics Netherlands in two steps, by first specifying a first and a second generation. The *first generation* consists of persons who were born abroad and have at least one parent who was also born abroad. The *second generation* consists of persons who were born in the Netherlands and have at least one parent who was born abroad. The remaining persons are classified as native. This definition implies that every person who has at least one foreign-born parent is considered to have a foreign background.

The definition of the first generation also implies that persons born abroad of parents who were both born in the Netherlands are not classified as persons with a foreign background (but as natives). Consequently, foreign-born children of Dutch migrants who left the Netherlands, for example for work or holidays, and who subsequently returned to the Netherlands, are not included in the first generation.

In addition to the distinction by generation, a distinction is made between persons with a western and non-western background. Persons with a foreign background are classified as western or non-western, according to their country of birth. If they were born in the Netherlands (the second generation), the classification is based on the mother's country of birth. If she was also born in the Netherlands, the background is determined by the father's country of birth.

The category 'non-western' includes persons with a Turkish, African, Asian and Latin-American background. Persons with a Japanese or Indonesian background are classified as western on the basis of their social and economic position in Dutch society. The group of persons with an Indonesian background consists mainly of persons (with parent(s)) originating from the former Dutch East Indies. Persons with a Japanese background are mostly employees of Japanese companies and their families.

The category 'western' consists of persons from Europe (excluding the Netherlands and Turkey), North America, Oceania, Japan and Indonesia (including the former Dutch East Indies).

Some remarks have to be made. First, the distinction between western and non-western is largely based on continents, rather than by specifying persons originating from individual countries as western or non-western. This makes the classification more robust and avoids

elaborate discussions on whether specific countries should be classified as western and non-western. Consider in this case the very many small island states in Oceania; almost all persons in the Netherlands who originate from Oceania come from Australia and New Zealand. Moreover, the western and non-western populations are still heterogeneous populations. Therefore, statistics usually distinguish individual population groups, at least the largest groups, like Moroccans, Turks and Surinamese.

3. The forecast model

The population forecast made by Statistics Netherlands is based on the traditional cohort component model. This implies that assumptions are required on future changes in fertility, mortality and migration. The assumptions on fertility refer to age-specific rates distinguished by parity. Mortality assumptions refer to age- and sex-specific mortality rates. Assumptions on immigration refer to absolute numbers, distinguished by age, sex and country of birth, and assumptions on emigration are based on a distinction of emigration rates by age, sex and country of birth.

To forecast the population with a foreign background the model is extended with a foreign background variable. This implies that the assumptions on fertility, mortality and migration have to be broken down by country of origin. The forecast distinguishes eleven categories with a foreign background. Persons with a non-western background are broken down into the categories:

- Turkey
- Morocco
- Suriname
- Netherlands Antilles and Aruba
- Africa (excluding Morocco)
- Asia (excluding Indonesia and Japan)
- Latin America (excluding Suriname, Netherlands Antilles and Aruba)

Persons with a western background are broken down into the categories:

- Indonesia (including former Dutch East Indies)
- European Union (24 countries, excluding the Netherlands)
- other European countries
- other non-European countries (North-America, Oceania, Japan)

Natives can be considered to form the 12th category. The twelve categories together constitute the total population.

Since changes in the number of immigrants and emigrants are determined by different processes, it is preferable to make assumptions on the future development of immigration and emigration flows separately, rather than on net migration only. With respect to immigration and emigration, a bottom-up approach is followed. For twelve groups of migrants, distinguished by country of birth, assumptions are formulated. These twelve

groups are equal to the ones that are specified above. The assumptions on migration of persons born abroad refer to the first generation. Assumptions on migration of persons born in the Netherlands refer to both natives and the second generation. The assumptions for the separate groups of migrants are aggregated to the total migration flows.

With respect to fertility, the process is both bottom-up and top-down. In the forecast of the total population, assumptions are specified for the total fertility rate (TFR) irrespective of country of origin. Next, assumptions are specified for the eleven groups with a foreign origin, i.e. excluding native women. These assumptions only concern first generation women. Once all assumptions are specified, the forecast can be calculated both for the total population and for the eleven foreign groups. Using these results, the population size and structure of the native population and the fertility rates of native women can be post-calculated. These fertility rates are tested for plausibility. In practice the fertility rates of native women are quite similar to those of the total population. The reason is that fertility rates of non-western women are higher than average, while fertility rates of western women are generally lower. Moreover, native women still constitute the large majority of the total population. If the fertility rates of native women are not considered to be plausible, the assumptions are adjusted and the whole exercise is carried out again.

The assumptions on the TFR refer to first generation women. However, children born of foreign-born women do not constitute the entire second generation, as also children born of Dutch-born women and foreign-born men are considered to have a foreign background. This implies that an assumption has to be specified on the proportion of children of mixed origin. The number of children born of foreign-born women as calculated in the forecast model is therefore adjusted by taking this proportion into account.

With respect to mortality it is assumed that mortality rates for the separate groups are equal to the overall level. The main reason is that the foreign population, especially the non-western population, is still very young. Therefore, mortality is a rather rare phenomenon. In a few decades this may change, although there are no indications that strong differences in mortality will occur.

Figure 3-1 shows that a large majority of the Dutch population is still constituted by natives. Currently about 80 per cent is native, more than 10 per cent has a non-western background and slightly less than 9 per cent has a western background. However, the native population is hardly growing anymore. In recent years about two thirds of the population growth is accounted for by the non-western population (*Figure 3-2*). This suggests that it would be wise to explicitly take into account the demographic developments of the population with a foreign background when compiling population forecasts in the Netherlands. *Figure 3-3* shows the size of the populations with a foreign background as distinguished in the forecast. About two thirds of the non-western population is constituted by persons originating from Turkey, Morocco, Suriname (each more than 300 thousand persons), and the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba. The western population is dominated by persons from the European Union (822 thousand persons). Germans and Belgians are among the largest populations in this group.

Figure 3-1. Population size in the Netherlands by foreign background, 1972 - 2005

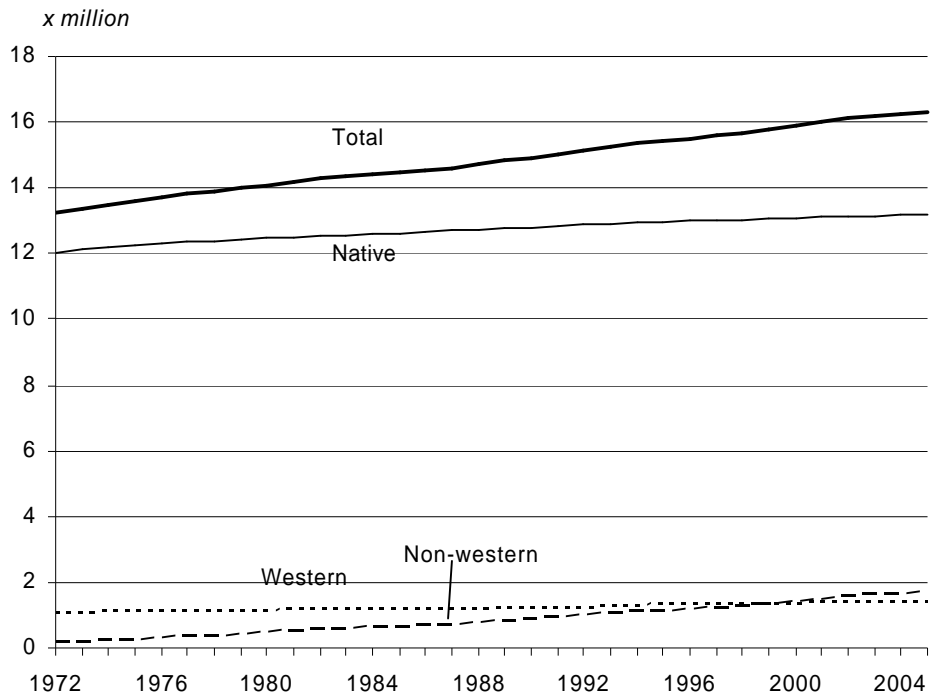


Figure 3-2. Share in population growth in the Netherlands by foreign background, 1972-2004

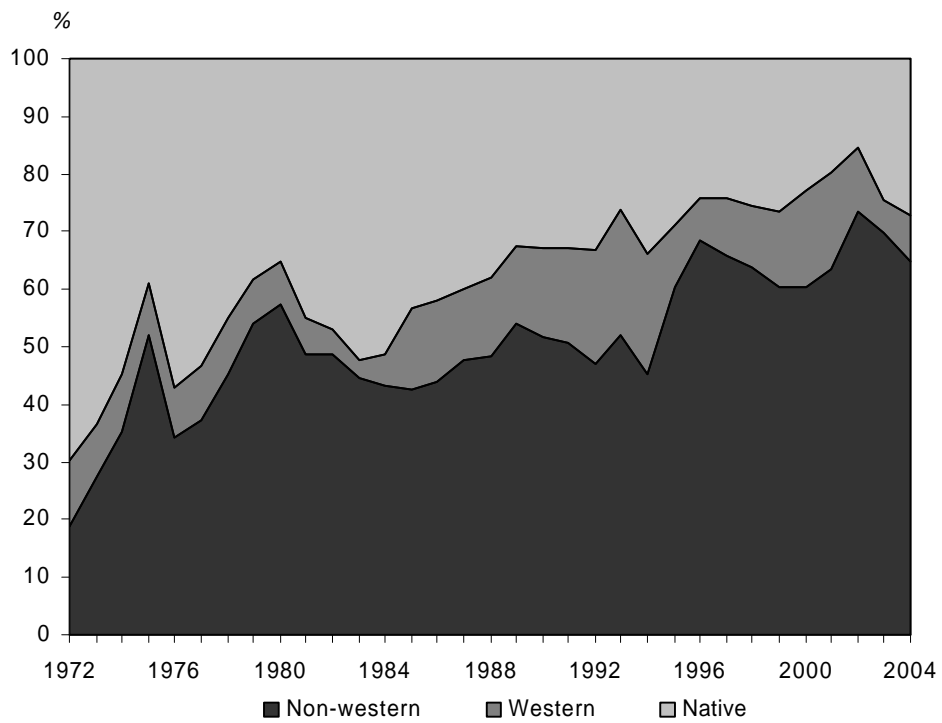
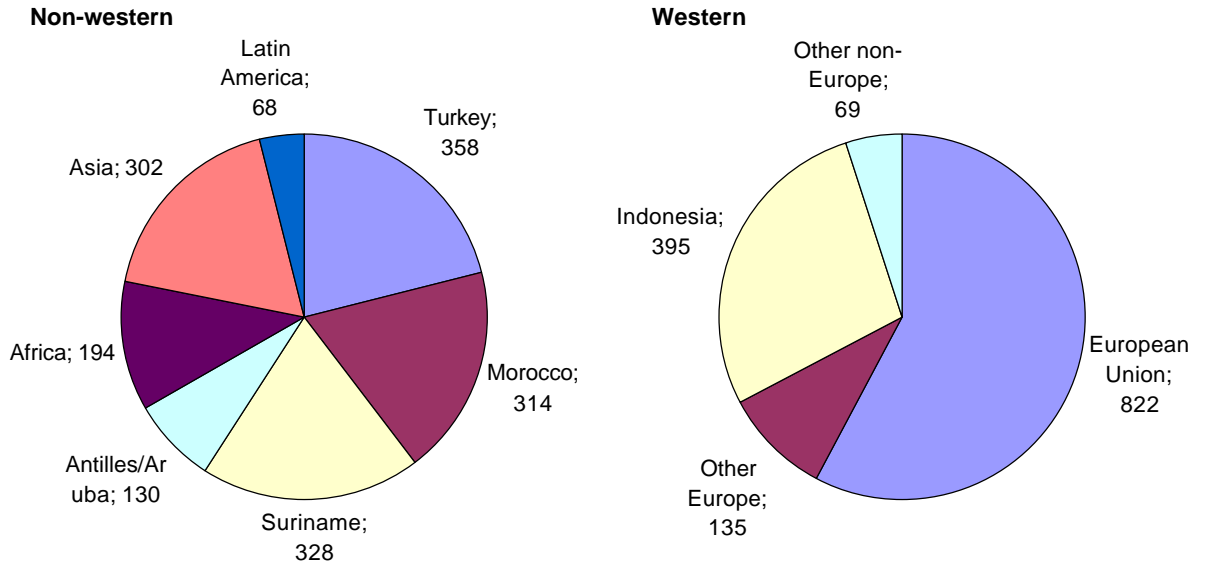


Figure 3-3 Population by foreign origin (numbers in thousands)



Uncertainty

The forecast describes the most likely future developments. It is clear that such future developments, in particular when they concern specific, comparatively small population groups, are uncertain. The degree of uncertainty is quantified by specifying assumptions on the uncertainty of future developments in fertility, mortality and migration. By means of simulations forecast distributions for the population size and structure can be calculated. With respect to the forecast of population with a foreign background this implies that assumptions have to be specified for each population group. This subject is beyond the scope of this paper.

4. Specification of assumptions on international migration

As indicated before, separate assumptions are made for immigration and emigration. The assumptions on immigration are to a large extent based on a distinction by migration motive, the most important motives being labour, asylum, family formation and family reunion. The assumptions on emigration are based on the proportion of immigrants that will eventually return.

4.1 Immigration

In recent years the number of migrants entering the Netherlands has plummeted, from 133 thousand in 2000 to 92 thousand in 2004. The number of labour migrants has decreased, due to the unfavourable economic developments in the Netherlands. In addition, the Netherlands attracted fewer asylum seekers as a consequence of new legislation ('Vreemdelingenwet') and the stricter enforcement of existing legislation.

These developments are reflected in the numbers of migrants by origin. The number of non-western migrants (mainly asylum seekers and family migrants) almost halved, from 64 thousand in 2001 to 33 thousand in 2004 (*Figure 4-1*). The number of western migrants, mainly labour and family migrants, also decreased, be it to a lesser extent.

The remainder of this section illustrates the way in which the assumptions on migration in the 2004-based forecast are developed. It is by no means exhaustive.

The majority of Turkish and Moroccan migrants are driven by family formation. Many young Turks and Moroccans living in the Netherlands are looking for a partner abroad, even those who were born in the Netherlands themselves. More than half of the second generation marry someone from the country of origin. As the number of second generation Turks and Moroccans will strongly increase in the next decades, in particular those around the family formation ages, an upwards effect on family migration can be expected. A model was developed to quantify this effect (Alders, 2005). If it is assumed that the tendency to marry a partner from abroad will not change, the number of marriage migrants will continue to increase in the years to come. However, it is more plausible to assume that this tendency will slowly decrease. First, legislation with respect to marriage migration is becoming more restrictive. Moreover, the number of young Turks and Moroccans in the Netherlands is growing, which increases the chances of finding a suitable partner in the Netherlands. Moreover, results from a family and fertility survey held among young Turks and Moroccans show that they consider it particularly important that the partner is of the same religious background, not that the partner has grown up in the country of origin. It is assumed that that proportion marrying someone from abroad will halve in the long run. For the short run this implies that the number of migrants will decrease only slowly, while in later years the numbers will drop, since the second generation will move beyond childbearing ages.

Asylum seekers are usually originating from countries in Africa and Asia. It is worth noting that not every asylum seeker is registered in the population registers and thus counted as asylum migrant. Only those who are permitted to stay or who are living in a refugee centre for at least half a year can be registered. Recently the number of asylum seekers has dropped, to below 10 thousand in 2004 (0.6 asylum seekers per 1,000 population). In the late 1990s the Netherlands received more than 40 thousand asylum seekers per year. It is not expected that the current low numbers will persist. For the long run it is expected that around 15 thousand asylum seekers will apply for asylum in the Netherlands. This implies about one asylum seeker per thousand inhabitants, slightly above the current average for the European Union. Studies show that about half of these asylum seekers in the Netherlands are entered in to the population register and are therefore counted as migrant (Nicolaas, 2005). Applying this fraction to future asylum seekers, 7.5 thousand asylum seekers would be registered each year. Only a minority of asylum requests are granted. A cohort analysis shows that, depending on the period, no more than 30 per cent - and usually less - of the requests is granted. In the forecast it is assumed that one third (5 thousand) of all requests will be granted. Only asylum seekers whose requests have been granted are allowed family reunion. Data on asylum migration show that in recent years one family member has immigrated per two asylum migrants. Hence, it is assumed that the 5 thousand granted requests will lead to another 2.5

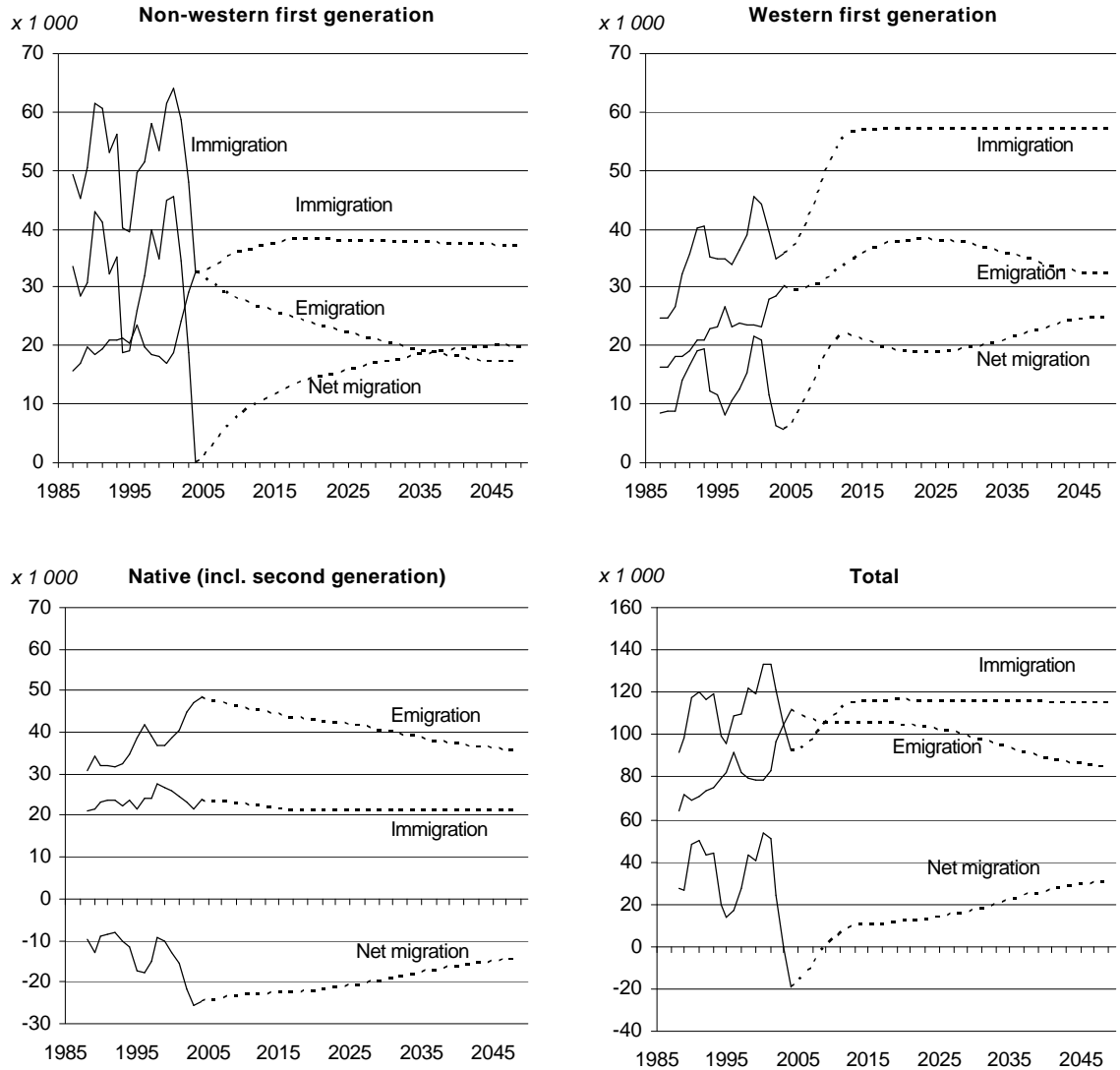
thousand migrants. It is assumed that in total 7.5 asylum seekers will be entered into the population register and that 2.5 thousand migrants will follow them. It is expected that from the 10 thousand asylum-related migrants 3 thousand will come from Africa, 5 thousand from Asia and 2 thousand from other countries.

Labour migrants are mainly coming from other European countries. Analyses carried out by De Beer (2004) show that the number of migrants from the European Union (before the accession of the ten new member states) is related to the business cycle. Unemployment in the Netherlands has undergone three periods of hefty increase in the last quarter of a century: at the beginning of the 1980s, the first half of the 1990s and in 2002-2003. In each of these periods immigration of EU citizens to the Netherlands decreased. Similarly, periods of falling unemployment were accompanied by an increase in immigration. Calculations on the basis of developments since 1976 in immigration from the EU and unemployment show that an increase in unemployment of 100 thousand leads to 2 thousand fewer EU immigrants. If unemployment is 300 thousand, 21 thousand EU-immigrants per year can be expected to arrive in the Netherlands. If it is 400 thousand (the average in the last 25 years) immigration will be 19 thousand per year. If unemployment drops to 200 thousand, EU-immigration will increase to 23 thousand a year. These estimations are only relevant for the EU-countries before extension on 1 May 2004. When taking into account a possibly higher mobility within the European Union, an assumption of 25 thousand immigrants from the former EU is plausible. It is expected that an additional 10 thousand migrants from the new member states will enter the Netherlands each year. Up to now migration from these countries mainly concerns Polish migrants. During the period May-December 2004 about 5 thousand migrants from the new countries arrived, among whom 4 thousand from Poland.

The number of returning Dutch-born migrants depends on the number of migrants who have left the country in previous years. Cohort data show that about half of the Dutch-born migrants who left in 1995 have returned in the meantime (Nicolaas, 2004). It is expected that 60 per cent will eventually return.

The assumptions specified above are the building stones of the final assumptions for all twelve migrants groups. Figure 4-1 summarises the assumptions by showing the results for persons with a native, non-western and western background.

Figure 4-1. International migration by origin



4.2 Emigration

Whereas the number of immigrants has dropped in recent years, the number of emigrants has risen to yet unobserved high levels. As a result, net migration in 2003 was slightly negative and in 2004 even significantly negative (about -1 per thousand inhabitants).

In the forecast model emigration rates are distinguished by age, sex and country of birth. This implies that changes in population size and structure will have an impact on emigration. Emigration rates depend heavily on the country of origin and duration of stay. In general, rates are high for labour migrants and low for migrants who come for the purpose of family reunion. Moreover, rates are high for short durations of stay and low for long durations. About half of the emigrants leave the country within three years after arrival. This implies that the number of emigrants depends on the number of immigrants in previous years.

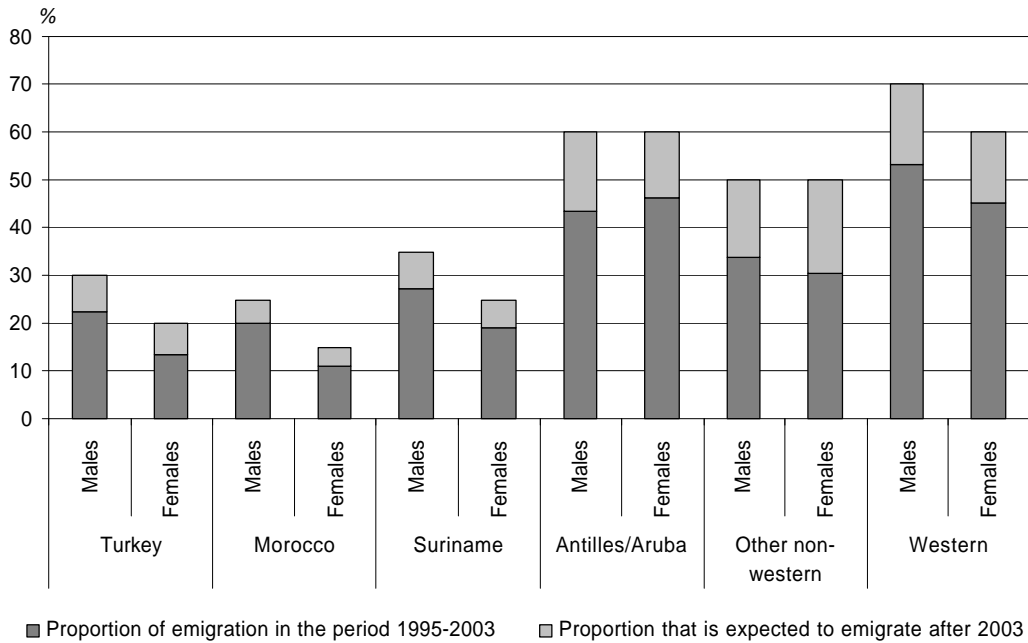
In the most recent forecast a separate procedure was developed to model emigration rates distinguished by age, sex, country of origin and duration of stay. The indicator to which the assumptions refer is the proportion of immigrants that will eventually leave the country. Age-patterns are applied in order to enable the calculation age- and sex-specific emigration rates can be calculated that serve as input for the forecast model.

Analyses of immigration cohorts show that strong differences exist in the proportions of immigrants that will eventually leave the Netherlands (De Jong and Nicolaas, 2005). Only a minority of immigrants from Turkey and Morocco who arrived in 1995 have left the country during the period 1995-2003 (*Figure 4-2*). On the other hand, about half of the western migrants have returned. In general return rates are higher for men than for women, which can be explained by the fact that women more often arrive for the purpose of family formation and reunion. The proportion of immigrants that can be expected to return after 2003 is comparatively small, as return rates are low for longer durations. As said, the assumptions refer to proportion of immigrants who will eventually return. It is assumed that return rates for immigrant cohort 1995 also hold for future immigrant cohorts.

Regarding male immigrants from Turkey, Morocco and Suriname it is assumed that between a quarter and a third will eventually return (*Figure 4-2*). For women the proportion of return migration is assumed to be 10 percentage points lower, as women more often come to the Netherlands for family formation than men. Migrants from Turkey and Morocco will also in the future arrive for family formation and reunion. Their intention will be to stay permanently. For this reason it is assumed that also in the future a rather low proportion of immigrants is expected to return. The observed proportion of return for immigrants from the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba is much higher. People from these islands can travel more or less freely between the islands and the Netherlands, as almost all are Dutch citizens. It is assumed that 60 per cent will return. The other non-western immigrants are mainly asylum seekers, labour migrants and marriage migrants. As only a minority of the asylum seekers are allowed to stay, the observed rate of return migration is comparatively high. It is assumed that eventually half of these migrants will return. Return rates are highest for western migrants. About half of those who arrived in 1995 have left the country in the meantime. It is assumed that eventually 70 per cent of male immigrants and 60 per cent of female immigrants will return.

These assumptions result in emigration numbers as shown in *Figure 4-1*. The number of non-western emigrants is expected to decrease in the next decades. One of the explanations is that the future number of immigrants will be lower than in the past. In addition the average duration of stay in the Netherlands will increase, as the share of new immigrants will become smaller. This will result in smaller emigration rates. The number of western emigrants will continue to increase as a result of increasing numbers of immigrants.

Figure 4-2. Return migration of immigration cohort 1995 by sex and country of origin



5. Specification of assumptions on fertility

The forecast for the total population projects a total fertility rate of 1.75 children per woman in the long run. This level is almost equal to the current level. This assumption is mainly based on analyses of period and cohort data distinguishing birth orders and on evidence on birth expectations as emerging from the Dutch family and fertility surveys.

The strong increase in the size of the non-western second generation in recent years is caused by the higher than average fertility rates of first generation women. However, for many groups fertility rates have decreased in recent years. The basic assumption regarding fertility is that differences with the overall level of fertility will continue to become smaller. However, some groups will still have higher fertility levels in the future.

The total fertility rate of Turkish and Moroccan women (first generation) has decreased in the first half of the 1990s (*Figure 5-1*). For Moroccan women the TFR has remained almost constant since then, while the TFR of Turkish women decreased again in most recent years. One of the explanations of the relative high fertility rates of Moroccan women, in particular, is that many young Turks and Moroccans living in the Netherlands marry a partner from the country of origin. These migrants are rather traditional in behaviour, with accompanying high fertility. For the future it is expected that fertility rates of these women will decrease, since the educational level and labour force participation of these women is expected to increase. However, fertility rates will not become as low as native fertility rates since a poor knowledge of the Dutch language of immigrant women will lead to an initially disadvantaged position regarding educational level and labour force participation. This will have an upward effect on fertility. It is assumed that the target value for the TFR is 2 children per woman. This number is based on the assumption that young generations will have fewer children than older generations.

Cohort data show that the fertility rates for birth orders three and higher are decreasing over the generations rather than those of birth orders one and two. Moreover, the fertility rates for first children hardly show any postponement, and childlessness is rare even for the youngest generations of Turkish and Moroccan women. The same development is expected for women originating from Africa (excluding Morocco).

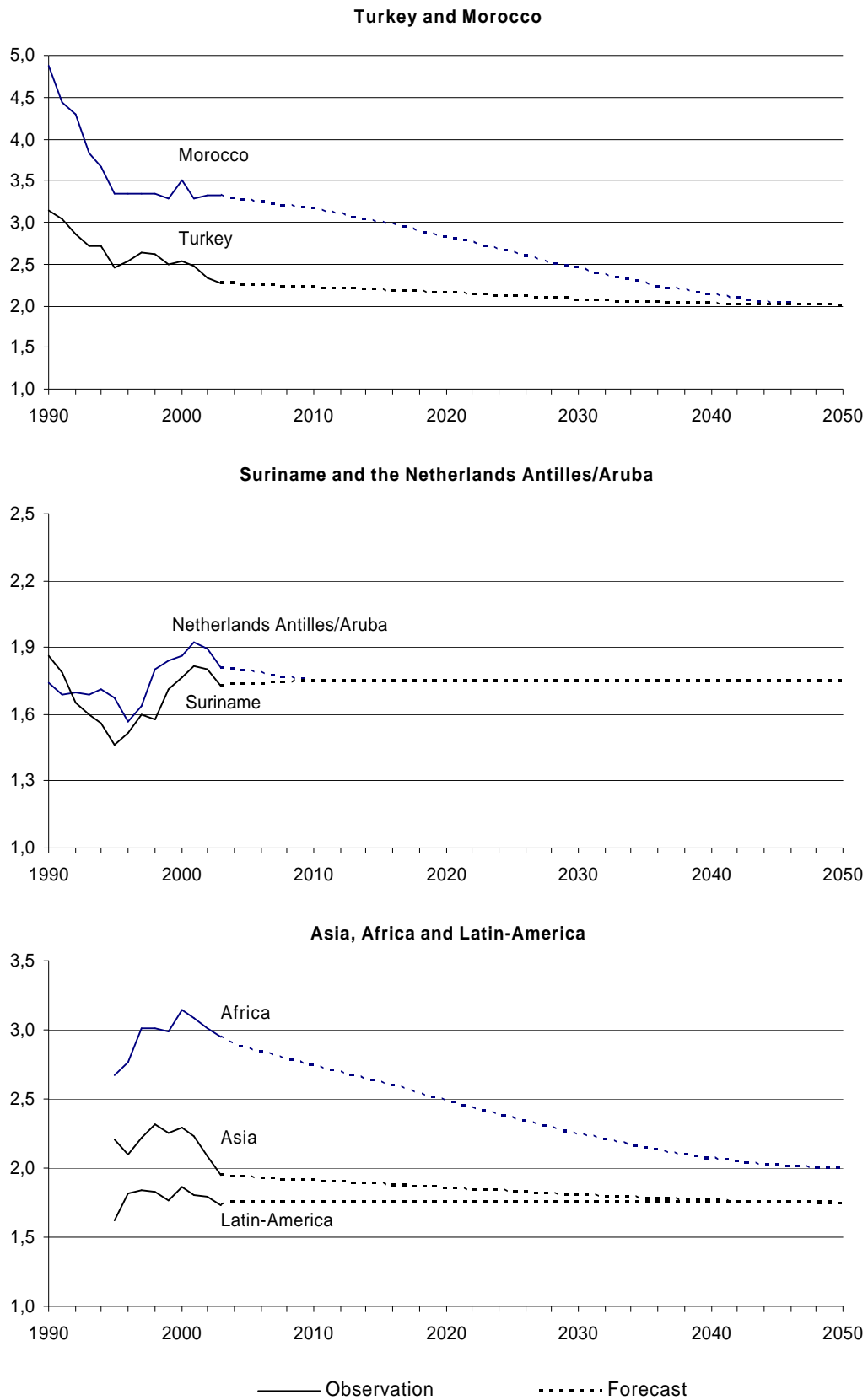
After a decrease in the first half of the 1990s the TFR of Surinamese women has gone up in the second half (*Figure 5-1*). For women originating from the Antilles and Aruba the development is comparable, at a slightly higher level. The increase in the second half of the 1990s was mostly due to increasing fertility rates at young ages. From 2000 the TFR of both groups of women has decreased to a level comparable to that of native women. It is expected that the TFR of these women will be equal to the TFR of all women. One of the reasons for this assumption is that these women, when compared to Turkish and Moroccan women, have a higher educational level and labour force participation. Moreover, they more often marry natives, which stimulates their integration. Cohort data show that especially Surinamese women postpone motherhood and are quickly converging towards overall levels of fertility.

The TFR of Asian women in the Netherlands has declined in the past few years (*Figure 5-1*). It is expected that this development will continue and that in the long run the TFR of these women will equal that of all women. The main reason for this assumption is that immigration from Asia will increasingly concern labour migrants, while the share of Asian asylum seekers will diminish.

Fertility from European women and from other western countries is lower than that of native women. The reason is that these women (and their partners) usually stay in the Netherlands for just a few years and wait with having children until they have returned to their home country. Based on the assumption that in the future, as well as in the past, the majority of these women will only stay temporarily, it is expected that the TFR will remain constant at a level of 1.4 children per woman.

In addition to the TFR, age patterns of fertility are specified. It is expected that especially for non-western women fertility rates at young ages will decline. This is in line with the expected increase in educational level and labour force participation. Moreover, the minimum required age for marriage migration has been increased to 21 years. For Turkish and African women it is expected that the average age at childbearing will increase, though not to the same extent as native women. For the other groups it is expected that the age-specific fertility rates will converge to the overall average level.

Figure 5-1. Total Fertility Rate (TFR) of first generation non-western women in the Netherlands



6. Summary of results

Currently the number of persons in the Netherlands with a non-western background is about 1.7 million (10 per cent of total population). In the next five years the number will increase only slowly to 1.8 million (*table*). The main reason of this slow increase is the fact that net migration is only slightly positive. After five years the increase will accelerate, as it is expected that immigration will outnumber emigration in a structural manner. The non-western population will eventually increase to 2.8 million in 2050, which amounts to 17 per cent of the total population. The population with a western background is with 1.4 million persons somewhat smaller than the non-western population. Also for this group only a modest increase is expected in the next few years.

The native population in the Netherlands is still growing, but not for long. As net migration is structurally negative and the number of live births is dropping (due to falling numbers of births in the 1970s) the size of the native population will start to decline in a few years. Total population size will decrease from 13.2 million at present to 11.9 million in 2050.

The expected increase of the non-western population mainly concerns the second generation. The increase of the second generation reflects the growth of the first generation in the past years. For the long run it is expected that the second generation will outnumber the first generation.

Both the first and the second generation of the western population will hardly increase in the next few years. In the long run the second generation will increase only moderately. The reason is that many first generation western migrants only stay in the Netherlands temporarily and do not get their children in the Netherlands. Moreover, the western first generation is rather old on average, as compared to the non-western first generation. The first generation will increase faster in the long run, due to increasing numbers of labour migrants.

As regards comparing specific groups, strong differences are expected. Traditionally the majority of the non-western population in the Netherlands are originating from Turkey, Morocco, Suriname and the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba. The first generations of these populations will only increase slowly, if at all. Only the second generation is expected to increase substantially. A strong increase is expected for the Asian population, which is expected to more than double in the next decades. The European population living in the Netherlands will also increase strongly, especially in the medium and long run, when a significant migration surplus is expected.

Table. Forecast of the population with a native and foreign background in the Netherlands

		2005	2010	2030	2050
		<i>x 1 000</i>			
Total		16295	16462	17022	16906
Native		13177	13169	12855	11880
Non-western	First generation	1018	1021	1160	1266
	Second generation	677	809	1194	1534
	Total	1696	1831	2354	2800
Western	First generation	582	606	862	1132
	Second generation	841	857	950	1094
	Total	1422	1463	1812	2226
Turkey	First generation	195	200	220	205
	Second generation	163	189	259	309
	Total	358	389	479	514
Morocco	First generation	167	171	183	175
	Second generation	147	181	253	284
	Total	314	352	436	460
Suriname	First generation	188	186	185	158
	Second generation	141	156	189	209
	Total	328	342	374	368
Netherlands Antilles & Aruba	First generation	81	78	95	120
	Second generation	48	55	85	129
	Total	130	132	181	249
Africa	First generation	125	108	103	133
	Second generation	69	84	118	155
	Total	194	192	221	289
Asia	First generation	219	229	303	381
	Second generation	84	111	223	339
	Total	302	341	525	720
Latin America	First generation	43	49	71	93
	Second generation	25	33	67	108
	Total	68	82	138	201
Indonesia	First generation	131	118	78	54
	Second generation	265	263	245	175
	Total	395	380	323	229
European Union (24 countries)	First generation	304	326	534	824
	Second generation	518	522	561	710
	Total	822	847	1095	1534
Other European Countries	First generation	110	119	168	187
	Second generation	25	38	87	134
	Total	135	157	255	321
Other non-European Countries	First generation	37	44	82	66
	Second generation	32	35	57	76
	Total	69	79	139	142

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