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Post-colonial Immigrants and Identity Formations in the Netherlands

ULBE BOSMA (ED.)



AMSTERDAM UNIVERSITY PRESS

Post-Colonial Immigrants and Identity Formations in the Netherlands

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Post-Colonial Immigrants and Identity Formations in the Netherlands

edited by
Ulbe Bosma

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1 Introduction

Post-colonial immigrants and identity formations in the Netherlands

Ulbe Bosma

1.1 Introduction

Whereas the post-colonial condition has been extensively discussed in the Anglophone and Francophone countries, hardly anything of this has resonated in the Netherlands. This book explores how this phenomenon is related to the specific histories and composition of the various post-colonial groups in this country and the peculiarities of Dutch society. The least one can say is that post-colonial immigrants in the Netherlands came from highly diverse backgrounds. Among them were metropolitan Dutch (who were repatriated during and after the Indonesian War of Independence), Moluccan militia, Indo-Chinese, Afro-Caribbeans and Surinamese originating from India, Java and China. This heterogeneity is not specific for the Netherlands, however. In the Dutch case, one could even claim that one can speak about 'post-colonial migrants' as a distinct category, because probably more than 90 per cent of these newcomers were already Dutch citizens before their arrival in the Netherlands. Their elites were steeped in Dutch culture and often had had their (academic) education in the metropolis or colonial mother country. One can also point to the agendas of post-colonial migrant organisations, many of which, one way or another, were shaped by colonial issues.

But there are also counterarguments. Almost half of the post-colonial migrants to the Netherlands found themselves in the same dire social and economic circumstances as labour migrants. This was particularly the case for post-colonial immigrants who were not immediate descendants of metropolitan Dutch, were usually lower educated and entered the Dutch labour market in the 1980s. Another objection would be that even if colonialism shaped Dutch culture, it is not something very visible. Again, the Netherlands is not exceptional in this regard. The only pan-European publication on post-colonial immigrants even has 'invisible' in its title: *Europe's invisible migrants* (Smith 2003). This invisibility has been noted by quite a

few Dutch scholars, some of whom also contribute to this volume. But this point precisely could be turned on its head, into an argument in favour of discussing post-colonial immigrants as a distinct category. Their identity formations are solidly linked to the erratic and convoluted ways in which the colonial past is rendered in Dutch collective memory: compounded by taboos and silences (Bosma 2009; Oostindie 2010; Van Leeuwen 2008).

The most straightforward argument for discussing post-colonial immigrants and their identity formations within a single analytical framework is the fact that they constitute a substantial segment of Dutch society that arrived in huge waves over a relatively short period of time. Decolonisation and post-colonial immigrations changed the Netherlands demographically in a post-colonial society. Today, about 6.3 per cent of the Dutch population comes from the former colonies, or has at least one parent born there. By and large, this figure is smaller than the other Western European twentieth-century colonial powers. France and Great Britain probably have between 7 and 8 per cent first- and second-generation post-colonial immigrants. In Portugal the proportion might approach 10 per cent (Bosma 2009: 349-350; Bosma, Lucassen & Oostindie 2012; Oostindie in this volume). What sets the Netherlands apart from France, the UK and Portugal is that post-colonial migrants only make up half of the extra-European immigrants. Most non-European immigrants in France, the UK and Portugal are from former colonial territories. Moreover, the overwhelming majority of Dutch post-colonial immigrants is Christian and about 90 per cent of the immigrants from Indonesia were designated as Europeans – not as indigenous – in colonial times. Only a tiny minority of a few thousand Indonesians had Dutch citizen rights under Dutch rule. The post-colonial immigrants from Indonesia were therefore a most privileged segment of the colonial society. They were born in the Netherlands, were Dutch or European descendants or were other persons who identified themselves with Dutch culture or at least with the colonial variant of it.

The aim of this book is to explore Dutch post-colonial migrants' identity formations throughout the processes of immigration and settlement, to examine these immigrants' relationships with the local Dutch populations and to reflect upon second- and third-generation responses to the post-colonial condition. This edited volume presents an overview of more than 60 years and three generations of post-colonial migration history. It also takes stock of an impressive body of thematic literature that has appeared since the early 1980s. Most of it, pertaining particularly to publications of a more historical nature, has never reached an international audience. Our purpose, therefore, is to present Dutch scholarship in this field to an international audience, but also to bring together literature on the various post-colonial groups in a single book, where possible in a comparative manner.[1] Obviously, the contributions are from a variety of disciplines with their own theoretical and conceptual approaches. The authors have nonetheless

found a common point of departure in the post-colonial condition of the Netherlands. One way or the other, all chapters focus on the complexity of identity formations. This term is thus carried by the title of this book. A few words about our use of 'identity formations' are apposite here. As a rule, this concept is used for the study of the second generation often in the context of a segmented assimilation (Haller & Landolt 2005: 1183). In this book, however, identity formation is employed in a context that is not necessarily determined by segmented assimilation. It has a wider meaning here, encompassing the first, second and third generations.

1.2 Immigration and settlement conditions

Before discussing the main theme of this book – the dynamic and historically contextualised processes of 'identity formation' of different post-colonial immigrant populations – it is also apposite to introduce the different groups and to provide some basic data about them. Dutch post-colonial immigrants came in three different waves. Between 1945 and 1962, almost 300,000 Dutch citizens came from Indonesia. The first group came immediately after the end of the Japanese occupation in 1945, during which half the Dutch population in Indonesia had been in internment camps. A second important wave followed in the 1950s when relations between Indonesia and its former mother country rapidly deteriorated. Ultimately, only 10 per cent has chosen to stay. More than 60 per cent of these so-called *repatrianten* ('returnees') were born in the former colony and were often of part-Indonesian descent. The first round consisted mainly of repatriating first-generation Dutch families. In the successive rounds, immigrants comprised the proportion of Indische Netherlanders[2] who had never been in the Netherlands, as well as other groups who were categorised as 'socially Dutch' and therefore eligible for 'repatriation'. The latter group concerned certain segments of highly educated Indonesians and Christians and, in particular, several thousand ethnic Chinese (Bosma 2009; Oostindie 2010). Last but not least, in 1951, 4,000 Moluccan colonial soldiers arrived in the Netherlands after they had refused to be demobilised in Indonesian territory. Together with 8,000 wives and children, they were ordered to embark for the Netherlands and discharged just before disembarkation in Rotterdam (Smeets & Steijlen 2006: 67, 79). They were loyal to the Moluccan Republic (Republik Maluku Selatan, RMS) that was created in 1950. It was subsequently crushed by the Indonesian state, although a small guerrilla movement managed to survive until 1966.

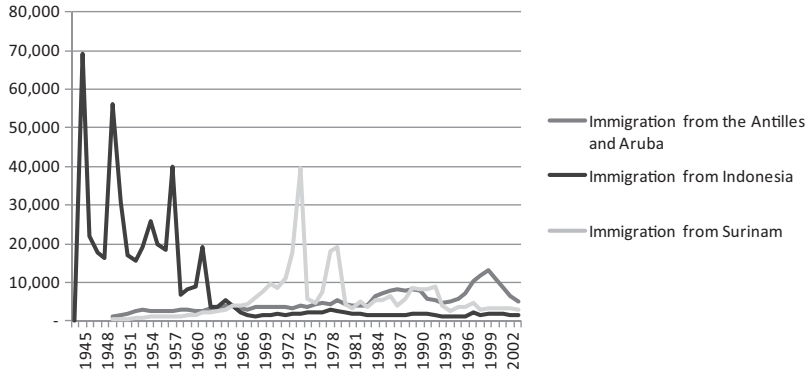
The exodus from Indonesia was more or less completed by the mid-1960s. By then, some 300,000 had migrated to the Netherlands. But only a few years later immigration started again, this time from the West. In the 1970s, about 180,000 immigrants came from Surinam and from the 1980s

onwards, another 90,000 arrived from the Antilles and Aruba. The Surinamese were driven by the deteriorating economic conditions in their country. Many Surinamese did want to stay when their country became independent in 1975 for fear of political unstability and economic chaos. The Surinamese community in the Netherlands stands at 360,000 today – against 475,000 in contemporary Surinam itself. In 2007 the proportion of first-generation Surinamese immigrants was still above 50 per cent, but will fall below that mark soon (Table 1.1). The growth of the Antillean population in the Netherlands, originating from six tiny islands in the Caribbean, came later. Until the 1980s, Antillian migration was predominantly circular in character, but deteriorating conditions, particularly in Curaçao, brought a growing stream of Antilleans who stayed in the Netherlands. Today, the Antillean community in the metropolis is just over 140,000, with still a clear majority being first generation (Table 1.1). The total population of the six islands is some 300,000.

Migration to the Netherlands has been a predominantly Curaçaoan affair, with Aruba following at a long distance. As the great majority of the Antilleans in the Netherlands stems from Curaçao, and the island has only some 140,000 citizens left, the distribution of the Curaçaoan transnational population may well be in the order of 55/45. The Antillean exodus is the most recent of the post-colonial migrations under review here. All Antilleans have continued to enjoy full citizenship and the right of abode in the Netherlands. One consequence of this constitutional arrangement has been a highly intense circular migration.

These large influxes of post-colonial immigrants to the Netherlands were not entirely new. Before the independence of Indonesia and Surinam, extensive colonial migration circuits had been in place. In the nineteenth century, travelling was still confined to the mostly well-educated elites, but in the twentieth century, these colonial migration circuits expanded rapidly, particularly among more educated people. Of the approximately 5,000 Surinamese and Antilleans who were living in the Netherlands in the 1950s, between 10 and 20 per cent had a higher education (Oostindie & Maduro 1986: 211). Likewise, 15 per cent of the first waves of Dutch people returning from Indonesia between 1945 and 1949 had an academic education (Kraak 1958: 226). The level of immigrants' education declined as the influxes of the respective migrant groups became much larger. This was a source of concern to the Dutch authorities. In the 1950s, the Dutch government was reluctant to admit Indische Netherlanders, particularly if they had never lived in the Netherlands, as Jones details in this volume. Likewise, in the early 1970s, the Dutch government tried to stop the increasing number of Surinamese immigrants by expediting the independence of Surinam. In both cases attempts to stem the migration influxes had little effect.

Figure 1.1 *Immigration from the Antilles & Aruba, Surinam and Indonesia*



Source: Central Bureau of Statistics

As far as work (i.e. social-economic attainment) is concerned, conditions changed fundamentally over time. Most crucial was the changing role of the state in the economic sphere. Whereas in the 1940s the government intervened in the labour market on behalf of repatriates from the newly independent Indonesia, in the 1980s and 1990s, the integration of immigrants into the labour market was left to market forces, employers and the labour unions (Amersfoort & Van Niekerk 2006). The impact of this withdrawal was enormous, especially because the Netherlands was suffering from a severe economic crisis and deindustrialisation in the 1980s. In other spheres, such as housing (i.e. spatial patterns), a drastic change also took place. The central coordination of housing and welfare provision in place when the Indonesian repatriates had arrived was disintegrating by the 1970s, exactly at the time the Surinamese were migrating in large numbers. Whereas in the 1950s and 1960s the Dutch government had been able to disperse Indische Netherlanders all over the country, this was no longer the case in the 1970s. As a consequence, Surinamese and Antillean migrants became concentrated in large cities. As far as geographical distribution is concerned, the Moluccans are a special case. In the first decade after their arrival, Moluccan former soldiers and their families were lodged in barracks because, apart from the differences they had with the Dutch government they agreed that their stay would only be temporary. From the 1960s onwards, a slow integration process was nevertheless set in motion, and they were transferred to separate districts across some 60 villages.

If we take intermarriage as one of the parameters of integration, it appears that the affinity post-colonial migrants have with Dutch society is growing over time, and is stronger than that felt by labour migrants.[3] The question of intermarriage vis-à-vis the post-colonial discussion is addressed

by Laarman in this volume. Generally, intermarriage with the indigenous Dutch population occurs much more frequently among post-colonial migrants than among labour migrants from Morocco and Turkey, who started to settle in the Netherlands from the late 1970s onwards (SCP 2007: 39). In the 1950s, more than half of the Indische Netherlander immigrants married outside their own group (Willems 2001: 201). This figure was slightly lower for Moluccans. According to figures from the 1960s onwards, only about one third of them married into indigenous Dutch society. This is a difference that can easily be explained by their isolated housing in barracks (and later on in separate residential areas in Dutch villages and towns) and by the long-held ideal of a return to the Moluccas. In the first decade of the twenty-first century, about one third of immigrant Surinamese and half of immigrant Antilleans are married to indigenous Dutch people. The second generation's percentages are considerably higher than those of the first.

Table 1.1 *Post-colonial immigrants in the Netherlands, first and second generations, 2006*

	First generation	*Second generation*	*Total*
1. Indische Netherlanders and Dutch repatriates	204,000	315,000	519,000
2. Moluccan	26,000	32,349	58,349
2. Surinamese	187,483	144,417	331,900
3. Antillean and Aruban	80,102	49,581	129,683
Total	497,585	540,868	1,038,932

Source: Bosma (2009: 30)

Post-colonial immigrants had different levels of education and different degrees of affinity with Dutch culture, but almost all were legally Dutch citizens with the exception of the Moluccans. Many Moluccans had refused to apply for Dutch citizenship during their exile in the Netherlands, and about 80 per cent did not hold a Dutch passport in the 1970s (Jones 2007: 129). The Surinamese – Afro-Surinamese, in particular – and the Indische Netherlanders were the most proficient in speaking Dutch, whereas the Moluccans and Antilleans showed the least affinity with Dutch language and culture.

Throughout the post-war period, the overwhelming majority of the Antillean community in the Netherlands was of African descent, Christian and Papiamentu-speaking. Initially, the immigrants were mainly members of the middle class mostly seeking higher education. Their educational levels were above average and their command of Dutch was good. From the 1980s onwards, the growing Antillean community came to represent a cross-section from the sending islands, from Curaçao, in particular.[4] This meant a dramatic change to the socio-economic profile of new arrivals

from the Antilles. Middle-class migrants continued arriving, but they were now far outnumbered by lower-class islanders with meagre educational skills, a poor command of Dutch and little affinity with Dutch culture at large. How different this last episode in the history of post-colonial migrations was compared to the opening chapters of the Indische Netherlanders!

1.3 Post-colonial immigrants as a distinct category

Post-colonial immigrants vary widely in terms of their education, employment opportunities, religion and affinity with Dutch society. However, they are generally more familiar with metropolitan society than are labour immigrants from Turkey and the Southern Mediterranean. The great majority are Dutch citizens; a smaller majority have had at least a couple of years of Dutch education and have attended Protestant or Catholic churches. This 'positive social capital' that the post-colonial immigrants possessed when they arrived in the metropolis, and which gave them an advantage over other immigrant groups, has been coined 'the post-colonial bonus' by Oostindie (2010: 46; Boehmer & Gouda 2009: 43). Part of this 'bonus' was also that post-colonial immigrants were Dutch citizens. However, this was a status Dutch lawmakers were in many cases quite reluctant to honour, particularly if the immigrants were not direct descendants of metropolitan Dutch. Whereas in colonial times the importance of loyal citizen-subjects overseas was stressed, as soon as the consequences of these citizens' repatriation became clear in terms of their housing and settlement costs, the cultural distances between metropolitan and colonial Dutch nationals were emphasised by a process of 'ethnic othering'. After the transfer of sovereignty to Indonesia, for example, Dutch citizens of mixed descent were systematically encouraged by the Dutch authorities to give up their Dutch passports and become Indonesians. Moreover, the Dutch government systematically discouraged their attempts to leave Indonesia because of its deteriorating conditions in the 1950s. The Dutch government only changed its attitude in 1957, when the Indonesian government simply declared Dutch citizens to be personae non gratae and ordered them out of the country as undesirable aliens. The malleability of the concept of citizenship is explained in chapter 2 by Jones.

Colonial background did indeed carry some drawbacks, too. One cannot ignore the legacies of colonial societies with their racial prejudices. Many continued to exist as stereotypes in post-colonial metropolitan society. It has therefore been argued, as some contributions to this volume suggest, that colonialism continues in new shapes and forms in our present-day post-colonial societies. But even those who do not strictly adhere to the notion of post-colonial continuity still subscribe to the point of view that contemporary Dutch multicultural society is in many – often invisible –

ways connected to the past history of Dutch colonisation in South-East Asia and the Caribbean. The Dutch are post-colonial without realising it and without accepting newcomers from the colonies as agents in the national historical narrative. According to Willems' contribution in this volume: 'In spite of the massive cultural interdependence between the former motherland and its overseas territories, post-colonial migrants appear as victims rather than as active agents.' I will return to the point of 'victimhood' later in this chapter. The wider issue is the lack of reflection – the absence of a systematic debate – on the Dutch post-colonial state. This theme also recurs in my own chapter 10. By way of introduction let me just mention a few explanations that apply here.

Firstly, highly diverging from situations in the UK's and France's former colonies, Indonesia, the Netherlands' largest former colony, does not 'speak back'. On the eve of World War II, about 800,000 Indonesians had some knowledge of Dutch, but the familiarity with the coloniser's language completely disappeared during the successive Japanese occupation and decolonisation process. Other former colonies did speak back to the metropolis. We see this, for example, through Antillean writer Frank Martinus Arion's novels, thousands of copies of which have been sold. The books were highly acclaimed by the Dutch readers, but it is questionable whether the author's sharp critique of the neo-colonial relationship between the Caribbean and Europe had much impact on his Dutch audience.

Secondly, decolonisation histories in the Eastern and Western parts of the former Dutch colonial empire were radically different. The mass departure from Indonesia consisted of minority groups directly connected to the waning colonial order. In contrast, the Surinamese exodus comprised a fairly representative sample of the total population and was sparked by the Surinamese government's greatly contested decision to attain independence by the end of 1975. While the Dutch government was delighted to comply with the mainly Afro-Surinamese quest for independence – partly in hopes of curtailing immigration – a large number of Surinamese voted with their feet. In the following decades, the spectre of the Surinamese exodus would haunt not only the young republic, but equally the former metropolis. The vain hope of the Dutch government of enticing the Antillean population, and its leadership, to accept independence became increasingly linked to the equally futile wish to curtail Antillean migration to the Netherlands. Exactly the opposite happened. The choice against independence made by the Antilleans has not simply confirmed their citizenship within the Kingdom of the Netherlands and their right of abode in the metropolis. These privileges are now key arguments for Antilleans to reject a transfer of sovereignty (Oostindie & Verton 1998: 53-54).

Thirdly, post-colonial immigrations and immigrant settlement processes present a fragmented picture. While the first migration waves from the East – from Indonesia – had arrived in the 1950s, the others from the West

– from Surinam and the Dutch Antilles – came after 1970. Meanwhile, Dutch society underwent a complete transformation. Before 1965, it was a highly pillarised society under shared Catholic, Protestant and Social-Democratic leadership, where each aspect of social life was separated by denomination. The Netherlands had its share of youth protests around 1970 and rapidly secularised in the course of the 1960s and 1970s. Moreover, in the early 1970s, Bagley and other authors could still claim that racial tensions were practically absent in Dutch society (Bagley 1973; Verwey-Jonker 1971). Before the end of that decade, however, the first racist political organisations entered the scene. Meanwhile, youth who were recognisably Afro-Surinamese and Moluccan complained that they were being discriminated against. Economic changes were likewise drastic. The 1950s and 1960s witnessed two decades of high rates of economic growth, whereas in the 1980s, most migrants to the West had to find their way in a society going through a process of deindustrialisation and transformation into a service economy.

As in other European countries, the post-colonial immigrants who were direct descendants of the metropolitan population, or were even born in the metropolis, were comparatively well-educated, often arrived during periods of economic expansion and benefitted fully from a cultural and linguistic affinity with metropolitan culture. This applied particularly to the Indische Netherlanders. For many Surinamese, Antilleans and second-generation Moluccans who entered the Dutch labour market from the late 1970s and 1980s onwards, prospects were rather grim. Unemployment figures among Surinamese, Antilleans and Moluccans were around 40 per cent in 1983 (Veenman & Roelandt 1994: 11, 34). In that respect, they found themselves in more or less the same position as labour migrants and their children. The Netherlands was not exceptional. Elsewhere in Europe – Portugal, for example – the first waves of metropolitan Portuguese who returned from African colonies after 1973 were in a far better position than other subjects of former Portuguese colonies who set foot on metropolitan soil later on. Today Antilleans in France and South Asians and Caribbeans in the UK face the same problems as any other immigrants from outside the Western world. The post-colonial bonus can only be cashed in times of economic boom and bust. Moreover, history has also taught us that in good times, post-colonial immigrants are not the only ones who benefit from rising economic opportunities; other migrant groups profit as well. The post-colonial bonus is often just a temporary and precarious advantage.

1.4 Post-colonial identity formation and construction from an associational perspective

Various contributions to this volume, alongside other publications, note that different post-colonial immigrant groups form distinct 'memory communities'. (Since chapters 9 and 10 elaborate on the subject of memory communities, I do not do so here). By some authors, the situation in the Netherlands has been labelled as an extremely heterogeneous diaspora (Boehmer & Gouda 2009: 45). First of all, this has been articulated in terms of how immigrants organised themselves upon arrival in the Netherlands. Post-colonial immigrant groups in the Netherlands differed considerably in terms of social capital (e.g. education, religion, ethnic consciousness) and the opportunity structures they met, as did their associational landscapes (Bosma & Alferink forthcoming; Vermeulen 2006). Coming from a plural society, Surinamese immigrants from various ethnic backgrounds – Afro-Surinamese, Hindustani, Maroon and Javanese – all established their own organisations. In this respect, identity politics in the Netherlands were a continuation of the pillarised politics of Surinam. To this it should be added that Surinamese independence was pushed through by the Afro-Surinamese government against fierce resistance by the Hindustani opposition. Cooperation between Hindustani and Afro-Surinamese immigrant organisations proved to be extremely difficult in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Bosma, 2009; Oostindie 2010).

The opposite happened within the group of European immigrants from Indonesia, despite the fact that in colonial times there had always been tensions between white metropolitan Dutch and Dutch descendants of mixed origin, the latter being denoted as the Indo-Dutch or Indische Netherlanders. After the war, these tensions were far from buried, but other issues were momentarily pressing enough to forge a unity among Europeans coming from Indonesia. During the Japanese occupation (1942-1945), most of the European population had been concentrated in detention camps under horrible circumstances, while many males had been deployed as forced labourers under even worse conditions. Even though many Indo-Dutch stayed outside the detention camps, they would find themselves increasingly isolated, threatened and harassed by both the Japanese and the Indonesian populations. About 23 per cent of the prisoners of war and 10 per cent of the other detainees did not survive (Van Velden 1963: 366-374). Things hardly improved for the European citizenry in the immediate post-war years, as the armed fight over the country's political status became wedded to social and civil struggle and outright criminality. This so-called *bersiap* period resulted in the death of thousands of European residents. With the transfer of independence, order was more or less restored, but the remaining Dutch descendants felt increasingly marginalised in the

new republic, which, in turn, saw these groups as remnants of a despised racial colonial order.

Once in the Netherlands, the repatriated – almost half of whom were colonial civil servants and their family members – sought to organise themselves in order to rescue their pensions. The funds for pensions were under threat of disappearing, after responsibility for them had been transferred to an unwilling Republic of Indonesia. Another issue was that during the Japanese occupation of Indonesia, the majority of Dutch men (as well as women and children) had been interned and during these years their salary payments had been discontinued. A final bone of contention was that the Netherlands government was quite reluctant to help Dutch citizens repatriate to the Netherlands when, in the early 1950s, many of them lost their jobs in Indonesia and fell on hard times. At the time, the government took the position that Dutch who were born and raised in the Dutch East Indies would fit better in a future Indonesia than in the Netherlands. It spoke of this category of people as 'oriental' Dutch, whose future would be within Indonesian society, a debate that is also examined in this volume by Jones. What mattered for the moment is that one way or another *all* repatriates felt that they were treated as second-rate citizens who had to stand up for their rights. And this created a solidarity that bridged colour and social divisions amongst them. Indische and repatriate associations in the Netherlands could rely on the organisational skills they had developed in the colonial days, when they started setting up organisational branches, collecting membership fees and circulating journals over the immense distances of the Indonesian archipelago. Post-war organisations, such as Pelita (established to help women who lost their husbands in prisoner-of-war or other Japanese camps) and NIBEG (an organisation of prisoners of war and other former detainees), had thousands of members and branches throughout the Netherlands. Moreover, in the 1950s and 1960s, welfare work for the repatriates from Indonesia was coordinated by the Centraal Comité van Kerkelijk en Particulier Initiatief voor Sociale Zorg ten Behoeve van Gerepatrieerden (Central Committee of Churches and Private Initiatives for Social Care of Repatriates, CCKP) – with many local committees all over the country – in which non-governmental organisations of repatriates and the churches worked together (Willems 2001: 102). Integration policies were coordinated at a national level and the Indische organisations operated likewise.

The geography of the Surinamese organisational landscape was completely different. Not only was the plural society, but also the different positions vis-à-vis Surinamese independence reflected in the Surinamese organisational landscape. During their years of settlement, Surinamese immigrant organisations were far more divided than the Indische ones in terms of ethnicity, scale and membership figures. Moreover, and in contrast to the Indische associations, Surinamese organisations in the 1970s did not

become involved in policymaking at a national level, but in social work at the municipal level and sometimes even in unrewarding and dangerous activities for semi-volunteer organisations, such as providing help to drug addicts. The difference becomes clear if we look at the first fifteen years of settlement. Between 1945 and 1960, Indische Netherlanders and repatriates established twenty new *national* organisations and only three *local* ones, whereas between 1975 and 1990, the Surinamese established 67 new *national* and 330 new *local* (IISH database 2008).

1.5 Towards the mildly multicultural minority policies of the 1980s

Even though strong doubts had been expressed about the capacity of Indo-Dutch, who had never been in the Netherlands before, to integrate into Dutch society, Dutch government, churches and welfare workers were united in their efforts to complete the process of integration within fifteen years. They were not so naive as to believe that a full assimilation was possible; their aim was just to make sure that the newcomers were able to cope with the demands of the labour market and all the practical exigencies of daily life. Special attention was given to the allegedly wealthy lifestyle of the colonies, which needed to be tweaked and twined into frugal housekeeping. They had no illusions whatsoever that the newcomers would ever feel entirely Dutch; mentally, they would stay in their own milieu (Bosma 2009: 145-146).

The community development approach – with its separate facilities for newcomers and its strong assimilationist features – had worked very well during the Indische repatriation. It went down as a success in Dutch history to such a degree that it became commonplace to speak of a 'silent integration'. Facilitating this process was that the bitterness accompanying decolonisation forged a unity among the metropolitan Dutch and Indo-Dutch who had to leave Indonesia. This proved the case even though in daily life the two hardly mixed, just as they had never done in colonial days. Moreover, that their future rested in Dutch society was no point for debate. This came in contrast to Moluccans in the Netherlands. Up until the mid-1970s, they thought – or at least it was the official position of their leaders – that they would return to the Moluccas as soon as their own Free Republic of the Moluccas was established. Unsurprisingly, this delayed their integration into Dutch society and fostered a politicised and oppositional identity vis-à-vis Dutch society. The entire world saw how, between 1975 and 1977, radical second-generation Moluccans hijacked trains and took hostages, even at a primary school, resulting in several innocent casualties.

The model of Indische integration still dominated in the 1970s, but it met resistance from both Moluccan and Surinamese organisations.

Moluccan organisations considered integration policies to pose a threat to their ideal of a Free Republic of the Moluccas. Their organisational life was highly fragmented and fraught with rifts and tensions, but still united in one powerful interest organisation, the Badan Persatuan, which according to its leadership should be recognised as the Moluccan government in exile. Meanwhile, the relationship between Surinamese organisations and the Dutch Ministry of Welfare was rather frosty. Initially, Surinamese organisations held on to the ideal of a return to Surinam, which in the view of the Dutch government was unrealistic (Bosma 2009). In marked contrast to the close collaboration between repatriate organisations and the Dutch government over the issue of housing, Surinamese spokesmen condemned attempts by the government to disperse the Surinamese across the Netherlands as an attack on their newly gained sense of Surinamese nationhood (Surinam having only become independent in 1975). There was mistrust between the Ministry of Welfare, Surinamese organisations and contemporary local welfare foundations staffed by Surinamese (Bosma 2009).

Post-colonial immigrants definitely played a role in inducing the Dutch government to formulate a new, mildly multicultural minorities policy. The Moluccan hijackings and frictions with the Surinamese convinced the government that certain groups in Dutch society would maintain patterns of identity formation distinct from mainstream Dutch society. At the same time, the idea of the welfare state and community development as such came under increasing scrutiny. It was felt that immigrant organisations should become more involved in policymaking, but that separate welfare organisations for minorities, the so-called 'categorical facilities' that were also product of pillarisation, were impeding rather than encouraging integration. The newly formulated minorities policy – and particularly the expressed desire to speak to immigrants directly – should be seen against the backdrop of a government struggling against powerful welfare conglomerates, which, according to some contemporary observers, had placed themselves between the government and the population (Van Doorn & Schuyt 1978). The minorities policy of the early 1980s tried to break this deadlock by making a distinction between welfare work and political empowerment. Underlined was the importance of the Dutch government talking directly to immigrants themselves, rather than to the professional national welfare network (WRR 1979: 17). Moreover, there was broad political consensus that national welfare policies should be decentralised, a process that had already been set in motion in the 1970s, but began seriously to take shape from 1983 onwards. As Van Heelsum and Vermeulen demonstrate in this volume, the support of central and local government for Surinamese organisations in Amsterdam diminished. A very important conclusion is that Dutch multicultural policies aimed at engaging newcomers in municipal politics, even if they were not Dutch citizens, did not lead to a proliferation

of migrant organisations (Vermeulen 2006; Bosma 2009: 203-204; Van Heelsum & Vermeulen in this volume).

Interestingly enough, however, immigrants continued to organise themselves and this pertains also to the Indo-Dutch and the Moluccans, whose second generations reached adulthood in the early 1980s. In the 1980s, identity politics of first- and second-generation immigrant spokespersons found an increasingly supportive audience, both within their own groups as well as in the political arena. In some cases new memory communities were forged. The war in Indonesia brought, from the 1970s onwards, Moluccans and Indische Netherlanders together, whereas the history of slavery had been a common concern for Afro-Surinamese and Afro-Caribbeans. These are also, by far, the two largest post-colonial memory communities in the Netherlands. Cross-ethnic Surinamese identity politics did not emerge. The question of Surinamese independence had been a source of bitter contest between, on the one hand, Afro-Surinamese leaders who advocated rapid decolonisation and, on the other, Hindustani and Javanese who were anxious to preserve their relationship with the Netherlands. The Caribbean islands were also deeply politically divided. In the Dutch Caribbean, the second-largest island, Aruba, successfully applied for a separate statute within the Kingdom of the Netherlands, loosening its ties with the largest Caribbean island, Curaçao.

1.6 Culture of victimhood

By the early 1980s, a new page had been turned in the identity formation of Dutch post-colonial immigrant groups. This was, however, hardly set in motion as a result of the newly inaugurated, mildly multicultural minorities policy of the Dutch government. Rather, it was developments within these groups that mattered. In 1981, the coup by Bouterse ended the precarious democracy of newly independent Surinam, which came as a deep disillusion to all who had championed the cause of releasing Surinam from its colonial chains. While in the 1950s and 1960s, the decolonisation of Africa had been a central issue for black people around the world, following the astounding success of the 1977 American television series *Roots*, the Atlantic slave trade and the African diaspora became central to black identity formation. Here we see the emergence of the memory community of the Black Atlantic, the well-known concept of Gilroy, as Oostindie points out in his contribution to this volume. Slavery and slave resistance have played a central role in the post-war historiography of the Caribbean. Meanwhile, the migrations of the British, Dutch and French Caribbean to Europe, and their intellectuals, demand that attention to their legacies and perspectives be paid in the metropolitan academia and media. Black culture

is now solidly positioned in the West, but is also quite distinct from other post-colonial identity formations.

As discussed by Steijlen in this volume, during the 1960s and 1970s, Fanon's *Black skin, white masks* belonged to the select libraries of young Moluccan intellectuals. But in the 1980s, nostalgia became an identity marker, facilitated also by the increased opportunities to return to the country of origin. Relations between the Netherlands and Indonesia had drastically improved during the 1970s and airfares went down rapidly from 1980 onwards. In 1982, the Moluccan magazine *Tjenkeh*, which was edited by young Moluccan intellectuals, reported that there was a lot of 'nostalgia and identity strengthening' happening (*Tjengkeh* 1982). Within existing structures – mainly magazines, museums and Pasars (i.e. ethnic markets) – there was a growing interest in colonial history and in Indonesian culture overall. 'Indische' became increasingly associated with history and identity. At the same time, the Moluccan focus on Indonesia increased. Whether looking to the Indische journal *Moesson* or the Moluccan *Marinjo* or *Tjenkeh*, we see the same tendency to reflect on the past. The 1980s were also the beginning of the quest to include in Dutch history writing the experiences of the Moluccans, descendants of slaves and non-white Dutch from Indonesia. Members of the second generation of Indische Netherlanders distanced themselves from the often colonial mentality of most of their parents' organisations. Second-generation Moluccan intellectuals distanced themselves from the ideal of a Free Republic of the Moluccas. They considered this political quest as too compromised by colonial revanchism and too focused on the special relationship that had existed between the Moluccans and the Dutch in the colonial army. Following this trend, a few years later, *Moesson* had to defend itself against criticism by Indische intellectuals that it was indulging in politically insensitive, colonial nostalgia. Members of the second generation created their own organisation. These 'Indische descendants', as they were known, sought to leave colonialism behind and relate to modern Indonesia, or even to a much vaguer notion of urban Asia (Bosma 2009: 258-259; Van Leeuwen 2008: 326-327).

In some sense, however, the 1980s were belated echoes of earlier prominent and often politically engaged projects, namely of identity formation in the context of anti-colonialism and racism. The Indo-Dutch had their project of advocating the value and universality of Creole culture, which was also a clear sign of resistance to mainstream assimilation. Their champion was Tjalie Robinson, leader of the Tong Tong movement of the 1950s and the 1960s. This was both a revival and a continuation of the Indo-Dutch emancipation movement that had constituted such a powerful force in colonial days. But contrary to the colonial situation, it was not an emancipation that sought acceptance by colonial elites. This was heavily tilted towards metropolitan European cultural hegemony. Instead, as Willems outlines here, Robinson's cultural agenda was inspired partly by what he considered

to be mestizo cultures in Mexico and Brazil (Willems 2008). The emancipation of the Indo-Dutch (in colonial times first named Indo-Europeans; later on Indische Netherlanders) that had already begun in the 1880s was far from complete when they arrived in the Netherlands in the 1950s; this was the task Robinson took on with his Tong Tong movement. Willems observes how Robinson's critique of what he thought of as the materialism and technological shallowness of Western society – his sense of 'transnational' or universal belonging – fell completely on deaf ears in the Netherlands of the 1950s and 1960s. Robinson became, however, a valuable source of inspiration in the 1980s and 1990s, when the identity formation of the younger generations of the Indische Netherlanders took place in the context of a multicultural society. He himself would not be part of this renaissance, having died in 1974.

In the early 1980s, the Indische Netherlanders were not a subject of the newly formulated minorities policy, precisely because they were considered already integrated. The second generation nonetheless tried to jump on the bandwagon of multiculturalism. And as Pattynama describes in her contribution, chapter 9: in these years, they responded to their parents' 'silences and contradictory stories about the Dutch East Indies', particularly in the literary field. The older generation meanwhile expressed its wariness of the new multicultural 'pampering of newcomers'. They struggled to be included in the central chapter of Dutch identity formation: World War II. One of their greatest grievances was that their massive internment in Japanese detention camps (some 100,000 Dutch civilians were interned and an additional 42,000 had been prisoners of war) had not been given proper recognition within Dutch society. There was also the nagging issue of their salary back pay, which had never been addressed and continued to be a bone of contention between the Dutch government and the, now elderly, former Dutch civil servants of colonial Indonesia (Meijer 2005). In total, Indische Netherlanders established 43 war-related organisations, 37 of which were founded after 1979 (Bosma 2009: 246). The identity politics of the Indische organisations related to World War II in Indonesia were dominantly vocal.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the government became more open to claims relating to the consequences of the Japanese occupation of Indonesia between 1942 and 1945. Indische Netherlanders and repatriates, as well as Moluccans who had endured lasting physical and psychological damage as a result of the war, became eligible for a 'war victim's allowance'. Somewhat belatedly, their rights were brought on a par with those who suffered persecution during the German occupation of the Netherlands. For the first time in 1970, the anniversary of the capitulation of Japan was commemorated on 15 August instead of also on 5 May, the day German troops in the Netherlands had surrendered. It was conceived by the Dutch government as the first and *last* separate commemoration. But ten years

later, another commemoration was held on 15 August. This time it was organised by a union of 23 Indische organisations and the Moluccan Badan Persatuan. Since 1980 this separate commemoration has become an annual event. In 1988, victims of the war in Asia were granted their own monument in The Hague. In spite of the fact that the Indische Netherlanders were explicitly excluded from the Dutch minorities policy, they were rather effective in maintaining a memory community centred around World War II, and in obtaining government sponsorship to this end.

In her book *Ons Indisch erfgoed* ('*Our Indische heritage*'), Van Leeuwen concludes that the memory community of Indische Netherlander victims of World War II was the only such community in which colour did not play a role. She typifies it as depoliticised identity politics, successful in wrestling funds from the government, but too late for the first generation and at the price of not coming to terms with the colonial past (Van Leeuwen 2008: 344-345). What does remain are the Indisch Creole cuisine and the Tong Tong Fair (formerly Pasar Malam Besar), proudly claiming to be the largest Eurasian fair in the world and attracting between 130,000 and 160,000 visitors every year. From the 1980s onwards, festivals became the places where all post-colonial populations, not just the Indische, framed their cultural and social agendas within the context of a multicultural society. Ethnic festivals, in particular, became the arenas where this took place, as Alferink demonstrates in this volume. In terms of a bridging role between newcomers and the recipient society, these festivals increasingly interest government authorities. Rotterdam does little to hide its objective of using ethnic festivals as an instrument for ethnic marketing. Yet ironically, the various ethnic festivals of post-colonial migrant groups hardly receive any government subsidies, despite the fact that together they attract between one and two million visitors every year.

Festivals are, however, not the venues where fundamental discussions about the colonial project and its post-colonial legacies take place. In fact, festivals completely eclipsed earlier, and often more politically engaged, platforms about post-colonialism, centred on racism and gender discrimination. These platforms and similar manifestations crossed the boundaries between different immigrant groups in the Netherlands. In Amsterdam, for example, educated Moluccans, Antilleans and Surinamese established the Platform van Democratische Buitenlandersorganisaties (Platform of Democratic Immigrant Organisations), which works to fight against discrimination and racism. In other instances, progressive Antilleans, Surinamese, Turkish and Moroccans collaborated to protest against discrimination. But these were often exceptions to the rule. Nowadays, it is only in the academic realm that these boundaries are crossed, though this does not reflect a real rapprochement of different post-colonial groups. The post-colonial effects of the racial and gendered hierarchies of plantation societies are analysed through the lens of post-colonial gender studies. Then we arrive

at themes like the role of hypergamy, 'whitening through marrying', a phenomenon typical of plantation societies, not only in the West Indies but also in Java. As Laarman notes in her contribution, racial, class and gender inequalities are mutually reinforcing each other. They constitute both a complex and hotly debated field.

1.7 Post-colonialism and pockets of silence

The 1960s and 1970s saw emancipation movements among all post-colonial migrant groups, varying from the Tong Tong movement to Surinames and Antillean student activists and violent strikes in Curaçao and Surinam to hijackings in the Netherlands. Yet these emancipatory voices became far more subdued in the 1980s, or were transformed into narratives of nostalgia and victimhood. Meanwhile, the concept of post-colonialism had not moved beyond the walls of the academic community. This differs from France and Portugal, where the decolonisation process split the political spectrum and where post-colonialism is used by the left to criticise the dominant political discourses on integration and the colonial past. Sometimes the dominant position may lean towards the so-called 'balance sheet approach' which pretends that after all not all was bad in colonialism and that *we* (the colonisers) also 'did many good things'. The empires, it is argued, had their inclusive values too: France's Republican universalism, the UK's 'Britishness' and Portugal's Lusophony, the cultural community of Portuguese-speaking countries around the world. Recently, 'Britishness' has been called to order for it racist connotations, whereas Lusophony has been closely examined with regard to its silence about the colonial past and its association with the late imperialism of the Salazar regime. As Marques (2012) has recently pointed out, the ideas behind Lusophony are soundly rejected by the subaltern voices on black culture of immigrants from Africa and from the shanties around Lisbon. In France, the Republican model of integration is criticised by the left for its basically secular citizenship project that, in spite of its claims, allows discrimination to persist and Muslims to be excluded.

While the positions and debates are still in flux in France, Portugal and the UK, in the Netherlands, post-colonial tranquillity reigns outside academic citadels and, as Boehmer and Gouda (2009) have argued, within most universities, too. Perhaps it is a good sign that the most vexing post-colonial issues were resolved or taken to their graves by the first generation of post-colonial immigrants. Moreover, colonial history is very much a part of the history curricula of high schools and universities, even though in a rather fragmented way. The rediscovery of the Netherlands' long history of slave trading and slavery does not have the potential to be a highly contested issue in mainstream politics (Oostindie 2009b: 305). As Oostindie

(2009a: 620-621) wrote: '[…] the urge to accept Atlantic slavery as part and parcel of Dutch history may have been spectacularly successful, but this does not mean that there is no dissonance'. Neither does it seem to have a bearing upon the perception and rendering of Dutch colonial history at large. And so it can be that the formation of the Dutch East Indies Company in 1602 was celebrated, whereas the Dutch West Indies Company's activity in the transatlantic slave trade is associated with one of the darker pages of Dutch history. Slavery also existed in the realm of the East Indies Company and on a rather massive scale (Vink 2003; Van Welie 2008). Moreover, after the long overdue abolition of slavery, first in the East Indies in 1860 and then in the Dutch West Indies in 1863, there was an extensive history of indentured labour ranging from Sumatra to Surinam. The decolonisation of Indonesia was accompanied by colonial warfare, a violent and ugly history. More recently, relatives of the victims of the Rawagede massacre committed by Dutch soldiers during the colonial war of 1945-1949 have won their legal action against the Dutch state. Even though Dutch newspapers and television have reported on this, they were hardly able to provide any context to the case. Violence was part of the colonial enterprise from its early beginnings to its very end. Perhaps, the time has yet to come for a critical – and particularly *systematic* – reflection on the political, historical and cultural consequences of Dutch colonialism. Perhaps the best moment for such a reappraisal was in the early 1980s and the opportunity to do so has thus been missed. The specific constellation of identity formations and memory communities with all their traumas and sensitivities stood in the way of such a revisiting of the colonial past. On the other hand, there might be a new chance with a new generation's arrival on the scene, willing to reopen the debate by looking at the past from a greater distance. In that case, the relationship between identity formations and 'memory making' might be on the agenda as an important subject of investigation for the coming year.

Notes

1 This book is part of a larger project entitled 'Bringing History Home', which was initiated by Gert Oostindie, director of the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV). This project has produced three Dutch-language monographs on post-colonial immigants and post-colonial history in the Netherlands, as well as another English-language book comparing the various post-colonial histories of European former colonial powers, the United States, Russia and Japan (Van Leeuwen 2008; Bosma 2009; Oostindie 2010; Bosma et al. 2012). This introduction draws heavily upon the research conducted by Bringing History Home. *Recalling the Indies* by Coté and Westerbeek (2005) may be cited as an earlier example of presenting Dutch post-colonial scholarship to an international audience, although the study was confined to repatriates from the former Dutch East Indies.

2 The adjective 'Indische' that will be used throughout the book denotes a belonging to the former Netherlands Indies. The words 'Indische Netherlander' refer to Dutch citizens who were born in this colony and who were predominantly of mixed Dutch-Indonesian descent.
3 An exception to the rule are the Hindustani Surinamese (see Oostindie 2010: 36).
4 Over the past decade, all islands sent students to the Netherlands, with many not returning to their native homes afterwards. During a short economic crisis in the mid-1980s, migration from Aruba was relatively high and possibly included a disproportionate share from the island's Afro-Caribbean segment.

2 Dutch politicians, the Dutch nation and the dynamics of post-colonial citizenship

Guno Jones

2.1 Introduction

Dutch nationals who came to the Netherlands from the former colonies after 1945 often found that their legal status was far less secure than they might have expected. Dutch policies and debates on post-colonial citizens after 1945 illustrate how, time and again, politicians redefined the meaning of Dutch nationality for post-colonial citizens. In fact, Dutch lawmakers were quite reluctant to respect the rights of Dutch nationals from their former overseas possessions. This chapter addresses how, and in what contexts, members of the Dutch Parliament and government tried to circumvent the fact that Dutch citizens from the overseas territories were entitled to the same treatment as their metropolitan counterparts. These political discourses regarding post-colonial citizens alert us to the fact that the principle of equal citizenship – recognised in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) as a cornerstone of the nation-state – can never be taken for granted, even in contemporary liberal democracies such as the Netherlands.

Practically all post-colonial migrants to the Netherlands had been either Dutch citizens or subjects during colonial rule. After 1945, they started to move to the Netherlands in greater numbers under a variety of historical circumstances. The history of political debates concerning these post-colonial citizens illustrates that membership of the legal community of Dutch citizens does not necessarily lead to unconditional inclusion in the imagined community of the 'Dutch people', as we will see.

The dynamics of post-colonial citizens that I explore in this chapter not only illustrate how difficult it is to achieve the ideal of 'equal citizenship for all', but lead us to question the meaning of formal legal citizenship with regard to inclusion in society. Although post-colonial citizens were never subject to extreme forms of othering and dispossession of rights such as, for example, were Jewish Germans in Nazi Germany,[1] their formal legal citizenship did not guarantee unconditional inclusion in the country of nationality either. By the token of the 'optimistic' approach to formal citizenship Pieter Boeles, a professor of migration law, made the following observation:

> Nationality is an essential possession. We need only to consider the more than 11 million stateless people that exist in the world, people without identity documents, without […] the protection that ordinary citizens receive. Nationality normally guarantees the individual a right to enter his state, and to reside there.[…] In a democracy, nationality includes the right to choose and be chosen.[2]

Statements like these, still omnipotent in present-day citizenship theory, as we will see, suggest that forms of depreciation of formal legal citizenship (of status citizenship) are currently 'abnormal' phenomena in the nation-states of our world. Although I fully agree with the normative content of these statements, I would like to question their optimism with regard to status citizenship. As I demonstrate in this chapter, Dutch political discourses on people from the former Dutch colonies do not conform to the universalistic inclusive model, but illustrate that status citizenship is a historically contingent construction rather than a stable 'predictor' of rights. The focus in this chapter is on the history of Dutch political discourses, but the phenomena in question are neither typically Dutch, nor confined to the past. Dutch political discourses (mutatis mutandis) bear resemblance to those in post-war Britain on people from the British overseas empire, for instance (Anderson 1992: 9; Schuster 1999: 48-59; Dummet & Nicol 1990). Moreover, the instable meaning of formal citizenship is an urgent, present-day problematic. Different scholars have observed an inflation of formal citizenship in favour of 'religion', 'race' and 'autochthony' (indigenousness) as criteria for belonging and for the distribution of rights. This is, for instance, the case in Portugal and Belgium (Ceuppens & Geschiere 2005; Ceuppens 2006; Reiter 2008). In the post-9/11 era, those deemed 'Islamic minorities', in particular, increasingly find themselves to be second-class citizens as a consequence of rising 'securitocracies', as Gilroy (2009) termed it, in countries such as the UK, Denmark and the Netherlands (Terlouw 2009). In the Dutch context, Member of Parliament Geert Wilders, whose party currently provides the Dutch government with a parliamentary majority, even suggested to expel 'millions of Muslims' from Dutch territory in an interview with Danish television station DR2 in 2009. Wilders, who was talking about people with Dutch citizenship, was, in other words, in favour of denationalisation of a part of the Dutch citizenry on the basis of religion. Today, even the Dutch government does not consider formal legal citizenship as inalienable anymore, as it recently, in 2011, proposed to enact conditions under which the Dutch citizenship of naturalised citizens can be retracted. The inalienability of status citizenship – the cornerstone of modern conceptions of citizenship – is no longer secure in the Netherlands. In short, the inclusive ideal of a civic nation (a free association of people with equal rights regardless of ethnic, 'racial' or religious background) seems to have lost its appeal in many European

states today, while ethnic nationalism is on the rise. These current policies and discourses on citizenship seem to signify an insufficient moral reflection on unequal and instable citizenship in a colonial and 'post-colonial' setting. At least politicians seem not to have drawn 'moral lessons' from this past. This chapter deals with these historical antecedents of present-day instabilities of citizenship.

2.2 Citizenship, national belonging and former overseas citizens

The issue of historical contingency of citizenship definitely pertains to post-colonial immigrants who came to the Netherlands. But before we return to their specific 'interests' in citizenship (i.e. the overlooked dimensions of citizenship), it is important to realise that scholarly work on citizenship tends to focus primarily on the position of *accepted* members *within* the borders of a nation-state.

It is instructive to take a brief look at these more accepted, territorially delimited understandings of citizenship. In these conceptions we can distinguish between formal-legal, participatory and normative approaches to citizenship (Jacobs 1998: 3-4; Bosniak 2006: 16-36; see Yuval-Davis 2006). The normative concept of citizenship refers to norms and ideals about what it means to be a 'good citizen'. It concerns political views on how people (or groups) should relate to, or behave in, society. The participatory aspect focuses on the actual participation of people within social, socio-economic and political spheres. This participatory aspect is enhanced (or made possible) by legal arrangements. These formal-legal dimensions of citizenship refer to 'legal and institutional bonds between the state and the population'. Here, nationality (nominal citizenship) and the rights this entails are the focus of attention. By this token, Marshall (1999) has analysed the expansion of civil, political and social rights of nationals within the borders of European nation-states. However, Bosniak (2006), Soysal (1994) and Sassen (2002) demonstrate that possession of formal nationality is not a sine qua non to enjoy rights or to make a 'decent' living. For instance, EU citizens have 'the right to move and reside freely within the territory of Member States' and also enjoy economic rights (Bosniak 2006: 25, 148). So *non*-nationals can be treated as nationals by the polity. Bosniak (2006: 2) refers to this phenomenon as 'the citizenship of aliens'. By contrast – and this is of particular interest regarding the position of post-colonial citizens – studies on citizenship pay little attention to the phenomenon by which states perceive or begin to treat nationals as *non*-nationals. The possession of nationality (status citizenship) is thought to guarantee inclusion. This widely accepted approach to nationality, consistent with the territorial bias of citizenship theory, assumes the inclusion and incorporation of every

national into society as the norm within nation-states. In accordance with this universalistic ethic ('equal citizenship for all'), Bosniak states that those who are status citizens may 'travel unconditionally into the country of citizenship' (2006: 111). 'Full citizenship for every national' is assumed to be the accepted norm. Former colonised subjects, whether they are citizens in overseas territories or post-colonial citizens in the metropolis, discover that things are more complex.

The trans-territorial dimensions of European empires, characterised by relations between people in overseas territories and the motherland or their former motherland, expose the blind spots in accepted concepts of citizenship. For Dutch citizens in and from overseas territories it was, first of all, of crucial interest that they did not lose Dutch nationality *against their will* as a consequence of independence. Secondly it was, and still is, important that their Dutch citizenship guaranteed the right to migrate to the Netherlands and to reside there. Furthermore, it was, and still is, of great interest to post-colonial citizens that they and their offspring were considered 'real', competent and permanent members of Dutch society. In light of the ways in which Dutch politicians dealt with these issues, the inclusive assumptions in conventional citizenship theory become highly problematic. Dutch political discourses on the identities, nationality, admission and integration of post-colonial citizens turned out to be techniques of exclusion from Dutch society, especially during periods of increased migration during and after decolonisation. In this process (which had symbolic, legal and policy dimensions), the idea of the 'Dutch citizen' became increasingly ethnically connoted; as I demonstrate below, Dutch politicians held essentialist views on ethnic identities and were not keen initially to accept Dutch citizens from the overseas territories on Dutch territory. Contrary to accepted understandings of citizenship, these political discourses on post-colonial citizens primarily illustrate the 'alienage of citizens'.

2.3 After 1945: The construction of borders between overseas nationals and the Netherlands

According to Anderson (1991), British nationalism was characterised by an 'inner incompatibility of empire and nation'. Anglicised overseas British citizens were subordinate in rank compared to 'English *matturangos*', not only overseas, according to Anderson; moreover, they were not expected to relocate to the metropolis. Anderson considered this to be 'the fundamental contradiction of English official nationalism' (Anderson 1991: 92-93; see Schuster 1999). How do post-war Dutch political discourses on overseas citizens relate to this? On a general note, the Netherlands 'fell into' the role of colonial mother country of overseas citizens more easily

than it assumed the role of patria when, after 1945, those citizens sought or found their way to the Netherlands. While the Dutch presence in the overseas territories had long been seen as natural, the inclusion of people from these territories into the Netherlands was far from self-evident to many politicians in the Netherlands. But while the dynamics of post-colonial citizenship have been characterised by the exclusion of citizens, there are also instances of the partial and conditional inclusion of non-citizens who were in fact Dutch citizens.

Before I attend to post-war Dutch political discourses, it is instructive to take a brief look at the citizenship status of the population in the Dutch East and West Indies during the colonial era. In 1892, a new Dutch nationality law that was based on descent was enacted. It granted the entire population of the West Indies full Dutch citizenship, while the population of the Dutch East Indies was divided into Dutch subjects and Dutch citizens. The difference in citizenship status was consistent with already existing Dutch colonial policies. On a general note, in the West Indies the Dutch aimed at assimilation of the population (mostly formerly enslaved and their descendants) into one single Dutch linguistic and cultural community', whereas the colonial policy in the Dutch-East Indies produced an apartheid-like social and legal dualism between 'Europeans' and 'natives'. While politicians in the Netherlands did not see any discrepancy between the Dutch colonial order in the West Indies and full Dutch citizenship of the population, they believed that such a field of tension effectively existed in the (much more populated) Dutch East Indies. Although citizenship status during colonial times certainly had its implications for the social and political positions of 'subjects' and 'citizens', I will not give a detailed description on this issue in this chapter. For now, suffice it to say that the Dutch East Indies as well as the West Indies were racialised colonial societies in which metropolitan Dutch were at the top of the colonial bureaucracy.

Still, as a legacy of distinctive Dutch citizenship policies in the colonial era, the population of the Dutch East Indies consisted of Dutch 'subjects' and Dutch 'citizens' until the independence of Indonesia in 1949, while the entire population of Surinam was Dutch citizen until its independence in 1975 (the then Dutch Antilles remained part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and even today the citizens of these islands are still Dutch citizens). However, citizenship status before and even after independence was far from a 'stable predictor' of Dutch discourses on people from the former colonies after independence. Dutch politicians reduced the significance of citizenship status of people from the former colonies, as I will demonstrate. I now take a closer look at what these dynamics meant for post-colonial citizens from, firstly, the Dutch East Indies and Indonesia and, secondly, the West Indies.

At the time sovereignty was handed over to Indonesia in 1949, the 'Indo-Dutch' (also referred to as Indische Netherlanders) and Moluccans,

in particular, found themselves in a precarious position due to their political orientation and the social positions they had occupied in Dutch Indies society. The fact that (before independence) the majority of Moluccans (like the 'native' Indonesians who constituted the vast majority of the population) were Dutch *subjects* while Indische Netherlanders were predominantly Dutch *citizens* was of little significance in this regard: Indonesian nationalists identified *both* these categories with the Dutch administration (Jones 2007: 73-80, 139; Surie 1973: 65; see Bussemaker 2005; Captain 2002).[3] These social categories had developed a special orientation towards the Netherlands by means of Dutch language, education, religious conviction or profession. After independence, their position in Indonesian society became untenable. In the 1950s and 1960s, both Eurasian Dutch and Moluccans made the journey to the Netherlands. During that period, a total of approximately 312,500 people migrated from the Indonesian archipelago to the Netherlands. They included 'Indo-Dutch' (200,000), Moluccans (12,500) as well as 100,000 'white' Dutch citizens (Jones 2007: 91, 137).

Initially, the government supported by a parliamentary majority did not welcome the arrival of the Indische Netherlanders and Moluccans. At first sight, this reluctance on the part of the Dutch political class seems consistent with the socio-economic rationale of the emigration policies in the 1950s and 1960s. In the same period in which the above-mentioned 312,550 persons came to the Netherlands, approximately 324,000 emigrants left the Netherlands as a result of emigration policies (Sociaal Economische Raad 1985: 80). The Dutch government quite reluctantly facilitated the transfer of Dutch citizens from Indonesia, referring to scarcity in housing and employment opportunities. Closer scrutiny, however, reveals that its attitude was racialised with regard to the target group. That is, they were not articulated in connection with the repatriating metropolitan Dutch, but exclusively with the Indo-Dutch and Moluccans in mind. Indo-Dutch and Moluccans were not supposed to settle in the Netherlands because politicians perceived them as 'unfit' for Dutch society. There was, however, a sharp rift in political discourses before and after 1949. Immediately before the transfer of sovereignty in 1949, politicians treated Indische Netherlanders and Moluccans as part of the Dutch nation. Comments like the one below made by Member of Parliament C.J.I.M. Welter (also the former Minister of Colonies) in 1949 were not uncommon among politicians:

> During hundreds of years, the Ambonese [Moluccans] have sacrificed their best people for the Netherlands. The great project of the Dutch East Indies, the building of that magnificent monument, the creation of a constitutional state, could not have been achieved without the blood and lives of these people. During the occupation of Japan, these people also sacrificed their lives by hundreds, as an

> expression of their loyalty to our nation and queen. Make sure that they can't accuse us of ingratitude, because they don't deserve this. After all they are, as Christians, more closely connected to us than a lot of other people.[4]

Similar opinions were voiced about Indische Netherlanders in the colony, but this would radically change after Indonesian independence when Dutch politicians began to construct the image of both Indische Netherlanders and Moluccans as maladapted aliens, whose future lay outside the Netherlands.

First, the lot that befell the Moluccans. Dutch politicians praised Moluccans for their loyalty to the Netherlands in the conflict with Indonesian nationalists, but did not include them in the Dutch nation-state after the independence of Indonesia in 1949. In the political debate between the Dutch government and members of parliament on allotment of nationality after Indonesian independence, politicians preserved an exclusive silence with respect to the Moluccans. Their fate with regard to citizenship status was sealed by a conspicuous (and excluding) form of legalism by the Dutch government and Parliament: the mere fact that they were legally Dutch *subjects* (unlike Europeans and most Indische Netherlanders who were Dutch *citizens*) resulted in their loss of Dutch nationality; Moluccans were assigned Indonesian citizenship. During the debates on nationality, neither members of the Dutch Parliament nor the Dutch government took into consideration the troubled relations between the Moluccans and Indonesian nationalism, their loyalty to the Netherlands or the fact that they strongly resisted Indonesian nationality (Jones 2007: 99-101). Only a few members of the Senate deplored the fact that the government has not met the wishes of those Indonesians, by whom the Moluccans were meant, who had explicitly stated, that they wished to keep the Dutch nationality.[5] They wondered why the Dutch government had not granted the Moluccans the right to opt for Dutch nationality (Jones 2007: 101; see Heijs 1991: 27) However, critical remarks like these were 'too little too late'. Immediately after 1949, when Moluccans became Indonesian citizens, the political aim of the Dutch government with respect to them was their eventual integration into Indonesia. At the time, there were 12,500 Moluccans, former soldiers of the Koninklijk Nederlands Indisch Leger (Royal Netherlands Indies Army, KNIL) and their families, who were living in temporary camps. The Dutch government did everything in its power to try to make them Indonesian citizens in a social sense, after Indonesian citizenship was legally ascribed to them. When that aim proved impossible to achieve, the Dutch government eventually suspended the exclusive function of their legal alienage with regard to access to Dutch territory: in 1951, the Dutch government decided to collectively admit Moluccans to the Netherlands (Jones 2007: 109-110).

Here, we see a dynamic of post-colonial citizenship at work that is atypical in accepted understandings (among scholars) of the position of non-citizens (as a matter of legal status) who reside *outside* the borders of a nation-state. Bosniak (2006: 4) points to the presumption among scholars that citizenship is 'hard on the outside': nation-states reserve the right to attach conditions to the admission of individual non-citizens. Migration policies towards non-citizens outside borders are accepted internationally as an expression of national sovereignty. The collective admission of Moluccans to the Netherlands does not conform to this normalised state of affairs. Due to the historical ties between Moluccans and the Netherlands (and responsibilities felt), the Dutch government could not persist with a 'hard on the outside' regime towards *these* non-citizens. This being said, we should not overlook the fact that the collective admission of Moluccans only became a reality after a fierce political and legal battle between Moluccans and the Dutch government, in which the Moluccans received the support of part of the Dutch Parliament. During that process, Dutch courts underlined the Moluccan position that social citizenship (i.e. integration in Indonesian society) could not be enforced in view of their strained relationship with the Indonesian government.

Admission to the territory of the Netherlands is one thing; inclusion into Dutch society and nation another. Although the Dutch government assumed responsibility for the fate of the Moluccans (by the collective admission of Moluccans to the territory of the Netherlands) in response to court rulings in 1951, it nonetheless construed their admission to the Netherlands as – to quote the Minister of Union Matters and Overseas Territories L. Peters – 'the worst solution conceivable' and one that was temporary.[6] According to the Dutch government, the Moluccans would eventually have to return to Indonesia and it reserved for itself the right to expel them if they did not leave voluntarily (Berghuis 1999: 152-156). [7]

Authors such as Benhabid (2004), Bosniak (2006) and Soysal (1994) have analysed how inclusive policies gain power with regard to non-citizens *within* national borders: they are governed only in part by the exclusive 'hard on the outside' dimension of citizenship. With the passing of time, governments tend to grant non-citizens *within* borders more and more of the rights that full citizens possess. Bosniak (2006) terms this phenomenon 'the citizenship of aliens', while Soysal (1994) speaks of 'the denationalisation of citizenship'. For a considerable time, however, the Dutch government pursued a very different policy with regard to Moluccans who had migrated to the Netherlands, notwithstanding their historical ties with the country. It was precisely within the borders of the Dutch nation-state that the legal alienage of those Moluccans gained more political significance: Moluccans were discharged from military service, isolated from Dutch society, initially not allowed to work and, in theory, could even be expelled (Jones 2007: 116-122; Berghuis 1999; Belserang & Manuhutu 1991; Van

Praag 1975; Amersfoort 1973; Steijlen 1996). From 1951 onwards, their status as loyal Dutch subjects in service of the KNIL prior to 1949 was replaced by a sustained alienage in the Netherlands, both formally and materially. The Dutch government (along with references to economic conditions in the Netherlands) legitimised these policies by articulating essentialist discourses on Moluccan identity, in which insurmountable differences between the Moluccans and Dutch society were assumed. In 1951, Minister Peters made the following remarks in Dutch Parliament:

> The government holds the view, that the customs, social views and the physical and mental condition of the Ambonese [Moluccans], and the climatic circumstances in which they will come to live do not dispose them for permanent residence in a Dutch community that is unknown and foreign to them. From the beginning, the government has considered the residence of the Ambonese in the Netherlands as temporary, and has communicated this view to Ambonese leaders.[8]

Although in 1951, some members of opposition parties in parliament were already arguing in favour of inclusion, the exclusion of Moluccans from the Dutch nation dominated policies for a long time. It was not until the 1970s that the Dutch government, supported by a parliamentary majority, changed its course. The eruption of Moluccan nationalism among youngsters in the 1970s, aimed at the establishment of an independent Moluccan republic in Indonesia (Steijlen 1996), emphasised once more that 'citizenship within Indonesia' could not be realised. Within the context of critical reflections by the Dutch government, from the mid-1970s onwards, concerning the exclusion of the Moluccans in the 1950s, their substantive citizenship in Dutch society acquired more significance. After many years, nationality (i.e. formal legal citizenship) appeared not to be a sine qua non to enjoy rights: from 1 January 1977 onwards, Moluccans in the Netherlands, who had in the meantime become stateless, would be treated 'as Dutch status citizens'. This 'social Dutch citizenship' implied an absolute right of residence and eligibility for almost all the rights that Dutch citizens had with the exception of political rights (Jones 2007: 122-134). Their denizenship (the situation in which an individual has many citizenship rights without being a legal citizen) was a symbol of the restoration of their relationship with the Dutch government. Even so, the symbolic inclusion of Moluccans into Dutch society was not complete because they remained an ethnic minority in Dutch political discourses for a significant period of time. However, at present, the Moluccans are no longer regarded as a category of problematised 'non-Western allochthonous people'. Moreover, an increasing number of individual Moluccans who were previously stateless have been naturalised and silently transformed into Dutch citizens with *all*

the related formal rights. What the Dutch government regarded as impossible and undesirable immediately after 1949 – i.e. full Dutch citizenship for Moluccans – had become in 2005 a fact, one that Dutch politicians proved ready for only after a great many years.

Political discourses concerning the Indo-Dutch were characterised by the same combination of rhetoric on identity, economic arguments and exclusion as the discussions concerning the Moluccans. This is surprising, considering that after 1949, the legal position of Indo-Dutch differed from that of Moluccans. Most Indische Netherlanders had retained full Dutch citizenship after the transfer of sovereignty to Indonesia in 1949. In that respect, they were 'on the inside'. As mentioned before, most scholars of citizenship assume (implicitly or explicitly) that the *inclusion* and incorporation of *every* national into society is a universally respected norm (Bosniak 2006: 111; Benhabib 2004; Boeles 2007). Status citizenship is, as Bosniak (2006) observes, 'soft on the inside'. In contrast to this universalistic-inclusive premise ('equal citizenship for all citizens'), political debates about the Indo-Dutch point to what can be termed the *alienage of citizens*. These discourses illustrate the fact that the possession of formal citizenship does not guarantee all citizens inclusion in the nation-state.

Political discourses in the 1950s expressed the idea that the Dutch citizenship was an improper status for the Indo-Dutch. In these discussions, the inclusive function that is attributed to status citizenship in conventional wisdom was overshadowed by an exclusionary political debate concerning opting for Indonesian citizenship. This needs a brief explanation. As mentioned before, the majority of the Indo-Dutch retained Dutch nationality after the independence of Indonesia in 1949. One of the provisions concerning transfer of nationality was that Dutch nationals who were born in the Dutch East Indies, or who had lived there for more than six months, had the right to opt for Indonesian nationality up until 27 December 1951. This provision was aimed at the Indo-Dutch population. The Dutch High Commissioner in Indonesia, Dutch members of parliament and the Dutch government pressured Indo-Dutch into opting for Indonesian citizenship (Schuster 1999: 94; Jones 2007: 146-146). The Minister of Overseas Union Matters and Overseas Territories, in accordance with the views of Dutch Parliament, stated in 1951 that it was: 'in the best interest of the strongly Indonesia-oriented Indo-Dutch to accept Indonesian nationality'.[9] Subsequently, the Dutch government started a search for a new fatherland (outside the Netherlands) for Indo-Dutch, while discouraging those who wished to migrate to the Netherlands. At that time, the Dutch government provided loans to Dutch nationals who wished to migrate to the Netherlands but could not afford the cost of travel. The government instructed civil servants in Indonesia to judge whether these potential 'repatriates' were 'suitable' for residence in the Netherlands. While the *totoks* – referring to the 'pure' white settlers – were considered suitable, the Indo-

Dutch were not. In 1954, Minister of Social Affairs Frans-Josef van Thiel made it very clear that the majority of Indische Netherlanders was not eligible for these loans.

> The government holds the view, that there needs to be a close scrutiny of whether it is in the right interests of the persons concerned to come to the Netherlands. In the majority of these cases, the answer to this question is negative, so that the requested loan will not be granted.[10]

In these political discourses (just as in the case of the Moluccans) 'ethnic othering' of Indische Netherlanders functioned as an important justification for exclusion. The government legitimised its policies by construing Indische Netherlanders as 'mentally, physically, culturally and socially maladapted' to conditions in the Netherlands (Schuster 1999: 99). Migration of the Indische Netherlanders to the Netherlands would, according to Minister Van Thiel, result in 'irresolvable uprootedness'.[11] Just as for Moluccans, an additional argument was the economic crisis in the Netherlands, which was accompanied by scarce job opportunities and housing. By contrast, politicians did see a future in the Netherlands for the 100,000 *totoks* who came from Indonesia in the same period.

The identity and national belonging that Dutch politicians ascribed to them was at odds with the Indo-Dutch self-definitions. Indische Netherlanders decided overwhelmingly against exercising the option of Indonesian citizenship (thus retaining Dutch citizenship), and many of them tried to make the journey to the Netherlands using their own resources (Willems 2001; Meijer 2004). It was not until 1956, against the backdrop of further deterioration in Indonesian-Dutch relationships due to the New Guinea crisis (both countries having claimed sovereignty over this Island), that the Dutch citizenship of Indische Netherlanders acquired more significance. Increasingly, Indische Netherlanders were marginalised and excluded from post-colonial Indonesian society (Bosma 1997; Meijer 2004). Against this background, the Dutch government, with the consent of parliament, abandoned its discouragement policy (Jones 2007: 170-171; Willems 2001). Subsequently, the Netherlands gradually warmed to the idea of being the factual patria for Indische Netherlanders holding Dutch citizenship. That change towards inclusion extended to Indische Netherlanders who regretted their decision to opt for Indonesian citizenship when they found that they were being excluded from Indonesia. For these former Dutch nationals, the so-called *spijtoptanten* (meaning those who regretted their choice), the government pursued an admission policy that was more favourable than the regular policies concerning non-citizens (Ringeling 1978: 84-99).

After the Dutch government had abandoned its discouragement policies, the emphasis in political discourses on Indische Netherlanders shifted

towards their assimilation into Dutch society (Rath 1991; Willems 2001; Captain 2002). That policy, financed by the Dutch government but delegated to Christian social work organisations, was a polyvalent interim phase. Firstly, it signalled the acceptance by the Dutch government, that the Netherlands was both the legal and the factual fatherland of the Indische Netherlanders. Secondly, 'assimilation' implied a departure from a socio-biological truth regime on Indo-Dutch identity. Politicians no longer treated differences between Indo-Dutch and the rest of the population as innate and thus insurmountable, but 'bridgeable' by policies. Hence, implicitly, a culturalist definition of Indo-Dutch identity – being the product of socialisation instead of biology – gained ground in the political discourses on the Indo-Dutch. But, thirdly, this shift did not simultaneously signify their symbolic inclusion in the Dutch nation: politicians constructed Indo-Dutch (unlike the *totoks*) as being 'Asian-oriented' or 'Eastern-oriented' Dutch who had to be civilised, thereby excluding them from the (simultaneously elevated) ethnic majority (Jones 2007: 171-177; see Schuster 1999). The effects of the racialised assimilation policy were also gendered: it involved attempts by Christian social workers to discipline mainly Indo-Dutch women, due to a focus on the domestic sphere (Mak 2000). Apart from its paternalism, the assimilation policy may also have resulted in an unintended symbolic advantage in later years, however. Indo-Dutch were not incorporated into the Dutch minority discourse that sprang up in the 1980s. On the contrary: in those years politicians began to construct the Indo-Dutch tacitly (they were no longer referred to as a problematic group) and sometimes expressly as exemplary citizens who had 'largely integrated in Dutch society without problems' (Jones 2007: 177-180; see Captain 2002: 175-180). Meanwhile, the third-generation Indo-Dutch would emphasise the hybrid nature of Indo-Dutch identity and propagate the view that 'a multiple identity' and 'real Dutch citizenship' were not at odds with one another (Captain 2000: 260). Seen from a historical perspective, the representation of Indo-Dutch as people who have 'largely integrated without problems' is quite ironic. In the past, Indo-Dutch were subject to intense processes of racialisation, as we have seen. The evolution of Dutch political discourses on Indische Netherlanders clearly shows that, following Hall, 'race' is a floating signifier. While Indo-Dutch in the 1950s, like Moluccans, were constructed as people who were 'biologically and culturally' very different from the Dutch majority, today Dutch politicians no longer see them as groups with innate and problematic differences.

2.4 A new paradigm of difference

The political problematisation of the Dutch citizenship of people in and from the colonies is not exclusively connected with socio-biological

discourses in the 1950s; Dutch politicians in the centre also drew boundaries between the Dutch nation and Surinamese and Antillean Dutch citizens in the 1970s, when 'race thinking' was considered obsolete among the mainstream political parties in the Netherlands. In the context of a 'leftist' political climate and a strong anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist sentiment from the end of the 1960s onwards, 'culture' had become the normalised way of reflecting on 'differences' between people (Ghorashi 2006; Jones 2007). 'Culture' even came to be represented as something that people were entitled to; it was 'recognised' (see Ghorashi 2006). This paradigmatic shift, however, did not necessarily signal an inclusive turn in Dutch political discourses. Notwithstanding the dominant premise in the 1960s and 1970s that differences between people stemmed from nurture and not nature, the political representations of Surinamese and Antillean Dutch identity still remained static and reductionist: a new form of essentialism became visible in these discourses. Moreover, culturalist discourses even became instrumental in drawing the boundaries of the Dutch nation when migration from the West Indies increased in the 1970s.

2.5 Dutch politicians and the dynamics of Antillean and Surinamese citizenship

In contrast to the 1970s, politicians in the Netherlands still stressed the similarities between Dutch citizens in different parts of the kingdom in the 1950s. Immediately after the 'traumatic loss' of the 'Dutch East Indies' they began to emphasise the importance of the constitutional relationship between the Netherlands and the overseas parts of the kingdom in the West Indies (Jones 2007: 185-93). While political debates on the Dutch nationality of people from the former Dutch East Indies (in the context of increased migration) signified the boundaries of the Dutch nation, the Dutch nationality of citizens in the West Indies became a symbol for the continuation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Dutch politicians attached great value to both territories in the West Indies – Surinam and the Dutch Antilles – remaining within the kingdom (Marshall 2003; Jones 2007: 185-88). The wish of the Dutch to maintain constitutional relations with Surinam and the Dutch Antilleans coincided with moderate nationalism in the case of the former and almost absent nationalism in the latter territory in the 1940s and 1950s. The aspirations of local politicians in both overseas parts of the kingdom were, in contrast to Indonesian nationalism, not aimed at independence, but at autonomy in internal affairs (Marshall 2003; Oostindie & Klinkers 2001).

The reconfirmation (and expansion)[12] of an undivided and full formal Dutch citizenship for the whole population of the West Indies, but also royal visits to the territories, were in keeping with the construction of a single,

unified kingdom in the 1950s (Jones 2007; Oostindie 2006). Dutch politicians articulated a universalist, inclusive model of citizenship ('equal citizenship for all citizens') in relation to overseas Dutch citizens in Surinam and the Dutch Antilles. With regard to these Surinamese and Antillean Dutch citizens, the government and Dutch Parliament emphasised their 'legal equality' within the kingdom. Thus, parliament and the government strongly denounced the discrimination experienced by a number of Surinamese students in the Netherlands (Jones 2007: 200-201). Unlike the policy of discouragement aimed at Indo-Dutch in the 1950s (an expression of ethno-particularistic discourses on Dutch citizenship), politicians did not even think about discouraging the migration of overseas citizens from the West Indies to the Netherlands. That was considered incompatible with their idea about the unity of the kingdom. Moreover, in the 1950s, male Surinamese labourers and female nurses (followed by Antillean labourers in the 1960s) were recruited on a selective basis (Budike 1982: 50-51; Schuster 1999: 120; Cottaar 2003; Jones 2007: 201-203). This was also in keeping with the notion of the kingdom according to politicians. Yet the limits of that inclusive rhetoric could already be read between the lines. Politicians expected that the 'overseas citizens of the West-Indies' would in time 'return to their own country'.[13] Moreover, unlike the Indo-Dutch, citizens from the West Indies were not a large community of settlers in the 1950s and did not make heavy claims on public facilities in the Netherlands. Under these circumstances, the Dutch citizenship of citizens in and from the West Indies was unproblematic and their migration to the Netherlands a secure right.

However, in the course of the 1960s, when migration from the West Indies increased, the emphasis of political attention gradually shifted from care for the Kingdom of the Netherlands to concern about the ethnic composition of the Dutch nation. In the 1960s, migration from Surinam was slightly higher than from the Netherlands Antilles.[14] Under these conditions, political discourses concerning the Surinamese and the Antillean Netherlanders took separate paths. From the early 1960s onwards, Dutch members of parliament expressed concerns about the numbers of Surinamese Dutch who had moved to the Netherlands (Jones 2007: 210-222; see Schuster 1999). As Member of Parliament J. Meulink stated in 1963:

> At this moment in time, a very large number of Surinamers is residing in the Netherlands […] It is estimated, that the number is around 8,000, while yearly increasing by 800. Until today, there are, according to our intelligence, fully booked ships with Surinamese who travel to the Netherlands to seek a job.[15]

We should keep in mind that Dutch politicians were already expressing anxieties like these when migration from Surinam was still small in

numbers compared to the 1970s and 1980s, the time of the 'Caribbean exodus' (Oostindie 1998) to the Netherlands. Meanwhile, concerns about the movement of Surinamese Dutch citizens to the Netherlands did not only refer to their *numbers*, but increasingly their *identities* as well (Schuster 1999). This was parallelled by a shift in the composition of the Surinamese-Dutch 'community' in the Netherlands. Up to the 1950s predominantly members of the elite moved to the Netherlands, but in the early 1960s blue-collar workers began to migrate as well. In the context of this 'democratisation', Dutch politicians began to problematise the arrival and presence of Surinamese Dutch and their earlier discourse about similarity gradually but surely gave way to constructions of cultural differences. During political debates in 1963, for instance, Members of Parliament suggested that male Surinamese workers were causing 'problems', which they presented as related to 'the Surinamese workers culture' (Jones 2007: 213-215; Schuster 1999). One might get the impression from these statements that something was terribly wrong with the population of Surinamese Dutch in the Netherlands. However, government-commissioned investigations into the matter concluded that the alleged problems such as crime and lack of 'work ethos' were small and unrepresentative (e.g. Bayer 1965; Amersfoort 1968). But while these report brushed away the negative perceptions of the politicians, they could only do that by going along with the existing political discursive parameters of cultural difference. They even went a step further and invented 'the Surinamese Dutch' as a distinguishable 'non-Dutch' minority group with specific characteristics. This is also underlined by the ways in which the Dutch government as well as government-commissioned reports dealt with 'mixed relationships'.

Although 'mixed relationships' in the Netherlands traditionally referred to marriages between people of Protestant and Catholic faith, relationships between black Dutch men and white Dutch women were also constructed as an anomaly. In this context, politicians presented Surinamese Dutch workers as being 'in search of thrills and adventure', for which there was 'little room' within Dutch society.[16] Such remarks, made in 1963, undoubtedly referred to relationships between working-class Creole Surinamese Dutch men and working-class white Dutch women, which newspaper reports and some circles within the Dutch civil service presented as a problem (Schuster 1999: 119-128). Thus, it was no coincidence that in the above-mentioned report by Bayer on 'Surinamese workers', this type of relationship was placed under the magnifying glass (Jones 2007: 215-218).[17] The combined effect of these discourses on migration – 'Surinamese workers culture' and 'mixed relations' – was that the boundaries of the 'Dutch people' were drawn *symbolically* along lines of gender, ethnicity and class. Nonetheless, the free movement of people remained in effect throughout the 1960s.

However, at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, 'decolonisation' would become a vehicle for politicians to initiate a debate on the politically sensitive issue of migration and citizenship of overseas citizens of the West Indies. In the context of increased migration in the 1970s, politicians started to re-signify 'self determination', meaning political independence, from a *right* into a *duty.* The anti-imperialist and anti-colonial social and political climate in Dutch society in these years (Ramdas 1994: 28-29) certainly helped to make this shift possible; Dutch politicians began to treat relations with the remaining overseas parts of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Surinam and the Dutch Antilles, as a neo-colonial anachronism that hindered the overseas citizens from becoming familiar with 'their own place and identity' (Jones 2007: 222-225). To give just one example, on 17 February 1970, Member of Parliament A. de Goede made the following remarks on the subject: 'The present-day neo-colonial relations have to come to an end. The Netherlands can't take responsibility for good governance [in Surinam and the Dutch Antilles] any longer.'[18]

Views like these were frequently expressed in connection with concerns about the migration of Surinamese Dutch to the Netherlands (7,000 individuals in 1970), while politicians were almost silent regarding Antillean Dutch migration which was somewhat smaller in number (a few thousand in 1970) and remaining at the same level (Jones 2007: 282). Under these conditions, decolonisation became a means of drawing the boundaries of the Dutch nation. Dutch politicians increasingly began to present Dutch citizens in the West Indies as, in the words of a member of parliament, 'victims of Dutch nationality.'[19] In addition to this, politicians saw the Netherlands as an unnatural social and cultural habitat for Surinamese Dutch. For instance, Member of Parliament H. Pors stated that 'Dutch citizens from overseas cannot adapt in our community.'[20] Views like these were common in Dutch parliament and functioned as justifications for a speedy independence of Surinam (Jones 2007: 224-226).

The wish of the Dutch government to expedite Surinam's independence was to no small degree inspired by a desire to put an end to the influx of immigrants into the Netherlands. Moreover, voices were heard among members of parliament suggesting restriction of migration via 'an admission scheme' even before independence ('within the framework of the kingdom'). The Dutch government also considered this option, but ultimately rejected the idea on moral grounds (Jones 2007: 229-234). In line with a universalistic inclusive model of citizenship, most scholars assume that, to quote Bosniak (2006: 111): 'those who are status citizens may travel unconditionally into the country of citizenship'. The recurrent political debates on an 'admission scheme' for overseas Dutch citizens in Surinam illustrate that Dutch politicians were not convinced of the universality of this principle. Rumours about an 'admission scheme' only added to migration from Surinam in the early 1970s (from 7,000 individuals in 1970 to

40,000 in 1975). Against that background, the Dutch nationality of the Surinamese Netherlander rapidly lost its meaning in Dutch political discourses. The Netherlands urged the Surinamese government to make haste with independence. Notwithstanding fierce opposition to independence within Surinam, the Surinamese government complied. On 25 November 1975, the Republic of Surinam was born.[21]

Independence meant the closure of Dutch borders to people from Surinam. Overseas Dutch citizens became Surinamese citizens, who in principle had no free access to the Netherlands. From 1975, the people of Surinam formally found themselves 'on the outside' of the Dutch nation-state; they had become non-citizens. As a concession to Surinamese opposition parties and to channel the social unrest in Surinam – the opposition against independence was fierce in Surinam and almost led to civil war – the Dutch government agreed with a less restrictive admission policy for these former Dutch citizens for a period of five years (1976-1980). The Dutch Antilles, in contrast, remained a part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and thus the population of these islands retained Dutch citizenship. Besides the fact that politicians of the Dutch Antilles collectively resisted independence, politicians in the Netherlands did not perceive the (much smaller) migration of Antillean Dutch to the Netherlands as a social problem and therefore did not insist on the Netherlands Antilles becoming independent (Oostindie & Klinkers 2001:170-79; Jones 2007: 284-89).

The less restrictive admission policy towards former Dutch citizens in Surinam between 1976 and 1980 did not mean that 'Surinamese' were considered as becoming permanent and competent citizens of the Netherlands. There was a belief that even Surinamese Dutch citizens who were already residing in the Netherlands would ultimately return to Surinam in large numbers. This turned out to be wishful thinking. Moreover, in the 1970s and 1980s, political discussions about integration were dominated by pessimism regarding the ability of the Surinamese Dutch to adjust.

However, just as in the case of the Indo-Dutch and Moluccans, the idea of fundamental differences between Surinamese Dutch and Dutch society has dissipated. Although Surinamese Dutch are still symbolically not included in the ethnic majority of so-called '*autochtonen*' ('native' Dutch), politicians no longer construct them as a major problem and, since the 1990s, sometimes present them as integrated into Dutch society (Jones 2007 263-66).[22] The idea that the Surinamese Dutch citizens in the Netherlands are doing reasonably well may even have had some unexpected consequences for Surinamese nationals. With the borders closed – migration from the former colony has been strictly regulated by Dutch migration law since independence – the Dutch government, because of 'language, 'culture' and the 'longstanding relation between the Netherlands and the former colony of Surinam', decided to enact by law small legal improvements for Surinamese nationals. Surinamese citizens who were

resident in the Netherlands were, unlike other non-citizens from outside the EU, exempted from the Dutch integration exam abroad that was introduced in 2006 (Jones 2007: 265-266). Moreover, students with Surinamese nationality, unlike students from other non-EU countries, have, as of 2008, paid the same university fees as students with Dutch nationality.[26] However, these small legal improvements for Surinamese nationals do not take away the fact that the independence of Surinam resulted in a division between Surinamese nationals and Surinamese-Dutch. Because of strictly applied Dutch migration rules, this still poses enormous challenges for the many transnational family relations that exist between the Netherlands and Surinam today (Van Walsum 2000).[23]

Analogous to shifts in political discourses towards the Indo-Dutch and the Surinamese Dutch in the 1950s and 1970s, Dutch politicians began to problematise the Dutch citizenship of the Antillean Dutch as they increasngly began to make use of their right of free migration to the Netherlands. During the 1990s, the population of Antillean Dutch in the Netherlands grew somewhat in size (71,200 persons in 1990, 92,800 in 1995 and 110,000 in 2000) and was more a cross-section of the Dutch Antilles than before (Jones 2007: 299). In the context of increased migration, the political discourses on the Antillean Dutch citizens were characterised by, following Elias, an exclusive *pars pro toto* mechanism: from the late 1990s onwards, politicians would inflate the problems of the underprivileged in connection with culturalist discourses, while keeping silent on the great majority of socio-economically successful Antillean Dutch citizens. While Dutch politicians saw Antillean Dutch in the 1960s as 'exemplary', 'calm' and 'hard-working' people, from 1998 onwards, they almost exclusively presented them as a problematic and culturally distinct group. Changed political discourses on the identity of 'Antilleans' were paralleled by changed political ideas on the content of their Dutch citizenship. In the 1970s, the Dutch government and the great majority of Parliament shared the opinion that the right of free migration to the Netherlands was inseparable from the Dutch citizenship of the Antillean Dutch. Ideas to restrict migration of Antillean Dutch to the Netherlands were fiercely rejected as discriminatory. Hence, in the 1970s and 1980s, the principle of 'equal citizenship' with regard to Antillean Dutch was still dominant in political discourses.

The situation in the 1990s was quite different: restriction of the migration of the Antillean Dutch to the Netherlands 'in order to combat the problem of the socially weak that move to the Netherlands' became part of the accepted political discourses in parliament (Jones 2007: 300-321). Interestingly, the Dutch government (which initiated these debates) stressed on more than one occasion that 'the majority of the Antillean Dutch in Dutch society is doing well' (Jones 2007: 314-322). The Dutch government, because of fierce Antillean opposition and legal obstacles, did not

restrict free migration. By now, however, the Antillean Dutch were constructed as a maladjusted group, whose citizenship of the Netherlands was conditional. Their status, as others within the Dutch borders, was underscored by the fact that in 1998 they, in contrast with EU citizens, became a target group of the Civic Integration Newcomers Act (Wet Inburgering Nieuwkomers). Although the Dutch government refrained from restricting the free migration to the Netherlands in 2000, in the years thereafter the right of the Antillean Dutch to migrate and reside in the Netherlands was still object of recurrent political debates (Jones 2007: 328-329).

The Dutch citizenship of the Antillean Dutch is age-old. The Antillean Dutch have always been 'on the inside' with regard to their citizenship status. But in the Dutch political discourses of recent years, they are primarily constructed as alien to the Dutch nation. This once again questions the meaning of formal legal citizenship for inclusion in the nation-state.

2.6 Concluding remarks

The dynamics of post-colonial citizenship explored in this chapter express the complex ways in which Dutch politicians have tried to come to terms with the post-colonial legacy of the Dutch empire. These post-war political discourses illustrate how politicians in the Netherlands redefined the meaning of Dutch citizenship when people started to move to the Netherlands in greater numbers. These discourses illustrate that nationality is potentially a contingent status when people live in the so-called periphery of the world. A significant number of overseas Dutch nationals in Indonesia and Surinam, unlike Dutch citizens in the Netherlands, had no choice but to accept transfer of nationality in 1949 and 1975, respectively. Although for many (especially in Indonesia) this transition of status citizenship was the expression of newly acquired freedom, to others it felt like the dispossession of a historically earned Dutch nationality. Especially in the case of Surinam, where independence was partly motivated by the wish of the Dutch to put an end to free migration and thus draw the boundaries of the Dutch nation-state, a significant part of the population perceived the loss of Dutch nationality as an injustice. Moreover, post-war Dutch political discourses underscore the fact that even retention of Dutch citizenship does not guarantee unconditional inclusion in the Netherlands, as many post-colonial citizens discovered. Dutch politicians, in an attempt to restrict the settlement of Dutch citizens from the former colonies, started to problematise a right that is regarded as inherent to formal nationality – admission to territory of the country of nationality. In recurrent debates, Members of Parliament as well as the government contemplated an 'admission scheme' for Dutch citizens from Surinam and the Dutch Antilles, while the government initially conducted a policy of discouragement towards Indo-Dutch

citizens in Indonesia. Ethnic *othering* played an important part in these discourses: politicians excluded Dutch citizens in overseas territories from the imagined Dutch community by portraying their identities as 'unfit' for Dutch society. The principle of 'full citizenship for every national' was certainly not respected in these political discourses. This does not mean that we should overlook the fact the Dutch government, after intense oppositional pressure, opened the Dutch borders to former Dutch nationals in Indonesia in the 1950s (*spijtoptanten* and Moluccans), and applied a less restrictive migration policy to former Dutch citizens in Surinam between 1975 and 1980. Nonetheless, the 'alienation of citizens' is much more a characteristic of Dutch political discourses concerning post-colonial citizens in the post-war era. Even after they relocated to the Netherlands, their symbolic inclusion in the nation – as 'real' and competent members of Dutch society – was far from obvious, as we have seen. Today, citizens from the former colonies and their descendants *grosso modo* seem to be more accepted (less problematised) members of Dutch society in political discourses. This applies, in particular, to those post-colonial citizens whose migration history is regarded as a more or less closed matter (i.e. the Indo-Dutch, Moluccan and Surinamese Dutch) and, to a lesser extent, the Antillean Dutch whose migration is still unstable in the eyes of politicians.

In short, the Dutch political discourses concerning post-colonial citizens demonstrate that the actual social and symbolic position of people in a society in the last instance is not dependent on their legal status. The ever-changing meanings that politicians have attached to the formal citizenship of post-colonial citizens show that the power to define insiders and outsiders should be the focus of attention in our studies on citizenship.

Notes

1 Inherent to an anti-Semitic ideology, in which Nazis construed the Jews as the ultimate 'other', the Hitler regime redefined Germany as an Aryan nation. Extreme 'othering' of Jews by the Nazis began with the far-reaching dispossession of their rights, followed by the collective expropriation of their German citizenship and, eventually, culminated in genocide (Lusane 2003: 106-107; Veraart 2002: 178-178). For black Germans, the redefinition of Germany as an Aryan nation meant sterilisation (Lusane 2003).

2 'Het Nut van nationaliteit: Nationaliteit, dubbele nationaliteit en staatloosheid' (edited version of valedictory address, held on 29 June 2007 by Pieter Boeles, Professor of Migration Law at Leiden University).

3 This was especially the case during the chaotic power vacuum that is known as the *bersiap* period (1945-1946) and the decolonisation wars – which were officially labelled 'police actions' by the Dutch government – that took place in July 1947 and December 1948.

4 Handelingen II, 1949/50, 1478, 815.

5 Kamerstukken I, 1949/50, 1478, 17.

6 Kamerstukken II, 1950/51, 1900 (XIIIB), no. 9, 10-11.
7 Kamerstukken II, 1950/51, 1900 (XIIIB), no. 9, 11.
8 Kamerstukken II, 1950/51, 1900 (XIIIB), no. 9, 11.
9 Kamerstukken II, 1951/52, 2300 (XIIIA), no. 6, 16.
10 Kamerstukken II, 1953/54, 3200 (XIIA), no. 9, 8.
11 Kamerstukken II, 1953/54, 3200 (XIIA), no. 9, 8.
12 Before 1951, some of the descendants of Javanese and Hindustani indentured labourers who migrated to Surinam were still Dutch *subjects*; thereafter they became Dutch *citizens* like the rest of the population (Jones 2007: 189).
13 Kamerstukken II, 1957/58, 4900 (XIII), no. 12, 2-3.
14 As a result, the Surinamese population in the Netherlands increased from 8,000 individuals in 1960, 11,600 in 1965, to approximately 29,000 persons in 1970. The Antillean Dutch community in the Netherlands increased from approximately 3,000 individuals in 1965 to approximately 13,600 individuals in 1970 (Oostindie & Klinkers 2001: 225).
15 Handelingen II, 1963/64, 1397.
16 Handelingen II, 1963/64, 1387-1402.
17 This report by Bayer (1965) presented ambiguous content. On the one hand, he stated that problems attributed to Surinamese workers in the Dutch media were non-existent while, on the other, he focused in great detail on sexual relations between Creole Surinamese Dutch men and white Dutch women.
18 Handelingen II, 1969/70, 2287.
19 Kamerstukken II, 1971/72, 11500 (XVI), no. 70, 1.
20 Handelingen II, 1971/72, 1196.
21 At the time, the small but influential Partij Nationalistische Republiek Suriname (PNR), headed by Eddy Bruma, was part of the Surinamese government coalition (Marshall 2003). Although the PNR favoured independence, the coalition's biggest party, the Nationale Partij Suriname (NPS), headed by Prime Minister Henck Arron, never made independence an 'urgent matter'; it was seen as a long-term goal. The instant compliance of the Surinamese government was also 'a matter of self-respect' (Jones 2007: 234-241).
22 However, political acceptance of the Surinamese Dutch has occurred parallel to continued exclusion of 'new others'. Nowadays, religion (read: Islam) is regarded as the defining factor: the boundary between 'us' and 'them' (Captain & Jones 2007: 95).
23 Most of the 495,000 Surinamese citizens have relatives in the Netherlands; most of the 300,000 Surinamese-Dutch in the Netherlands have relatives in Surinam.

3 Representations of post-colonial migrants in discussions on intermarriage in the Netherlands, 1945-2005

Charlotte Laarman

3.1 Introduction

A recent study showed that, alongside religion, colonial history has had an important influence on intermarriage in Western Europe since World War II. Though post-colonial migrants marry out more than other migrant groups (Lucassen & Laarman 2009: 52-68) their relationships had to cope with prejudices too. This chapter will explore how certain stereotypes survived the momentous changes brought about by the dissolution of the colonial empire, and how they followed post-colonial immigration flows. Could it be that some stereotypes and prejudices were such an entrenched aspect of the way migrants and nationals perceived each other that they survived well into post-colonial times? Obviously, migration intensified contact between former colonisers and the colonised, which might have reinforced or challenged existing ideas and stereotypes. Gendered stereotypes on intermarriage turned out to be very persistent, as I argue in this chapter. In the colonies, gendered stereotypes had been voiced in order to exclude native people from power and to justify Dutch hegemony. These stereotypes travelled with the post-colonial migration flows to receive another function in contemporary Dutch society.

I demonstrate this by highlighting some aspects of my own study of post-colonial migrants to the Netherlands from 1945 to 2005. Several groups migrated from former Dutch colonies to the Netherlands in the post-war period. This chapter deals with only two: the Indische Netherlanders (or Indo-Dutch) from the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) and the Afro-Surinamese from Surinam. I chose to use one case study from each colony, one with an Asian background and one with a creolised African background. Both have to a large extent dominated the image that the Dutch had of Indische and Surinamese people.

The migration and settlement process of the Afro-Surinamese and Indische Netherlanders has already been thoroughly researched concerning issues such as integration in the labour market, the housing market, the educational system and participation in clubs and organisations (see e.g.

Kraak 1958; Van Heelsum 1997). This chapter focuses on just one of these fields to make a better and clearer comparison between the two different migrant groups. Many academics regard an increasing level of intermarriage as the best indication that the cultural and socio-economic gap between migrants and nationals is closing. This is for the simple reason that the choice of a partner to share ones daily life with says more about diminishing social and cultural differences than where a person lives or works (Alba & Nee 2003; Gordon 1964). When migrants live in an all-Dutch neighbourhood or work on an all-Dutch shop floor, they can still hold onto their own social and cultural practices in their own homes: the gap can still be very wide, despite integration in certain areas. What the present study could add to existing knowledge is the long-term perspective that takes colonial history into account.

Most former colonial subjects had already learned the language of their mother country, were converted to Christianity by missionaries and were socialised in the educational system of the metropolis: the metropolis and its inhabitants were not unknown to post-colonial migrants. For the elite, migration to and from the colony had been part and parcel of colonial history, so the colonies and their inhabitants were not unknown to the nationals in the metropolis either (Oostindie 2008a; Bosma, Raben & Willems 2006; Bosma 2007: 512; Willems 2001).

Of course, this does not apply to all inhabitants of the colonies; the indigenous population was for the most part excluded from migration to the Netherlands and from Dutch education, but this was not the group that eventually migrated to the Netherlands. On the other hand, the ethnic *othering* of colonial subjects (especially the indigenous population and people of mixed descent) could also have led to the opposite. In a colony, this *othering* was intended to legitimise the hegemony of the coloniser. Constructions or images of masculinity and femininity were used (consciously or subconsciously) to define Dutch (or French or British) power and submission of the indigenous populations. It is interesting to see how this paradox could have played out in a post-migratory, post-colonial context.

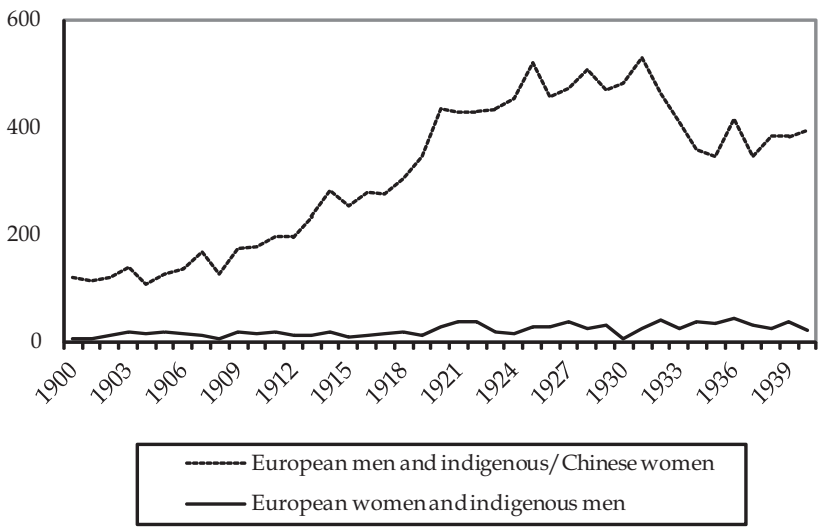
In this chapter I first give an overview of debates about intermarriage in the colonial context. I mostly focus on the period just before the migration of the two groups investigated, as this has had the biggest influence on the perception of intermarriage between these post-colonial migrant groups and Dutch nationals in 1945-2005. Subsequently, after a short quantitative overview, I describe how and why these colonial perceptions still popped up in post-colonial debates about the intermarriage of these groups.

3.2 Colonial ideas and perceptions on intermarriage

Debates on inter-ethnic marriages in the African, Asian and American colonies of the different Western European countries show some striking similarities. In these melting pots, people of different ethnicities came into contact with each other. During most of the colonial period, intermarriage between European men and indigenous, or enslaved, women were common phenomena in European communities in the colonies, and were to a certain extent tolerated by colonial governments.

If we focus on the twentieth century (just before the largest migration flows to the Netherlands), about 20 to 25 per cent of marriages of Europeans in the Dutch East Indies were mixed.[1] Unfortunately, there are no numbers available for concubinage, but these must have been high, judging by other sources and the number of births out of wedlock (Meijer 2004: 31). Intermarriage involving European women was very scarce, which I explain later in this chapter.

Figure 3.1 *Out-group marriages of 'Europeans' in the Dutch East Indies, by gender, 1900-1940*

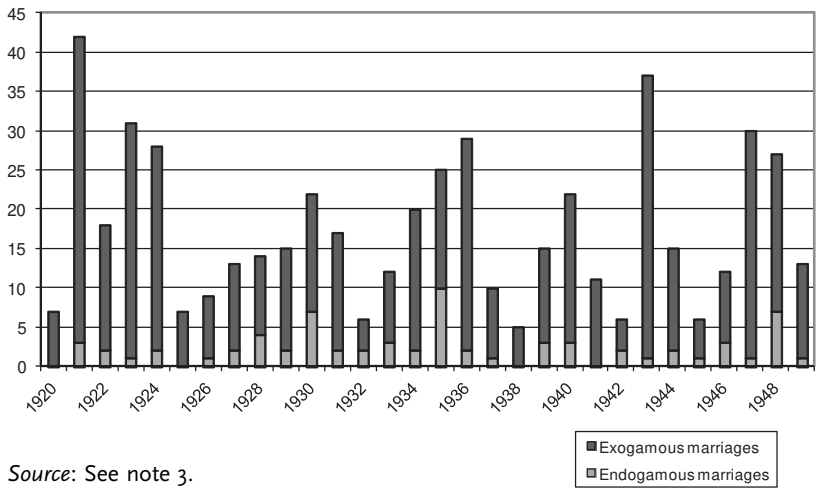


Source: Koloniaal Verslag 1901-1931; Indisch Verslag II, *Statistisch jaaroverzicht van Nederlandsch-Indië over het jaar 1931-1941*

In Surinam, 60 to 100 per cent of marriages in the period 1900-1950 involving 'Europeans' were mixed.[2] There are no numbers broken down by gender, but we can easily assume that they mostly concerned men as there were very few European women in Surinam during this period. European

men who married out mostly did so with Afro-Surinamese women (the descendants of African slaves). A large proportion of the Europeans were Jewish, while the Afro-Surinamese were mostly Catholic or Protestant, so many marriages were also mixed in the religious sense.

Figure 3.2 *Marriages of Europeans in Surinam, 1920-1949*



Source: See note 3.

In both Surinam and the Dutch East Indies, the prevalence of intermarriage was, in part, a consequence of the skewed sex ratio in the colonies. Migration to the colonies had been a men's affair. In the Dutch East Indies, for instance, there were only 220 European women per 1,000 European men in 1632. In 1930, this number had risen to 884 women per 1,000, but men still outnumbered women (Locher-Scholten 2000a: 45).

Initially, in the Dutch East Indies, the colonial state was lenient towards intermarriage and racial mixing, even promoting it, albeit only between Dutch men and indigenous women. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this lenience towards racial mixing subsided (for French Indo-China and the Dutch East Indies, see Stoler 1992; for German South-West Africa, see Wildenthal 2001; for French West Africa, see Conklin 1998; for Rhodesia, see Kirkwood 1984; for Malaya, see Brownfoot 1984; see also Bland 2005; Tabili 1996). The intermarriage that had existed for centuries had created a large group of people of mixed descent who were officially defined as 'Europeans' on account of their European fathers and grandfathers or great-grandfathers. However, by 1900, their existence raised the issue of whether they should thus enjoy the privileges of the Europeans. Those of mixed descent were increasingly seen as a threat to white prestige and as a sign of degeneration and moral decline. Intermarriage was seen as disrupting European society and overthrowing

its structures. When remaining with his indigenous mother, an Indo-European child would be brought up in poverty or at least not in a way that was considered to be proper for Europeans. It was argued that this group of poor, dark-skinned, Eastern-oriented children would threaten the European prestige perceived by the indigenous population. Miscegenation could also be seen as a political threat, as once these children were adults, they could turn against the European fathers who had abandoned them (McClintock 1995; Stoler 2002; Hart 2001; Wildenthal 2001; Conklin 1998). Despite these debates opposing mixed relationships, inter-ethnic marriages still occurred frequently. Strikingly, their number even rose steeply after 1900.[3]

Conversely, relationships between European women and indigenous men were highly controversial and rare in both the Dutch East Indies and Surinam. In Surinam, they were forbidden by law throughout the colonial period. In the late nineteenth century, public and political debate became heated – both in the colonies and in the metropolis – on the subject of intermarriage involving European women. In reality, there were only very few women who entered into these relationships. In the Dutch East Indies until the 1880s, between only one and three women per annum (in some years even none) married an indigenous man. In the 1930s, this number had risen from 3 to 40, but as the total number of women rose during this period, there were still *relatively* few women who married an indigenous man (1-1.5 per cent).[4]

But why was this seen as a problem when actually very few women were involved? Until 1967, every Dutch woman who married a different nationality automatically acquired the nationality of her husband and lost her own. This kind of legislation was not unique to the Netherlands and also existed in other Western European countries. It was based on the idea that women and children were subject to the head of the household (Studer 2001: 623, 642; Volpp 2006: 426). Since Dutch law applied to the East Indies as well, its upshot was that European (e.g. Dutch) women who married non-European husbands lost their privileged European status. This was highly undesirable to the Dutch government; Dutch women could become the victims of abandonment by their indigenous Muslim husbands without the colonial government being able to protect them (Berg 1887; Nederburgh 1899). Being unable to change this metropolitan law itself, the government of the Dutch East Indies enacted some regulations to contain the damage in 1898 (Hart 2001; Stoler 2002: 101-106).

The point is that a European woman lost more than just her nationality and rights when she married an indigenous husband. In all the colonies (not only the Dutch), perceptions of, and consequent discussions about, the intermarriage of white European women had been very much gender-based. European women met with the expectations and norms of a certain ethnicity, class and gender. When a woman lived up to those expectations

and according to these gender, class and ethnic norms, she was seen and treated as a real, decent woman. One of these norms was that European women married European men. In the colonies this was even more important than in the metropolis, as the small number of European women was crucial to the survival and prestige of the European community. A 'real' woman, it was said, would never choose to marry an indigenous man, who was ethnically and socio-economically inferior to a European. Those European women who did not live up to the expectations of their class, gender and ethnicity – i.e. who were in an inter-ethnic relationship – were portrayed as poor (a commentary on class), as prostitutes (a commentary on gender) and/or as having low intellectual capacities. The identity and nationality of a woman did not depend on who she was, but on whom she married. This was a universal notion well into the twentieth century, both in the colonies and in the Western European metropoles (for references, see Mak 2001: 101-122).

The situation in Surinam (which did not have a large indigenous population but one largely consisting of descendants from enslaved Africans) was different from that in the Dutch East Indies. Relationships between Dutch women and enslaved or indigenous men were not only controversial, but forbidden outright by law and heavily punished. If caught, Dutch women were whipped and banned, whereas the enslaved or indigenous men were put to death (Schiltkamp & Smidt 1973).[5] Despite the fact that relationships between Dutch men and women in slavery or indigenous women were also officially forbidden, they were condoned and very common. The prohibition was only lifted after the abolition of slavery in Surinam in 1863. But even then intermarriages were highly unusual. The institution of marriage, it was said, was only for two partners who were equal socio-economically, ethnically or otherwise. A European and an emancipated slave were not considered equal. Most intermarriages were casual and, when they lasted longer, they remained informal.

The fact that black women were legally subjects of Dutch men did not necessarily mean that they were forced into a relationship. In these colonial societies, racist ideas were entrenched aspects of everyday life. Race defined the haves and have-nots. A relationship with a white man could result in social advancement for a woman, and especially for her lighter-skinned children. The more 'Dutch' they looked and the fairer their complexion, the better their position in society. So it could be a more or less rational choice, too.

3.3 The post-colonial situation

3.3.1 Context

Racial difference is usually put forward as the most important contemporary barrier to mixed relationships. This viewpoint is strongly influenced by the American view on the issue. There is no question that in the United States, racial barriers are the most salient, due to the history of domestic slavery there. As a consequence, relationships between white, Anglo-Saxon Protestants and African-Americans are seen as highly controversial. But what about Western European countries? They also have a history of slavery that influenced the way in which Europeans regarded people of African or Asian descent, but this history was not domestic. It is interesting to see how this differed for Western European countries, with regard to intermarriage rates between nationals and migrants from its former overseas colonies.

Lucassen & Laarman (2009) compared intermarriage rates in the largest migrant groups in the Netherlands, UK, France, Germany and Belgium for the period from 1990 to 2000. Although it was quite difficult to find comparable data for these countries (and impossible for earlier periods), we showed that religion and colonial history, rather than racial difference, were important in explaining intermarriage patterns in Western Europe.

First of all, we found that religion appears to be the most important variable. Immigrants that adhere to a faith that has no tradition in Western Europe, intermarry much less than those that adhere to a faith that is common in the country of settlement. So intermarriage rates are lowest in Hindustani and Muslim communities compared to those in Christian or non-religious communities, often regardless of whether the immigrants were guest workers or colonial migrants. Strikingly, colour differences seem to be less important: immigrants with lighter skin colour but with a non-European religion (such as the Turkish in the Netherlands) had a lower propensity to intermarry than did migrants of African descent but with a European religion (such as West Indians in the UK and Afro-Surinamese in the Netherlands). This is also in line with discussions in the media about intermarriage (see last section in this chapter entitled 'Methodological appendix'). This followed from 'pillarisation' in Dutch society, which was segmentation of society into religious (Catholic, Protestant) and secular pillars (liberal and socialist). One read only newspapers from the pillar, went to schools and shops in the pillar, worked within the pillar and married its members. Migrants were incorporated in one of the pillars, regardless of colour (Schrover 2010:138-147). Despite the fact that the multiculturalist frame that followed pillarisation quite differed in many respects, colour remained less important than religion, ethnicity or 'culture'.

Another interesting point we found is that, besides religion, colonial history seems to matter as well, which I explore in this chapter. We think that

colonialism reduced the social and cultural distance between nationals and migrants from former colonies. Due to pre-migratory socialisation, post-colonial migrants were already familiar with some key aspects of the society they migrated to, such as religion (with the exception of North African immigrants in France) and language (Amersfoort & Niekerk 2006). The fact that colour does not play such a large role in intermarriage in Western European countries does not mean that post-colonial migrants did not meet racist stereotyping in the receiving society, but this apparently does not seem to have been a barrier to intermarriage in the long run (Lucassen & Laarman 2009).

3.3.2 Indische Netherlanders

Unfortunately, numbers on the intermarriage rates of post-colonial migrants defined by ethnicity are very scarce. Only in the last decades of the twentieth century have statistical data on the intermarriage patterns of migrants become available. From the 1980s onwards, national statistical bureaus and research institutes have registered intermarriages. But scholars have also gathered data through surveys and micro censuses. A systematic comparison of the intermarriage patterns of different migrant groups over a longer period of time is impossible. This is also because definitions vary as well; sometimes intermarriage was registered by nationality and, more recently, by country of origin and ethnicity (Lucassen & Laarman 2009). Data by nationality cannot be used in this research, as most post-colonial migrants held Dutch nationality; as a consequence, their marriages to Dutch nationals were not registered as mixed marriages. Where Indische Netherlanders were concerned, there are almost no figures for intermarriage, as the majority held Dutch nationality. The Dutch statistical bureau did not register marriages by ethnicity at this time. One survey carried out in 1958 showed that 94 per cent of the couples surveyed were already married at the time of migration, as migration of Indische Netherlanders was then still recent, meaning the numbers were more representative of the Indies than of the Netherlands (Kraak 1958). This survey also showed that Indische Netherlanders who had never been to the Netherlands were most endogamous, and they also showed the highest percentage of marriages to (indigenous) Indonesian wives. Indische Netherlanders who had been to the Netherlands before were less often married to Indonesian women than those who were born in the Netherlands (*totoks*). This was due to the fact that among the *totoks* there were many soldiers of lower ranks, who in the Dutch East Indies were for decades largely married to indigenous wives. Moreover, being of mixed descent, Indische Netherlanders had to prove their racial superiority to the indigenous population. Thirty per cent of their marriages were interracial according to the investigators. Unfortunately,

they did not provide numbers on marriages of women to Indonesian men (Kraak 1958: 300).

More interesting were the intermarriage patterns of the adult children of repatriated couples, as they married in the Netherlands. In only a few years of their settlement, 50 per cent of the marriages of Indische youngsters were to Dutch nationals. The investigators concluded that already 60 per cent of the marriages were interracial. Intermarriage rates of Indische Netherlanders rose even more in the decades that followed, but exact numbers are lacking. In the 1997-2001 period, 86 per cent of the marriages of immigrants from Indonesia or the Indies were to Dutch nationals. This number is not entirely accurate for Indische Netherlanders, because it also includes Indonesian nationals who migrated to the Netherlands very recently (Beer & Harmsen 2003: 35).

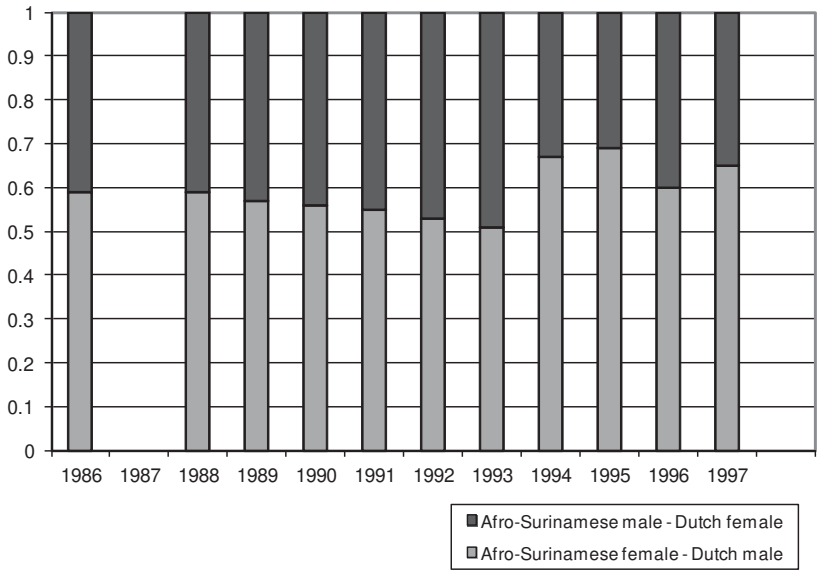
3.3.3 Afro-Surinamese migrants

There is slightly more statistical data available in the case of the Afro-Surinamese. Early data was gathered by the Statistical Bureau of Amsterdam. Most Afro-Surinamese migrants have lived, and still live, in Amsterdam, but numbers for the city are not necessarily representative of the Netherlands as a whole. There could in fact be more endogamous marriages due to most Afro-Surinamese living in a certain neighbourhood. Because of this geographical concentration, contacts between Afro-Surinamese could have been more frequent (on the street, in Afro-Surinamese organisations, in churches that mostly Afro-Surinamese attended, etc.) and could have fostered in-group marriages and relationships. If we look at the 1986-1993 period, about 30 to 35 per cent of the marriages of Afro-Surinamese were Dutch marrying Afro-Surinamese (see Figure 3.3). We have to be aware, however, that many Afro-Surinamese couples were not formally wedded.

Both Afro-Surinamese men and women married Dutch nationals. On the whole, however, it was mostly Afro-Surinamese women who intermarried, especially in the second half of the 1990s.

From 1996 onwards, statistical data are available at the national level concerning intermarriage rates by ethnicity. In the Netherlands, the number of mixed marriages rose in the 1996-2006 period. This is partly due to the fact that these data are national (so also from areas without geographical concentrations) and that Afro-Surinamese migrants had resided longer in the Netherlands.

Figure 3.3 *Afro-Surinamese-Dutch couples in Amsterdam, by ethnicity and gender, 1986-1997*



Source: 'Echtparen naar herkomst van echtgenoot en echtgenote', per 1 January 1986, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993 in *De Amsterdammers in acht bevolkingskategorieën* (Amsterdam 1986-1993) O&S; *Mutatiestatistiek Huwelijken* (Amsterdam 1997: table 405)

3.4 Perceptions and stereotypes after decolonisation and migration

3.4.1 Indische Netherlanders

This section investigates how intermarriage between Indische Netherlanders and Dutch nationals were portrayed in the Dutch and Indische media. To what extent and to what purpose were colonial representations of intermarriage and of the Indische Dutch referred to when discussing intermarriage after decolonisation and migration?

After the Dutch East Indies became an independent republic in 1949, it became increasingly difficult for Indo-Europeans to live their lives as they had been accustomed to. *Indische Netherlanders* held Dutch nationality and felt more Dutch than Indonesian, so they wanted to migrate to their former mother country. Prior to 1955, the Dutch government tried to restrict their migration, stressing that the Netherlands was itself still recovering from World War II and could not house and feed all the immigrants from overseas.[6] It even actively promoted emigration of its population to

Australia, Canada and the US (Coté 2005; Rijkschroeff 1991). Immigration of 'full-blooded' Dutchmen (many of whom were born in the Netherlands) was, however, self-evident; hence, the issue to restrict immigration became centred on people of mixed descent. To decide which Indo-Dutch citizens could migrate to the Netherlands, the Dutch government attached greater importance to their so-called 'Dutch orientation and conduct' and appearance, than to the fact that they held a Dutch passport (because they all did) (Jones 2007, 150; Werner 1952, 42). The Dutch government tried to encourage dark-skinned lower-class Indo-Dutch, who were seen as 'rooted' in Indonesia, to opt for Indonesian citizenship (Pekelder 1990; Jones 2007). It could not prevent legal citizens from entering the Netherlands, but it tried to prevent them from travelling to the Netherlands. It restricted state loans for the expensive travel fares to those who were seen as able to assimilate, which actually resulted in barring lower-class Indische Dutch.

In the course of the 1950s and 1960s, diplomatic relations between the Dutch and Indonesian governments became increasingly strained. Living and working in Indonesia became difficult for Dutch citizens and for people of mixed descent, whom the Indonesians assumed were 'too Dutch'. It was harder to get a job, as most companies now preferred Indonesian-by-birth employees over Dutchmen and so-called 'Indonesians-by-choice' (former Dutchmen who had opted for Indonesian citizenship). On top of that, they were being bullied more and more and even attacked. The Dutch government eventually accepted that *Indische Netherlanders* could no longer stay in Indonesia and had to leave (Bosma 2009).

One aspect that contributed to the way the Indische Netherlanders viewed intermarriage was their family history. Relationships between Indische and Dutch people had been very common in the colony. Many Indische Netherlanders had one or more Dutch ancestors, family members or friends who were intermarred. So it was not regarded as exceptional within the Indische community. It could be argued that it therefore did not generate much discussion in the Indische media, but that was not the only reason. After World War II, talking about race was practically taboo in the Netherlands.

What was fiercely debated was whether Indische Netherlanders had to assimilate (and would thus lose part of their own ethnic identity as a consequence), or whether they should go all out to preserve their Indische ethnic identities. It is interesting to see that two opposing ideas developed concerning intermarriage and the Indische identity. On one hand, the fact that most of the first-generation Indische Netherlanders had chosen a Dutch partner was seen as both the cause and the result of the loss of their Indische identity (Cress 1996; 'Die Hollanders' 1981). On the other, it was regarded as the key aspect that defined Indische identity, as in the Dutch East Indies, these relationships had in fact created the group (Boeijen 1996; Haak 1971; 'Assimilatie' 1959).

My examination of the Indische magazines showed that after arriving in the Netherlands, it was stated that Indische Netherlanders – still – felt inferior to the 'native' Dutch. In the colony, Indische Netherlanders had been raised with notions of racial inequality and white superiority (Meijer 2004: 380). They had internalised this racial hierarchy in which white Europeans had been superior to the dark-skinned indigenous people (Haak 1971: 11). The fact that Indische Netherlanders were of mixed descent had given them more privileges than the indigenous, darker-skinned population. Most Dutchmen, however, were unfamiliar with this colonial racial categorisation and only used the dichotomy 'black' and 'white' – this to the amazement of the Indische Netherlanders who were suddenly called 'negro' or 'Javanese' if they did not look 'Dutch enough' in the eyes of Dutch nationals (Cottaar & Willems 1984: 106-107; Kraak 1958: 140). They tried to compensate for what they and the Dutch perceived as racial inferiority by trying to act as Dutch as possible: speaking Dutch fluently, doing well in school and at work, and finding a Dutch partner (Cramer 1971: 16; Tuynman 2000: 60-61; Hall 1975: 4; Tuynman 1999: 385; 'De Indische Nederlander in Nederland' 1975). The following quote of an Indische woman in 1957 represented a common thought among the Indische Netherlanders.

> We have come to the Netherlands because we are Western in orientation, otherwise we had better have stayed there! Most of us are brought up in a Western fashion. We had to choose […]. Let's stay down to earth: we live in the Netherlands. Our kids grow up here, amongst the Dutch youth. ('Letter to the editor' 1957: 6)

By acting as Dutch as possible, the Indische Netherlanders tried to justify their staying in the Netherlands and basic rights, for instance, to housing and work. Their Dutch behaviour and their use of the Dutch language in the Indies had been the reason they could migrate to the Netherlands. Their fast assimilation was seen as even more urgent, since some Indische Netherlanders felt they could never return. The country they had lived in most of their lives – the Dutch East Indies – did not exist anymore. Early acceptance that they would be staying in the Netherlands for good made relationships with a Dutch partner more likely (Hondius 1998). The consequence of this so-called 'colonial inferiority complex' was that marrying a white partner was understood as hypergamy (marrying up) in a racial, cultural and sometimes socio-economic way. A Dutch partner was thought to be a 'better catch'. Marrying an Indonesian or someone with darker skin than one's own was seen as hypogamy (marrying down) and therefore not desirable, especially for women (Hall 1975; Thiang 1975: 4; Meerten 1975: 25; Tuynman 1999: 384). Although this concept is not typically colonial, and could be a more general view of racial inequality and of

gender norms concerning marriage, the above-cited authors explicitly refer to this idea of hypergamy as typically colonial. The fact that their migration and settlement in the Netherlands had been possible because they were children of intermarriage and were 'more Dutch' and lighter skinned than the indigenous population could explain this.

But not everyone approved of fast and full assimilation and some Indische Netherlanders quite disliked the tendency towards hypergamy. By trying to be 'more Dutch than the Dutch themselves', they denied their own, Indische identity (Hoorn 1998: 33; Boeijen 1998; Dijck 1999; Cramer 1971[7]). It is almost a kind of treason (similar findings in interview J.G. 1996; interview R.H. 1996[8]; interview J.M. 2008). An Indische man who was married to a Dutch woman noted that his relationship was not always accepted in the Indische community.

> There were Indische families who thought that Indische boys who married a Dutch girl or vice versa, did so to rise up the social ladder. That's a frustration, a feeling of inferiority. Some said: 'He feels superior to us, are we not good enough?' Many people had that idea. In the 50s. (interview R.H. 1996)

Another man said the following:

> I really believe that my mother would have liked me to marry an Indische girl, which is quite logical, because, well, she would understand her better. And not only because of the language, but also because of the culture. […] Many Indische people, had at the back of their mind that this meant that the 'Indisch-ness' would disappear. And so many marry Dutchmen! Well, the 'Indisch-ness' will disappear very quickly! (interview M.A. 1996)

So far, I have only discussed the views of the Indische community on intermarriage. But what about the willingness of members of the native Dutch population to marry an Indische partner? They also had their opinions on intermarriages, whether or not they were in one.

Most Indische Netherlanders spoke Dutch, were Christians, were educated in accordance with the Dutch curriculum and were accustomed to Dutch culture and customs. In addition, especially in The Hague (a city where many Indische Netherlanders also lived during colonial times), the Dutch were to a certain extent accustomed to the Indische culture because of their Indische neighbours and colleagues. Moreover, 95,000 Dutch conscripts had fought in the Indies after World War II. Although not yet thoroughly researched, these various aspects could have influenced intermarriage in the post-war period.

For the first ten years after their settlement, hundreds of newspaper articles appeared about the Indische Netherlanders in the Netherlands and the situation in Indonesia (and the Indische Netherlanders who were still there) that were investigated for this chapter (see 'Methodological appendix'). The general idea was that Indische Netherlanders were fellow citizens after all, and migration had been their only resort in order to escape the hardships in Indonesia (Pekelder 1999).[9] In speeches by Queen Juliana and the Minister of Social Services as well as in these newspaper articles, the Dutch were asked to make Indische Netherlanders feel at home and to open up their hearts. Initiatives by the Dutch to do so were heralded in the press; the Indische Netherlanders gratefully and humbly received them. In the press and in parliament, frequent reference was made to the fact that Italian guest workers were recruited while the 'compatriots' in Indonesia – who were so much closer to the Dutch in culture – were denied access.[10] To gain attention for their case, the pressure groups tried to generate as much media attention as possible. Their migration was represented as a heritage of the colonial past and of the earlier intermarriage of Dutch men and as a moral obligation.

In May 1958, inter-ethnic relationships were a hot topic in Dutch newspapers. These reports give an interesting insight into the relations between Indische Netherlanders and Dutch nationals, between male and female adolescents. In the city of The Hague, Indische and Dutch young men were fighting over girls for days in a row, so the newspapers wrote, and the fighting was becoming more and more aggressive. Many participants were involved in the debates, including the police, the Minister of Social Services, Dutch and Indische social workers and Indische organisations. They all stated that it was no more than a fight between guys over the right to date Dutch girls (Cottaar 1998: 100-102; Cottaar & Willems 1984: 129-130; Boon & Geleuken 1993; Schuster 1999: 232). It is also stressed in interviews with Indische couples (interview J.M. 2008; interview G.B. 1996; interview R.H. 1996; interview E.B. 1996). No one explicitly mentioned the possibility of an ethnic conflict, as race and ethnicity were still touchy subjects in the years after World War II.

The 25 newspaper articles that appeared in all national newspapers in two weeks time stated that the Dutch boys felt pushed aside by the Indische boys. Dutch boys had always dominated The Hague's clubs and pubs and felt they had the exclusive right to date Dutch girls. As Indische boys were very popular with the girls, Dutch boys had to reaffirm their manliness by fighting over them. Indische counterparts claimed they had just as much right to date these women and to go to the pubs, as 'they were Dutchmen too' ('Oplossing in zicht?' 1958). Ideas about gender and ethnicity intersected: the adolescent men were fighting over who had the right to call himself a Dutchman, but also over who could call himself a man to begin with. The riots mostly occurred in neighbourhoods where

many Indische Netherlanders lived and where the competition was most felt.

Indische boys were attractive to Dutch girls, so the journalists wrote, because they were 'different': they sported black greased quaffs (like Elvis Presley), wore brightly coloured shirts and rode mopeds, all following the latest American fashions. They were ahead of the Dutch boys in the way they dressed, danced and in their musical taste (interview J.M. 2008; interview S.H. 1996; interview E.B. 1996; interview R.H. 1996). One Indische man explained in an interview why Indische boys were more attractive.

> Probably because they spoke the language, and because they were a bit more kindhearted, and spent more time with their girlfriends. The Indische boys were kindhearted and a bit feminine, too, you know, they were gentle with these girls. They were understanding. (interview S.H.1996)

He observed that Indische men were a bit feminine and modest – a stereotype that already existed in the colony (Cottaar & Willems 1984).

Dutch men felt they could not stand up to that kind of competition. But not all Dutch women fell for their charms, it was argued: only girls of 'a certain type', not the typical, reasonable Dutch girl. This is a gender norm that we find in different times and geographical contexts (Diederichs 2000: 41-64; Hart 2001; Mak 2000b).

I found that intermarriages with Indische Netherlanders were seldom discussed. This was also because from the 1970s onwards, discussions in politics and in the media about the assimilation of the Indische Netherlanders ceased. Indische Netherlanders came to be known as migrants who had assimilated smoothly into Dutch society. Their success served as an example to other migrant groups whose (perceived) problems monopolised attention – a positive example to oppose the negative. Intermarriages with Indische Netherlanders were no longer discussed, except when they served as an example (Jones 2007).[11] I will elaborate on this in the next section, because it compares Indische and Afro-Surinamese migrants with other migrant groups.

Both in the colony and in the metropolis, Indische Netherlanders insisted on their European heritage and European ancestry, as this gave them a privileged position. It also influenced the way in which Indische Netherlanders viewed intermarriage: a Dutch partner was seen as a sign of success. The Dutch, however, (especially in the 1950s and 1960s when the immigration of Indische Netherlanders was still recent) did not always see Indische Netherlanders as 'one of us'. This resulted in heavy fighting between Indische and Dutch male adolescents in 1958. But the case of the Indische Netherlanders also showed how fluid this *othering* was. From the 1980s onwards, the Indische Netherlander community was seen as the

perfectly assimilated immigrant group. Indische people were seen as less different from the 'native' Dutch population than other migrant groups because they spoke Dutch perfectly, were Christians and in fact had always lived on Dutch soil. As most newspaper articles were about the problems that intermarriage caused, writers had to show that Indische Netherlanders were not like the other migrant groups in these articles. They used colonial history as a justification: this showed that their partner was not just any foreigner.

3.4.2 Afro-Surinamese

In this section I pinpoint three points in time when intermarriage was discussed: the 1930s, the 1970s and recently from 1993 to 2005. In these discussions, ethnicity, gender and class were intertwined. I start with the views of Dutch society and, following that, discuss the opinions of Afro-Surinamese on the matter.

In the decades preceding World War II, Afro-Surinamese people were uncommon in Dutch society. When they walked through the streets, Dutch people looked at them with amazement and curiosity. They touched their faces to see if the colour would come off (Kagie 2006). The Afro-Surinamese put their – in the eyes of the Dutch – 'exotic' appearance and the fact that there were few Afro-Surinamese migrants to positive use. They built a niche, mostly in the entertainment business, sports, such as boxing, and modelling for artists.

The popularity of jazz and African American musicians, such as Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington, also created a niche for many musicians from Surinam in the Netherlands. Their physical appearance provided them with the authenticity of 'real' jazz musicians in the eyes of the Dutch: the darker his complexion, the more successful he could be as a jazz musician. It did not always matter whether the music itself sounded good.[12] However, jazz music and new dances, such as the shim sham, were not loved by everyone. Some critics wrote that jazz was some kind of primitive 'jungle music' that was only played to arouse sexual desires (*Het Vaderland* summer 1933 in 'Pornografische muziek?'; see also Wouters, 1999: 7; Kagie 2003: 99; Openneer 1995; Cottaar 2004a).

Despite these critical voices, many Dutch youth went to listen and dance to the music played by Afro-Surinamese in clubs such as Amsterdam's *Kit Kat Club* and Rotterdam's *Negro Palace Mephisto*. Afro-Surinamese tried to benefit from the positive image of African American jazz musicians and, to give their music more authenticity, changed their names to American-sounding ones that sometimes referred to American slavery (e.g. Theodoor Kantoor who used Teddy Cotton as his stage name). The fact that they were Dutch citizens from a Dutch colony had no bearing on their popularity. Many of the listeners did not even know they were from

Surinam as they presented themselves as African Americans. In this way, they exploited the stereotype of people of African descent being good musicians (Nederveen Pieterse 1992).

In jazz clubs, Afro-Surinamese men and Dutch women could meet and dance together. Some feared that a consequence of dancing would be that Surinamese men would 'commit sexual offences' with these (presumably underaged) Dutch women (Kagie 2003: 101). As such, stereotypes of men of African descent (especially from lower classes) being hyper-virile and even rapists prevailed. Dutch women were seen as passive victims. These ideas did not just develop after the migration of Afro-Surinamese to the Netherlands, but had already existed for centuries in Surinam. Furthermore, it was not only typical of Dutch colonies, but was a more widespread view on the sexuality of people of African descent, both men and women (Nederveen Pieterse 1992: 172-187; Terborg 2002: 44-45; Blakely 1993: 172; Janssen 2002: 49-50).

White women who had had a liaison with the racial 'other' were described as old and ugly; in other words, they were 'leftovers' who had been unable to 'get a Dutch guy' (J.H. 1935). This notion echoes debates on marriages between European women and Indo-Dutch men in the Dutch East Indies in the 1890s, for example. The *fear* of intermarriage, however, was focused on innocent young women. It filled the chief commissioner of the Amsterdam vice squad in 1936 with great concern. He advised the mayor of Amsterdam to close down the *Kit Kat Club* or at least dismiss the Afro-Surinamese employees in order to save Dutch women from these 'practices', especially after two high-school girls were allegedly 'harassed' by Afro-Surinamese men. This showed that class intersected with gender norms and ethnicity: smart, upperclass, white women would never voluntarily have sex with an Afro-Surinamese man. If Dutch women did such a thing, they were considered old, poor or were prostitutes. Despite the fact that one of the high schoolers involved in the Kit Kat Club incident declared to the police that she 'just loved Negroes' – so she well might not have been a passive victim – she was viewed as such because of the gender norms of her class and ethnicity. Conversely, an Afro-Surinamese man was automatically viewed as a perpetrator. Self-discipline, sexual or otherwise, was a marker of 'whiteness' and socio-economic standing. In this case we see that gender, ethnicity, race and class intersected in expected gender roles and notions of sexuality. Again we see the centuries-old stereotype of the red-blooded African man who is a danger to pure and innocent white women. 'For the weak-minded', as intermixing women were called, 'these public dancing halls are the gates of prostitution' (Bie & Heyden 1931: 90).

Despite the crusade by the chief commissioner of Amsterdam, Afro-Surinamese migrants generally met relatively little opposition to their attempts to find jobs and housing. Jones (2007) and Schuster (1999)

proved in their respective PhD dissertations that this changed in the 1960s, as migration from Surinam increased and became more socio-economically diverse. As a consequence of the ominous newspaper articles concerning problems that working-class Afro-Surinamese migrants caused, a government commission was established to investigate their prospects of assimilation into Dutch society. Although there was also a rising number of female immigrants, this government report only focused on the males, who were thought to be more inclined towards criminal behaviour and expected to have more difficulties in assimilating (Cottaar 2003; Jones 2007: 215-218; Schuster 1999). Besides gender, class also played a large role in defining which Surinamese people were 'a problem' and thus proved a point of interest. Surinamese students and educated Surinamese immigrants were thought to have assimilated fairly easily and not to have caused any problems.

In the above-mentioned government report, we again see two stereotypes of men and women in intermarriage. It states that Afro-Surinamese men are more potent than Dutch men, and they allegedly leave Dutch women as soon as they impregnate them because in Surinam they have never learned to take care of a family.

For Surinamese men, a white partner was a status symbol, the commission concluded. The fact that he could make it economically in the Netherlands, was crowned by the 'conquest' of a white woman.

> In Surinam it is practically impossible for unskilled, and also skilled, workers to obtain a Dutch woman [this is different for Surinamese from higher classes]. The eagerness with which they jump at the passes made by Surinamese men, makes them believe they have climbed the social ladder. (Bayer 1965: 90)

The Dutch women in these relationships were portrayed as poor and sexually experienced. The underlying assumption was that these women had done and seen it all, and were therefore looking for something different (Bayer 1965). An Afro-Surinamese man was considered as the most 'different' and 'exotic' one could get. Gender, class and ethnic norms concerning intermarriage had changed little since the 1930s.

From 1993 to 2005, intermarriages between Dutch men and Afro-Surinamese immigrants were not discussed much in the Dutch media. They seem to have been considered as less of a problem, but that cannot fully explain it. Hondius (1998: 234-275) showed that the Dutch, in general, were reluctant to talk about race and colour differences in order to avoid being thought of as racist; they denied difference. Strikingly, a recurring theme in the media and interviews consulted for this chapter was the 'exotic', 'different' looks of Afro-Surinamese men and women, something that their Dutch partners found attractive. The unknown and, in a sense,

'forbidden' was considered interesting. This is contrary to many theories on intermarriage that consider these relationships signs of integration. Mixed couples, however, also seem to foster the perception of difference because it is what they themselves find attractive.

This difference was not only related to appearance but also to clichés about sexuality. The cliché that Afro-Surinamese men and women have a high libido still appeared in articles about intermarriage in Dutch post-colonial media (Best, Blokker, Hoving & Pennings 2005: 165; 'Letter to editor' 1984; 'Gemengde relaties: Liefde in zwart wit?' 1991: 31; Engelen 2001;[13] 'Blank en zwart' 1981)

The idea of hyper-sexuality did not only apply to Afro-Surinamese men. Afro-Surinamese women were sometimes also pictured as hypersexual and extremely passionate. The headline of an article in a large national newspaper about intermarriage read: 'That [girl] is a tigress between the sheets' (Engelen 2001). Although some researchers say this exotic sexual attraction does not play such a large role (see e.g. Trommelen 1996), the argument is abundantly mentioned in articles and discussions on intermarriage between Afro-Surinamese and Dutch nationals. It has its roots in the colonial period, during which, as mentioned, sexual self-discipline was a marker of 'whiteness'. Portraying black people as promiscuous was a way of excluding them from power. In a post-colonial context, this stereotyping was still used to define the difference between whites and blacks, sometimes in a positive way (making them more interesting as a partner) and sometimes in a negative way (fostering a fear of black men and thus excluding them).

A second recurrent theme was that a 'true' relationship with an Afro-Surinamese man based on loyalty, life-time commitment and true love was not possible and was doomed to fail. The stereotype held that all Afro-Surinamese men sleep around, have mistresses and will leave their children behind (Deijl 1998; Hoek 1998[14]). This image not only developed in the Netherlands, but also in the US, among many other places (Wilson 1996: 87-110).

Dutch girls and women were warned by friends and family not to get into relationships with Afro-Surinamese men because of this. The argument that all Afro-Surinamese men are inherently unfaithful and have children with multiple women whom they do not live with was sometimes linked to the concept of the nuclear family being uncommon in the plantation society Surinam was. Members of enslaved families were often sold separately to different plantations by the Dutch, slaves were not allowed to marry and nuclear families were uncommon. As a consequence, it was argued, the concept of the nuclear family never took hold in the Afro-Surinamese community and Surinamese men had the reputation of unfaithful husbands. In this regard a Dutch man is seen as a 'better catch'.

A third theme was that Afro-Surinamese were better integrated than other immigrant groups and were therefore more attractive as partners. Post-colonial migrant communities (also the Indische Netherlanders) were compared to other large immigrant communities such as the Moroccan and Turkish communities specifically with regard to integration. Because Afro-Surinamese and Indische Netherlanders are culturally more akin to the receiving society than Moroccans, due to our colonial history, the relationships with the former are less seen as problematic.

> Dutch people see Surinamese people maybe as less 'strange' [than other immigrant groups]. They have the Dutch language in common and they share an, indeed awkward, history. Moreover, one third of the Surinamese is Christian minded. (Rutenfrans 1999)

This discourse developed parallel to heated debates on the integration of Moroccans and Turkish, who were perceived as troublesome. There is a class element to this, too: relationships involving lower-class Afro-Surinamese are seen as being more problematic than those involving middle- and upper-class Afro-Surinamese.

Besides colonial history, religion is an even more important aspect leading to criticism of intermarriage involving Moroccans and Turkish, especially where Dutch women are concerned. Difference in religion, especially between Christians and Muslims, is perceived as the biggest obstacle to a successful marriage. On the internet discussion board of the popular ladies' magazine, mothers were asked whom they would prefer for their daughters and they were unanimous: every single one preferred an Afro-Surinamese or Indische over a Moroccan or Turkish son-in-law.[15] It was not always flattering: of all 'foreigners', Afro-Surinamese were the least bad, but still worse than a white Dutch anyway. Dutch partners of post-colonial migrants felt the need to defend themselves. They justified their own choice of an immigrant partner by stating that post-colonial migrants were not as 'strange' as Moroccans, due to the colonial history, language and religion the Dutch and Afro-Surinamese share.

When investigating the arguments made in articles in Afro-Surinamese media, I found they could be divided into two clusters. For the sake of argument, I describe these clusters here as generalisations and extremes, whereas the reality is more nuanced and diverse. The first cluster I call the 'improve your colour narrative', which is favourable towards intermarriage and has its roots in colonial history. The second I call the 'traitor narrative', which is opposed to intermarriage and has its roots in the 'black power' type of movement. The first narrative is the oldest and has existed since the first Afro-Surinamese arrived in the Netherlands. The second is more recent and developed in the 1990s.

As I described above, in colonial times, marrying a white man could mean social advancement for an Afro-Surinamese woman and her children. Having lighter skin, 'good' hair (which meant straight hair), thin lips and a pointed nose not only meant being more beautiful, but also meant having more chances in life. Girls were expected to '*opo yu kloru'* or '*opo yu buba*', which means 'open' or 'improve your colour'. These notions were brought to the Netherlands and proved persistent (for US and Caribbean, see Russel 1993; Young 1999; Kempadoo 2004; for Afro-Surinamese in the Netherlands, see Niekerk 2000: 187-188; Rooij 2005: 140-141; Hondius 1998: 237, 239 especially n11, n12).

As a first-generation Afro-Surinamese mother told her daughter, who was impregnated by an Afro-Surinamese man: 'I tried so hard to improve your colour but now you ruin everything by having children with an Afro-Surinamese man' (Jones 2004: 91). This idea of intermarriage as a way to 'improve' one's colour was not exclusively present in the Netherlands, but can be found throughout the entire African Diaspora (Oostindie 2007). The idea of hypergamy was not exclusively relevant to women, but also men. In the case of the government report in the 1960s, we saw how having a relationship with a Dutch woman was seen as a sign of success in Dutch society. This continued into the twenty-first century. Some Afro-Surinamese commented on the fact that Afro-Surinamese men who became successful in Dutch society (especially soccer players and boxers) appeared in public with (mostly blonde) Dutch women at their sides (Mark 1997; Trommelen 1996). The Afro-Surinamese community saw these women as a symbol of success, for better or for worse. Some said it was a pity that Afro-Surinamese women were apparently 'not good enough anymore' for these successful men. This was not an exclusively Afro-Surinamese experience nor did it only occur in the Netherlands; it is considered typically colonial (Zebroski 1999). In some cases, Afro-Surinamese women saw these Dutch women as competitors saying: 'That blonde is running off with *our* man!' (Mark 1997). Remarkably, this idea of co-ethnics being 'stolen away', seems to apply to men, too, contradicting theories on this topic that only focus on 'stolen' women.

This brings me to the opposite view on intermarriage among Afro-Surinamese. From the second half of the 1980s, slavery history was increasingly incorporated into debates about Afro-Surinamese identity. The history of slavery became the focal point of the group's self-image. This was heavily influenced by debates in the US concerning African American identity (Oostindie 1997: 309; Kardux 2004). I found that this slavery history and trauma was also used in debates about inter-ethnic marriages. Some Afro-Surinamese were strongly opposed to intermarriage, saying that they should be proud of their African roots and therefore not have a relationship with someone from outside their own race, much less have children with them.

Contemporary intermarriage between Dutch nationals and Afro-Surinamese – especially between Dutch men and Afro-Surinamese women – was seen as a remnant of the colonial history during which Afro-Surinamese women were allegedly oppressed, exploited and even raped by Dutch men (Wouters 1997: 18; Deijl 1998; Mark 1997; Engelen 2001; Wijne 1999: 23; Deijl & Leistra 1991: 32; 'Hebben zwarten meer problemen met gemengde relaties dan blanken?' 2003[16]). Some Afro-Surinamese argued that in these kinds of intermarriage colonialism and slavery lingered on. However, not all women with Dutch partners were seen as passive victims to be pitied. Some were seen as actively collaborating with this allegedly 'neo-colonialist' oppression of the Afro-Surinamese by the Dutch male.

> Some [Afro-Surinamese] people think I am a Bounty[17] – brown on the outside, white on the inside. They mean that in a negative way. As if I am betraying my own race, as if I am collaborating with the former colonizer (Deijl 1998).

There was a strong gender aspect to the traitor narrative. Not only were women more often called traitors to their own ethnic group or portrayed as victims of their husbands than were men of their wives, they were also regarded as not 'real Afro-Surinamese women' when they entered into an inter-ethnic relationship (Diederichs 2000; Zebroski 1999).

Colonial history was used both negatively and positively by the Afro-Surinamese themselves. Most Afro-Surinamese still experienced racial prejudices in Dutch society. In the colony, intermarriage had been a way to climb the social ladder. In Dutch society, intermarriages were still explained as a way to lighten children's skin colour, thus giving them an advantage to 'make it' in society. Women were especially expected to *opo yu kloru*, though successful Afro-Surinamese men, like some soccer players, very often had Dutch girlfriends or wives. Anyway, Afro-Surinamese accepted hypergamy as a given as it was during colonial times.

Opposed to this were arguments against intermarriage put forward by those Afro-Surinamese who were proud of their African roots. They tried to make other Afro-Surinamese aware of their internalised racism, which made them feel inferior to the Dutch. Contemporary intermarriage, especially between Dutch men and Afro-Surinamese women, is seen as neo-colonialism. In colonial times, Dutch men exploited and raped slave women, and Afro-Surinamese women were warned not to let the same thing happen. Some even viewed intermarriage as a kind of treason to the community, not only by women but also by men.

3.5 Conclusion

This overview of how intermarriage between Dutch and Afro-Surinamese and Dutch and Indische Netherlanders was portrayed provides insights into which ideas and stereotypes were put forward during certain periods and why. Stereotypes and preconceived images were used to include or exclude peoples from the so-called in-group that was defined by class, gender and ethnicity. Belonging to the Dutch community meant having rights: to compete for jobs, to secure housing, to start an organisation and – central to this chapter – to date and interact with members of this community. Those who were not seen as part of the receiving Dutch society, due to ethnicity, class or gender norms, were excluded from these rights. Discussions on intermarriage are a case in point: when ethnic boundaries are crossed in relationships, the boundaries are made explicit. In the post-colonial context, gendered colonial stereotypes and ideas were used to explain, oppose or promote intermarriage between Dutch nationals and migrants from former Dutch colonies in order to demarcate the boundaries between the two. At the same time, post-colonial immigrant communities were defining their own ethnic identities.

In these discussions, Indische Netherlanders, Afro-Surinamese migrants and Dutch nationals referred to colonial history. The aim of this study was not to show what exactly were the influences of colonial history, but rather what purpose was served by referring to it. In both Dutch and immigrant media as well as in interviews, gender norms and race relations were portrayed as being typically colonial or typically Dutch. International academic literature, however, shows that they were not typically Dutch or colonial. Actually, they were part of a more general debate on gender norms, class, race relations and ethnicity, about power relations between men and women, black and white, national and immigrant. For instance, the idea that Afro-Surinamese women should marry and have children with a man with lighter skin colour than her own is, as the argument goes, typically colonial. But is it not part of the more general gender norm that women should marry up, not down? And is that not part of the white superiority discourse that up means white?

Remarkably, despite decolonisation and migration, immigrants and Dutch nationals perceived salient continuities and all used gendered stereotypes to explain, promote or oppose intermarriage, but in different ways and for different reasons. On the one hand, immigrants used them to justify their positions in Dutch society; on the other, they used them to justify their pursuit of preserving their own ethnic identities. The Dutch used it to show that these intermarriages were ‘less mixed’ than other relationships, and tried to anticipate negative responses from other Dutch people.

The most striking difference between the Indische Netherlanders and Afro-Surinamese cases was that some of the latter attached great value to a

collective, 'hereditary' slavery trauma. In colonial society, some argued, enslaved women who had been exploited and raped by Dutch men and intermarriage in the 1990s were no different. Indische Netherlanders did not stress a kind of collective victimhood, although they could have on historical grounds. Where Indische Netherlanders were concerned, they used colonial history and gender norms in a different way to demarcate ethnic boundaries, which depended largely on the political and economic context of their settlement. Dutch slavery history was, and is, an inconvenient truth in Dutch history, so this argument is obviously never used in the Dutch media.

It is interesting to see that colonial history was used in different ways to demarcate ethnic identity depending on the political, social and economic context of the moment, and it shows that ethnicity is never linear or static. Due to changing political, social and economic circumstances (and the arrival of other immigrant groups, for instance), the boundaries of ethnicity, class and gender change. Neither history nor stereotypes are a given: post-colonial migrants and nationals choose elements from their so-called shared history and from existing gender, class and ethnicity norms to define who belongs to their group and who does not. This is an ongoing process, sparked by changes within and outside the group.

3.6 Methodological appendix

The source materials that I used are newspapers, Dutch and immigrants' magazines, some interviews and archival material. I aimed to look at a wide variety of magazines and newspapers and tried to cover the whole post-war period. For the first group, the Indische Netherlanders, I systematically investigated all volumes of the three largest and most important magazines.[18] What struck me here is that during the whole period spanning over 50 years, inter-ethnic marriages were never discussed in a single individual article. The subject was sporadically discussed in articles on Indische identity, alongside other topics. Inter-ethnic marriages were either seen as part of the Indische identity or as a threat to the Indische identity, an interesting point we will return to later in the chapter.

I have also systematically worked through important Afro-Surinamese magazines from 1974 to recent dates.[19] In the 1970s and 1980s, these magazines focused mostly on the problems migrants first encountered when settling in the Netherlands: housing and work. During this period, newly arrived immigrants encountered high unemployment rates and housing shortages that hit the Afro-Surinamese extra hard. Intermarriage was not discussed until the 1990s. But even when the numbers of intermarriage rose, the number of articles covering intermarriage remained very small.

Sourcing from Dutch newspapers and magazines required a different methodology. It is of course physically impossible for one person to work through all of them over a period covering over 60 years. From 1993 onwards, all articles that were published in Dutch national and regional newspapers were filed in the electronic database LexisNexis. I searched this database using the terms '*gemengde relatie(s)*', '*gemengde huwelijk (en)*', '*gemengd trouwen*','*schijnhuwelijk(en)*', *gemengd getrouwd*', '*gemengd(e) stel(len)*', '*gemengde stelletjes*' ('mixed relations', 'mixed marriages' and so on). I found 1,641 articles on intermixing and intermarrying. By far, the most articles (79 per cent) were on bogus marriages or marriages of convenience by people whose intention was to obtain Dutch citizenship. Five per cent of the articles were on interreligious marriages, especially between Christian (or non-religious) and Muslim people. These two issues put pen to paper and it could be argued that they were seen as the most disturbing (see also Kamminga 1993). There were far fewer articles on intermarriage between Dutch nationals and Indische Netherlanders or Dutch nationals and Afro-Surinamese immigrants. For earlier periods, I used different methods. I found references in other magazines or works by other researchers, I looked through newspaper- and magazine-clipping files[20] and I searched through library search engines and the digital online archives of national newspapers and magazines. I included every article on intermarriage and marriages to compare the different narratives and stereotypes. In addition to these articles, I used some interviews of inter-ethnic couples that were conducted by me or by Mathijs Tuynman in 1996.[21] About twenty interviews were of Indische-Dutch couples and twenty of Afro-Surinamese-Dutch couples. In half of the cases, the men were either Afro-Surinamese or Indische Netherlander. The interviews were used to cross-check the views and ideas that I came across in other sources. All interviews were anonymised at the request of the interviewees.

To investigate colonial stereotypes and discourses on intermarriage in the colonial period, I used novels and travellers' accounts that were written in the Dutch colonies during the period from 1700 to 1950, as well as government reports and secondary literature.[22] Intermixing and intermarrying were very popular themes in novels and travellers' accounts. The works I studied were also written for a Dutch audience and were widely read in the metropolis, too. This could be an indication that colonial views on the nature and appearance of the colonised men and women, and on intermarriage, must have been known in the Netherlands through the reading of these books. In addition, I used legal codes and parliamentary records.

Notes

1 Koloniaal Verslag 1901-1931; Indisch verslag II, Statistisch jaaroverzicht van Nederlandsch-Indië over het jaar 1931-1941.
2 Koloniaal Verslag 1907-1908 and 1929-1930; *Surinaamsch Verslag.* 1931-1950. After 1950 there are no exact numbers available for mixed marriages
3 Koloniaal Verslag 1902-1932; Indisch verslag II, Statistisch jaaroverzicht van Nederlandsch-Indië over het jaar 1931-1941.
4 Ibidem.
5 In 1730, Jantje den Indiaan was hanged and his girlfriend Ganna was whipped and banned (Nationaal Archief: Societeit van Suriname 258; *Brieven en pampieren van Suriname* 2 January 1731 in Lenders 1996: 66).
6 Nationaal Archief, Ministeries AOK en AZ, Kabinet van de minister-president, nota voor de Raad van Ministers betreffende het in 1959 te voeren beleid inzake de toelating in Nederland van personen van niet-Nederlandse nationaliteit uit Indonesië, ter fine van vestiging, 26 January 1959; Handelingen Eerste Kamer, zitting 1960-1961 (8 December 1960): 2475.
7 Similar findings at www.indisch4ever.web-log.nl.
8 For reasons of privacy, only the interviewees' initials are given.
9 Similar findings at www.indisch4ever.web-log.nl.
10 Handelingen Eerste Kamer, zitting 1960-1961, hoofdstuk IV (8-12-1960) 2439 and 2460; Handelingen Tweede Kamer, zitting 1960-1961, hoofdstuk IV (7-3-1961) 2190.
11 See internet discussion board www.forum.viva.nl/list_messages/10325; accessed in 2008, no longer available in 2012.
12 See e.g. 'Het Hawkins trio' , Het Vaderland 30 May 1939.
13 See www.waterkant.net/suriname/forum/viewtopic.php?id=98.
14 www.forum.viva.nl/list_messages/10325; www.weerwoord.nl/weerwoord/ viewtopic.php?t=4543&highlight; accessed in 2008, no longer accessible in 2012.
15 www.forum.viva.nl/list_messages/10325;accessed in 2008, no longer accessible in 2012.
16 See also www.waterkant.net/suriname/forum/viewtopic.php?id=98; accessed in 2012.
17 Bounty refers to a type of chocolate candy bar.
18 Onze Brug began in 1956. Three years later, it was followed by Tong Tong, later called Moesson, which is still in print. These magazines almost completely comprised letters from readers and therefore give a good overview of the views in the Indische community itself. I also consulted the periodicals Onze Brug (1956-1958), Tong-Tong (1959-1977), Moesson, 1978-2007) and Onze Koers (1974-1996).
19 These include Obsession: *Onafhankelijk Surinaams-Nederlands tijdschrift* (1997-2002)*; Wi Rutu: Tijdschrift voor Surinaamse genealogie* (2001-2005)*; Ashanti: Surinaamse vrouwenkrant* (1981-1987)*; Alerta: Het andere nieuws over Latijns-Amerika en de Cariben; Wrokoman: Stem van de Surinaamse gemeenschap* (1974-1983)*; Surinfo: Knipselkrant van de Stichting Landelijke Federatie van Welzijns-stichtingen voor Surinamers* (1978-1982)*; Kompe: Informatieblad voor Surinamers e.a. in en om Rotterdam* (1978-1984)*; Famiri: Maandblad voor Surinamers in Nederland. Rubrieken, politiek, kunst en kultuur, sociaal-maatschappelijke adviezen, berichten uit Republiek Suriname* (1978-1980)*; Kon na wan! Progressief maandblad voor Surinamers en vrienden van Suriname* (1987-1991)*; Span'noe: Informatieblad voor Surinamers in Nederland. Orgaan van de Stichting Landelijke Federatie van Welzijnsstichtingen voor Surinamers* (1974-1995)*; De objectieve Surinamer: Onafhankelijk wekelijks orgaan voor alle Surinamers in Nederland* (1971-1976)*; Suriflex* (1974-1976).

20 In the archive of the Centraal Comité van Kerkelijk en Particulier Initiatief voor Sociale Zorg ten Behoeve van Gerepatrieerden (CCKP), I found newspaper clippings concerning Indische Netherlanders in all national, regional and local newspapers (Utrechts Archief (1405), inv. no. 344-357, scrapbooks, newspaper clippings, 1951-1967.) At the Internationaal Informatiecentrum en Archief voor de Vrouwenbeweging (IIAV) in Amsterdam, I found newspaper clippings from 1973 to 2000 from national newspapers and women's magazines as well as 41 articles labelled 'Huwelijken' ('Marriages'), 'Surinaamse vrouwen' ('Surinamese women'), 'Buitenlandse vrouwen' ('Foreign women'), 'Allochtone kinderen' ('Allochthonous children'), 'Relaties' ('Relationships'), 'Suriname', 'Zwarte vrouwen' ('Black women'). Seventy-six per cent were on marriages of convenience and 22 per cent on marriages involving a guest worker. In the CCKP archive, I found newspaper clippings concerning Indische Netherlanders in all national, regional and local newspapers (ibid.).

21 Tuynman's interviews were used by Hondius (2001) for her seminal work on mixed relationships in the Netherlands. IISG, BG GC6/385-493.

22 Novels from the Dutch East Indies include *Stille kracht* (1900) by Louis Couperus; *De scheepsjongens van Bontekoe* (1924) by Johan Fabricius; *Rimboe* (1949) by L. Szekely; *Njai Sarina: Een roman* (1941) by Simon Franke; *Bijna verloren* (1880) by Marie C. Frank; *De Van Sons* (1881) and Bogoriana (1890) by Annie Foore (pseudonym of F.J.J.A. Junius-Ijzerman); *Janneke de Pionierster* (1904) by Louise B.B. (pseudonym of Louise de Neve 1859-1913); *Nummer elf* (1893) and *Goena-Goena* (1887) by Paul A. Daum; *Hermelijn* (1885), *De familie van de resident* and *Herfstdraden* (1896) by Melati van Java (pseudonym of Nicolina M. Sloot); *Kruis of munt* (1949) by Jo de Boer; *Vrouwen lief en leed onder de tropen* (1892) and *Vervreemd* (1906) by Adinda (pseunonym of Thérèse Hoven); *Huwelijk in Indië* (1873) by Mina Kruseman. Novels from Surinam include *Drie maanden in de West* (1913) by E. W. Wijnaendts Francken-Dyserinck; *Reize naar Surinamen* (1792) by J.G. Stedman; *De Negerslaven in de kolonie Suriname en de uitbreiding van het Christendom onder de heidensche bevolking* (1842) by M.D. Teenstra; *De manja. Familie-tafereel uit het Surinaamsche volksleven* (1866) by C. Van Schaick; *Herinneringen van Anna de Savornin Lohman* (1909) by A. De Savornin Lohman; *De stille plantage* (1931) by A. Helman; *Dagverhaal van eene reis naar Paramaribo en verder omstreken in de kolonie Suriname* (1842) by G.P.C. van Breugel, *Slaven en vrijen onder de Nederlandsche wet* (1854) by W.R. van Hoëvell; *Schetsen en beelden uit een vreemd land* (1869) by Kwamina Jetta.

4 Group-related or host state-related? Understanding the historical development of Surinamese organisations in Amsterdam, 1965-2000

Floris Vermeulen and Anja van Heelsum

4.1 Introduction

As is typical of immigrant communities all over the world, Surinamese migrants to the Netherlands have formed a considerable number of associations following the time of their arrival (Rex, Joly & Wilpers1987; Jenkins 1988; Moya 2005; Lucassen, Feldman & Oltmer 2006). In this chapter we look at the factors that may explain the development of the Surinamese organising process by focusing on the policy of Amsterdam authorities and on factors related to the group itself. This chapter shows that Dutch policymakers at first reacted encouragingly, as separate welfare institutions for the just-arrived Surinamese fitted into the existing categorical policy line – which was both a result of the pillarised welfare system that existed in the Netherlands and an ad hoc result of the lack of policies concerning the integration of immigrants. But with the development of integration policies from 1983 onwards, these views changed and consequently support diminished for the Surinamese associations that already existed. More recently, resentment developed towards the role that immigrant associations might play, and they were – correctly or not – accused of functioning as fortresses where immigrants could hide from Dutch society (Penninx & Van Heelsum 2004). The attitudes of policymakers have influenced the organisations considerably. In this chapter we analyse the development of Surinamese immigrant organisations in Amsterdam between 1965 and 2000, as well as study the factors that influenced the rate at which these organisations were founded.

As we have explained elsewhere (Vermeulen 2006; Van Heelsum 2004: 12), the collective actions of immigrants are often explained by referring either to the characteristics of the immigrant population (Breton 1964; Jones-Correa 1998: 143; Moya 2005) or to the influence of the country of settlement (Olzak 1983; Kasinitz 1992; Waldinger 1996; Morawska 1996; Lucassen 2003; Koopmans, Statham, Giugni & Passy 2005). From our

point of view, the two interact and both should be taken into consideration. We therefore deal with the question of how a combination of these group-related factors (immigrant model) and host state-related factors (opportunity model) may explain the building of an organisational field among the immigrant group that was largest in the Dutch capital during the period studied.

Firstly, we give a description of Surinamese migration to Amsterdam, outlining the history of the main organisations this group established and distinguishing between Afro-Surinamese and Indo-Surinamese organisations. In the first section we describe the development of the associations, paying particular attention to a factor in the opportunity model, namely the difficult relationship between local authorities and Surinamese and Afro-Surinamese organisations in the 1970s. This was influenced by colonial legacy in the form of mistrust towards the authorities on the part of the Afro-Surinamese, on the one hand, and Dutch authorities' racism (together with the fear of being called racist), on the other, which has cast a shadow over the rest of the organising process of the Surinamese in Amsterdam. We end this section with the development in numbers of Surinamese organisations in Amsterdam. Secondly, we go deeper into one of the factors of the migrant model, paying particular attention to the development in the types of activities that Afro-Surinamese and Indo-Surinamese organisations have set up in Amsterdam. Finally, we analyse which factors most influenced the founding rates of Surinamese, Afro-Surinamese and Indo-Surinamese organisations in Amsterdam, using multivariate regression analysis. This last section combines the opportunity model and the migrant model.

4.2 History of Surinamese immigrants in Amsterdam and their organisations: Focusing on the opportunity model

Surinamese immigration into the Netherlands has a long history and is closely tied to the colonial relationship between the two countries. Because of its colonial history, the population of Surinam is made up of several distinct ethnic groups, almost all brought there by the Dutch. The largest groups are the Afro-Surinamese, also known as Creoles, who are descendants of African slaves, and the Indo-Surinamese, also known as Hindustanis, who are descendants of contract labourers brought mainly from India to Surinam after the abolition of slavery in 1863. Other ethnic groups include Javanese, Chinese, Jewish and native Indians. Before World War II, Surinamese immigrants were predominantly children of the colonial elite or Afro-Surinamese middle class, studying or working in the Dutch capital (Cottaar 2004). After the war, this pattern changed slowly, as Surinamese migration in this decade became more ethnically diverse and

more driven by economic factors. As Van Niekerk (1994: 47) noted of this time: 'Administrative personnel, teachers and nurses arrive, still in small numbers, to work in the booming Dutch economy' (Cottaar 2003; Lucassen 2003: 330).

The history of the Surinamese organising process in Amsterdam began as far back as 1919, with the establishment of the Bond voor Surinamers, later known as Vereniging Ons Suriname (Our Surinam Association). However, the actual start of the first phase of the Surinamese organising process was not until after World War II, when Afro-Surinamese students became active in establishing several associations in support of the emerging nationalist movement in Surinam. Although Surinamese independence was the primary goal of such organisations, their activities were also aimed at fostering a resurrection of Afro-Surinamese culture. These students, studying in Amsterdam and confronted with Dutch society, founded nationalist organisations in an attempt to understand and express their national identity (Oostindie 1998: 225-228; Jansen van Galen 2000: 33-34). Such organisations were relatively few in number and their reach was mostly limited to Afro-Surinamese students. Most of these organisations ended their activities in the 1960s when their leaders returned to Surinam to expand the nationalist movement there (Jansen van Galen 2000). New Surinamese organisations established in the 1960s lost their political orientation and focused primarily on social and sports activities. They provided a familiar social environment for the growing Surinamese community in Amsterdam. For instance, several Surinamese soccer associations were founded in this decade, in which Surinamese immigrants could 'feel at home', as the jubilee publication of one of these associations states (Real Sranang 1990: 13). This cushioning function of immigrant organisations, which eases the shock of transition by offering a more familiar environment, was also important to the Surinamese immigrants in Amsterdam during this early period.

In the 1970s, migration from Surinam to the Netherlands changed completely in terms of numbers, ethnicity, social-economic background and motivation. The pull factors that dominated immigration into the Netherlands until 1973 remained important, but push factors caused more and more Surinamese to leave their country. The economic situation in Surinam showed little progress and more people came to look for work in the Netherlands. The Netherlands was the most obvious destination for these migrants, as they were familiar with the culture and language and possessed Dutch citizenship. These newcomers increasingly originated from the lower classes in Surinam, and the percentage from ethnic groups other than the Afro-Surinamese also increased in this period. The approaching independence of Surinam in 1975 caused more economic and political uncertainty, which resulted in more people leaving the country.

An exodus of more than 50,000 took place in the years 1974 and 1975 (Vermeulen 1984: 35-36; Van Heelsum 1997: 6).

The rapid increase in population during the early 1970s caused serious social problems among the Surinamese immigrants in Amsterdam with respect to housing, unemployment and increasing racism. The arrival of large numbers of low-skilled Surinamese workers after 1975 exacerbated the situation. The high level of unemployment sparked by the worsening Dutch economic situation was keenly felt in this group, which was less familiar with Dutch culture and language. Aberrant, or even criminal, lifestyles took root among unemployed Surinamese youth (Sansone 1992) and adverse media coverage reflected on the whole Afro-Surinamese population, associating it with drug crime and violence. Resistance to Surinamese immigrants, tension and discrimination within Dutch society became widespread in the 1970s (Van Niekerk 1994: 71). Authorities could no longer ignore the problems of Surinamese immigrants and strong policy measures were deemed necessary.

Social policy targeted specifically at the Surinamese community in Amsterdam had its beginning in 1974, when the city council issued a groundbreaking local memorandum. This memorandum acknowledged that social policy aimed at the Surinamese population was unavoidable and, more importantly, it assigned a crucial role to local Surinamese welfare organisations in implementing it. Surinamese immigrant organisations were designated to provide social services to deprived segments of the Surinamese community, with special attention paid to drug-related problems of the youth (*Gemeenteblad Amsterdam* 1974: 2078-2081). From the opportunity model, the influence of local policies and programmes is the determining factor in the development process of associations. Because Afro-Surinamese organisations had historically been the most prominent Surinamese associations in the city, they seemed the best option for channelling social services to the community. The first Surinamese welfare organisation, Welsuria, was an initiative of Dutch and Afro-Surinamese individuals, mostly with religious backgrounds, and it was assigned a leading role. Board members enjoyed good relations with local officials and could count on generous grants, which they subsequently distributed to other Surinamese organisations in the city. However, within the Surinamese community, Welsuria had the reputation of being an elitist Dutch colonial organisation. This prompted the founding in 1968 of a new Afro-Surinamese welfare organisation called Building a Surinamese Home (BEST). BEST stemmed from the Surinamese nationalist movement and had a more pronounced Afro-Surinamese character than did Welsuria. Although its relationship with local officials was certainly not as good as Welsuria's, the city council nonetheless approved funding. BEST was a combined welfare organisation and pressure group. It published exposés of the many social problems plaguing the Surinamese community in the 1970s (including

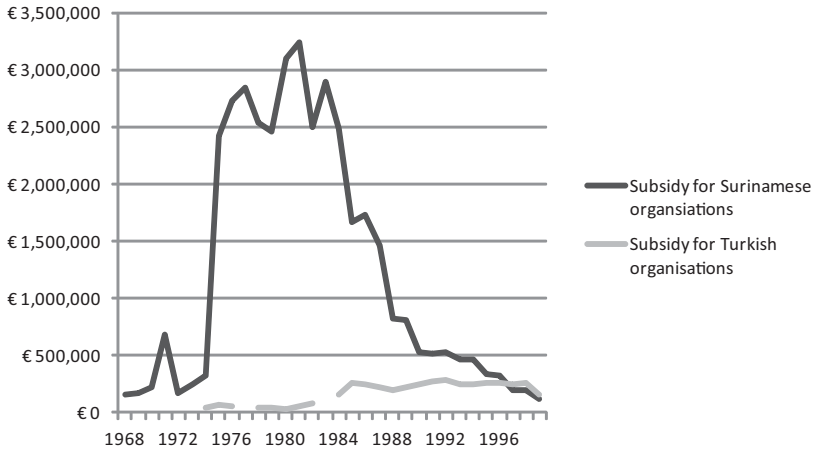
housing scarcity, police brutality, racial discrimination) and it provided social welfare services to Surinamese young people (Meerveld 2002).

In total, five Surinamese welfare organisations received municipal funding in 1974. A survey in 1977 found that 20 per cent of the local Surinamese population – some 5,200 people – had visited one of these five organisations at least once during that year (Gooskens 1979: 27). Because some organisations also funded smaller groups, the total number of organisations receiving public money was actually much greater than five.

Since there was not much experience with large numbers of immigrants, it was unusual in those days to delegate to immigrant associations such a critical role in social service delivery, which was normally the task of mainstream Dutch organisations. The pillarised system that existed for religious groups was more or less transferred ad hoc to social service provision for ethnic groups. Money for Surinamese organisations was no problem in the early 1970s, which was quite remarkable in light of the difficult economic situation in the wake of the 1973 oil crisis. The generosity of local government can be explained by the magnitude of the social problems plaguing the Surinamese population in Amsterdam, mainly because so many Surinamese had settled in the city over just a few years and the approaching independence of Surinam in 1975. The authorities seemed motivated by feelings of guilt over the colonial past and by a desire to preclude problems with the Surinamese minority. Mindful of the disastrous decolonisation process that had taken place in Indonesia, Dutch politicians, especially on the political left, were determined to avoid similar mistakes (Jansen van Galen 2001; Buddingh' 2001: 71). Surinam itself received a vast amount of Dutch foreign aid in the 1970s (Van Amersfoort 1987: 478), an expression of generous attitudes also evident at the national level. Figure 4.1 starkly illustrates the open-handedness of Amsterdam local government towards Surinamese organisations after 1974, especially if we compare this to the support given to Turkish organisations. The gaping disparity between the amounts of public subsidy provided to Surinamese and Turkish organisations is illustrative of the inclusive policy pursued by the Dutch authorities towards colonial migrants in the 1970s and 1980s (Koopmans & Statham 2000: 28-29). The first local subsidy to a Surinamese organisation was given in Amsterdam in 1968 (to Welsuria). The golden age for Surinamese organisations was between 1975 and 1984, a ten-year period during which they received over five million guilders a year.

The Amsterdam subsidy policy was to have far-reaching consequences, both positive and negative, for Surinamese organisations. The positive side was that many new Surinamese organisations could benefit from receiving subsidies, and a large number indeed sprang up after 1974. But the negative repercussions were tremendous. No clear concept underlay social policy towards the Surinamese in the 1970s, either at government level or

Figure 4.1 *Municipal funding (in guilders)[1] to Surinamese and Turkish organisations in Amsterdam, 1967-98*



Source: Vermeulen (2006: 132)

within the organisations. Policy was characterised by ad hoc measures to maintain peace (Van der Burg 1990: 97), and little monitoring took place. One Afro-Surinamese organisation, SOSA, charged with providing welfare services to the youth, was notorious as a centre for drug dealing, and was shut down after a few years. Another organisation founded in 1977 to support Surinamese drug addicts, Srefidensi, received millions of guilders in funding, but could not account for how the money was spent and went bankrupt shortly afterwards (Reubsaet & Geerts 1983: 100-103). The supply of public money available to Surinamese organisations in the mid-1970s raised high expectations within the Surinamese community. Up to 1978, enough money was available for all groups, but that was to change. So many groups were receiving money that new groups now had difficulty in obtaining funding. New organisations could not accept this because funding had been so readily available just a few years previously. The suspicion grew that Welsuria and other large Afro-Surinamese organisations were withholding money (Reubsaet & Geerts 1983: 79-81) and the offices of Welsuria and BEST were occupied dozens of times in protests during the 1970s and early 1980s.

Another big problem for Welsuria was how to deal with the ethnic diversity within the Surinamese population. The main welfare organisations were predominantly Afro-Surinamese (Van der Burg 1990: 96-97), as were most Surinamese organisations that received money in Amsterdam. Indo-Surinamese organisations also began to demand financial support from the Amsterdam authorities. This could only be channelled through Welsuria,

which had been assigned the task of distributing subsidies among Surinamese organisations. So in 1977, Welsuria became involved in the establishment of an Indo-Surinamese cultural centre. It was difficult to find the right building, and internal quarrels between Indo-Hindu and Indo-Muslim groups frustrated the search even more. When an adequate facility was found, additional money was needed to renovate the property. Finally, in 1982, the money was found and the building was officially opened two years later, seven years after the initiative had started. Shortly after opening, the building was occupied by Afro-Surinamese organisations, protesting against the fact that so many subsidies had been given to an Indo-Surinamese organisation. The occupiers flooded the building, after which renovation had to start all over again (Meerveld 2002: 59). This example, along with many other failed Surinamese organisations during this period, illustrates the extremely difficult situation Welsuria and other Surinamese welfare organisations faced at the time.

By the end of the 1970s, the situation had deteriorated and Surinamese associations were plagued by increasing distrust and rivalry. Instability was aggravated by the fact that most organisations were structured around informal leadership. Informal leaders were successful and tolerated as long as they could raise sufficient revenue for their organisations and constituencies. To secure funding and a substantial patronage, an informal leader had to be as high-profile as possible, and the Dutch media had an inclination to support anti-colonial, anti-Dutch pronouncements. This created another paradox, whereby the most radically anti-Dutch voices received the most attention and subsequently the most government funding for their organisations (Van Amersfoort 1974: 158-162; Reubsaet & Geerts 1983).

For Surinamese immigrants this ambiguous situation was quite familiar, as it was similar to the manner in which voluntary organisations operated in Surinam. The Dutch colonial administration had always blocked the development of a democratic political system under which civil society might have matured. The first general election in Surinam was not held until 1949, and the political mobilisation that then emerged developed exclusively along ethnic lines (Buddingh' 1995: 279-280; Ramsoedh 2001). Most voluntary organisations in Surinam were linked to political parties or religions, and they were differentiated by ethnicity. Because organisational leaders and the Dutch colonial administration both used such associations to their own benefit, voluntary organisations were highly distrusted by the Surinamese population (Reubsaet, Kropman & Van Mulier 1982: 219-220). In the years leading up to independence in 1975, clientelism was rife throughout the political system. Surinamese politicians provided fake government jobs for their ethnic voters (Van Amersfoort 1987: 479). In other words, a situation in which voluntary organisations were not a symbol of trust and stability, but rather vehicles to jobs, influence and personal benefit, was rather familiar to Surinamese newcomers in Amsterdam. In this

sense, the colonial history of Surinam played an important role in the development of Surinamese immigrant organisations in Amsterdam in the 1970s. This, combined with a lack of trust in Amsterdam authorities, and both hidden and open racism on the part of Dutch policymakers, created an impossible situation.

The Amsterdam city government broke this chain of events in 1983 by severely decreasing the stream of subsidies to Surinamese welfare organisations, as illustrated in Figure 4.1. Social policy for the Surinamese was thereafter to be carried out by mainstream Dutch organisations, which was firstly fairer to other immigrant communities and also more in line with the socialist thinking of the PvdA, the dominant political party in Amsterdam. Surinamese organisations now became part of the general minority policy framework in which, for instance, Turkish organisations were also included. The introduction of the Dutch minority policy had several contradictory effects on Surinamese organisations in Amsterdam, as the new policy meant less money and less political influence, but more stability and eventually a more secure environment.

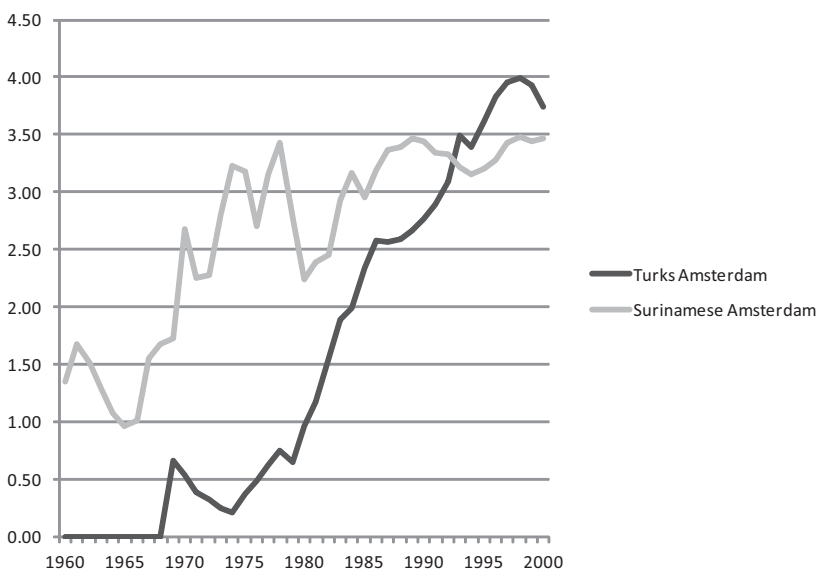
In terms of financial support, the introduction of the Dutch minority policy clearly decreased the resources for Surinamese organisations in Amsterdam. Figure 4.1 shows that the amount of subsidy was significantly lower after 1985 than before. It continued to decrease in the 1990s and by 1999 Surinamese organisations received even less money than Turkish organisations in Amsterdam (although the size of the Surinamese group was more than double that of the Turkish group). The introduction of the new policy also meant that Surinamese organisations became less powerful in political terms, as they lost the function of providing welfare support to the Surinamese population. On the other hand, the political position for Surinamese immigrants in Amsterdam did improve somewhat after the introduction of immigrant voting rights in 1985. Nothing changed formally, since the Surinamese had always possessed Dutch citizenship and already had the vote, but local Surinamese politicians benefited from the greater attention paid by Dutch political parties after 1985 to immigrant constituencies in Amsterdam. This gave Surinamese politicians greater access to the parties and to influential positions.

There was another positive side to the introduction of the Dutch minority policy in the early 1980s. It meant an end to uncertainty. As described, the ad hoc policies for Surinamese organisations and the provision of large sums of money had created a disruptive and unstable environment for Surinamese organisations in Amsterdam. With the minority policy, explicit policy goals were introduced and the requirements for receiving subsidy became stricter (Bloemberg 1995: 61-62) In addition, immigrant organisations were granted a clear position within the policy framework. Three primary tasks were envisaged for Surinamese organisations, just as for organisations of the other minority target groups: to promote and preserve

cultural identities, to emancipate their members and to serve as advocacy groups (Vermeulen 2005) (note that integration was not yet an issue). Furthermore, local authorities now became directly responsible for providing money to Surinamese organisations. Before 1983, this had been the task of Welsuria. Local authorities used Welsuria as a buffer to avoid contact with difficult Surinamese organisations or groups, often rejecting any responsibility toward Surinamese organisations, either old or new. This frustrated many Surinamese organisers and increased internal competition (Meerveld 2002). Now the more direct relationship with authorities provided opportunities for lots of new Surinamese organisations, which had been previously left aside. The total amount of subsidy for Surinamese organisations was lower, but the number of Surinamese organisations eligible for subsidy was greater.

To summarise historical developments, Figure 4.2 compares the number of Surinamese organisations in Amsterdam to Turkish ones, thus providing a comparison between different immigrant groups in the city. It shows that the Surinamese organising process in Amsterdam is rather older than that of the Turkish. The small Surinamese population in Amsterdam already had a relatively high number of organisations in 1960 (interest, cultural and sports organisations). The provision of the first subsidy to a Surinamese welfare organisation in 1968 and the arrival of more and more

Figure 4.2 *Number of Surinamese and Turkish immigrant organisations per 1,000 Surinamese and Turks in Amsterdam, 1960-2000*



Source: Vermeulen (2006: 138)

Surinamese after 1970 led to a significant increase in the number of Surinamese organisations. The improved opportunity structure for Surinamese organisations had the expected effect on their number: an increase from 1.5 per 1,000 Surinamese residents in 1968, to 3.4 in 1978. After 1978, the disruptive impact of ad hoc policies took its toll, and the number of Surinamese organisations in Amsterdam dropped to its lowest level since 1969 (2.2 in 1980).

The Surinamese were the most actively organising immigrant group in the city until the second half of the 1990s. Figure 4.2 shows that the difference compared to the number of Turkish organisations was especially high in the 1970s, but also remained evident in the 1980s. In 1993, the Surinamese and Turkish had a similar number of immigrant organisations. Unlike the pattern for the Turkish, the number of Surinamese organisations remained stable in the 1990s.

4.3 Development of Surinamese organisations in Amsterdam among Afro-Surinamese and Indo-Surinamese: Focus on the migrant model

The Surinamese population in Amsterdam consists of several different ethnic groups. From the viewpoint of the migrant model, this characteristic of the Surinamese community explains most of their organisational development. The description of organisational developments in the 1970s shows that these groups established separate organisations, and that Afro-Surinamese and Indo-Surinamese immigrants formulated different organisational demands. In fact, Afro-Surinamese and Indo-Surinamese have seldom established organisations together (Bloemberg 1995: 50), least of all in the first phase of the Surinamese organising process in Amsterdam. Indo-Surinamese valued their own ethnic organisations, separate from other Surinamese groups. In Amsterdam, they did not feel adequately represented by the Afro-Surinamese organisations that had initiated the organising process. This was mainly a continuation of the situation in Surinam, where they also felt unrepresented by the main organisations, which were practically all Afro-Surinamese. Indo-Surinamese leaders harnessed this discontent to start their own organising process in Amsterdam (Van Amersfoort 1970: 134). Some seventeen Indo-Surinamese organisations sprang up between 1970 and 1975, only six less than within the much larger Afro-Surinamese community.

In terms of the types of Surinamese organisations, it is therefore necessary to distinguish between the two main Surinamese groups, as the Afro-Surinamese and Indo-Surinamese groups differ in many respects. The origins of such differences go back to the colonial history of Surinam, but have been reinforced by migration to the Netherlands. Within the context

of their organising processes, the most important distinction between them concerns their types of social networks and their religious affiliations.

In general, Afro-Surinamese networks can be characterised as more open than Indo-Surinamese ones. Indo-Surinamese family structures are much tighter and less individualistic. Because Indo-Surinamese networks often include parents and children, social control and cohesion is far stronger than it is among the Afro-Surinamese (Van Niekerk 2000: 181-190). Mixed marriages with ethnic Dutch people are more common for Afro-Surinamese than for Indo-Surinamese.

In terms of their religious beliefs, there is a strong distinction between the Christian Afro-Surinamese and the Hindu or Islamic Indo-Surinamese. At first, Afro-Surinamese immigrants did not establish their own religious organisations but joined those European institutions they had been familiar with in Surinam (Cottaar 2004: 61), such as the Protestant Evangelische Broedergemeente (EBG). Many Surinamese immigrants joined the Dutch section of the EBG, basically changing it into an Afro-Surinamese organisation with their own Afro-Surinamese religious school. In the 1990s, the Pentecostal movement gained popularity among some Afro-Surinamese groups (Van Heelsum & Voorthuysen 2002: 11-12), increasing the percentage of religious organisations among Afro-Surinamese organisations during that decade (see Table 4.2).

The Indo-Surinamese can be divided into a large Hindu group and a smaller Islamic one, each with its own separate organisations. Although the number of religious Hindu organisations is relatively large, they have struggled amongst themselves over the establishment of Hindu temples, mainly due to contradictory interests within the Surinamese-Hindu community (Van der Burg 1990: 105). The Indo-Surinamese in the Netherlands are often characterised as a homogeneous group; yet they are far more heterogenic than often presumed, not only in a religious sense but also in cultural terms (Gowricharn 1990: 9-10). What is indeed true, however, is that the Indo-Surinamese as a group place a lot of emphasis on preserving their religious and cultural traditions in the Netherlands. In that sense, the Indo-Surinamese are more engaged in maintaining a sense of ethnic community than the Afro-Surinamese (Van Niekerk 1994: 64).

The Surinamese population in Amsterdam consists predominantly of Afro-Surinamese. The Indo-Surinamese form a majority within other Surinamese populations in the Netherlands, mainly in The Hague (Bloemberg 1995: 63). Table 4.1 illustrates the changing ethnic composition of the Surinamese population in Amsterdam since 1970.

At first, the Surinamese immigrants in Amsterdam were overwhelmingly Afro-Surinamese. The proportion of Indo-Surinamese grew after 1974, although always remaining a minority. This shows that the character of the Surinamese immigration to Amsterdam changed notably during the years around Surinamese independence. Many Indo-Surinamese left Surinam for

the Netherlands in fear of Afro-Surinamese domination after independence. These Indo-Surinamese immigrants arrived as families, which explains the sudden increase in the number of Indo-Surinamese people in Amsterdam between 1970 and 1977. As the figures are estimates, and no precise annual numbers are available, we cannot show the relative number of Afro-Surinamese and Indo-Surinamese organisations.

Table 4.1 *Percentages of Afro-Surinamese and Indo-Surinamese within the total Surinamese population in Amsterdam*

	Afro-Surinamese	*Indo-Surinamese*	*Other ethnic Surinamese groups*[1]
1970	95	5	0
1977	64	28	8
1994	70	26	4

[1] Mainly Javanese-Surinamese or Chinese-Surinamese

Sources: Van Amersfoort (1970: 113); Gooskens (1979: 15); Martens and Verweij (1997: 10)

4.4 Types of Afro-Surinamese and Indo-Surinamese organisations

Literature has characterised Indo-Surinamese organisations as being highly religious and explicitly concerned with strengthening their ethnic and religious communities (Bloemberg 1995). Afro-Surinamese organisations, on the other hand, have been characterised as being concerned with promoting unity among the Surinamese in the Netherlands. They tend to value highly an ongoing relationship with people in Surinam and to emphasise the importance of knowledge of the country's history, in particular, its colonial past. Afro-Surinamese immigrants, in stark contrast to the Indo-Surina-mese, have founded many organisations whose activities focus directly on Surinam. Table 4.2, showing the distribution of types of Afro-Surinamese and Indo-Surinamese organisations, illustrates this, along with other differences between the two ethnic groups. A large proportion of the Afro-Surinamese organisations have been directly involved in their country of origin, supporting developments or projects in Surinam such as schools and hospitals. In the 1970s, in particular, these were core activities of Afro-Surinamese organisations in Amsterdam, when this type of activity constituted the second-largest goal of Afro-Surinamese organisations. Very few Indo-Surinamese organisations have been established that aim to improve the situation in Surinam. The Indo-Surinamese community is much more interested in its 'real' motherland, either India or Pakistan (if it concerns Islamic Indo-Surinamese). Indian culture (either from India itself or from the large Indian community in Great Britain) has proved a significant influence on Indo-Surinamese youth in the Netherlands (Van Niekerk 1994: 67).

Table 4.2 *Percentage distributions of Afro-Surinamese and Indo-Surinamese immigrant organisations in Amsterdam, by the activities of the organisations, 1970-2000*[2]

	Surinamese %				*Afro-Surinamese* %			*Indo-Surinamese* %		
	1970	*1980*	*1990*	*2000*	*1980*	*1990*	*2000*	*1980*	*1990*	*2000*
Interest representation	20	11	18	13	10	21	9	3	11	6
Social welfare	12	16	11	6	14	10	5	13	6	14
Religious	12	23	22	28	6	5	24	60	58	56
Sociocultural	20	15	13	11	14	14	9	17	11	14
Country of origin	16	13	9	5	24	13	10			
Cultural	4	6	8	10	10	13	11			3
Sport	12	4	4	5	4	6	5	3	3	3
Youth		3	5	5	6	8	7		2	2
Women		3	3	5	6	5	6		2	2
Political			1							
Unknown	4	6	6	11	6	6	15	3	6	10
N=	*25*	*104*	*215*	*209*	*50*	*106*	*88*	*30*	*64*	*63*

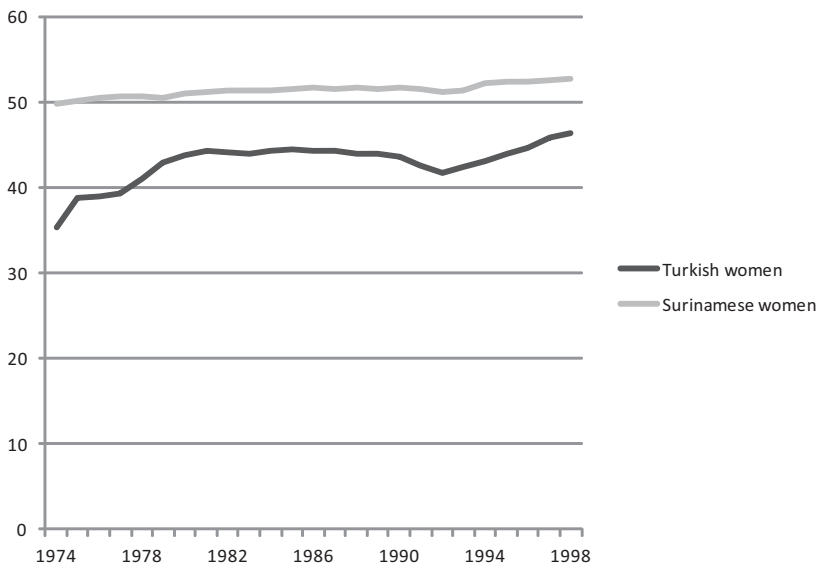
Sources: National Archive; Chamber of Commerce Amsterdam; for 2000 Van Heelsum and Voorthuysen (2002)

Table 4.2 further illustrates that Indo-Surinamese organisations have indeed been overwhelmingly religious by nature. Throughout the Indo-Surinamese settlement process, the vast majority of organisations for this group have been involved in religious or sociocultural activities. Religion has been the most obvious organisational principal for Indo-Surinamese for several reasons. Indo-Surinamese migration to the Netherlands was a family migration. Complete families came as a group, causing a sudden demand for religious Indo-Surinamese institutions (mainly Hindu, but also Islamic) in Amsterdam in the 1970s. These family migrations also resulted in the transplantation of almost complete family networks. Because of this, the social function of Indo-Surinamese organisations was less in demand, at least in the sense that networks did not need to be reconstructed, which can be an important function of the first organisations of recently arrived immigrant groups. Instead, Indo-Surinamese organisations could focus fully on the cultural and religious aspects of their community. Maintaining Indo-Surinamese culture and religion became the prime focus of the organisations, as well as incorporating the second generation into the ethnic community as much as possible (Bloemberg 1995: 201). One of the practical reasons that so many Indo-Surinamese organisations were established was the strong competition between different types of Hindu movements within the Indo-Surinamese community (Bloemberg 1995: 51).

The distribution of Afro-Surinamese organisational activities displays a more diverse picture. Afro-Surinamese already had a wide diversity of

organisational types to choose from in the 1970s, as their organisational history had begun long before then. We also see in the 1970s a number of Afro-Surinamese women's organisations, which was unusual at this time. Among other immigrant groups, women had not yet founded separate organisations. This relatively early existence of women's organisations can be attributed mainly to the high level of female representation in the Surinamese population, compared to other immigrant groups in Amsterdam. Figure 4.3 shows that the female-to-male ratios in the Surinamese population have been reasonably steady since the early 1970s, with the number of women slightly exceeding that of men from 1976 onwards. This contrasts sharply with, for instance, the male-dominated guest worker groups of Turkish immigrants. Especially within the Afro-Surinamese community, women play a relatively active role in society, as seen in their high rate of participation in the labour market, for instance (Van Niekerk 2002: 97-98). These women have also been very important in terms of the organising process. Afro-Surinamese women have functioned as intermediaries between the Afro-Surinamese population and the leaders of formal Afro-Surinamese organisations (Van Wetering 1986: 243-244).

Figure 4.3 *Percentage of women in Surinamese and Turkish population in Amsterdam, 1974-1998*



Source: Vermeulen (2006: 146)

4.5 Combining the migrant and the opportunity models: The relative influence of municipal policy and the characteristics of the Surinamese community

In the next section of this chapter, we use a multivariate regression analysis to test the effect of the different explanatory factors determining the Surinamese organising process. We follow Hannan and Freeman (1989), who argued that the analysis of organisational founding rates is a good measurement of the entire development of the organisational population.[3] We wish to see to what extent group-related (immigrant model) and host state-related (opportunity model) factors, as described in the previous section, influence founding rates. To take into account that we are dealing here with different ethnic groups, we use three separate analyses for three populations: 1) all Surinamese organisations together; 2) only Afro-Surinamese organisations; 3) only Indo-Surinamese organisations. This makes it possible to analyse the organising processes of the ethnic groups separately, as well as to analyse interpopulational influences between these groups of organisations (Minkoff 1995). We can do this by looking at, for instance, the influence of the number of existing Afro-Surinamese organisations (density) on the founding rates of all Surinamese organisations or Indo-Surinamese organisations. It could be the case that the density of Afro-Surinamese organisations, the first group to organise, has had a positive effect on other types of Surinamese organisations (for instance, the Indo-Surinamese).

The database of organisations used to describe the developments here and the first section of this chapter was set up following Fennema and Tillie (1999, 2001; Fennema 2004). We gathered most of the information about immigrant organisations from the archives of the Chamber of Commerce Amsterdam (Kamer van Koophandel Amsterdam). The data held in these archives indicates the year an immigrant organisation was founded and when it was dissolved. It further includes the name of the organisation, its mission statement and the names, dates of birth and birthplaces of its board members and founders. To identify immigrant organisations, we used a method that works with keywords and existing lists of immigrant organisations (Van Heelsum & Tillie 1999: 10-11; Vermeulen 2006: 21-26). The information about board members is used to determine an organisation's ethnic composition and to assess whether the organisation is a genuine immigrant organisation. An immigrant organisation is defined as a formal (officially registered) non-profit organisation, at least half of whose board members originate from one single immigrant group (first or second generation). Every formal non-profit organisation founded by members of a single immigrant group is included, regardless of the mission statement of the organisation or the ethnic composition of its members (Fennema 2004).

From our database, the following variables were used in the regression model. As *dependent variable* – that is, the factor with which we want to explain the development in time – we have chosen *the organisations' year of founding*. The Chamber of Commerce Amsterdam keeps a record of the year organisations were founded. Based on this information, we made annual counts of the number of new organisations for each group and used these figures as the dependent variable (founding rates).

As *independent variables* – that is, the variables that in our opinion influence the number of newly founded organisations – we included three factors related to the two explanatory models described at the beginning of this chapter. For the immigration model we use *size of the immigrant population*. The size of the Surinamese population in Amsterdam is used to measure its effect on, and relationship to, the ethnic constituency.[4] In general, a growing immigrant population increases the demand for immigrant organisations, more new organisations are expected (increasing founding rates) and it will be easier to maintain existing organisations (decreasing disbanding rates) (Olzak & West 1991; Schrover & Vermeulen 2005; Vermeulen 2006). Schrover and Vermeulen (2005) expect that at a certain point in time the size of the population will not support the founding of more new immigrant organisations. To test this curvilinear effect of the size of the immigrant population, we included a quadratic size term. These measures are all lagged one year.

Two other independent variables are related to the opportunity model. One is the *state funding for immigrant organisations*. We included the annual amount allotted by the state to local Surinamese organisations in Amsterdam in Euros (Vermeulen 2006). The measures are lagged one year. The second variable are *multicultural policies from 1983 to 1999.* The Dutch multicultural policy acknowledged Surinamese as an official minority, entitled to specific rights as an immigrant group. For the Surinamese this meant fewer state subsidies, but a more secure environment. The period in which Amsterdam had an official multicultural policy is measured by including a dummy variable distinguishing the periods in which there was and was not a multicultural policy (coded 1 for years 1983-1999). The measures are lagged one year.

The last variable in the model is the *control variable:* '*organisational density'*. Control variables are extraneous factors, possibly affecting the analysis, that are kept *constant*. Organisational density has to be kept constant to control for interorganisational dynamics that occur (for instance more organisations means more competition for resources). Organisational density is calculated as the total number of organisations active at the end of the preceding year (t-1) to measure the density effect on the annual founding-rates of local immigrant organisations. We also tested for a curvilinear density effect by including a quadratic density term for the preceding year (Hannan & Freeman 1989). The density measure particularly enables

us to see whether competition between Surinamese organisations has had an effect on the organising processes of the group. The reason this factor was added is that density-dependent theory hypothesises a positive first-order effect of density on the founding rate (increasing legitimation) and a negative second-order effect of density on the founding rate (enhancing competition).

4.5.1 Results

Table 4.3 provides the results for three different analyses for three different groups of organisations. The first model presents the results for the complete population of Surinamese organisations in Amsterdam (the dependent variable is the founding rates of Surinamese organisations). The second model presents the results of the analysis of Afro-Surinamese organisations (the dependent variable is the founding rates of Afro-Surinamese organisations). The third model presents the results for Indo-Surinamese organisations (the dependent variable is the founding rates of Indo-Surinamese organisations). Significant effects (betas) are shown with stars.

Table 4.3 illustrates that for all three groups the immigration model has a significant influence on the organising process. More Surinamese, Afro-Surinamese and Indo-Surinamese are founded as the size of the Surinamese immigrant population in Amsterdam increases. It also shows that we cannot claim that group-related factors are stronger for the Indo-Surinamese process than for the Afro-Surinamese as all groups were influenced by this indicator. The fact that the effects are stronger for the entire group of Surinamese organisations than for the two sub-ethnic groups is probably due to the lack of specific annual data for the number of Afro-Surinamese and Indo Surinamese in Amsterdam.

Models 1 and 2 confirm the expectation of Schrover and Vermeulen (2005) that at a certain point, the size of the immigrant population decreases the founding rates of immigrant organisations. This is indicated by the significant negative influence of the quadratic term on the founding rates of Surinamese and Afro-Surinamese organisations. Apparently, in the long run, when the size of the immigrant population reaches high numbers, the immigrant constituency is able to fulfil their organisational needs using already existing ethnic organisations and native organisations. It then becomes more difficult to establish new immigrant organisations.

Table 4.3 confirms the negative effect that the state-funding policy of the city of Amsterdam had on the establishment of new Surinamese and Afro-Surinamese organisations in the city (models 1 and 2). The significant negative effect of the annual state subsidy for Surinamese organisations on the founding rates of Surinamese organisations shows that the large sums of state subsidy that were provided through a few large Surinamese welfare organisations decreased organisational activities among Surinamese im-

Table 4.3 *The founding of Surinamese, Afro-Surinamese and Indo-Surinamese immigrant organisations in Amsterdam, 1965-2000 (negative binomial estimates)*

Independent Variable	*Surinamese 1*	*Afro-Surinamese 2*	*Indo-Surinamese 3*
Immigrant	.0002***	.0002	.0002*
Population (t-1)	(.00007)	(.00009	(.00001)
Immigrant	-1.7e-09**	-1.5e-09*	-1.2e-09
Population Squared (t-1	(8.0e-10)	(8.4e-10)	(1.2e-09)
State funding (t-1)	-1.4e-07**	-1.6e-07**	-1.4e-07
	(6.2e-08)	(6.1e-08)	(1.1e-07)
Multicultural policy	.16	.38	.20
(1983-1999) (t-1)	(.30)	(.36)	(.43)
Density Surinamese	-.027		
Organisations (t-1)	(.02)		
Density Surinamese	-.00004		
Organisations Squared (t-1)	(.00006)		
Density Afro-Surinamese		-.08	.021
Organisations (t-1)		(.06)	(.026)
Density Afro-Surinamese		-.0002	
Organisations Squared (t-1)		(.0002)	
Density Indo-Surinamese		.016	-.035
Organisations (t-1)		(.04)	(.10)
Density Indo-Surinamese			-.001
Organisations Squared (t-1			(.001)
Constant	.46	-.32	-.105
	(.39)	(.50)	(.66)
Pseudo-R2	.15	.17	.18
Log-likelihood	-10.28	-77.69	-62.20
Number of cases (years)	36	36	36

*p <0.10; **p < 0.05; ***p <0.01
Source: Authors' own derivation

migrants by causing an insecure and competitive environment. Older and more established Surinamese organisations protected their positions by putting up high subsidy barriers for new Surinamese organisations. These older organisations were also suspected of withholding money to secure their own financial positions. A common method employed by new organisations demanding more state subsidy in the 1970s and early 1980s was to occupy the offices of Surinamese welfare organisations. Models 2 and 3 illustrate that the Indo-Surinamese did not suffer as much as a result of the subsidy policies as the Afro-Surinamese organisations for which the policy was specifically formulated (Vermeulen 2006). Interestingly, we do not find statistical evidence that the implementation of local multicultural policy in Amsterdam in the early 1980s had an effect on associational

activities among Surinamese immigrants (models 1-3), which we would expect following the opportunity model.

Finally, Table 4.3 indicates that the Afro-Surinamese and Indo-Surinamese organising processes evolved separately, as expected, as neither the density of Afro-Surinamese nor Indo-Surinamese organisations significantly correlates to the founding rates of other groups (models 2 and 3). We do not find any significant evidence of interorganisational dynamics, indicated by the lack of significant results for the density of organisations on the founding rates of similar organisations.

Summarising the main results of these statistical analyses, we find strong support for the immigration model and mixed support for the opportunity model. Group-related factors apparently play an important and positive role on the organising process of Surinamese, Afro-Surinamese and Indo-Surinamese immigrants in Amsterdam. As more Surinamese immigrants settled in the city the demand for immigrant organisations increased and different types of organisations were founded, as described in the second section of this chapter. The Amsterdam opportunity structure seemed to have played mainly a negative role in the Surinamese organising process. The ad hoc provision of large sums of local subsidies to a rather disorganised and recently arrived immigrant group frustrated the development of the Surinamese organising process.

4.6 Conclusions

This chapter described how the Surinamese were very active in establishing organisations in Amsterdam between 1965 and 2000. For a long time this group showed the highest degree of associational activities of all the immigrant groups in the city. We first focused on the influence of factors from the opportunity model, particularly subsidies. We then looked at factors from the immigrant model, particularly the difference between the Afro-Surinamese and the Indo-Surinamese. Finally, we combined the two. It has become clear that a combination of both models provides the best explanation, just as we had assumed.

The relevance of the immigrant model is shown by the clear distinction between Afro-Surinamese and Indo-Surinamese organising processes and the significant effect of the size of the immigrant population on the founding rates of Surinamese organisations. Both sub-ethnic groups predominantly organised separately and the development of their organisations should be understood differently. Afro-Surinamese organisations have more often established activities in their country of origin, Surinam. In addition, more Afro-Surinamese organisations have been involved in interest representation and in cultural affairs. Indo-Surinamese organisations, on the other hand, seem to have followed the demands of their ethnic

constituency more consistently. These organisations organise more often in relation to Hinduism, and in Amsterdam this group displayed a higher degree of associational activities than the Afro-Surinamese.

The relevance of the opportunity model is shown by the strong (negative) influence of the Amsterdam subsidy policies on the Surinamese (and Afro-Surinamese) organising processes. We explained the influence of the Amsterdam opportunity structure by referring to the colonial situation in the country of origin. For Surinamese immigrants in Amsterdam, the ambiguous manner in which Dutch authorities dealt with their organisations was quite familiar. It was similar to the way in which voluntary organisations in Surinam functioned. The Dutch colonial administration did not encourage the development of a vibrant and democratic civil society, although many voluntary associations were present in Surinam. Most of these organisations were linked to political parties or religions and clearly differentiated by ethnicity. In addition to that, organisational leaders and the Dutch colonial administration both used the existing associations to their own benefit, which created a lot of distrust among the population towards these organisations.

Consequently, we are tempted to conclude that in a situation in which voluntary organisations are not a symbol of trust and stability, but rather vehicles to jobs, influence and personal benefit, the provision of large subsidies has problematic consequences for the immigrant organising process, since it can multiply existing mechanisms. Reasoning a step further, it probably also has a negative effect on the formation of a post-colonial political identity as this political identity is not formed independently from the Dutch authorities, with whom the post-colonial immigrants had, by definition, an ambiguous relationship. A political identity solely formed by group-related factors would have been at least less complicated. In that sense, it is fortunate that we did find strong effects of group-related factors on the Surinamese organising process. This shows that the negative influence that the opportunity structure had in this case did not completely dominate the Surinamese organising process nor, consequently, the formation of a Surinamese post-colonial identity.

Notes

1 One guilder is equivalent to about € 0.46.

2 Although no objective criteria are available for identifying Afro-Surinamese associations, a reliable categorisation can be made by taking an organisation's name in conjunction with the names of its board members (Van Heelsum & Voorthuysen 2002: 10).

3 We have modelled the organisational founding rate using Poisson regression analysis, which is a non-linear regression model and appropriate for use with annual count data (Barron 1992; Hannan 1991; Minkoff 1997; Cameron & Trivedi 1998).

According to Cameron and Trivedi (1998: 20), the baseline Poisson model takes the form: $\Pr(Y = y) = e^{-\mu}\mu^{y}/y!$, where y is the number of organisations formed per year. In the Poisson formulation, the assumption that the conditional mean and variance of Y are equal fails to account for over-dispersion. Over-dispersion occurs when the variance exceeds the mean and can result in a downwards bias of the standard errors for coefficients for the exogenous variables (Barron 1992). We used negative binomial regression models estimated by quasi-maximum likelihood to overcome this possible problem. The analyses were carried out using the software Stata 9.0 (Long & Freese 2003). In order to incorporate a set of covariates, *X t-1*, including a constant, the parameter μ is specified to be $\mu = \exp(X_{t-1}\beta)$, an exponential function is specified to insure a non-negative count. *X t-1* refers to a set of covariates measured one year prior to the dependent variable. β represents a set of parameters indicating the effects of these measures on the founding rates of immigrant organisations (Cameron & Trivedi 1998; Minkoff 1995).

4 Unfortunately, we do not have information on the sizes of the Afro-Surinamese and Indo-Surinamese populations.

5 Post-colonial migrant festivals in the Netherlands

Marga Alferink

5.1 Introduction

Every year, the Zomercarnaval Rotterdam (Rotterdam Summer Carnival) attracts one million visitors, almost the same number as the famous Notting Hill Carnival in London. Both festivals are organised by Afro-Caribbean immigrants from former Dutch respectively British colonies. Meanwhile, Indian immigrants from South Asia or the Caribbean have their own gatherings, known as *mela*, in the Netherlands. These festivals and others like it, offer immigrants venues where they can assert and renew their collective identities, based on ethnic, religious or national commonalities. Festivals play an important role in the process of bonding. However, these large public gatherings also offer opportunities to build ties with the receiving society, a process that is known as bridging (Putnam 2002). And this takes the phenomenon of ethnic festivals right to the heart of the political agendas of various participants in both local and national politics, as was the case with the internationally renown Notting Hill Carnival. This chapter presents the results of my field research on Dutch ethnic festivals in the context of the Dutch multicultural society that developed from the 1980s onwards.

The arrival of post-colonial immigrants in the Netherlands introduced four nationally renowned festivals to the country: the Pasar Malam Besar, recently renamed into Tong Tong Fair, and the Milan Festival, the Kwakoe Festival and the Zomercarnaval ('Summer Carnival') Rotterdam. The Pasar Malam Besar, organised by The Hague's Indische community, celebrated its 50th edition in 2008 and attracted approximately 133,000 visitors.[1] The Milan Festival is an event organised by the Hindustani community in The Hague and attracts approximately 70,000 visitors, mainly Hindustani themselves. The Kwakoe Festival is an event that lasts for six weekends and is organised by the Afro-Surinamese community in the Bijlmer, a predominantly ethnic-minority quarter in the borough of Amsterdam Zuidoost ('south-east').[2] The festival attracts around 400,000 visitors, most of whom visit it more than once. Finally, the Summer Carnival, which started in 1984 as the annual Antillean festival, attracts approximately one million

spectators. These festivals are a reflection of the multicultural society that the Netherlands has become over the past decades.

Since the introduction in the early 1980s of the new minorities' policy, which was mildly multicultural, municipal authorities began to see these festivals as a useful vehicle for *bridging* between immigrants and the receiving society. The Dutch government's 1983 'Minorities policy' paper stated that activities for minorities aimed at emancipation, expressing identity and improvement of relations between the majority and minorities, were eligible for funding by local authorities (*Minderhedennota* 1983: 109). While these policies were developed at the national level, local authorities were responsible for their implementation. The local levels became the arenas where the different agendas of multicultural policies and of the newcomers who organised the festivals had to be negotiated.

This chapter discusses the impact of the ethnic minorities policies on post-colonial festivals. Because Indische Netherlanders were considered as having been fully integrated in the 1970s, they were not part of the multicultural project. The Pasar Malam Besar is therefore not discussed in this chapter.[3] This chapter describes how the organisers of the Kwakoe Festival, the Milan Festival and the Summer Carnival negotiated with local authorities to realise their goals and discusses whether they managed to build bridges between different ethnic groups in Dutch society. Each section of the chapter follows the festivals' respective paths. Although the Kwakoe Festival started in 1975, the introduction of the minorities policies in 1983 coincided with the festival's change of location from a field between two apartment blocks to Bijlmerpark, where it transformed into a major public event. Of course, there were many other events that did not succeed in becoming a regularly practised tradition. Many completely withdrew from municipal ethnic arenas.

5.2 The Kwakoe Festival in Amsterdam

Until the late 1960s, it was mainly the better-educated Surinamese who came to the Netherlands to study or to work. The composition and the intensity of the flow of immigrants changed, however, in the early 1970s, when the Creole National Party in Surinam was striving for independence. The political tensions surrounding Surinam's independence in 1975 as well as the economic problems of the newly independent nation brought about a massive exodus among all population groups.

Most of the immigrants preferred to live in one of the Netherlands's major cities: Amsterdam, The Hague or Rotterdam. Generally speaking, most Hindustanis went to The Hague, while Afro-Surinamese went to Amsterdam (Jansen 2006, 90-91). Many would stay with relatives and find a home for themselves from there. Others, who could not rely on help from

family or friends, found temporary homes in one of the boarding houses in larger cities, or were lodged in government-run centres, after which they were assigned housing in towns and villages throughout the country. This policy of the dispersal of immigrants was, however, very unpopular among the Surinamese. In particular, many Afro-Surinamese moved to Amsterdam, into the newly built southern borough of the Bijlmer in Amsterdam Zuidoost. Today, the Bijlmer is a unique part of the capital, housing 130 nationalities, of which the Surinamese outnumber all other ethnic groups. This quarter of the city – designed in the 1960s to offer (at the time, all white) residents of Amsterdam a green, spacious alternative to the crowded city – did not attract the numbers of residents that city planners had hoped for. In 1969, the first new apartments were put up for sale, but many of the newly built blocks of flats remained empty (Jansen 2006: 88).

These empty apartments in the Bijlmer attracted large numbers of Surinamese immigrants, many of whom travelled directly from the nearby airport to the area. This itinerary became widely known in Surinam as 'the Bijlmer express'. Community development for the Surinamese population in the Bijlmer started with an organisation called the Caraïbisch Centrum, where youngsters from Surinam, and a few from the Antilles, would meet. This centre was closed down due to internal problems, personnel shortages and poor housing) (Reubsaet & Geerts 1983: 79). In 1975, a new organisation was established to continue with youth work for Surinamese youngsters in the Bijlmer. The founders of the organisation, some of whom were active in the former Caraïbisch Centrum, named their new organisation Kwakoe. Kwakoe is the name of a statue in Surinam that commemorates the abolition of slavery. As slavery was abolished on a Wednesday, boys born on a Wednesday are also named Kwakoe in Ghanese tradition. The founders of the Kwakoe organisation used the name in a symbolic way, representing freedom. They wanted to define their own future, independent of the older generation who had been in charge of the Caraïbisch Centrum (Reus 2005: 20-21; interview Roy Groenberg).[4]

The choice of the name and symbolics excluded the Hindustani population, who are descendants of indentured labourers and do not self-identify with the history of slavery. In 1977, a Hindustani group set up its own centre, helped by a temporary subsidy scheme allowing for separate ethnic organisations within the Surinamese immigrant population (Reubsaet & Geerts 1983: 1220). Their Hindustani Cultural Centre Dosti was housed in a cultural centre originally meant for more users. These two were not the only organisations set up to work with youngsters in Amsterdam Zuidoost; research in 1980 identified 25 existing associations (Reubsaet & Geerts 1983: 119). Among them, Kwakoe was the only one that received a subsidy from the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Recreation and Social Welfare, which fully covered the expenses of the organisation (Reubsaet & Geerts

1983: 119-120). The other groups received a 40 per cent subsidy from the municipality towards their budgets.

Kwakoe organised a wide range of activities for the Surinamese living in the Bijlmer, such as sports, music and community development (interview Roy Groenberg, stadsarchief Amsterdam). The most popular activity was a soccer tournament during the summer, which evolved into the Kwakoe Festival. The setup of the event was comparable to Sunday tournaments that were very popular in Surinam, and in which – sometimes under different names – the top teams of the country joined (Douglas 1984). The Kwakoe tournament started as an informal event, organised for youngsters who had nowhere to go during their summer holiday, simply participating in the matches on ad hoc teams. The Bijlmer tournament lasted over eight weekends. Matches were played on a field between two apartment blocks known as Hoogoord and Frissenstein. Around the field, vendors sold cans of soda and Surinamese snacks.

In 1983, this location became unavailable due to construction of a new shopping mall. The tournament moved to Bijlmerpark, where it attracted more attention and the number of spectators doubled to 2,000 visitors per weekend (*De Nieuwe Bijlmer* 4 August 1983). The festival's relocation to a more visible space, a public park, also provoked mixed reactions from Dutch whites, who were unfamiliar with Surinamese culture (*De Nieuwe Bijlmer* 4 August 1983). People living in the vicinity did not all welcome the festival to the park. Newspapers praised the quality of the soccer, but also expressed concerns about loud music and litter being left behind (*De Nieuwe Bijlmer* 21 June 1983, 11 August 1983). Clearly, the Afro-Surinamese population perceived the event as way to maintain a Surinamese sense of belonging in the Netherlands. At the same time, they began to distance themselves increasingly from Surinamese politics. The military coup against the democratically elected Surinamese government in 1980 and the December 1982 murder of fifteen opponents of the new military regime (among the victims were union leaders, lawyers and journalists) resulted in a very strained relationship between the Netherlands and Surinam, also causing divisions within the local Surinamese community. When at Kwakoe's closing ceremony of 1983, Surinam's ambassador to the Netherlands, Henk Herrenberg, gave a speech expressing favour for the political leaders in Surinam, the audience walked away (*De Nieuwe Bijlmer* 30 June 1983; Douglas in *Span'noe* 1984). Their feeling was that there should be 'no place for politics at Kwakoe!'

But politics did come in. In 1983, Antillean Kerwin Duinmeyer was brutally murdered by Dutch racists. The resulting public indignation prompted municipal authorities to initiate an anti-discrimination campaign. Kwakoe has undoubtedly benefited from the more proactive attitude of the Dutch authorities. Despite the protests and troubles accompanying the first tournament in Bijlmerpark, the festival was organised at the same location in

1984. This time, reactions were more positive: the 14 June edition of the local newspaper *De Nieuwe Bijlmer* featured a headline mentioning the efficient organisation of the festival. The paper also published a letter sent in by a Dutch resident, passionately pleading in favour of the festival, as the atmosphere there reminded her of the country fair in the rural village where she grew up (*De Nieuwe Bijlmer* 14 June 1984). The tournament was opened by the chair of the borough council and concluded with a soccer match between the local police force and a team of Surinamese youngsters. This contest should be seen as an attempt by the Amsterdam municipality to improve the strained relationship between the overwhelmingly white police force and the Surinamese community in the city. In the course of the 1970s and early 1980s, various incidents had been reported concerning the use of disproportionate violence by police officers against young Surinamese men (Luning 1976; Bosma 2009: 97).

The positive impression made in 1984 compensated for the troublesome start in the park in 1983. Kwakoe was granted permission by the borough council to continue in Bijlmerpark, much to the relief of festival staff. The borough also continued with an annual grant of 10,000 guilders towards the cost of the event (*De Nieuwe Bijlmer* 20 June 1985). That year, the tournament attracted a total of 80,000 to 90,000 spectators. Apart from the matches, visitors enjoyed Surinamese cuisine, music and a playback contest. But success became a burden on the organisation. Judging by the archives, one sees that organising the festival took a toll on the staff, who hardly got round to their dayjobs (*De Nieuwe Bijlmer* 8 August 1985). The board decided to appoint a project manager to relieve the regular staff. What is more, the bookkeeping practices of the tournament left a lot to be desired.[5] From the same archival files it emerges that it was uncertain whether Kwakoe would be granted the organisation of future tournaments. Kwakoe's financial records were inadequate and there was a looming settlement with the borough for payments due since 1982.

Despite uncertainty about the future, in 1986, Kwakoe attracted more teams than before. As only one field was available in Bijlmerpark, not all the teams who signed up could join in the competition (*De Nieuwe Bijlmer* 12 June 1986). Local newspapers were delighted by the quality of football in the matches. The widely distributed local *De Echo* designed a special column for the tournament (*De Echo* 25 June 1986, 2 July 1986, 9 July 1986). The number of visitors set a new record and the event was called the biggest crowd-puller for Amsterdam Zuidoost (*De Nieuwe Bijlmer* 10 July 1986, 7 August 1986). 'The Bijlmer at its best', was the headline in the following week's edition (*De Nieuwe Bijlmer* 17 July 1986). An attempt to stop the tournament by covering the field with glass splinters showed, however, that not everyone was in favour of the event (*De Nieuwe Bijlmer* 31 July 1986). To ease tensions within the neighbourhood, the Kwakoe summer tournament was reduced from eight to six weekends

(*De Echo* 6 July 1988). It was the borough council that took the decision because, according to its chair, Jaap Ruijgers:

> The discussion about the inconvenience caused by the festival has been an issue for years. The borough council is not against the festival, but we do have to take into account complaints from neighbours of the park [...].

In 1989, Kwakoe entered a new phase. In June of that year a plane operated by the Surinamese air company crashed near Paramaribo; 176 people died and only thirteen survived. Many residents of the Bijlmer knew one or more of the victims. Among them were professional soccer players of Surinamese descent en route to a benefit match in Surinam. A number had also participated in the Kwakoe tournament. Other victims linked to the Kwakoe Festival were musicians in the Draver Boys, who had performed at Kwakoe every year (Reus 2005: 40). Some residents of the Bijlmer asked Kwakoe to cancel the tournament. Yet after consulting with the victims' next of kin, organisers decided to start the competition, albeit in a more sober fashion during the mourning period, which lasted six weeks from the date of the accident (Jaarverslag Kwakoe 1989: 28). Kwakoe co-organised a commemorative ceremony at the RAI exhibition and conference centre in Amsterdam, which was attended by representatives of the Dutch government and attracted much media attention (Reus 2005: 40). The mourning period was concluded with a visit to the festival by Suriname's vice-president. World-class soccer players Frank Rijkaard and Ruud Gullit were appointed patrons of Kwakoe and visited the festival. Both were contracted by AC Milan and were star players on the Dutch team that won the 1988 European Football Championship in Germany. The festival was also visited by Wim Kok, leader of the Dutch social-democratic opposition party, PvdA (*Het Parool* 14 August 1989). The national programme Studio Sport broadcasted part of the finals. Apart from national attention for the festival, the Amsterdam police force also had special interest in it. Aiming for a more balanced composition on their force, allochtonous police officers recruited new colleagues from minority groups who were present at the festival. The campaign resulted in 40 new applicants for the local police training course (*Het Parool* 14 August 1989).

From 1989 onwards, a number of Dutch national party politicians have been guests at Kwakoe and former Surinamese President Jules Wijdenbosch also paid a visit to the event (*de Volkskrant* 30 August 1993; *Het Parool* 12 July 1995; *Het Parool* 31 July 1997). Thanks to the steadily growing number of visitors to the festival and its growing popularity, Kwakoe finally managed to attract sponsors: the Surinamese soft drinks producer Fernandes and the Nationale Postcode Loterij (a lottery by postal code) (*Alerta* 15 August 1995: 11). That year, the number of visits neared the

500,000 mark. Financial struggles and a lack of transparency were issues recurring throughout the 1990s. In 1997, the financial administration's non-transparency was once again discussed by the borough council, but it proved difficult to address Kwakoe's problems. While borough member Emile Esajas complained that everyone scrutinised Kwakoe extra harshly because it was a 'black' organisation, other politicians were of the opinion that the financial problems were serious. The characterisation of Kwakoe by a right-wing council member, of Surinamese descent herself, as 'old welfare mafia' proved to be too offensive and caused upheaval during a local council meeting (*Het Parool* 24 September 1997). To avoid a total collapse of the Kwakoe organisation, which would have also meant the end of its youth work, the borough council forced Kwakoe to divide its activities into one branch for youth work and another for the festival.

Of the two parties applying for the permit to organise the festival, the organisation known as Kwakoe Events was selected by the borough council to arrange the 1998 edition. Kwakoe's youth work was placed in the hands of the Afrikaans-Surinaams Cultureel Centrum (Afro-Surinamese Cultural Centre, ASCC). The borough council agreed 'for the last time' to a subsidy of 150,000 guilders or € 68,000 (*Het Parool* 17 September 1998). This was granted on condition that debts would be settled by Kwakoe, that the foundation would give council representatives unfettered access to its financial administration and that the organisation would resolve the public disturbance matter arising from neighbours' complaints of the loud music. The 1998 edition was officially opened by Hannah Belliot, the first black district-mayor of Amsterdam Zuidoost (*Het Parool* 13 July 1998). In the hands of Kwakoe Events, the festival continued to grow into a 'multicultural miracle', as Amsterdam newspaper *Het Parool* put it, attracting visitors of Surinamese, Ghanese, Turkish, Moroccan and Dutch descent (*Het Parool* 14 July 2000). Further, the festival maintained its transnational ties with Surinam by welcoming then President of Surinam Ronald Venetiaan in 2001. That year's Kwakoe attracted one million visits (*Het Parool* 8 July 2002).

Despite the growing popularity of the festival, cooperation between Kwakoe Events and the borough entered into crisis in 2007. After that year's edition, the borough council decided to find a new partner to organise the Festival. According to borough president Elvira Sweet:

> Things did not go well last year. Kwakoe's administration was insufficient. Also, we had to give them a number of warnings relating to security and traffic measures. That is why the council of the borough found another partner.[6]

The council acknowledged the importance of the festival in presenting Amsterdam Zuidoost as a dynamic multicultural borough, and guaranteed

continuation of the event. An open competition was set up. Six parties applied for a permit to organise the festival, among them being Kwakoe Events, whose application was rejected.[7] It was determined that the Stichting Zomerfestival Amsterdam Zuidoost (Summer Festival Foundation of Amsterdam Zuidoost, ZAZO) would organise Kwakoe 2008. Kwakoe Events was furious and took legal action against the borough, but the judge sanctioned the borough's decision.

When ZAZO decided to continue the festival tradition under its original name, Kwakoe Events tried to prevent this through legal action. They claimed that the name was not free for use since it had been registered as a trademark in 1997. Kwakoe Events continued with its efforts to move the location to the nearby town of Almere. Attempts to sit both parties around the table to discuss the situation failed. Treasurer and chair of Kwakoe Events Winston Kout and ZAZO director Kenneth Renfrum were foes, following an old conflict dating back to the early 1990s. It was director of Podium Kwakoe Urwin Vyent and a Kwakoe founder, Chas Warning, who offered help to reconcile the parties and to continue the Kwakoe tradition in Amsterdam Zuidoost.[8] According to Vyent, 'Kwakoe', the name, needed to be preserved for the festival in the Bijlmer.

> The name Kwakoe is linked to an internationally successful festival […] The name means something. It refers to the struggle, the fight of the Surinamese to be able to settle here. We shouldn't just throw that away. Kwakoe has also contributed to a better image of this borough […] Now 33 years of history is thrown away. [It is] exactly the name Kwakoe that shows the rest of the country that Surinamese, Antilleans and Africans are able to organise a festival with a multicultural charisma.

The Kwakoe Festival, which started as a small-scale soccer tournament in the Bijlmer, has developed into a national event, completely having outgrown its original setting. Yet it has been able to preserve its bonding role. This balance is quite unique, as the next two cases will illustrate.

5.3 The Milan Festival in The Hague

In 1983, board members of the, mainly Hindustani, Stichting voor Surinamers submitted a plan to two council members of The Hague. The plan concerned a festival during the summer season that would commemorate 5 June as Immigration Day for the Hindustani community, 1 July as Keti Koti (Emancipation Day) and 9 August as Immigration Day for the Javanese community (interview Suresh Chotoe 30 July 2008). The idea was to establish a meeting place for all citizens of Surinamese descent and to

provide a multicultural platform for old and new citizens of The Hague. Perfectly attuned to the newly inaugurated minorities' policies of the Dutch government, the event would foster identity formation of ethnic-cultural groups and encourage mutual acceptance and understanding (*Aisa Samachar* 1985: 10). It was agreed that Stichting voor Surinamers would organise the event and use part of the subsidy it received from the municipality to cover the costs of the festival. The name of this event was to be the Intercultural Meeting Manifestation Milan ('*milan*' is Hindi for 'meeting').

The use of '*milan*' was a reminder of the annual Immigration Day of the Hindustani population, held in previous years in The Hague. This Day of Unity was also referred to as Milan ke Din (Meeting Day) (*Aisa Samachar* 1982: 24-26). Commemorating the migration of indentured labourers from British India to Surinam was a tradition in Surinam, which gave the *kalkatiyas* (people who had boarded the same ship in Calcutta) the opportunity to meet again and maintain the friendships that had grown during the voyage to Surinam. From 1977, the national federation of Hindustani organisations in the Netherlands, Lalla Rookh (named for the first ship that brought contract labourers from India to Surinam), the Stichting voor Surinamers and Eekta had taken up this tradition and organised a weekend cultural event close to 5 June. The programme comprised an official segment, with speeches by presidents of the organising bodies and special guests like local council members (and sometimes a representative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs), and a cultural programme, featuring dance, a play depicting the history of migrant labourers and traditional music.

The Milan Festival was an open-air event held in The Hague's Zuiderpark from 21 to 23 June 1985. These dates were chosen because Ramadan had ended on 19 June and would therefore allow celebrations by the Islamic minority of Hindustanis, as well as the mainly Muslim Javanese-Surinamese population. The park housed the information stands of political parties, welfare organisations and other institutions, a job market with representatives of the local business community and educational institutions. There were a fun fair, stalls with Surinamese snacks, sports and games for children. The cultural programme featured Afro-Surinamese, Hindustani, Javanese, Antillean as well as Turkish, Moroccan and Dutch music and dance. The festival attracted, according to the organisers, approximately 40,000 visitors (*Aisa Samachar* 1989: 3, 14). The number of visitors steadily increased to about 60,000 in 1989, including a modest number of Dutch visitors (*Aisa Samachar* 1989: 2, 14).

In 1990, the city council representative advised the festival organisers to manage their financial affairs by themselves and not leave them to Stichting voor Surinamers. This was to avoid the possibility of financial tribulations jeopardising the organisation's other activities. These setbacks came sooner than expected; within a year, the Stichting voor Surinamers was informed that – probably because of budget constraints – the

municipality would no longer support organisation of the Milan Festival.[9] To cover the costs, the festival organisers charged a small fee to visitors. Despite the extra investment needed to install fences around the field and complaints from visitors about the entrance fee, the festival continued and the organising committee stayed free of debt.

As soon as it became clear that the Milan concept was commercially viable, other entrepreneurs followed the example. In 1993, two new events for the Hindustani community were added to the summer festival calendar. Mela Lounge was a bazaar to raise money for children and the elderly. The event comprised a fair and numerous food stalls selling Hindustani snacks and music cassettes. Its location was the Malieveld, an open field in the centre of The Hague. Mela on Tour was organised by Ujala, a student organisation that also wanted a Hindustani event in its hometown of Amsterdam (interview Anand Chandrikasingh 17 July 2008). The name Mela (which means 'meeting' in Hindi and Urdu) was inspired by *melas* in India, where the term refers to the gathering of a crowd of people, such as a village fair. This concept was taken up in other South Asian diaspora countries, such as the UK, where a network of *mela* organisations exists.[10] Apart from organising social events for the Hindustani community, Ujala, whose activities' appeal went beyond students, started a radio station. From its studio in Amsterdam Zuidoost, Ujala started broadcasting Bollywood music, together with notices of births, deaths and marriages in the Hindustani community. The relationship with India, expressed by using the name '*mela*', was stressed by Ujala radio station director and organiser of Mela on Tour Anand Chandrikasingh. He identified his audience as Bollywood-oriented (meaning fond of the products of the Bombay film industry), including Pakistanis, Indians and Surinamese (interview Chandrikasingh 17 July 2008; my translation). His commercial approach would hardly make him eligible for any subsidies, but Chandrikasingh did not bother about that, because he preferred to be independent.

> The ultimate difference between a subsidised and a non-subsidised festival […] is the dynamic, wanting to change things and being able to change things, not being lazy, mobilising people, maintaining people […] that's what it is about. Realising great things with little money […].

Despite the competition from all these new Hindustani festivals and the lack of financial support from the city council, the Milan Festival in The Hague continued to grow and developed into a mainly Hindustani event. As president of the group responsible for its organisation, Suresh Chotoe said the following about the Milan Festival:

> It is a place to experience Hindustani identity; for the Hindustani it is a place to experience their identity. There is nowhere else, where they can be together in such great numbers. The feeling of being Hindustani originates there too. It is a place to charge your battery. (interview Chotoe 30 July 2008; my translation)

In the ensuing years, the festival addressed a number of issues that were of specific relevance to the Hindustani community. In 2004, the Milan Festival launched an information campaign on diabetes, a disease common among Hindustanis, though few seemed aware of it (*Haagse Courant* 26 July 2004). But in the years that followed, the political climate apparently changed. Whether by coincidence or not, in 1986, the year that Hindustani Rabin Baldewsingh became an alderman in The Hague, the financial relationship between the Milan Festival and the municipality was restored. Since then the importance of the festival as a meeting place for Hindustani and Dutch citizens of the city of The Hague has been underscored by the municipal authorities.[11]

5.4 Zomercarnaval

The Dutch Antilles are still part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and migration between the islands and the metropolis is circular rather than unilateral, as is the case for the other post-colonial migrations. Citizens of the Dutch Antilles can move freely between the islands and the Netherlands. Migration to the Netherlands increased in the 1960s, with the arrival of students, labourers and nurses who were recruited for the Dutch job market. The closure of oil refineries in 1985 brought about the largest influx of immigrants to the Netherlands from the Antilles.

Zomercarnaval (Summer Carnival) has its roots in the Dutch Antilles, as migrants from these islands introduced their still rather recent tradition of celebrating carnival to Dutch society. Carnival in Curaçao was celebrated as early as 1890, when the European elite brought their tradition of the celebration to the island. At that time, however, it was not the massive popular celebration known today. The elite organised masquerade balls at their clubs, men wearing tuxedos and women in evening dresses. This setup changed in the 1950s, due to influences from other Caribbean Islands and the Netherlands. A group of Dutch migrants from Limburg introduced carnival Limburg-style (Hagendijk 1994: 26). Limburg is the southern-most and most Catholic province of the Netherlands, famous for its pre-Lenten carnival celebration. Limburgers, familiar with a popular festival in which rich and poor celebrate carnival together, continued their tradition in Curaçao, and were soon joined by people from other parts of the Netherlands as well as residents of the island. In 1957, Limburgers resident

in Curaçao founded their own carnival group known as the Limburgse Kabrieten,[12] and their parties attracted many Antillean visitors. Also, migrants from Trinidad and the Virgin Islands, who had come to Curaçao to work for Shell, brought their tradition of carnival to the island. In this phase, the carnival was a migrant affair, celebrated in a few locations on the island, but not of the scale or intensity as carnivals in other parts of the Caribbean. Only later than 1969, after a partially successful revolt aimed at black empowerment, did carnival become a national event. The first carnival celebrated after the rebellion in 1970 was organised by a central committee and featured a *gran marcha* ('grand parade'), a tumba contest (tumba is the Curaçaon/Aruban version of calypso music, featuring similarly explicit, spicy lyrics), crowning of a carnival queen and king, the *marcha de despedida* (farewell parade) and the burning of Rei Momo (a doll meant to personify carnival).

Carnival on the island of Aruba has been celebrated on a grand scale since 1954 (Tak 1997: 84). The practice was introduced by industrial workers from Trinidad, who had settled in a shantytown near the refinery of San Nicolas that was named the Village. They brought to the island the tradition of a parade and a steel band. Little by little, the indigenous Aruban population joined in the festivities, even though only as spectators at first (Tak 1997: 85). Though carnival traditions on Aruba are different from those on Curaçao, they share in common an abundance of Caribbean music and dance, exotic outfits and glitter and glamour. Unlike carnival in Trinidad, with its tradition of inversion and the mocking of authority, Curaçao's is less inclined to make political commentary.

As early as the 1960s, students from the Antillean islands in Rotterdam organised carnival in February (Tak 1996: 223; Hagendijk 1994: 7). But once the initiators had completed their studies and returned to the Antilles, their event dissipated. In 1982, the Antillean carnival gained more stable footing in the Netherlands. That year, an Antillean committee organised a Caribbean carnival in Utrecht. Emulating the Notting Hill Carnival in London, they organised a summer parade. Their aim was to promote the integration of Antilleans into Dutch society by presenting their culture and thereby encouraging mutual acceptance (Tak 1996: 225; my translation). The committee chose Utrecht because of its central location, seeing as Antilleans were dispersed throughout the Netherlands. In the following year, a tumba contest and carnival queen crowning were added to the festivities. The parade was an instant success, attracting approximately 100,000 spectators (Tak 1996: 226). Antillean carnival seemed to have found its place in Utrecht, even though a conflict about the queen's parade float cast a shadow over the 1983 edition and the group from Rotterdam, whose queen had won the election, decided not to return to Utrecht.

This Rotterdam group started its own carnival in its own town and founded the Stichting Antilliaans Zomercarnaval Committee (AZCC). This

new foundation decided to compete with the Utrecht carnival, planning their event on the same day as Utrecht's. They persisted with their provocation – despite mediation by Plataforma Organisation Antiyano, the umbrella organisation of Antillean groups in the Netherlands – stating that 'competition is intrinsic to Antillean Carnival' (Tak 1997). AZCC promised financial support to groups who wanted to join the parade and even provided funds in advance. The group in Utrecht could not beat this and had to accept that their carnival moved to Rotterdam.

The AZCC won support from the Rotterdam community council by emphasising the carnival's multicultural nature, its international linkages and the fact that it could nicely fill the void during the summertime when not much was going on in the city (Tak 1996: 227-228). Even though all AZCC board members were Antilleans, the parade was open to Cape Verdians as well. After a year full of organisational tribulations and financial problems, the municipality of Rotterdam took the initiative itself to organise carnival. They considered it an opportunity to present the city as one that was multicultural and international, as well as a chance to counter the image of Rotterdam as city of frugality without joy: i.e. 'all work, no play'. One of AZZC's founders, Marlon Brown, was contracted to coordinate contacts with groups who would join the parade. The municipality invested money in the event and also managed to attract sponsors for the festivities. The carnival was concluded without financial problems and the festival's continuity was secure. In 1988 the organisation was entrusted to an independent foundation, the so-called Zomercarnaval Rotterdam, a name without explicit reference to 'Antillean', even though the board consisted mainly of Antillean members. A number of factors may explain the loss of the modifier: Brown mentions Aruba's 'status aparte' that was obtained in 1986 and protests by Aruban participants in the parade, who stated that they were not Antilleans. Also, the municipality, in striving for an all-encompassing multicultural event and encouraging the participation of Turkish, Moroccan and Chinese groups, may have had a say in this. Karel Willems, boardmember of Zomercarnaval Rotterdam, put forward another reason: in the old AZCC, non-Antillean groups were welcome to join the parade, but were excluded from the competition (Hagendijk 1994: 14). The new organisation wanted to make a fresh start and truly be open to all ethnic groups.

The new organisation, having secured Rotterdam as the national capital of its summer carnival, tried to preserve the event's Antillean roots, while propagating a 'melting pot' philosophy. The Antillean spirit was maintained by the tumba contest and carnival queen election. Both activities were small-scale, visited mainly by Antilleans and simply forming the introduction to the parade. The competition between groups encouraged participation and enhanced the performances at the parade. Groups from all nationalities were welcome to join, though the carnival committee board

urged participants to give a lively and colourful presentation accompanied by a music group playing tumba or calypso. By doing so, they aimed to preserve the Antillean character of the event. To maintain the Caribbean flavour of the parade, the board organised training sessions and group meetings in preparation for the event.

The organisation needed to align the inherently anarchistic character of a Caribbean carnival with the organised reality of a Dutch city. Carnival in the Caribbean may start a couple of hours later than planned and a change of route is not uncommon. This would be unthinkable in a Dutch urban context. Unlike spectators at carnival in Curaçao, those in Rotterdam *do* mind if the parade starts late. In addition, police and emergency services require a strictly observed route and timetable.

Since 1988, the number of groups participating in the parade and the number of visitors had steadily increased. The tenth edition in 1994 was marked by the publication of a book, large-scale celebrations of the tumba contest and carnival queen crowning. Still, the celebrations did not attract the number of visitors the organisation had hoped for, nor did the book sell many copies (Tak 1996: 235). The Zomercarnaval Rotterdam Foundation (SZCR) was practically bankrupt.

In 1995, the foundation received an additional subsidy from the Rotterdam festivals fund, which administered the municipality's festival budget. This fund defined a festival as an open-air activity with free access (*Rotterdams Dagblad* 7 July 1995). By these standards, the budget could finance the parade, but not the tumba contest or queen election, as these activities were held indoors and were open only to visitors who bought separate tickets. As a result, these activities were cancelled and the parade was led by the previous year's elected queen. Due to the absence of the two introductory activities, the number of groups participating in the parade was considerably lower than the year before. On the other hand, the number of spectators was as high as usual, so in terms of city marketing purposes, the 1995 edition could still be considered a success.[13]

After 1995, the board of the SZCR realised that arranging such a big event was too heavy a burden for the organising committee, who were all volunteers. Also, the financial risks were too great. The committee needed a strong partner, and found this in Ducos Productions, a company organising cultural events since 1988. To mark this new phase, and to emphasise the scale of the carnival, the name of the organisation was changed from Stichting Zomercarnaval Rotterdam to the Stichting Zomercarnaval Nederland (Netherlands Summer Carnival Foundation, SZCN). The participating groups were not at all enthusiastic about this step. They were afraid that the carnival would lose its unique Antillean flavour, as Ducos Productions was a Dutch organisation. To maintain its original flavour, responsibilities for the event were divided between the two organising parties. Strict agreements were made: the SZCN was to monitor the quality –

and, specifically, the carnivalesque aspect – of the parade as well as upkeep contacts with participating groups. Ducos Productions would provide administrative support and financial back-up, being in charge of external contacts such as sponsors and lobbyists.

Having a professional company at the helm had its advantages. The parade of the 1996 edition was broadcast live for two hours by SBS6, a national commercial television company. But Ducos' more businesslike approach also led to a change in the programme. In 1997, the tumba contest disappeared, proving too costly even though it was highly popular among Antillean participants.[14] In the Netherlands Antilles, the tumba contest lasts three days and attracts many participants and spectators. In the Netherlands, such a contest proved much harder to stage. There was a shortage of wind instrumentalists in the Netherlands, resulting in high transportation costs and the expense of hiring professional musicians. Because the tumba contest mainly appealed to an Antillean audience, its costs could not be covered by ticket sales alone.

Crowning of the carnival queen remained an important event, despite high costs and limited visitors. These investments were offset by media attention. The candidates for the title were introduced in the local newspaper and the local TV station broadcasted the crowning ceremony.

The first couple of years of the cooperation were marked by getting used to the sharing of responsibilities and winning over the trust of the participating groups. As Guus Dutrieux, the productions director of Ducos stated:

> Getting the participants on board cost a great deal of effort. After all, I was only a white boy and Ducos was a white tent, so we do not want to waste our cultural heritage on that. Their fear is quite justified; we have to make sure that it doesn't come to that. We managed to develop it against the odds, we established mutual trust and we have the trust of the groups.[15]

Ducos Productions aimed to increase the overall event's size and presence, to the extent that its mere existence would be undebatable and financial support from the municipality would be secure. To this aim, Ducos programmed extra activities throughout the city, such as podia with artists performing Latin American music, in order to develop the parade into a real festival and attract more media attention. Meanwhile, the Summer Carnival Foundation aimed to improve the quality of the parade, to win the trust of the Antillean carnival groups and to maintain contacts with carnival organisers in Curaçao and Aruba. Meanwhile, in 2001, the Summer Carnival received the prestigious Prince Claus Award, giving the organisers the cultural and artistic recognition for which they were striving.

Together with Trinidad carnival's top designer Peter Minshall, the Summer Carnival Foundation was awarded the prize in recognition of

achievements in artistic innovation and building intercultural bridges through carnival (Prince Claus Awards 2001: 37). The prize gave them the funds to invest in sustaining international contacts with other carnival organisations, such as the Notting Hill Carnival and the Mardi Gras celebration in New Orleans, as well as to continue relations with Curaçao and Aruba.

This prize also gave the organisers the opportunity to obtain artistic recognition by the municipality of Rotterdam. Even though the importance of carnival for the city – in terms of marketing and economic relevance – had been established (expressed by an annual subsidy from the municipality's sports and events budget), the Summer Carnival Foundation still aimed to put itself on the cultural arena map. Recognition from the Prince Claus Fund gave them the credibility to convince policymakers of their cultural relevance and to be included in the city's *kunstplan* ('art policy agenda'). This would mean more recognition for their cultural contribution (expressed in the form of a yearly subsidy from the city arts budget).

On the one hand, this seems to offer a great opportunity for the Summer Carnival Foundation. On the other, extra subsidy from the city council probably also implies closer ties to the Rotterdam city council and thus more risks of being encapsulated by the municipal interests at city promotion.

5.5 Conclusions

The principles laid down in the Minorities Policy Paper of 1983 were based on the assumption that the integration of new groups in society would be enhanced when immigrants and the population of the receiving society got to know each other. Festival organisers applied for financial assistance to create spaces in which immigrants could express their identities and define their common backgrounds. Local authorities considered the festivals as bridging tools uniting different ethnic groups living in their cities as well as tools for city marketing. This chapter followed the paths of three post-colonial festivals – Kwakoe, Milan and the Summer Carnival – to describe how their organisers dealt with this diversity of interests. Three models can be discerned for the festival: purely as a bonding tool; as a tool for bonding and bridging; as an instrument for city promotion.

The path of Kwakoe is a combination of bridging and bonding components. In the 1980s, Kwakoe fulfilled the demands of different parties: the Surinamese community in the Bijlmer, Surinamese living in other parts of the Netherlands and local authorities who, through the festival, got help addressing issues related to racism and employment. In subsequent years, the festival gained national attention as a multicultural meeting, expressed by the teams joining the competition and by the visitors.

The organisers of Milan designed their festival explicitly by the standards of multicultural policies that were just defined in the Minorities Policy Paper. This, however, proved no guarantee for multiculturalism. Even though dates were chosen to be symbolic for Afro-Surinamese, Surinamese, Javanese and Hindustani cultural commemoration (and the programme also featured Dutch, Moroccan and Turkish music), the festival developed as neither a pan-Surinamese event nor an all-encompassing multicultural event. The absence of pressure or specific demands from the city council made the bridging component less urgent, and the festival developed into a Hindustani bonding event.

The concept of the Milan Festival was commercialised by Mela on Tour, which plays a number of Dutch cities during the summer season and does not depend on local authorities for financial support. Unlike any of the categories used in the Minorities Policy Paper, this festival organiser defines his audience as 'Bollywood-oriented', referring to the event's cultural bonding theme. In view of the limited Pakistani and Indian immigrants in the Netherlands, visitors are mainly Hindustani.

Even though the aim of the organisers of the first Summer Carnival in Rotterdam was to promote the integration of Antilleans into Dutch society, the carnival soon attracted other nationalities, such as Cape Verdians. This tendency to attract more groups to the celebrations was reinforced by the city council that insisted on participation from all ethnic groups in Rotterdam, including those from nations with no tradition of carnival such as Morocco and Turkey. By maintaining close contact with the groups participating in the parade, the organisation tried to practise its 'melting pot' philosophy, while still preserving the festival's Antillean character. However, the event increasingly became a tool of the municipality of Rotterdam to promote its own city.

Notes

1 See www.pasarmalambesar.nl.

2 The Kwakoe Festival was suspended in 2011. At the time of writing, no information was available on what the future has in store for this particular festival.

3 Indische heritage has been extensively described by Lizzy van Leeuwen (2008), a contributor to the research project 'Bringing History Home'.

4 Interview Roy Groenberg in Stadsarchief Amsterdam, Project Eigentijdse Geschiedenisdragers/Migrantenerfgoed: Verhalen van pioniers en sleutelpersonen van zelforganisaties van migranten en vluchtelingen in Amsterdam).

5 [I]Archiefdoos (1984/1985/1986; 1985 management meeting).

6 My translation; see www.wereldjournalisten.nl/artikel/2008/04/07/zomerfestival_vervangt_kwakoe_in_de_bijlmer; accessed in 2012.

7 The application was rejected not because of its debts to the borough (totalling € 371,333), but because Kwakoe did not adhere to agreements concerning security and the prevention of public disturbance caused by loud music (www.zuidoost.

amsterdam.nl/artikelen/veel_gestelde_vragen?ActItmIdt=119134; accessed in 2008, no longer available in 2012).

8 www.surinaams.caribiana.nl/Cultuur/car20080407_kwakoe-naam; accessed in 2008, no longer available in 2012.

9 Chotoe suggested this happened when The Hague was declared an *Artikel twaalf gemeente*, which means it came under the financial supervision of central government (see interview Chotoe 30 July 2008).

10 www.melafestival.com; accessed in 2008, no longer available in 2012.

11 See www.milanzuiderpark.nl/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=67&Itemid=37; accessed in 2012.

12 *Kabrieten* is the Dutch word for 'goats'.

13 In September 1995, the SZCR carnival committee received a Laurenspenning award presented by the municipality of Rotterdam to persons or organisations in the city who make a special contribution to local arts or culture. The timing of the presentation of this award seems, however, a bit odd given the organisational problems the foundation was facing at the time.

14 Interview with Willems and Ducos Productions director Guus Dutrieux, 22 September 2008.

15 Ibidem.

6 Closing the 'KNIL chapter': A key moment in identity formation of Moluccans in the Netherlands

Fridus Steijlen

6.1 Introduction

At the time of their arrival to the Netherlands in 1951, the lives of 12,500 Moluccan soldiers and their families were dominated by their desire to return home – to an independent Republik Maluku Selatan (Republic of South Molucca, RMS) in the eastern part of the Indonesian archipelago. They had come to the Netherlands as the consequence of a complicated decolonisation process. Temporarily, they thought. Up until the mid-1970s they were convinced that they would return to a re-established RMS. Reluctantly integrating into Dutch society, they developed a politicised and oppositional identity towards it. This culminated in train hijackings and the taking of hostages by Moluccan youngsters in, among others, schools in 1975 and 1977, resulting in several innocent casualties. It was during and after these hijackings that members of the second generation of Moluccan immigrants began to review their relationship with the Moluccas, as well as their position in the Netherlands. In retrospect, it seems that this was the point at which they began accepting the fact that they would stay. It was attended by a flurry of creative and cultural projects: from magazines and literature to music and theatre. Moluccan identity now had to be articulated within Dutch society, rather than as a culture of exile.

Most experts think that a failed second train hijacking in 1977 and its violent ending spurred the changing ethos in the Moluccan communities. In their view, the 'failure' of that terrorist action compelled Moluccans to reconsider how they had pursued their political aspirations (see e.g. Bartels 1986). Politicians were inclined to believe it was the government's hard, fast response in 1977 to the hijackings that brought the radicalisation to a halt.[1] I would argue, however, that a reorientation was already underway within the Moluccan community at the time of the train hijackings. This was a key moment in the identity transformation of the Moluccan group when they changed from refugees to immigrants.

The history of the relationship between the Moluccans and the Dutch government is very much determined by their colonial relationship and by the Dutch colonial project. Throughout the timeline of their stay in the

Netherlands, this colonial adventure and experience reverberates. But rather than starting a fundamental discussion on the colonial project – and the post-colonial condition at large – Moluccans only referred to their colonial past and their connection to it in discussions about the specific responsibilities of the Dutch government vis-à-vis the Moluccan community. In the mid-1980s, the leaders of the Moluccan communities settled their disputes with the Dutch government about debts of honour with an agreement that 'closed the chapter' on the colonial era.

How can we explain this? Why did the Moluccans not join up with the Indische Netherlanders and Surinamese to engage themselves with the consequences of the colonial past? Particularly in the 1970s, young Moluccans were inspired by the Black Power Movement and by books such as Fanon's *Black skin, white masks*. There were certainly ample opportunities for a critical reappraisal of the colonial past.

This chapter explores these questions, starting with the shift in perspective among second-generation Moluccans and using manifestations of the 'cultural explosion'. I then explain the momentum of change by linking it to identity formation of the Moluccans in the Netherlands since the 1950s. I argue that central to this change was the redefinition of the RMS. It was the transformation from refugee to migrant, from a waiting-to-go-home to actually investing in a life in the Netherlands. It created the necessary momentum for a profound post-colonial reflection that had the potential of reaching out to other post-colonial groups. Why this did not happen is also explained in this chapter.

6.2 A sign of change: The Moluccan Moods album

In late 1982, *Moluccan Moods* was released. This record album comprised the harvest of one year of Moluccan Moods theme parties held at the Amsterdam rock music club and cultural centre Paradiso. It contained tracks by the ten best Moluccan bands that had performed monthly on the Moluccan Moods stage and photographs of all ten were printed on the cover. The album was an example par excellence of the diversity in styles and music among Moluccan bands in the Netherlands at that time. Its broad spectrum of musicians and music is epitomised by three particular bands. Their album cover photos alone give a sense of their individuality.

The photo of Perlawanan (the band's name means 'opposition' or 'resistance') shows four young men – three Moluccan and one Dutch – posing against a tiled wall with graffiti, presumably in an underground station. They wore either a pullover or a jacket and two of them wore sunglasses; not the Ray-Bans that were in fashion among Moluccans, but even trendier ones. The frontman's hairstyle, with curls in front of his eyes, links him with the more sophisticated urban alternative scene. The band members

refer to themselves by the nicknames V0 10, Pelor ('bullet') and BMW. Their contribution to *Moluccan Moods* was in Dutch, entitled 'Tastbare Nacht' (meaning 'tangible night'). With a heavy bass sound and melodramatic vocals, the song was emblematic of the experimental underground music genre.

Another featured band is the H-Gang. Their name is derived from an alley behind the houses of the Prins Hendrikstraat, a street in Amsterdam's Moluccan ward, where some band members grew up. Of the seven band members, most posed in their photo in jeans and bomber jacks. Their clothing style was representative of Moluccans living in the Moluccan quarters, where most of the members came from. Their song 'Buka mata sama sama' ('Open our eyes together') was in the variant of Malay spoken by Moluccans, though their repertoire also included songs in Dutch and English. 'Buka mata sama sama' was a call to the Netherlands-dwelling Moluccan community, living in comfortable conditions, not to forget the oppression of their relatives in Indonesia. H-Gang varied from reggae to ska, the style of which 'Buka mata sama sama' embraced. The band embodied a political group of Moluccan youth who were as critical of their own community as they were of the outside world. Their songs criticised the Dutch police force, but also expressed concerns over the global risks of nuclear proliferation and nuclear energy.

Unlike the H-Gang, Umatilla was rooted in the urban environment of Amsterdam. The seven band members – two of whom were Dutch – knew each other from Amsterdam West, the neighbourhood where they all lived. The name Umatilla comes from that of a Native American tribe; the band was known to use a logo incorporating an Indian battle axe.[2] The Moluccan members of Umatilla did not have the experience of living in Moluccan camps or quarters like members of H-Gang, but belonged to a minority of Moluccans in the Netherlands. They pose in their photo as though they are a group of young friends at a party. Their music is smooth Latin funk, a popular genre among Moluccan bands, such as the nationally renowned Massada. Umatilla's album contribution, 'Spotlights', is sung in English.[3]

In retrospect, it is amazing that such an album was released at all – primarily because of its diversity. After all, the socially engaged H-Gang conveyed political messages out of step with the predominantly pro-RMS voice of the Moluccan community. Another novelty was the presence of Umatilla, a group that was not rooted in one of the camps or quarters. These were signs of a widening understanding of who the 'real' Moluccans were.

6.3 Moluccan Moods as part of a broader movement

The success of Moluccan Moods concerts was not only thanks to the band line-ups and performances. It was also greatly facilitated by the independent Moluccan magazine *Tjengkeh*, its title meaning 'clove' – one of the spices originating in the Moluccan Islands and a reason for Europeans to first sail there. Spices were also the reason the Dutch East India Company (the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie in Dutch, VOC), established itself in the Moluccan Islands from 1605 onwards. *Tjengkeh* was an initiative begun in 1977 by young Moluccans who left the Moluccan camps and wards to live in Amsterdam and Utrecht. The first issue was published in 1978. Like the organisers of Moluccan Moods, the *Tjengkeh* group wanted to make a statement to Dutch society: to counter biased reports in Dutch media and to create an independent, critical Moluccan magazine. Up until then, almost all Moluccan journals had been affiliated with political or religious associations or movements.

With the help of a young Dutch journalist,[4] *Tjengkeh* commenced as a professional organisation. In no time, it had a large number of subscribers, reaching almost every Moluccan quarter. *Tjengkeh* reported monthly on the Moluccan Moods parties and published the line-ups of forthcoming events. Moluccan youngsters throughout the Netherlands became familiar with the parties at Paradiso. While *Tjengkeh* thus helped Moluccan Moods, the concert series supported the magazine by organising benefit parties at Paradiso. This was necessary, as subscription fees did not cover the magazine's costs. Cooperation between *Tjengkeh* and Moluccan Moods was not just based on business, but was cemented by personal friendships and family linkages. People involved knew each other from the Moluccan camps and quarters.

Moluccan Moods functioned as a platform for new musicians, encouraging new creativity, whereas *Tjengkeh* was also a platform for emancipation. It published articles about entertainment, sports and music, but also discussed taboo issues and socio-economic problems within the Moluccan community. Articles about couples living together without being married yet still attending important church ceremonies incited discussions; the same went for articles about mixed marriages and about being Moluccan on the police force. *Tjengkeh* represented the emancipation process that took place in Moluccan society.

The Moluccan Moods programme was initiated by Eddy Tutuarima, who was nicknamed Ed Kadet (*kadet* meaning 'bagel') because he sold bagel sandwiches in Paradiso (Mutsaers 1993: 111). Tutuarima lured Eddy Lekranty, the guitarist in the group Cheyenne, and Zeth Mustamu, the percussionist in the band Massada, into a project for a series of Moluccan concerts in Paradiso. At the time, this centre was programming more themed series, some of which were ethnically based. The series thus started

in 1982 as Moluccan Moods. It was a success because, contrary to other themed series, Moluccan Moods – being the brainchild of active Moluccan musicians – continued to be part of Paradiso's programming for several years. Mustamu and the two Eddys continued to organise the Moluccan Moods events.

The objective of the Moluccan Moods events was twofold. They were aimed both at encouraging Moluccan bands and introducing Moluccan musicians and bands to a wider Dutch audience. The 1982 album was released with the aid of the Nationaal Pop Instituut (known in English as the Dutch Pop & Rock Institute, NPI). After their second album in 1983, Moluccan Moods was discontinued for a year. The organisers considered new activities including a documentation centre, a presentation of Moluccan bands in Berlin and the formation of a new band: the Moluccan Moods Orchestra. In 1985, Moluccan Moods parties resumed at Paradiso. In the programme, there was more room now for expressions of Moluccan culture beyond music. Fashion shows by Moluccan designers, traditional dances, theatre and talk shows by the Moluccan journalist Rocky Tuhuteru were featured, together with band performances (Steijlen & Wessels 1990: 48). The Moluccan Moods Orchestra functioned as a 'music school'. The idea was to invite young Moluccan musicians to play with a core of professional Moluccan musicians. The orchestra's repertoire consisted of new arrangements of traditional Moluccan songs (Steijlen & Wessels 1990: 48).

From a sociological point of view, the most interesting characteristic of the Moluccan Moods events was that they functioned as a village square. This hearkened back to the traditional *alun alun* (town square) in the Moluccas, which was important for a Moluccan community that had been dispersed over the country into 60 separate Moluccan quarters during the process of settlement. Moluccans came to Amsterdam to see the bands play at Paradiso and to meet up with each other. Each performance was attended by about 600 to 750 Moluccans arriving by bus from all over the country. Moluccan Moods events became the main podium for Moluccan bands in the Netherlands, although it was not the only one. Community halls in Moluccan quarters,[5] and sometimes local facilities in Dutch villages and towns where Moluccans lived, formed a network where Moluccan bands could play. The best gig, of course, was to play on the main podium: Moluccan Moods in Amsterdam.

Two other movements at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s signify the transition from a rigid community to a more liberal and emancipated one. First of all, there was a Moluccan women's movement. In the 1950s, when Moluccans arrived in the Netherlands, women's organisations already existed. Most of them, however, were related to the church or to core political organisations. A new Moluccan women's movement arose in the second half of the 1970s, led by Moluccan women; some were involved in the Dutch women's movement. They organised weekends

when women could discuss their positions within the Moluccan community, as well as in Dutch society. Their discourse was cautious, defining the emancipation of Moluccan women as part of the emancipation of the community as a whole. Despite their moderate tone, it was clear that this Moluccan women's movement determined its own pace of emancipation.

Indeed, youth and women's emancipatory activities began to change the political map of the Moluccans in the Netherlands. Before the mid-1970s, critical remarks about the viability of a Republic of South Molucca were hardly ever heard, even though some groups were clearly dissident (see Steijlen 1996a). It was only in the 1970s that in wider circles, the idea of an RMS came under discussion. In particular, Moluccan youth organisations like Gerakan Pattimura and Pemuda 20 Mai questioned the ideal of an independent RMS and began to redefine it. The Gerakan Pattimura was named after a Moluccan warrior who had rebelled against the Dutch in 1817. Pemuda 20 Mai directly referred to foundation of the Budi Utomo movement in 1908, a defining moment in the development of the Indonesian nation. These organisations argued for as long as Moluccans in the Moluccas did not have a chance to make their own decisions on their political future, it was paternalistic to impose an independent RMS on the Moluccas from outside. They advocated solidarity with other Indonesians who resisted the oppressive military regime of Suharto and confined their political objectives of self-determination, rather than independence for the Moluccas.

The rise of these emancipation movements and the development of independent media were concomitant to cultural projects like Moluccan Moods, as well as Moluccan theatre, poetry and literature. It was a momentum that marked change.

6.4 Understanding the moment of change: Migration and radicalisation

Moluccan Moods and *Tjengkeh* were two expressions of a broader process of transformation in the identities of the Moluccan population in the Netherlands. When the majority of Moluccans came to the Netherlands in 1951, it was as a group. The reason for their migration was that their demobilisation from the Dutch colonial army had become very problematic in the wake of Indonesia's independence. Immediately after the formal transfer of sovereignty to an Indonesian Federation in December 1949, the federation started to collapse and was replaced by a unitary state. In reaction to the federation's dismantling, an independent RMS was proclaimed in the city of Ambon on 25 April 1950. It was a step taken by the Moluccan elite, who had collaborated with the Dutch during the colonial era and had enjoyed a position of privilege. Amongst them were teachers,

clergymen and army sergeants, most of whom were Christians. At the time, 4,000 Moluccans located on Java were still in the colonial army, which was at the point of being disbanded. They were waiting for demobilisation and transfer to the Moluccas, as was the right of demobilised soldiers. They shared with the Moluccan elite a fear of retaliation by the Indonesian government and supported the RMS movement. Obviously, the Indonesian government did not allow these militia to return to the Moluccas until it had regained control of the islands.

The Moluccan KNIL soldiers were protected by soldiers of the Dutch Royal Army, who were sent to Indonesia during the decolonisation war. A deadlock in the demobilisation of the Moluccans arose as time was pressing, because the deadline for the withdrawal of Dutch troops from Indonesia was nearing. The Netherlands feared a bloodbath if they left their Moluccan military behind on Java. The Moluccan soldiers were given the choice of either demobilising in Java or being transferred to the Indonesian army. But as the militia held on to the right to be returned to the Moluccas – or, as a matter of fact, to Dutch New Guinea, which was close to the Moluccas – the Dutch government added a third option of being sent to the Netherlands. They accepted this,[6] not knowing that they would be discharged immediately upon arrival. In ten transports, some 3,500 Moluccan soldiers, together with their families (totalling some 12,500 people) were brought to the Netherlands. They came under the assumption that they would be in the country only temporarily, on their way to the RMS, and that the Dutch government would help them achieve their ambition of an independent RMS. For their part, Dutch authorities held onto the belief that the Moluccans would be in the Netherlands for a few months before they returned to Indonesia, definitely not to a free Moluccan republic.

In the Netherlands, the Moluccans were housed in camps – most socially and physically isolated from Dutch society – where the Dutch government looked after their basic necessities. Men were discharged from the army upon, or just before, arrival and not, as they felt entitled to, in accordance with the military charter of the KNIL in their own Moluccas. This caused a sharp conflict between the Moluccans and the Dutch government. Attempts to fight the discharge in court failed for procedural reasons. Deep mistrust and resentment resulted among the Moluccans. They felt betrayed by the Dutch government whom they had served during the colonial era.

The relative isolation of Moluccans continued until the mid-1960s, even though the Dutch government curtailed their living allowances after 1956, forcing them to look for jobs in Dutch society. In 1956, for example, central services in the camps were stopped. In the 1960s, most of the camps were broken up and their residents were housed in special quarters within villages and small towns. While still living in one of the 60 camps (the number changed over time), a whole range of associations and institutions was established, varying from churches and sports clubs to societies based

on villages or islands of origin known as *kumpulan*. Each camp had a council representing the interests of its inhabitants vis-à-vis the Dutch government and its representatives. These Moluccan institutions were locally based, but were presided over by national boards. There were conflicts and schisms among the organisations and churches.[7] Supporters of rivalling ones were housed in different camps. The result was that in 1953, the Moluccan camps (which were spread all over the country) formed a kind of Moluccan archipelago. Some of the camps were linked to each other by interest organisations and churches, but almost all were linked by the *kumpulan*, which were not influenced by politics. When the camps were closed in the 1960s and Moluccans were transferred to the Moluccan quarters, the structure of the community basically stayed the same, except that some new institutions like community centres were introduced.

Moluccans considered provision of housing and subsistence allowances to be a token from the Dutch government who felt a responsibility towards them in their status as exiles. Within a few years of their arrival, however, an increasing number of Moluccans found work on the labour market. For that reason, the Dutch government curtailed its subsistence allowances. Moluccan leaders sharply reproached the Dutch government for neglecting its true responsibility to them as exiles. Meanwhile, they exerted tight social control over their rank and file, to ensure that the RMS ideal was upheld.

For as long as a guerrilla movement, under the leadership of RMS president Chris Soumokil, was still active on Seram,[8] the RMS movement in the Netherlands, which consisted of several organisations, could be considered a nationalist support movement. It solicited international support for their cause. Its leader was Johan Manusama,[9] a representative of the RMS government who fled Seram and came to the Netherlands in 1953. In 1963, Soumokil was captured in Seram, as were remaining members of the RMS guerrillas, and he was executed three years later. After his death, a RMS government in exile was inaugurated, headed by Manusama as president. The RMS movement in the Netherlands transformed from a nationalistic support movement into an ex-patria nationalistic movement: Moluccans in the Netherlands were convinced that they had to liberate the Moluccas working from the outside. While Soumokil's prestige among Moluccans in the Netherlands went unquestioned, this was not the case with Manusama, whose position was challenged by other Moluccan leaders there. The most prominent of these was Isaac Tamaëla, a former officer in the RMS army. He had left Seram together with Manusama, but only arrived in the Netherlands in 1962. In the middle of all this rivalry and politicking, the second generation came to the fore. They started to organise themselves and became more radical and extreme in their methods. At the same time, they tried to overcome the schism between the two RMS governments.

This second generation found its inspiration in movements such as the Black Panthers in the United States and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, as well as in Castro's Cuba. Inspired by the spirit of the time, when it was believed that violent actions could influence political developments, the Moluccan youngsters turned to terrorist activities. Inspired by the 'black is beautiful' movement, they took a provocative attitude towards Dutch society, travelling around the country in large groups. This quite often resulted in fights and confrontations with local youths. Some Moluccan youngsters became involved in criminal activities, robbing banks or selling drugs to raise money for 'the struggle', as it was called. 'The struggle' meant being engaged in the cause of the RMS.[10] From the mid-1960s onwards, young Moluccan activists from all over the Netherlands met and entered into discussions, overcoming the many political divides among existing Moluccan organisations. Within these networks, the radicalisation process took shape.

It was not just a radicalisation process, but also a process of exploring their history. Young Moluccans started to study Dutch colonial history, the role and position of the Moluccan Islands and particularly of Moluccans in that history. They immersed themselves in the history of social and political movements and with classic works in the field, such as those by Fanon and Marx. The Moluccan youngsters met at different places to discuss their findings. This varied from informal meetings at playing fields near the Moluccan wards, to monthly meetings at local or regional centres. In the mid-1970s, for example, Gerakan Pattimura held monthly discussions in the city of Nijmegen, attended by young Moluccans from all over the country. They learned that their forefathers were initially forced to produce spices for the Dutch and were abandoned after the market for spices collapsed. Later they had been recruited as a 'martial race', purely to serve the colonisers' 'divide and rule' policy. By interpreting this history in their own way, the Moluccan second generation came to the conclusion that the Dutch were to be less trusted than their parents had always taught them. The second generation developed a genuine distrust of the Dutch. In a radicalising atmosphere, this meant that Dutch citizens could also become the victims of politicised actions (see Steijlen 1996b). Young Moluccans were fed up with what the second generation saw as their parents' soft approach, which never went beyond peaceful demonstrations and appeals to authorities. For them, it was time to take up arms. Six violent acts were subsequently carried out. In 1970, the residence of the Indonesian ambassador was attacked, just two days before the scheduled arrival of President Suharto, which was also the first visit of an Indonesian head of state to the Netherlands. Early in 1975, a group of Moluccans was arrested for plotting to take the Dutch queen, Queen Juliana, hostage. In December of the same year, Moluccan youngsters hijacked a train and, four days later, friends of theirs joined in on the action by taking hostages at the Indonesian

consulate in Amsterdam. In 1977, two coordinated terrorist acts followed: the hijacking of a train and the hijacking of a primary school (for more information, see Barker 1980; Steijlen 1996b). Unlike earlier acts, 1977's hostage-taking did not end with the surrender of the Moluccans, but was halted forcefully by the Dutch army. A last terrorist act in the series occurred in 1978 when three Moluccans attacked the provincial government building in the province of Drenthe. Special forces responded decisively and ended the hostage-taking the next day. In total, eight hostages, one police officer and six hostage-takers were killed.[11] These acts of violence were the clearest expressions yet of the Moluccans' support for the RMS and the fact that they did not consider their future to be in the Netherlands.

6.5 Understanding the time: Redefining the RMS

In contrast to the public disapproval shown by some Moluccan political leaders, the majority of the Moluccan community sympathised with the hostage-takers in 1970 and 1975. But it was also precisely in these years that support for the RMS ideal began to crack.[12] Before the second train hijacking had taken place, new developments were already challenging the dominance of the RMS ideal. The first was under the surface: Moluccan intellectuals began to question things, understanding their own history as part of the political situation in Indonesia, where a military regime was in power. They concluded that it would be paternalistic to force an RMS upon the people of the Moluccas and embarked upon a process of reworking the RMS ideal into a plea for the right of self-determination for the people of the Moluccas. In order to achieve this, they cooperated with Indonesian exiles in the Netherlands. This cooperation was revolutionary in itself because Indonesians had been seen as the enemy. Discussions on redefining the RMS ideal marked the beginning of a liberal political atmosphere.

The second development was that Moluccans in the Netherlands started to go to the Moluccas. Visiting the homeland was long taboo because the Moluccas were considered occupied territory and visiting the islands was seen as treason against the RMS. Beside this political dimension, there was also a practical problem. Most Moluccans were stateless, and Indonesia was reluctant to provide them with visas because they were expected to be RMS sympathisers.[13] Notwithstanding the taboos and practical problems, some Moluccans from the Netherlands had gone to visit the Moluccas as early as in the 1960s.[14] From the beginning of the 1970s, more second-generation Moluccans started to feel a desire to visit the Moluccas. Coincidently, shortly after the first train hijacking, the Dutch government started a programme to 'normalise' the relationships between the Moluccan community and Indonesia.[15] Part of this programme consisted of organised trips to Indonesia, so-called 'orientation visits'. Moluccan foremen were

invited to the first ones. The visits[16] were heavily criticised, but helped to break the taboo on visiting the Moluccas. Older Moluccans were consequently able to renew bonds with their families and villages and younger Moluccans could create their own relationships. In the tide created by the to-and-fro, discussions ensued about whether anybody felt alienated in the Moluccas, missed the Dutch pleasures such as going to the disco and so on. These discussions and the 'renewed' relations with the Moluccas helped nuance the political RMS rhetoric.

A third development was the growing awareness of social problems within the Moluccan community. For a long time, unemployment was not seen as a problem by Moluccans because they were not meant to become a part of Dutch society. However, in the course of the 1970s, unemployment, as well as the use of hard drugs, became serious problems. Dutch social work institutions seemed incapable of helping Moluccans. From 1976 on, this led to an increasing number of Moluccan initiatives to deal with the problems within their community. Like the political discussion on reformulating the RMS ideal and the visits to the Moluccas, the 'discovery' of social problems resulted in a minimised emphasis on the RMS. Many people who were politically active in earlier years could be found in the emerging Moluccan social work initiatives. Some of them combined their activities in social work projects (such as drug aid) with organising political courses, but they were no longer rigidly oriented towards the RMS ideal. A large group of young Moluccans entered academic programmes for social work, called 'second-chance education' for people who had dropped out of school.

Major changes were taking place in the second half of the 1970s. While some youngsters still followed radical ways and most Moluccans still thought they were only temporarily in the Netherlands, a process of reconsidering their position in the country and their relationship with the Moluccas began.

In the second half of the 1970s, the political atmosphere in the Moluccan community became more and more liberal and less dominated by mobilisation for the RMS. Magazines like *Tjengkeh* and publications by organisations such as Gerakan Pattimura and Pemuda 20 Mai took a leading role in this process of liberalisation. Visits to the Moluccas helped to re-establish relations with families and villages. Development projects became the new way of showing solidarity with the communities of their origin. Both practically and symbolically, these projects were instrumental in fostering a sense of belonging to the communities in the Moluccas, while staying in the Netherlands and accepting that their future would be there. And finally, the content of the RMS ideal itself began to change. It was no longer framed in terms of a struggle for independence, which until then was taken for granted as the cause embraced by all Moluccans. Now, it was accepted that people in the Moluccas should have the right of self-

determination. Further, the decision could not be made for them in the Netherlands. Ex-patria nationalism that had started in the 1960s was replaced by vicarious nationalism. The striving for an RMS gradually acquired the meaning of a plea for self-determination for the 'brothers and sisters' in the Moluccas and it became disconnected from the future of Moluccans in the Netherlands. Moluccans in the Netherlands could start integrating without renouncing their roots or their political history. This was an important and necessary step for integration into Dutch society.

6.6 Closing the 'KNIL chapter'

Less well known than the hijackings was another defining moment in the relationship between Moluccan immigrants and Dutch society at large. This was an agreement between the Moluccans and the Dutch government made in 1986. Its prelude was a growing dissatisfaction about the condition of housing in specific Moluccan quarters, most of which was built hastily by the Dutch government or housing cooperatives in the 1960s and was in bad shape by the 1980s. In Capelle aan den IJssel, for example, the courtyard had subsided by one metre. During the tense 1970s, some housing cooperations and the Dutch government had not raised house rents in Moluccan wards. In the 1980s, they nevertheless decided to bring rents up to par with the normal level in the Netherlands, though without improving the housing's poor quality. Small wonder that the inhabitants often refused to pay rent. Efforts to evict these tenants in January 1984 led to battles and police had to draw guns. Again, tensions between Moluccans and Dutch authorities increased and once more, the issue became political. Moluccan spokesmen pointed out that the Dutch government had brought Moluccan soldiers to the Netherlands and therefore were responsible for providing proper housing. They explicitly used the term '*KNIL-rechten*' ('the rights of KNIL soldiers'). Even the second generation born in the Netherlands laid claim to these rights despite the fact that Moluccans were slowly integrating and, as said before, were in the middle of reorienting their position within the Netherlands.

The housing dispute coincided with a major change in Dutch government policy towards ethnic minorities. From the 1950s onwards, this policy was focused on establishing specific ethnic-based facilities under the so-called 'group-oriented approach'. Its basis was the policy towards the Moluccan community, which was the major ethnic minority in the Netherlands in the first decades after World War II.[17] When, however, in the 1970s the Netherlands became an immigration country and other ethnic groups appeared, the government wanted to abandon the group-oriented approach. It was too expensive and considered an obstruction to integration. The new principles concerned a general policy whereby members of

ethnic groups were supposed to use general facilities; only in specific circumstances could an ethnic facility be funded.

The change to minority policies was particularly painful for the Moluccans, in light of their special relationship with the Dutch government stemming from the colony and the events that propelled Moluccans to the Netherlands. They were going to lose their extraordinary position as a minority. On the part of the Dutch government, the special position of the Moluccans was also felt. The issue of KNIL rights, the history of the Moluccan camps and the many conflicts between the Moluccans and the Dutch authorities made creation of a Moluccan dossier very sensible. Above all, the Dutch government still owned many of the houses in the Moluccan wards as well as most of the Moluccan church buildings.

The housing issue in 1983 and 1984 brought up this problematic history in a polarised way, but at the same time catalysed closure to the chapter of Moluccans being in an extraordinary position. A few Moluccan cadres felt that Moluccans were going to end up as a small minority, because all other ethnic groups were larger than the Moluccan community. They were familiar with the Dutch government because they had been working as advisory bodies and also occupied key positions in the largest Moluccan interest organisation.

The cadres offered the government their help in solving housing problems and in privatising Moluccan homes and church buildings. In return, they asked the government to make a gesture to first-generation Moluccans. In 1986, 35 years after the Moluccans arrived in the Netherlands, an agreement was signed by the Dutch prime minister and the chairman of the largest Moluccan organisation in the Netherlands. This historical agreement foresaw arrangements to improve the socio-economic position of Moluccans and made gestures to acknowledge their contribution during the colonial era and the war. These gestures comprised an annual allowance for first-generation Moluccans, a medal of honour and the establishment of a Moluccan Museum.

With this agreement, the so-called KNIL chapter ended. Part of the deal was that through the medal and the annual allowance, the Dutch government paid off debt towards the first-generation Moluccans – its former employees. Within the Moluccan community, negotiators were criticised for having sold out the 'rights' of Moluccans. But they responded by pointing out that, because of the changing minority politics, it was only a matter of time before Moluccans would be considered a 'regular' minority. Because of the housing issue, they were in a bargaining position to obtain as much as possible for the community. What had started as a conflict thus turned, by coincidence, into a process finalising the extraordinary position of the Moluccans.

The impact of this on the identity of Moluccans in the longer term was that symbols referring to the RMS became identity markers. Waving the

RMS flag, for example, no longer necessarily meant that somebody wanted to realise the free Moluccan republic – it meant that the flag waiver was a Moluccan, not someone from Turkey or Surinam. RMS and KNIL became elements of the specific migration history of new generations of Moluccans in the Netherlands, which, in turn, became part of their ethnic identity. What made third- and second-generation Moluccans different from other migrants, beside some cultural elements, was the shared history of their parents and/or grandparents fleeing from Indonesia as members of the KNIL because of the RMS and their stay in the camps and wards.

6.7 Identity formation and post-colonial debate

The new phase in the identity formation became fully manifest in the beginning of the 1980s, amidst an explosion of creativity including emancipation movements, theatre, publications, discussions and music. As we have seen, the initiatives that manifested the change of identity and the start of integration were also directed towards the Dutch public. There are two apparent reasons for this. We have to understand this in two different ways. Firstly, the second generation wanted to redress their surroundings after becoming conscious of, and accepted the fact that they were going to stay and integrate into the Netherlands. Secondly, Moluccans wanted to make the point that they had no intention of becoming fully assimilated with the Dutch. Their desire to preserve and relive their cultural heritage was expressed through theatre and music.

How does this connect with the absence of a post-colonial debate in the Netherlands, which has been noted by several authors in this volume? In his contribution at the end of this book, Bosma defines post-colonial debate as a critical and systematic reflection on colonialism. In principle, Moluccans were positioned well to engage themselves in such a reflective process. Very much part of the colonial system, they were also sharp critics of how the Dutch government had acted as a colonial power and taken up its post-colonial responsibilities. This resentment about the colonial past did not, however, lead to a wider debate.

I would like to submit the following explanations. Primarily, although second-generation immigrants made a new study of the past and reinterpreted some parts of it, post-colonial issues did not lead to a thorough reflection on the colonial past. At best, it was used as an argument to prove the unreliability of the Dutch government as an employer and, with that, to justify an anti-Dutch attitude among Moluccans. The dispute between former colonial soldiers and their former employer, the Dutch government, was first of all framed as a conflict between labourer and employer. Next, it was a conflict about whether or not the Dutch government could be held responsible for not demobilising the Moluccan militia on their own islands.

Probably the main reason Moluccans did not initiate a post-colonial debate, deliberately or not, is that up until the end of the 1970s they were not oriented towards the Netherlands. They conceived of themselves as exiles, although they were interested in reflecting upon their post-colonial condition in the Netherlands.

A post-colonial debate is foremost an intellectual debate and the Moluccan group lacked a critical mass of intellectuals. The first generation consisted of subaltern militia, and not until the 1970s did the Moluccans first become active as academically trained professionals. Certainly, there could have been Dutch intellectuals who might have started a post-colonial debate while taking up the Moluccan cause. However, the Dutch intellectuals who supported the Moluccans in the early 1950s came from political circles that had staunchly opposed Indonesian independence. They would have been the last to have started any critical reflection on, or debate about, the colony; they would rather have liked to re-establish colonial relations. Further, most scholars working with Moluccans were active in the field of applied research for the Dutch government on policy-related issues.[18] As soon as the idea of temporality was abandoned and Moluccans began to care about their position in the Netherlands, the colonial past declined as a point of reference. In the 1980s, moreover, the Moluccan 'problem' lost much of its urgency within Dutch society and became increasingly overshadowed by concerns about the integration of labour migrants and Surinamese as well as Antillean immigrants.

By the end of the 1970s and into the 1980s, several alliances were made with the Surinamese. This was visible in the fields of welfare and welfare education, where a lot of ideological debate was ongoing. Fanon's *Black skin, white masks* became a standard book. These overtures could have blossomed into a post-colonial debate because Fanon was a pre-eminent thinker on colonialism and decolonisation. It did not because the Moluccans and Surinamese did not join together for the sake of their shared post-colonial position. The reason was that the growth of Surinamese migration in the mid-1970s and their entrance into higher education in the fields of social welfare coincided with when Moluccans entered the same fields. Moluccans already had their own welfare organisations, but from the mid-1970s onwards, felt the need for professionalisation.

One of the rare moments Moluccans sided with Surinamese and Antilleans as post-colonial migrants was in the beginning of the 1980s. Ethnic groups were creating alliances to fight for emancipation and political influence and to discuss discrimination and racism. In Amsterdam, for example, groups of immigrants organised themselves into democratic organisations of foreigners, known as the Platform van Democratische Buitenlandersorganisaties (Platform of Democratic Immigrant Organisations). An Amsterdam-based Moluccan organisation participated in this platform together with Surinamese, Antilleans, Moroccans and Turks (Steijlen &

Wessels 1989: 42). Sometimes the divide was between the Mediterranean versus the post-colonial.[19] But here again, it was not about colonialism, per se. As far as the Moluccan participants were concerned, it was to articulate themselves as a group who had not come for economic reasons, but because the Dutch government had ordered them to embark on the Netherlands.

Related to the question of why Moluccans hardly engaged in a post-colonial debate is the remarkable distance between Moluccans and Indische Netherlanders. Together, they could have comprised a critical mass. But first of all, Indische Netherlanders did not feel any urge to start such a debate. Second, in spite of their shared long history in colonial Indonesia, the two groups do not mix easily. Although in the 1950s and 1960s, some Moluccans and Indische Netherlanders both participated in the Indo rock music scene, sometimes joining the same bands, there was generally much antagonism between both communities. This antagonism was a continuation of the different positions the groups had in colonial society from a social perspective. From interviews with Indische Netherlanders, we know they tried to avoid contact with Moluccans, 'because Moluccans meant trouble'. Within the Moluccan community, Indische Netherlanders were looked down at. In the suburbs of some big cities, like Amsterdam, there were friendships between Indische youngsters and Moluccans, but the latter were rather peripheral to their own communities.[20]

At the organisational level, some cooperation exists today in the field of care for the elderly and the welfare organisation Pelita, for example. At the same time, Moluccan and Indische clients do not want to mix and sometimes bluntly express a dislike of each other. In the 1990s, Pelita started programmes to include Moluccans in their clientele. Pelita organises walk-in meetings, the *masoek sadja* (i.e. just come in). Most of the public who attend are Indische Netherlanders; Moluccans only come if there is a *masoek sadja* especially for them. In 2007, Pelita celebrated its 60th anniversary with a large meeting in Utrecht. To help organise its clientele, Pelita organised bus transport to the meeting from all over the country. There was a large group of elderly Moluccans present. This led to complaints from older Indische Netherlanders about Pelita events becoming increasingly Moluccan and expressions of regret about the loss of Indisch identity.[21] The line-up of artists was also criticised for being too Moluccan.[22]

As we have seen, Moluccans and Indische Netherlanders constitute two different memory communities. Each is defined and shaped by distinct positions in late colonial society and different experiences throughout decolonisation and settlement in the Netherlands.

6.8 Final remarks

This chapter focused on a crucial shift between the mid-1970s and 1980s in the Netherlands concerning the identity formation of the Moluccan soldiers and their children. Their future was no longer in the RMS, but in the Netherlands. Moluccans were resident in the Netherlands for almost 30 years without coming much closer to the receiving society. It was as though they were stopping at a station in between: en route from the colonial society where they originated to the free Moluccan republic they hoped to go to. In this transitory situation, they did not engage themselves in a post-colonial debate, in which the colonial past would have been systematically and critically examined. The colonial past nonetheless became increasingly important. Firstly, because it supported the claim for an independent RMS and, secondly, because it referred to a special responsibility towards Moluccans on the part of the Dutch government. For second-generation immigrants, their reading of the colonial past was important to their radicalisation process, as it provided their own cause against Dutch society. The former colonial relationship did come very explicitly to the fore when the housing conflict got out of hand. Rebelling tenants used their former KNIL rights as an argument. In negotiations stemming from this conflict – which led to the historical agreement – the Moluccan cadre and the Dutch government convened to close the KNIL chapter. There were many openings for a critical engagement with the colonial past, but it did not materialise. In some way, the time was never ripe. Albeit not exhaustive, I have submitted here a set of possible explanations for this. It would be a challenge to explore these observations at greater length, in new and more comparative research.

Notes

1 Former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Member of Parliament Jozias van Aartsen suggested this in a comment on processes of religious radicalisation among Moroccan youth in the early 2000s.

2 It was not uncommon for Moluccans to look to Native Americans for inspiration. The band of Moluccan Moods organiser Eddy Lekranty was named Cheyenne.

3 A tape-recorded version of the album was bootlegged in Indonesia, although it left off 'Buka mata sama sama' for being too politically controversial, and the song by Perlawanan. The latter's exclusion was for two possible reasons: because it was sung in Dutch and its name meant 'resistance'.

4 In the magazine's first issue, the journalist, Peter Schouten, was referred to by the pseudonym of Etus Capitan (Etus being a Moluccan name for Peter and Capitan coming from the literal translation of the Dutch word '*schouten*' into English).

5 From the end of the 1970s onwards, the Dutch government subsidised community halls in Moluccan quarters.

6 There is a lot of debate on the question whether or not the Moluccan military were ordered to embark. The Dutch government denies this and insists that Moluccans came of their own choice. The Moluccans claim that orders had been given (for more on this dilemma, see Steijlen 1996: 54-55; for some orders that had been issued, see Smeets & Steijlen 2006: 64-68).
7 See also Smeets and Steijlen (2006); for schisms in the churches, see Van der Hoek (1994) and the IISH database Postkoloniale Migranten.
8 'Active' may not be the right word because, after some years, the guerrillas were busy just surviving. In the Netherlands, Moluccans thought the guerrilla movement was still active.
9 Manusama and Soumokil were the two initiators of the RMS proclamation.
10 There were some Moluccan criminals who said that they were doing 'it' for 'the struggle' though were in fact plain criminals.
11 The police officer was killed at the onset of the 1970 action. In the 1975 train hijacking, the hijackers inadvertently killed the train driver and then executed two hostages. The same year in Amsterdam, an Indonesian consulate employee died after he had jumped out of the building to escape from the Moluccans who had taken him and his colleagues hostage. The 1977 train attack that resulted in army intervention killed two hostages and six hijackers. Finally, in the 1978 terrorist act, one hostage was executed by the Moluccans and one was killed during the attack by the special forces. In the first half of the 1970s, a lot of similar plans were discussed among Moluccan youngsters, though not executed; other actions were undertaken, such as an arson attack on an Indonesian airways office (see Steijlen 1996: 154-165; Smeets & Steijlen 2006: 237-241).
12 Previously, there had been some ethnic and religious minority groups within the Moluccan community who turned away from the RMS. This was not the case in the 1970s.
13 According to decolonisation agreements, Moluccans were Indonesians. To keep this nationality they had to register at the Indonesian embassy. The vast majority did not do this because they considered themselves RMS nationals and Indonesians the enemy (see Smeets & Steijlen 2006: 326-328).
14 These trips were considered acceptable because people went to visit family.
15 A complex process of negotiations between the Dutch and the Indonesian governments had taken place to make this possible (see Smeets & Steijlen 2006: 241-242).
16 Not all orientation visits were paid for by the government; some were funded by the media. The 'normalisation programme' was a result of negotiations between the Dutch and the Indonesian governments that started after the first hostage-taking in 1970, which awoke the Dutch to the fact that something had to be done about the Moluccans' relationship to Indonesia.
17 In fact, Indische Netherlanders were the largest ethnic group after World War II. They were considered Dutch and their integration was expected to be very fast and smooth.
18 There is a whole range of such research: Verwey-Jonker (1959); Van Amersfoort (1971); Veenman (1990, 2001); Tuynman-Kret (1985); Bartels (1990).
19 These at least are my personal observations from the 1980s onwards.
20 Interviews done for Het Indisch Knooppunt between 2005 and 2008; see www.hetindischknooppunt.nl and also Steijlen and Wessels (1989: 18-19).
21 Personal observations 24 November 2007.
22 Comment by Jeanny Vreeswijk-Manusiwa to the author 31 October 2008.

7 Tjalie Robinson (1911-1974): A mediator between East and West

Wim Willems

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 A state of mental exile

In January 1958, Tjalie Robinson sent a letter to Mary Brückel-Beiten, an Indische woman who, through demonstrations and cookery books, had for years tried to introduce the secrets of the Eastern kitchen to the Dutch population. However, her activities did not remain limited to the domestic world, because she was also known for organising annual ethnic markets in the southern provinces of the Netherlands. The next year she would organise a big market in the conference hall of the The Hague Zoo. This heralded the launch of the Pasar Malam, an Indische institution, now around for half a century and self-touted as 'the greatest Eurasian festival in the world'. In The Hague, Brückel-Beiten found an ally in Robinson, then chief editor of an Indische magazine. When Robinson's letter of 9 January 1958 arrived in Brückel-Beiten's hand, the two community leaders of the repatriated Dutch people had had no previous contact. Yet, Brückel-Beiten must have known about Robinson, because the reporter, columnist and author of novels about life in the former colony had become a well-known figure in the post-colonial community in the 1950s. He approached her to ask if she would write a column for his magazine, which resulted in a mutual exchange of thoughts and ideas. In his letter, Robinson openly testified to his delicate position in Dutch society, on the one hand being a writer from the East and, on the other, living in the West and publishing within the homeland's literature (Willems 2009: 125-127).

As a Dutchman of Indian origin, he realised how little affinity he had with the mentality of his homeland by the North Sea. The Dutch habit of placing literature on a pedestal seemed ridiculous to him especially because, in his opinion, most writers had little to say. They were lacking life experience, which he felt was the only raw material on which to found a writer's imagination. These writers only knew the polder landscape of their own country, without being able, or willing, to picture life on the other side of the globe. In his view, Dutch writers – and artists in general – lacked a cosmopolitan outlook, whereas people from the Dutch East Indies had

already regularly come into contact with Asian classics, as well as with American culture: books, films, fashion and music. He felt that the Netherlands was lagging several decades behind in this respect, which gave him the impression of having ended up in a self-opinionated, monocultural swampland. Furthermore, he felt no affinity with a single literary trend in the Low Countries, nor with the reigning spiritual climate. It amounted to his feeling like an outcast in the country of his Dutch émigré father – his mother came from an Indische family rooted in the archipelago for one and a half centuries. Robinson had grown up in a different mentality and the difference became more palpable to him by the day. His attitude to life, his worldview and his artistic tastes were inspired by literature from other regions and continents.

Brückel-Beiten was instantly made aware of his sources of inspiration. These mainly included Latin American literature, sociology and the historiography of relationships in societies in which Caucasian people were in power. It revolved around publications that had resulted from a mixed society, similar to the one that had shaped him (and her) in the colony, and that had put a stamp on his 'Eurasian and half-caste' identity. One of the references he quoted was Gustavo Corção, a Brazilian writer, whose collection of stories had been translated into Dutch and became available as a paperback at a bargain price.[1] He claimed Brückel-Beiten, an accomplished writer in her own right, would be able to learn from him the secret of a modern writing style (i.e. self-analysis in simple words) and, primarily, honesty – a word Robinson repeated three times in his letter to Brückel-Beiten. Writers from South and Central America were his outright preference over French icons of the time, such as Gide and Sagan. He also favoured Gilberto Freyre, the twentieth-century pioneer of Brazilian sociology, who had analysed the history of the mestizo in an unprecedented manner. The original title of Freyre's principal work, about the relationship between masters and slaves, referred to life in 'the main house and the slave quarters'. This approach immediately took Robinson back to life in Indische houses in the tropics and to the history of his mother and her extended family. As he read Freyre's work, the Brazilian words and the Indian story flowed into each other:

> Fantastic to observe the parallels between the social and spiritual growth of tropical Europeans across the globe. By the way, it is a textbook, you know, heavy and expensive. As yet, Freyre has only been discovered by the French and is currently giving lectures in Paris. One of his quotes is: 'Chinese cookery is the universal cookery of the future.' Don't you agree that sounds amazing? (Willems 2009: 126)[2]

Another source of insight was the work of Haya de la Torre, the Peruvian political theoretician and activist who founded and led the radical Aprista party. His work was blacklisted because of his communist sympathies, whereas Robinson considered him the bearer of new philosophical ideas. He ascribed the same significance to the trailblazing architect Oscar Niemeyer and to writers like the Chilean Nobel prize-winners Gabriela Mistral and Pablo Neruda, as well as to the Mexican mural painter Diego Riviera. The echoes of his past seemed to resonate in the works of all these thinkers and artists. This certainly did not seem the case in the Netherlands of the 1950s, which he considered a more introspective society. Anyone of any significance there considered Paris more or less the frontier of their artistic ambitions. The principal narrators from Latin America, such as Machado de Assis, Gabriel García Márquez and Octavio Paz, would only really start to create a stir in the Netherlands in the 1970s.

In 1954, four years after his arrival in the Netherlands, Robinson felt he was an outcast from history and exiled from the country he felt a historic connection with, but could not relate to in any identifiable way. Unlike many of his peers, he did not want to be resigned to his fate. He started to speak up with pride for the society that had shaped him: the Indische colony, its highlights and drawbacks both. He developed into a warrior for self-preservation and consequently into a figurehead for a community that had to reinvent itself after decolonisation in the country of its ancestors.

7.1.2 A biographical view on post-colonialism

In several primarily Anglo-Saxon countries, such as the US and Great Britain, but in India as well, a lively debate about post-colonialism has been going on for years. Semiotic lessons in 'reading against the grain' have set the tone within literature and cultural studies departments.[3] It has generated a varied spectrum of arguments and theories that all commonly call into question the dominance of the Western worldview. National histories are being rewritten based on examination of the products of literary borderline figures, i.e. writers who represent more than a single culture in their lives and work. The continuities and discontinuities of previously creolised societies, such as colonies, have also come under scrutiny. For a long time, such debates hardly found any resonance in the Netherlands. That is a remarkable state of affairs, it may well be said, for a society with a voluminous colonial past, a large group (both in percentages and absolute figures) of post-colonial immigrants and a strong (and on the whole, positive) self-image with regard to its degree of tolerance and acceptance of cultural disparities. In the 1990s, a change in the situation, albeit on a modest scale, was brought about by the publication of a number of collections of essays: one about 'writing and writing back' in colonial and post-colonial literature and one about notable 'mediators'. Their paradigms offer

useful points of reference for the study of multi-cultural societies and the role of immigrant authors in shaping a national identity.[4]

Biography is a proven method for highlighting the significance of a person or a movement. It gives expression not only to the individual himself or herself, but also to the social context of the subject's life and the interaction between the personal and the public. This makes the genre appropriate for historical reconstruction of collective worldviews. Along lines similar to those in countries with Anglo-Saxon linguistic roots, Dutch historians and literary scholars long wrote biographies of literary authors and statesmen as a popular form in which to present their material. In the 1960s, the writer disappeared for a time from the front stage in academia, making way for autonomous textual analysis, structuralism, semiotics and post-modern theorising. For the past ten years, biography as a genre has been recovering lost ground, with the life stories of authors, politicians and royalty enjoying a considerable popularity once more. Theoretical reflections about biographies are also on the rise.[5] When we look for lives representative of the post-colonial situation, we light upon several literary-historical biographies and monographs about politicians.[6] There are no projects underway in which, through the use of life stories and collected works of cultural-historic mediators, an attempt is made to penetrate to the essence of twentieth-century relations between the Netherlands and its former colonies.

My motive for writing about Robinson in this chapter is that he stands for the transitional period in the Netherlands, from a colonial to a post-colonial nation. As one prototype for such an undertaking, Frits van Oostrom's magnum opus *Maerlants world* comes to mind. The works of this medieval poet and biblical scholar were not simply placed in their literary and social context; Van Oostrom also made use of the writings to penetrate deeper into the lives of contemporary nobility and clergy, into all aspects of the prevailing culture of the Lowlands, the processing of themes from antiquity, the relations conjoining myths and current worldviews. Interpretable in various ways, the works serve to reflect the spirit of the times. This is the justification for the relentless combing of archives that enabled Van Oostrom (1996) to reconstruct the social-historical reality within which Maerlant's texts functioned.

In my biography on Robinson, the working hypothesis is that his life and works mirrored what took place within the East Indian population during the transition – via decolonisation – from colonial to post-colonial relations. The central questions I have asked myself are the following: what traces has Robinson left behind through his work and activities that remain discernible in the literary and social-cultural life of the Netherlands and its former colonies? How did issues he raised become part of the identity formation among Dutch from the East Indies in the twentieth century? To

what extent did he play a role as a social-cultural mediator between Dutch society and the colonial groups from which he himself derives?

7.2 A post-colonial mediator

His official name was Jan Boon, but his readers got to know him as Tjalie Robinson or Vincent Mahieu. He was born in the Netherlands, while his parents were on a long leave, but was raised in the Dutch East Indies, now Indonesia. His mother was – in the terminology of these days – an Indo woman and his father a Dutch soldier in the colonial army. Being a person of colour, Robinson considered himself a member of the Indos category, people with a mixed European and Asian heritage. And that is how he grew up, as a child of the street, at the same time a dedicated reader eager to learn. He had much affinity with the lower strata in society, glorified the culture of machismo, but was also an intellectual, an artist and a gifted storyteller with a rich sense of humour.

Before World War II, Robinson had been a teacher and, later, a journalist, a career he continued after August 1945. During the Japanese occupation, he had been a prisoner of war in several camps. These years in imprisonment, with hard labour and little to eat, transformed him into a real survivor, a man who rediscovered the human dependency on nature, more than on culture. This shaped his outlook on post-war life and made him more pessimistic about the fruits of Western civilisation. As a man who was partly Asian, partly European, he ended up in an awkward position when civil war broke out after liberation from the Japanese. Indonesia wanted to become independent and it took more than four years of military struggle and political negotiation before the Dutch withdrew and the Republic of Indonesia came into being. All these years. Robinson had worked as a journalist for the military information service. He drew cartoons that became very popular among the military forces and wrote satirical short stories appreciated by the East Indian Dutch.

The real outpouring of his creativity took place in the beginning of the 1950s. In one of the Dutch-language newspapers he started a series of articles, actually long columns, about the city of Batavia, now Jakarta, from which he travelled back and forth between his pre-war life in the Indies and the post-war years. With these very personal reflections he grew to become the voice of a generation, one on the brink of leaving its East Indian lifestyle behind. There was no place for the Dutch descendants anymore in the new state of Indonesia, unless they denied their Western heritage, which 99 per cent of the over 300,000 former colonials refused to do.

This is why they left for their second homeland, the Netherlands, in the period between 1946 and 1968. From this feeling of loss, Robinson tried to recreate, in a very expressionistic way, the social climate of his youth

and later years. In his reflections, he took long walks through the streets and alleys of Jakarta, outlining all manner of elements of the urban environment, as though he were recalling everyday life in King Arthur's Camelot. His columns mixed real memories of the early days with romantic, wild fantasies about his adventurous childhood. In a way he was sketching a street map of former times, through which thousands of readers recognised their own pasts, but at the same time he was creating a myth. On his map of Jakarta he himself would certainly have got lost. Apparently, an author has to exaggerate to get closer to the truth.

The columns were not only widely read, but also published in two volumes, which found their way to thousands and thousands of readers for several decades.[7] It made Robinson the verbal representative of his generation: the Dutch from the Indies. However, as a narrator, he did not only look back. He also wrote, let's say, more sophisticated short stories, not for the newspaper, but to be published in a book. He named his alter ego writing in a different style Vincent Mahieu: taking the first name of the painter Van Gogh, whom he admired, and the surname of the founding father of a type of Indies' popular drama, August Mahieu.[8] Some of these works have been translated into English and German. I agree with many contemporary critics who think they belong to the pinnacle of twentieth-century Dutch literature. Nevertheless, Robinson and his family had to beg for four years to be allowed to migrate to the Netherlands; the policy then was that people without means of assistance nor the guarantee of housing by family should stay in Indonesia and continue their lives under the new rule. Only after publication of the two volumes of his columns were the authorities overseas willing to accept Robinson as a Dutch author, who was writing for a Dutch-speaking audience rather than an Indonesian public – one has to consider that he was completely unable to express himself in the language of the Republic of Indonesia.

In the middle of the 1950s, at last, his family arrived in the Low Countries. They moved from one state-controlled boarding house to another, until they got a flat in one of the newly constructed residential areas of Amsterdam. In Slotermeer, Robinson found a job as a teacher in a secondary school and also pursued his profession as a journalist. For a newspaper in Jakarta, he wrote columns about the first impressions of an East-oriented Dutchman in the West; for a Dutch newspaper, he wrote columns about the moments of alienation in his unknown fatherland. His first steps on new soil were moving between curiosity and astonishment. Within a year he wanted a magazine for himself, a kind of mouthpiece for what went on within the East Indian group in the Netherlands. For what he found out very soon is that the average Dutchman did not know anything about life in the former East Indies. Most of them had only vague ideas about the Japanese occupation and the revolutionary war that followed. People in the streets did not stop to show their astonishment that people of

colour could speak Dutch so well and they held nothing but stereotypical ideas about colonial life.

In the meantime, many newcomers had belonged to the lower or middle strata of East Indian society and were devastated by more than eight years of war and the decolonisation process. They had to fight against prejudices in a society that was itself recovering from five years of war and did not know what had happened in their overseas territories. For them, these so-called repatriates were 'the other Dutch' and that is the way they approached them. For a lettered, well-educated, ambitious and sensitive person such as Robinson, this attitude became more and more irritating. In his first years in Holland he was looking for kindred spirits in the cultural world, but ended up in isolation. He refused, or was unable, to understand that the Dutch, after having possessed colonies for more than three centuries, were so ignorant about what had happened overseas. The prevailing mentality was that the newcomers had to assimilate into Western codes of behaviour and leave their Eastern heritage behind. In those days the Netherlands was more of a monocultural society than nowadays and, as elsewhere in the world, the newcomers were supposed to adopt the mainstream way of life. For many people from the East Indies this was not as simple as it appeared, for they had lost their country of origin, they could not go back and they wanted to recreate – as many immigrants do – something of the world they left behind. That was not really an easy job to do in the 1950s.[9] It would require Robinson to act as a kind of Don Quixote and Ali Baba at the same time, fighting against the windmills of arrogance of the Low Countries and making a plea to collect the historical treasures his fellow migrants had taken with them from Asia, especially their memories and group values.

Robinson's message was that if the Dutch looked upon these newcomers as being different, then they had to be proud of being different. Society considered the East Indian newcomers as a potential failure and did not show much interest in their different past. Robinson recognised little of the former colony's tradition of storytelling in any leading literature by Dutch authors. For him, the novels in Holland were too laboured, too much *l'art pour l'art*, too little about real life. He could not understand that authors who were affected by the war were still slavishly following the codes of the fine arts. Robinson did not believe in 'Literature' – with a capital L – anymore; for him writing had to reflect the ups and downs of authentic life. His encounters with the Dutch in the Low Countries made him more *Indo*, more of an East Indies Dutchman, than he had ever been before. His identity became an issue, because he felt he was living a different life from the people around him and came from a different background. They wanted him to become like them, but he spoke their language already, had a Dutch family name and wore Western clothes. What more could they ask from him? He refused to give up or renounce the society he had been part

of. In the East Indies, the cultural influence of North America had been enormous (i.e. music, movies, fashion) and people had travelled a lot. Individuals like Robinson had been in contact with different religions and cultures and other ways of life. What he had experienced most people in the Netherlands had not even dared to dream about. And now they forced him to adopt their very restricted outlook on the world? No, he absolutely refused that.

Instead, Robinson began on his mission to preserve and present his own background. He became a kind of tradesman in culture. As a response to the ignorance of the surrounding society he established a magazine for the East Indian Dutch. *Tong Tong* still exists (albeit under the name of *Moesson)*. Not only was he the editor-in-chief, until the day of his death in April 1974, he sometimes filled one third of the pages, being a journalist to the core. What Robinson wanted with his magazine was manifold. First of all, he wanted to wake up his partners in distress and encourage them to take up a pencil and write about what had happened to them on the islands overseas. He wanted to collect the stories about that former lifestyle, to enable later generations to understand the society in which their ancestors had been rooted. As an author he wanted to re-create because he valued the Indische culture that had come into being in the former colony and that was swept under the carpet in post-colonial times. In the 1950s and 1960s, it was suspect to look back to the colonial pages of Dutch history – that period had to be suppressed – out of shame, feelings of guilt or whatever. But for the average man and woman who had lived in the colony, it was impossible to deny their past. They had been moulded by the social and cultural makeup of that society. To leave that behind would have been a denial of their existence. Robinson definitely refused to do so and, within a couple years, his magazine had 10,000 subscribers and maybe 50,000 readers, not only in the Netherlands, but also in the United States, Australia and elsewhere in the world. Although it was not an easy task to give people enough confidence to write something down, he succeeded in getting the pages filled time and again. The articles were not only about 'the way we were', but also dealt with contemporary issues. Every member of the family circle could find something he or she fancied, although older-aged readers dominated the magazine.

In the Netherlands, Robinson was the first to put the East Indian community on the map. This was not only through his writings and the magazine, as he also turned out to be a gifted organiser. As already said, the man had a mission. His statement – in short – was: be true to yourself and fight for who you are. Because he had experienced how Dutch journalists sometimes tried to change his style of writing, he knew how important it was for one's voice to be recognised. That is why he brought people together, to strengthen their confidence and to enjoy the company of their own kind. During the war, he had learned to value comradeship and that

feeling became the basis of many of his initiatives. To give some examples, he initiated the yearly Pasar Malam Besar – now known as the Tong Tong Fair – where people could eat and drink, listen to music, watch fashion shows and meet up with old acquaintances. In 2008, the fair had its 50th celebration, touting itself as the largest Eurasian festival of the world and welcoming over twelve days approximately 120,000 visitors, half of whom were indigenous Dutch. But Robinson also brought authors and artists together and invited them to give lectures and show their works. He took the initiative for a settlement in subtropical Spain for Dutch from the Indies, which indeed was realised, although by then he was occupied with other plans. As said previously, he transformed into a kind of cultural tradesmen, always bringing people together and breaking a lance for the preservation his community heritage.

Robinson was a proficient speaker and writer of Dutch and the short stories he published under the name of Mahieu were praised by many a critic. Nevertheless, one will look in vain for his work in surveys of Dutch literary history. He belongs to the ranks of the forgotten ones, except within the small group studying colonial literature. This has much to do with the fact that he felt, at the end of the 1950s, that his voice as a colonial author was insufficiently recognised in the Netherlands. His style was praised, but the themes of his stories raised many eyebrows. The macho world he was reconstructing reflected the mental landscape of the American media of those days, Marlon Brando in *The Wild One*, James Dean in *Rebel without a Cause* and the later published novels of writers such as García Márquez. There was no equivalent of his narratives in the Low Countries, and he felt that the audience did not understand what they were all about. Again and again, he stressed that Dutch images of the East were coloured by stereotypes, as Said (1978) would show twenty years later for the Western view on the Orient. It frustrated him so much that he decided, after six years, to distance himself from the cultural elite and to focus on the other East Indian Dutch in exile. They had been his readers, and his task now was to turn them into writers. By doing so, he certainly overestimated the talents of others and underestimated his own unique gift as a storyteller. But he wanted living space for a different way of thinking, a different identity and a different culture. He paved the way for later generations, by creating a collection of memories in his magazine and showing that the Dutch East Indian heritage was a rich and independent one. For that choice he paid a price as a creative author. But as a purveyor of culture he did something unique, because he has laid a foundation for group consciousness. And the young Indos, 30 and 50 years later, still profit from his initiatives when they look for the historical roots of their place in the multicultural world of today.

7.2.1 *Tjalie Robinson: A counterpoint*

The work of Robinson can be interpreted as the mirror for a transition process from a pre-war colonial society into a post-war republican Indonesia and the resulting consequences for life in a post-colonial reality – namely in the Netherlands. Not only did Robinson grow up in the spirit of colonialism, but he also recognised himself in that lifestyle. Not in the sense of superior well-being of the ruling class in the India of yesteryear, nor in any acceptance of the subtle mechanisms of exclusion based on colour, origin, social environment and status. On the contrary, from early on, he had denounced those discriminating standards, which he had also been regularly confronted by as an Indo-Dutch man. Not only during holiday periods in the Netherlands, when some of his father's relatives seemed prejudice-ridden with the racial thinking that was at the basis of colonial relationships, but also in the Dutch East Indies, he and his family regularly encountered the hypocrisy of the Western perspective, which limited his opportunities to develop his special talents. No one could teach Robinson anything new about the longstanding ramifications of being subjected to feelings of white superiority and to opinions about Indische compatriots being inferior. From the moment he claimed his place in Dutch literature, he spoke up on all fronts against the unfairness, as well as the offensiveness, of those beliefs. In that respect, he showed himself as a fierce critic of the Caucasian belief in superiority, which had dominated colonial society for so long. Those beliefs continued to linger in the Netherlands for a long time, including after the war.

He was entitled to reject such colonial thinking, which was not befitting of the society that had produced it. For that, he had to disavow his own life as well as that of his parents, who formed the real personification of it: an Indische mother with numerous Indonesian relatives and a Dutch father, who had sought his fortune as a soldier in the Dutch East Indies and who considered tolerance of paramount importance. From both parents, he inherited a natural pride in his origins, which he never repudiated in the face of changing ideologies. Furthermore, colonial history strongly determined his philosophy on life and he praised people who took the initiative to set off, migrate and settle in unknown regions. Giving in to the lure of a remote destination and gambling everything in the process – which he considered every man's ultimate destiny – brought out the best in people, in his view. Time after time, Robinson praised the dynamism of travellers, adventurers and idealists. People who dared to explore the world, with disregard for death, such as hunters who set out in prehistoric times. In his eyes, it had turned them into shining lights in history and he felt that no social progress would have been made without those daredevils.

Not only was his entire worldview based on this, but he also believed in those underlying values, for which his own family served as an example.

In those circles, he saw that audacity and freedom of spirit were compatible with domesticity. His *Oom David* ('*Uncle David*'), the first story he wrote under the Mahieu pseudonym, was an ode to his uncle, a mariner who had been sailing for 33 years. He knew the world, the camaraderie on-board ship, but also the temptation of fate to the individual. Although he remained free-willed, he appreciated the value of others. He was interested in the most insignificant things and understood that cripples, beggars and prostitutes were also entitled to a dignified existence. Uncle David allowed his nephew to experience how an adventurous life only makes people more human, because life is not about what you achieve, but about what you have done. In his first novella, the writer portrayed his Uncle David as a hero of the Occident, with his genuine affection, endless stories, a restless nature, but also his ability to evoke snippets from the past. Thanks to his receptiveness, the echoes of many cultures resonated in his head, which made him into a cosmopolite – a citizen who knew he was not restricted by national boundaries. In retrospect, the post-war writer made his uncle into a man with a transnational identity, one who felt at home in any place without feeling entirely at home anywhere at all – a free spirit, who understood that this sort of life comes at a cost.

Robinson appropriated this approach to life himself. He roamed around the Dutch East Indies archipelago and initially managed to support himself doing a variety of jobs. In the Netherlands, he did not seem particularly keen to settle down either and, in the 1960s, his restless nature kept him moving around: a traveller between the East and West, with the Netherlands as a pivot. It did not only involve physical movement; his adventurous mentality was particularly expressed in the manner in which he explored his own mind – and the minds of others. Within the universe of his artistry, he found scope to express his urge for change, as well as his yearning to bestow meaning. This was bound to result in conflicts, given his dissolute nature. This was evident least of all when writing as Mahieu, because through that persona, he was able to express his individual 'confessions of a dreamer'. Under the pseudonym, he explored the depth of his Dutch East Indies experiences in travels to 'the heart of darkness' of the colonial world. On first impressions, they are stories about very personal experiences. On reflection, they are expressions of the hidden mechanisms of colonial society. If Jan Boon, the man, felt freedom anywhere at all, it must have been in the guise of Mahieu.

Anything he undertook under the name of Robinson was more complicated. He also seemed to be steering his own course, but he was unable to sustain this soon after launching *Tong Tong* in 1958. Using his magazine and sideline activities resulting from it, he unfolded a chart of the Dutch East Indies, giving his readers the necessary signposts. On paper, he seemed a living example of how they were supposed to rediscover themselves by testifying to their pasts, in their own idioms, with self-awareness

and without continuously dragging up the war. He gathered his readers annually at the Pasar Malam Besar and fortnightly in the art circle known as the Netherlands-Indische Kunstkring. He took up the gauntlet for compatriots who risked getting the worst social deal under Indonesia's President Soekarno. He was looking for living space in Spain, in the West, in the US and eventually once again in the East. He manifested himself as an explorer, but also as a frontman of the Dutch East Indies group, both in the Netherlands and in other countries where his fellow countrymen and women settled over the years.

His personal nature was characterised by ambivalence. For example, he felt it was right to advocate the battle for self-preservation – as a knight who staunchly fought for his own group – whereas his vision of culture soon showed signs of pessimistic traits. He was not convinced that civilisation was making any real progress. All his journalistic pieces and activities as an organiser were aimed at recognition and the rehabilitation of a traditional way of living and history, but it seemed as if he wanted to protect the Indische enclave from a world that showed signs of profound decadence. In his adult life, he based that opinion on his own experiences, but he had already adopted those ideas as a young man. Eager to read by nature, he soon discovered the work of philosophers like the German Oswald Spengler and the Spaniard José Ortega y Gasset.[10] He adopted and also expounded on their views to others. The secondary school pupils who read the youth supplement in *Het Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad* newspaper in the 1930s found him a stimulating teacher, but also a strict moralist. He whetted their appetite for knowledge, encouraged them to reflect on their lives and convinced them to become physically active – all for the purpose of helping them find a benchmark, which he felt was impossible without a balanced self-image. In his view, for young people to get a grip on their own abilities, they needed to develop an awareness of the tradition they grew up with. This was certainly true for the historic background and social context of the Indisch society. He felt that without a clear sense of place, young people were at the mercy of modern life's temptations. They were encouraged to build up resistance against a potential descent into weakness and addiction. He believed in the purifying effect of willpower, which was at the basis of all his activities, including in Indische circles after the war.

Almost contrary to this view was Spengler's predicted fall of Western civilisation. For him, culture was doomed in societies that had become dominated by technology and the power of money. This view left a deep impression in the mind of Jan Boon, whose reading habits in the 1920s were mostly focused on European literature. He seemed to have absorbed the magnum opus of the Prussian Spengler into every fibre of his being. Already in his earliest pieces, he warned against the pernicious influence of welfare and modernity, as well as for the flipside of individualism. He

feared that the social contract, on which societies are founded, could be undermined and therefore unremittingly underlined the importance of respect, citizenship and a sense of responsibility. In the pre-war Dutch East Indies, he did it with just as much emphasis as he did later on, as chief editor of *Tong Tong*. The war strengthened his belief that barbarism triumphed if no attention was paid to spirituality and ideological reorientation. Under the pen name Robinson and originally also under Mahieu, he advocated cultural renaissance, although he soon came to the conclusion that no spiritual revival was in the cards in Europe, whose culture had helped to shape him.

During his trip to the US in the early 1960s, he was delighted to see immigrants from the Dutch East Indies doing very well for themselves by going along with the American idea of the self-made man. In the US, the government kept its distance, while private initiatives flourished and many newcomers developed into minor entrepreneurs. The dynamism involved in this courageous drive forward filled him with hope, additionally because the continent radiated a spirit of progress and belief in the ability to cope. In it, Robinson recognised the colonial pioneer mentality, which kept the idea alive that there is still a world out there to be conquered. In *Tong Tong*, he wrote about his realisation that the civilisations of Europe and Asia were so old and tired that it would be unrealistic to expect much from them. If anyone was going to travel down a new road, it would be the US that would determine the course. During his subsequent stay in California as a temporary immigrant, he would learn that the culture actually belied the same, if not more fanatic, materialistic pursuit. What also struck him as abhorrent was the imperialistic brutality with which the US tried to impose its capitalist ideology on Vietnam, with a complete disregard for the centuries-old civilisation of that Asian country. This is why he became enthusiastic again about the East during the last years of his life. After his visit to Indonesia in 1965, he wrote that he expected that from the chaos of post-colonial society, the 'butterfly of New Man' would eventually emerge, with a spiritual fervour untainted by Western decadence. He wanted to remain hopeful for a way out, although his dark view of culture gave him little reason to be optimistic. Social-political salvation ideologies, like fascism and communism, never inspired any confidence in him.

The starry-eyed Indische idealist whom Robinson developed into went through periods of enthusiasm as well as disappointment. With the charm and flair of his general manner, he managed to build up quite a following and to carry out many plans, for which his journalistic talent served him well. Behind the socially inspired leader, another side of him remained hidden. In the realms of the cultural magazine *Oriëntatie* and later of Dutch-language magazines such as *Nieuwsgier* and the *De Vrije Pers* (all three based in Indonesia), he used his talent for storytelling. As Tjalie Robinson, he would spend five years writing about the way of life of the post-war Indische generation in his 'Piekerans van een straatslijper': essays recalling

the bygone world of colonial life, in which he reoriented himself to life in the new Republic of Indonesia. It was a journey unfolding within the portrayal of a town that had changed during his lifetime, from colonial Batavia into Indonesian Jakarta. This was no nostalgia stemming from inevitable conservatism, nor a sentimental look back at a blissful youth, but rather an expression of a romantic desire, as he himself described it. He looked back and paid tribute to his ancestors, his boyhood years and the life he used to live. On paper, he placed himself in a continuum; he put his personality and his living environment into context. On the breaking point of old and new, he gave account of the situation, with one eye on the past and the other eye on the future. As a narrator, he exposed the nerves of a society and a population in transition, almost as if in a social documentary, but at the same time also as an artist who converts the rhythm of a community into words.

As a narrator, Robinson grew into the voice of the Indisch Netherlanders, a role he fulfilled with a great deal of verve for the rest of his life. Apart from being a journalist and an organiser, he was indeed an artist. He was duly aware of the fact that the part of him writing as Mahieu was also clamouring for its right to exist. His last wife, journalist Lilian Ducelle, reports that this was the real tragedy of his life: that he gave up his vocation as a story writer to give the Indische population what they expected from him. She claimed it left him embittered, and that at the end of his life he was longing for the moment when he could start writing as Mahieu again. With *Tong Tong* he had opened an Indische Pandora's box and created a need from his readers, from which he could not, did not dare to or did not want to, escape. Then again, he was also the artist who had evoked the Indische way of living in the Indies of bygone days out from the mists of time. With his imagination, he managed to penetrate a different truth than he could disclose in his work as Robinson, but he was nevertheless a first-rate observer, which was very rare in those days. Particularly in his letters, he expressed the realisation that artists are people with a calling, who realise that another world is hidden behind the one they perceive with their senses – a universe as a hushed moment in which life and the metaphysical unite. The ability to look behind the observable and to catch snippets of dreams from a 'twilight zone' gives the artist the aura of a visionary. In the autonomous universe of Mahieu, Jan Boon was able to dispose of his idealistic longing to make the world complete by showing it the way he felt it was, in its deepest essence. This is what he considered to be the social function of literature: the story as a renewed experience and hence a ritual of reconciliation.

His favourite metaphor to explain this was that of the hunter, the man who waits with infinite patience until his pray emerges from the bushes and who then outsmarts it. During the moments he is separated from his prey, he lives at the peak of his abilities: awake, on his toes and poised to deal with anything that happens around him. The happiness of hunting

would only be granted to those who were prepared to give up their life, because little could be achieved without dedicating their entire self to it and without undergoing several years of training. The outcome was never certain in advance; it was about being able to wait quietly until the right moment and then strike. In that approach, he recognised the writer, who also needs to hunt for the truth, without knowing in advance the way in which it would present itself. At the end of his novel *Tjoek*, the hunters and the prey became one – the image of a successful writing process. The narrator disappears and the story remains. In his letters, Robinson often emphasised that all his stories were based on existing people and real events. What he tried to do was to make a connection between all the elements in his life, thereby creating something new. He did this by penetrating so deep into the personal realm that elements of the universal sphere were uncovered – a form of searching for the truth, along the roads of the imagination: the writer as a hunter in search of the ultimate story. In his own view, it meant adopting the Eastern tradition of using a story to pass on history. It was seen as the only way in which mankind would become aware of its fate and in which the truth served a higher purpose. With that image in mind, we manage to get the closest to the artist in Jan Boon.

7.2.2 The bridge between East and West

Every immigrant author of the first, but also the second, of immigrant generations will sooner or later be confronted with the choice between adapting to Dutch standards or struggling to get access to an audience by making some concessions. How authentic can one be in this ambivalent situation? Especially in the work of writers with a colonial background – their direct own or via parents – the dominating theme seems to be the quest for, and the protection of, an inner voice. Because the picture of colonial history, culture and social circumstances gets distorted as soon as a process of decolonisation starts, this issue will become manifest. Language can lead to understanding, but also to serious miscommunication, which has to do with the referential nature of words. The same words – in a Dutch or translated text – can refer to different notions, modes of behaviour or landscapes. The deeds, or the meaning, of ghosts in the work of Robinson will be understood differently by people who are used to their appearance in literature versus Westerners who are less familiar with the supernatural in their novels. This is one example out of many, only to illustrate that for an author this will lead to the question: do I leave the ghosts out, or am I going to explain what I mean by them? Narration is about evocation, not about demonstration. On publishing a story, the implication is that one's readers are familiar with the world that is referred to, which is why mediaeval texts need so many annotations. Everything has changed since then, including the meaning of words that may seem superficially familiar.

When Robinson came to the Netherlands he noticed that Dutch critics praised his style of writing, but had very little affinity with the social climate he was referring to. And that is where things went wrong. Of course, he could have made the choice to write more comprehensibly, but by doing so he would have betrayed his whole make-up. The writer and his language were one and the same, and had to be accepted as a unity. Because Dutch society, in his perception, denied the value of an East Indian lifestyle, they could not understand the inner truth of his stories – which was the reason for turning away from his audience. On both sides there was a lack of identification.

One day, the voice will emerge from the woodwork, wrote Robinson, as justification for his unremitting attempts to keep readers interested in the Indische lesson. This prompts the question as to whether his heritage is currently still appealing to the imagination. At first sight, this does not seem to be the case. His collections of essays are only available secondhand. The Netherlands-Indische Kunstkring no longer exists. The Pasar Malam festival and the magazine *Tong Tong* have parted ways since his death. The stories he wrote as Mahieu are known only by a circle of literary connoisseurs, who regard him as a 'writer for writers'.[11] It means that his name is more or less recognised, but that his work is rarely referred to nowadays. As a narrator, he might be compared to canonised writers such as Rudyard Kipling (particularly in relation to his novel-like *Kim* (1901)) and Mark Twain, whose *Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884) seem direct predecessors of the Batavian column writer of *Piekerans van een straatslijper*. However, his work could just as easily be classified as a mixture of the macho bravura of Ernest Hemingway and the lyrical magic of Gabriel García Márquez. A reissue of his writings may lead to renewed appreciation in Dutch-speaking regions of his – incidentally, relatively small – body of work.[12]

Behind his vocation as a writer was also a secret migrant, diligently looking for individuality, with positions that may be valuable for our insight into the mechanisms of today's multicultural society. To start with, there is his belief in the need to formulate an idiosyncratic (group) identity and to preserve it. In pre-war colonial society and in the Dutch society where they ended up in the 1950s, the Indische community felt pressure to adjust to the dominant Dutch way of life. The young Robinson, who grew up with a range of ideas from the East and the West, was aware of the tension. Because of his eagerness to read in both cultures, he developed an acute awareness of the ambivalence. Not only that, but from early on he also managed to put its consequences into words. Like no other, he understood that no emancipation can take place without self-awareness, hence he opposed renouncing one's own background, including one's culture, history and way of life. He empathically tried to get young people growing up in the colony to get moving, to go out and explore the archipelago, but

also to study their own traditions. Any sense of identity is founded on self-knowledge was his view. Without such awareness, a group would be merely copying others, hence forcing a break in its own development.

The post-war situation only strengthened his belief that the concept of continuity is needed, particularly when a new community is establishing itself. In the Netherlands, many compatriots from the East discovered that, when push came to shove, they were more Indische than Dutch. They simply carried a different past in their backpack; their command of the Dutch language made little difference for better or worse in that respect. The same applied to their connection to the mother country by the North Sea, geography lessons taken there and their loyalty to the House of Orange. In the overseas archipelago, the newcomers had grown into an independent offshoot of the national stem – an awareness that nevertheless seemed to have escaped the notice of the society of their paternal grandparents. The reception policy in the Netherlands immediately banked on a quick integration of the 'repatriates', with the final stage envisaged as assimilation – in the sense of complete adjustment to the national ethics. The underlying thought was that this was the only way to prevent people from falling by the wayside. The post-war Netherlands considered itself an emigration country rather than a society that had much to gain from absorbing large groups of newcomers. That thought was in line, at the time, with the feelings of many Indische repatriates, who initially lived with the idea that they would return to their country of origin, like all immigrants – only to discover in the 1950s and 1960s that political storms had virtually cut off any return.

This did not apply to Robinson, who refused to choose in favour of one nation at the expense of the other. He wanted to keep all his options open, hence his continuous exploratory trips to other places in the world. During his 'search for identity', he initially found little recognition in the country of his father, which he felt was forcing him to give up his Indische identity. As a writer, he understood better than anyone that this would be impossible because he had been shaped by the language and substance of another society. If he renounced his origins, he would lose his reason for existence as an author. Without an individual character, repatriates, in his view, turned into pseudo-Dutchmen, which could only hinder their integration into the Netherlands. Every migrant, he wrote, can pretend to adapt – at work, on the street and in school – but it takes more than that to be an active citizen. This is why Robinson tried to encourage a form of group awareness early on, through his Indische activities. Initially, he did not do it to isolate himself, but to arrive at citizenship by profiling himself. In his perspective, this was essential in order to be able to participate fully in Dutch society. Without emancipation, the Indische group would not be able to escape the position of being second-rate Dutch people. He claimed that newcomers needed a medium to engage with, otherwise they would sooner

or later retreat to their own circle and avert themselves from society – which is indeed what happened to part of the Indische first generation.

Yet something else was hidden behind the pursuit of emancipation and citizenship. The colonial time knew the stereotype of the Indo-Dutch as a marginal figure, a being that consisted of two halves: one Eastern and one Western. At times, the life of Robinson had also been dominated by that struggle – a consequence of his youth in a so-called mixed household. For a long time, he tried to integrate both heritages, until he realised that the metaphor of the Indische group as neither fish nor flesh did not hold water. The social phenomenon of an identity supposedly split into two stemmed from a distorted image, he felt. He wrote that Indische people were considered the descendants of a 'wrong choice', both in the colonial days and afterwards. They grew up with a dual personality, which they found hard to get rid of, hence the feeling of disloyalty, whichever direction they chose. In his view, this pitfall could be avoided by rejecting the image that the *Indischgast* ('Indische guest') had to be one of two halves: either land animal or amphibian. On the contrary, he or she actually had added value for not needing to turn to face either the East or the West. In the imagined world of Robinson, the Indo-Dutch distinguished themselves by the ability to act as a land animal as well as an amphibian. There was no question of any victimisation due to a split identity, but rather a surplus resulting from a mixed identity: a sum of parts. As Robinson expressed it: 1 + 1 = 3. Studies of international mixed communities in Latin America, in particular, fed his ideas about the idiosyncratic nature and destiny of the Indische community. Literary stories from that region also strengthened his belief that there had to be scope for cross-border awareness of affinity, akin to an overarching identity of 'half-castes', the descendants of mixed relationships created in the tropics. Maybe this was not even so much as a guideline for a new Indische mass migration – although the idea certainly appealed to him – but first and foremost as a source of inspiration for a sense of community. There was an awareness that the lines of the past could be extended into the future so as to liberate the Indo-Dutch from his cocoon of nostalgia, felt by the loss of his country of origin and his feeling of being out of place in Western society.

What it amounted to was that Robinson advocated a transnational identity at a time that the concept was still unknown, let alone acknowledged. The thinking of the West was dominated by homogenous, monocultural nations; the Dutch political and social system (with its pillarisation) was unfamiliar with the notion that citizens might be able to hold several loyalties simultaneously. The Indische frontman therefore frequently felt like a lone voice in the desert. The boundaries of Dutch society seemed too narrowly defined in his eyes and those of many Indische people around him. From there, he nevertheless did not jump to the conclusion that his group had to completely adapt itself, although many peers preparing for

integration did just that. On the contrary, he felt that the Dutch boundaries had to expand, giving his people room to fit in. When this failed to happen year after year, despite three centuries of colonial history, he decided to pin his hopes on other countries. Not that he managed to establish a breakthrough in other countries; the *Zeitgeist* was not quite ready for that yet. During the first phase of becoming established in a new country, Indische migrants needed all their energy to settle: the rule was to look ahead, rather than back. In addition, the Indische communities in the Netherlands, the US and Australia were too small to set into motion an international movement. In that respect, he continued to work in comparative isolation.

Those belonging to the second or third generation who reflect on their Indische heritage can nevertheless count on Robinson's full support. His work provides them a blueprint for the transnational identity they may have in mind. That concept currently encounters far less resistance and is even in keeping with a trend in immigrant communities to refer to their ties to their peers elsewhere in the world, or to map out their network. Whether such a network is also feasible for the descendants of a nation transformed from the Dutch Indies colony into the Independent Republic of Indonesia still remains to be seen. Should such a development get underway, reaching beyond the so-called trips back to the *roots*, then Robinson's body of work offers many reference points for an Indonesian reorientation.

Notes

1 Here, he was referring to paperback *Cursus van de dood* published in 1951. For a more comprehensive review of the sources of Robinson's work, see Willems (2008).
2 Robinson refers to *The masters and the slaves* by De Mello Freyre (1900-1987), originally published in 1933 as *Casa-grande & senzala.*
3 Among many such works see: Said (1993); Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (1989); Hall (1996).
4 D'haen (1996); Leijnse and Van Kempe (1998). A good overview of the contemporary state of affairs in the Netherlands is given in the two volumes by Buikema and Meijer (2003 and 2004).
5 See e.g. Fontijn (1997) and Renders (2008).
6 See Hoefte, Meel and Renders (2008).
7 Robinson (1952/1954).
8 The collection of stories published under the Mahieu pseudonym was published twenty years after his death by literary historian Rob Nieuwenhuys in *Verzameld werk* (1992).
9 See Willems (2001, 2003).
10 See Spengler (1918/1922); Ortega y Gasset (1933) but also Robinson's favourite essay, 'Het geluk van het jagen', in Ortega y Gasset (1949).
11 This is beautifully illustrated by a piece written by Portnoy (1998) on her discovery of the English translation of a selection of Mahieu's stories, *The hunt for the heart.*
12 An anthology of Robinson's letters (Willems 2009) was followed up by a published collection of his essays (Willems 2011).

8 History brought home: Post-colonial migrations and the Dutch rediscovery of slavery

Gert Oostindie

8.1 Introduction

Slavery and slave resistance have been core issues in the post-war historiography of the Caribbean.[1] At the same time, massive migration from the British, Dutch and French Caribbeans to Europe has literally brought the legacies of colonialism and hence slavery home to the former metropolitan countries. Virtually all Caribbean nations, moreover, are thoroughly transnational today. One of the consequences of this post-colonial condition has been the emergence of what is now generally known as 'the Black Atlantic', a concept coined by Gilroy (1993). The shared history of enslavement provides a central point of reference within this Black Atlantic. It also provides inspiration for narratives of history that gloss over fundamental differences within the history of Atlantic slavery.

This chapter addresses the recent Dutch rediscovery and, at times, perhaps reinvention of the Netherlands' long history of slave trade and slavery in relation to the impact of the post-war migration from the Dutch Caribbean. A first issue is the overall impact of post-colonial migration – from Indonesia and the Caribbean – on the way Dutch history is canonised. The next sections provide a succinct analysis of the significance of slave trade and slavery in the various realms of the Dutch colonial empire, followed by an analysis of the recent and relatively successful impact of the Caribbean demand to accept African slavery as an integral part of Dutch national history. The final sections discuss the contested issue of the legacies of slavery and the issue of 'black'-versus-'white' perspectives; question whether Black Atlantic interpretations indeed help us see New World slavery and its legacies with fresh eyes; debate the concept and uses of 'cultural trauma'; and, finally, offer some reflections on the position of historians.

A word regarding the background to this chapter is appropriate. Three Dutch historians of slavery have been particular vocal on these issues in the Netherlands and have therefore become voluntary or reluctant actors in the field at the same time. Emmer and Van Stipriaan, both highly respected for their scholarly work, have represented some strongly opposing views

on these matters. A third historian engaged in these debates is the present author, who should probably be located somewhere between the other two. A good deal of this chapter therefore derives from publications by these three authors as well as from the present author's ongoing engagement with these issues. A good outsider's analysis is provided by Kardux.[2]

8.2 A historical canon for a post-colonial metropolis

World War II sparked the decolonisation of the Dutch empire and, even more unexpectedly to the Dutch, the first of a series of post-colonial migrations. The total number of immigrants from Indonesia in the 1945-1962 period is estimated at around 300,000. This figure is negligible in comparison to an Indonesian population of roughly one hundred million in the late 1940s, but involved the overwhelming majority from the circles where most of these immigrants originated, i.e. Dutch colonials and Indo-Dutch. Today, over half a million Dutch citizens have some Indonesian roots.

Whereas this first chapter of decolonisation thus caused unrepresentative and comparatively insignificant migration, the 1975 transfer of sovereignty to Surinam sparked an exodus involving colonial citizens of all classes, ethnicities and generations, a cross-section of the entire population. Over the next decades, the demographic growth of the Surinamese community would be a largely Dutch affair. Today, the country houses some 475,000 inhabitants, as against a Surinamese community of some 335,000 in the Netherlands. According to the 2004 Surinamese census, roughly half of the Surinamese population has African roots.

Large-scale Antillean migration to the Netherlands, mainly from Curaçao, dates from the late 1980s and beyond. Again, the numerical significance of the migration lies primarily on the islands themselves. This Antillean migration is not representative by origins, as the overwhelming majority hails from one island only. But again, in other dimensions the migrants form a cross-section of the insular population. The total population of the six islands is estimated at 280,000. The Antillean community in the Netherlands in 2006 stood at 130,000. The great majority of the Antillean community in the Netherlands is of African origins.

With an estimated one million taken together, the share of Dutch citizens with colonial or post-colonial roots in the total population is considerable. The number of Dutch people with 'roots' in Indonesia is estimated at just over half a million; the number with Caribbean origins at just under half a million; the number of Dutch citizens whose presence in the Netherlands has a prehistory going back to the Atlantic slave trade is some 300,000; probably half of the Surinamese Dutch are of Asian origins.[3]

Colonial history has literally come home with these successive waves of post-colonial migration. The post-colonial presence became immediately

evident in demographics, but more recently also in debates on Dutch identity and culture. Just as in other countries of the 'old' Europe, progressive European unification and large-scale immigration have provoked new, often fierce debates on national identity and the extent to which immigrants can and should adhere to 'national' traditions and values. By conventional Dutch standards, these debates have been unusually heated, hovering between the two extremes of conservative essentialism and unconditional praise of multiculturalism.

The rise of a post-colonial community of one million in the Netherlands has had an unmistakable and in some ways salutary impact on the Dutch debates on national identity. The colonial antecedents of Dutch history have been more strongly and critically incorporated in the national narrative than ever before. Post-colonial identity politics certainly played a role here. 'History', implying an imputed Dutch collective guilt handed down through the generations, was used as a strong argument, particularly by leaders of post-colonial migrant communities. The Dutch government responded accordingly in the past decades, supporting and subsidising commemorations, statues and museums, research projects and the like for post-colonial migrant communities.

In all of this, we witness present governments acknowledging responsibility for – from a contemporary perspective – morally dubious or outright immoral state actions going back decades and even centuries. Perhaps seeking some kind of moral redemption, but also trying to enhance social cohesion, the state answers to the urges of its post-colonial citizenry. This does not necessarily lead to consistent rewritings of the past. The Dutch East India Company (the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie in Dutch, VOC) is celebrated while shame and remorse dominate the memory of the Dutch West India Company (Geoctroyeerde West-Indische Compagnie in Dutch, WIC). This contrast has something to do with the different trajectories of the two companies, but arguably as much or more with the willingness to respond to post-colonial migrants' divergent ideas about these pasts.

Whatever the inconsistencies and moral challenges, the 'repatriation' of post-colonial migrants has had the effect of bringing colonial history back into the canonical version of national history. This is best illustrated in the recently coded canonical version of Dutch history defined by a government commission and subsequently accepted as the model for primary and early secondary school history education. The new canon, available online (www.entoen.nu) testifies to an enhanced awareness of the significance of colonialism in and for Dutch history. Of the 50 'windows' comprising Dutch history, five are exclusively about colonial history, while several other windows have a colonial dimension. Nowhere do we come across glorification of colonialism, the perspectives varying from neutral to explicitly critical.

Once we move to renderings of colonialism outside of academia, the picture becomes more blurred and one encounters more self-congratulatory perspectives on colonialism. Dutch colonialism in Asia evokes mixed memories, while the Dutch Caribbean history is mainly equated with slavery and therefore shame. This lack of balance reflects the contemporary framework in which colonial history is reinserted in the national narrative. There is a geopolitical context in which the Netherlands prides itself of having been among the pioneers of globalisation, but expresses embarrassment regarding colonialism as such and, in particular, as to its excesses. This intermingles with a domestic context in which post-colonial migrant communities demand that their voices be heard in the new narrative of Dutch national history.

In all of these debates, we may observe that leaders of post-colonial migrant communities have successfully capitalised on shared history. This need not necessarily mean claiming older and priority rights to full citizenship over and above the other ethnic minorities in the country, but at times precisely that implication is voiced. Cultural affinity then becomes an additional argument. In order words, as a late vengeance, references to colonialism become forceful arguments for full and undisputed contemporary citizenship.

The Atlantic slave trade and slavery in the Caribbean colonies are increasingly singled out as the nadir of colonial history. In 2000, 7 per cent of a representative sample of Dutch citizens indicated that among all episodes of Dutch history commending shame, the Dutch participation in the slave trade was at the top of their list of embarrassment. Four years later, this proportion had increased to 16 per cent. By 2008, this was up to 24 per cent, making the Dutch participation in the slave trade the answer most frequently given to this question. No other episode in Dutch history elicits more embarrassment (*De Geschiedeniskrant* 26 March 2008).

The pendulum continues to swing though. The VOC celebrations continued in spite of widespread irritation in countries implicated with the company such as Indonesia, India and South Africa, and well-publicised criticism by Dutch scholars. A backlash regarding official Dutch remorse about the WIC and Atlantic slave trade is not altogether unthinkable either. There has been no shortage of radical xenophobic websites denouncing monuments and remorse for slavery as nonsensical. Shortly before he was murdered in 2002, populist right-wing political leader Pim Fortuyn accepted the facts of Dutch involvement in the Atlantic slave trade, but ridiculed inherited guilt and reparation claims. In 2005, one of his later and most successful epigones, Rita Verdonk, then a member of cabinet, made a highly disputed official representation at the annual Emancipation Day celebrations in Amsterdam. But by 2008, launching her new political movement 'Trots op Nederland' ('Proud of the Netherlands'), she complained that 'everywhere in the Netherlands, monuments for slavery are erected

[that] depict our culture as awful'. One may well assume she anticipated many potential Dutch voters would support this firm stance (Fortuyn 2002: 158).[4]

8.3 Slave trade and slavery in the East and West Indies

We may well assume that the respondents' shame about the Dutch involvement in slave trade and slavery was exclusively linked to the Atlantic system. The Dutch involvement with slave trade in the Indian Ocean and colonial slavery in the territory covered by the VOC has received only slight scholarly interest and no public interest at all. This is actually one of the reasons the quadricentennial of the VOC establishment could be extensively celebrated in the Netherlands, an act unthinkable for the WIC (Oostindie 2003: 153).

Slave trades and slavery in the Dutch East and West Indies were two circuits that functioned virtually independent of one another, but lend themselves very well for comparison. This includes the scale and organisation of the slave trade, number and origin of the slaves, their economic importance to the colonies, contrasts between indigenous and foreign slavery, slavery regimes, inter-ethnic relations, creolisation and local cultural formation and, finally, abolition and emancipation.

Several conclusions may be drawn from recent tentative research, particularly the work of Vink (2003) and Van Welie (2008). First, the numbers game. The Dutch role in the Atlantic slave trade has long been established. Over the centuries, Dutch slavers were minor players, embarking some 555,000 or 5 per cent of the 12.5 million enslaved Africans destined for the 'middle passage' across the Atlantic. In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, however, the share of the Dutch was more prominent and they were also instrumental in exporting the sugar-and-slavery model from Brazil to the Caribbean.

Whereas the Dutch slave trade is mostly thought of as an Atlantic phenomenon, historians have long known that the VOC also engaged in slave trade. In a pioneering article, Vink (2003) suggested that the Dutch Indian Ocean slave trade was actually more voluminous than it was in the Atlantic. Van Welie's discussion of the literature and evidence makes it clear that the methodological and conceptual issues are far more complicated for the Asian slave trades than for the Atlantic area. Even short of satisfactory quantitative series, we may confidently say that in the East, too, the Dutch were active and unscrupulous buyers of slaves – in the realm of the VOC, enslaved Asians and, to a lesser degree, Africans supplied by local traders. The Dutch partners in oceanic trade were Asians, particularly Chinese and also Africans.

Up to the abolition of slavery (1863 in the Dutch case), slave labour formed the backbone of the colonies in the Americas – slave-produced tropical produce was the raison d'être of these colonies. Dutch Brazil and, even more, the Guyanas were typical plantation economies, with enslaved Africans making up a massive majority of the population. Conversely, in most of the Asian settlements and colonies, slave labour was mainly urban and incidental to other forms of locally procured labour, whether bonded or not. Slaves formed a tiny minority in the overall population of the Asian colonies. Only in places such as Batavia, Banda and Ambon did they make up half the population by the late seventeenth century and hence had a more significant impact.

Much has been written on the absence of a serious abolitionist movement in the Netherlands regarding the Atlantic slave trade and slavery. Drescher (1994) presented the classic analysis of the Dutch paradox over two decades ago. Clearly, this lack of abolitionist fervour is not that atypical in a European, let alone global, context. Yet, it contrasts strongly with the exceptional British case and also with nationally cherished ideas about Dutch progressiveness and humanitarianism. Studies on slave owners' attitudes in the Dutch Caribbean only confirm this sobering observation. Again, the study of Dutch attitudes towards enslavement in Asia is only in its infancy. There is no indication, however, that Dutch colonialism has a more commendable record here. Perhaps it was even easier to conceive of slavery as self-evident in Asia than in the Americas. In Asia, the Dutch, like other Europeans, simply participated in pre-colonial networks of slave trade and Europeans were certainly not exceptional in their deployment of slaves.[5]

Historians are generally weary about generalisations regarding slavery's variants of 'mild' versus 'harsh', even more so when such variations are explained through reference to criteria such as the national or cultural backgrounds of slave owners. Wherever there is slavery, abuse is endemic; so is slave resistance. Nonetheless, we may possibly discern some contrasts between the practice of slavery in the Dutch Atlantic and Dutch Asia. For all we know, for most enslaved, slavery in Asia would imply urban and domestic rather than agro-industrial labour, was more gender-balanced and implied lesser racial and ethnic distinctions. As a consequence, manumission was far more common, as was the likeliness that the descendants of manumitted slaves would be fully incorporated in the wider society, not necessarily in the lower classes. For most Asian slaves, there was no such thing as the dreaded middle passage, and probably lesser racial stigmatisation and alienation.

While this hypothesis awaits scholarly scrutiny, it is useful for present purposes to highlight another dimension of the history of slavery. Throughout the Americas as well as in the Afro-Caribbean diaspora in Europe, the Atlantic slave trade and New World slavery are crucial to the

way descendants of these enslaved Africans think of themselves, colonial history and contemporary issues ranging from racism to achievement. Conversely, their visible African ancestry makes them victims of this history identifiable to all. Slavery, in a sense, has remained, or has become a central feature in Afro-American identity.

Nothing of this sort applies to the former Dutch colonies in Asia. Remember that slavery was not nearly as dominant in the Asian territories as it was in the Americas. Moreover, it is difficult to point at legacies of slavery or at descendants of slaves – and where this *is* possible, in Indonesia, one would more likely be dealing with traces of the indigenous slavery that both preceded and outlasted colonial slavery. In other words, whereas colonial history itself does not have the contemporary weight in Asia that it has in the Caribbean, slavery evokes even less living memories.[6]

8.4 Commemorating Atlantic slavery: Gestures and dissonance

For all practical purposes, the 'Dutch' memory of slavery is narrowed down to – in this order – Surinam, the Antilles and perhaps Africa, symbolised by the Elmina fortress in Ghana. The Dutch involvement with slavery in the domain of the VOC has been largely forgotten. The same, incidentally, applies to enslavement of Dutch citizens in Northern Africa in the early modern period. The rediscovery of slavery in Dutch history is therefore partial and corresponds to a particular demand in Dutch society expressed mainly by the Afro-Caribbean community.

Since the late 1990s, Dutch government and institutions in the public arena have been forthcoming in financing and otherwise supporting initiatives to commemorate Atlantic slavery. In the presence of the Dutch queen and prime minister, a national commemorative monument was inaugurated in Amsterdam on Emancipation Day, 1 July 2002. The Nationaal Instituut Nederlands Slavernijverleden en Erfenis (National Institute for the Study and Documentation of Slavery and its Legacy, NINSEE), was established one year later in Amsterdam. Zeeland, once the major slave trade province, followed suit in 2005 with its own monument, in Middelburg. In 2006, the beautiful, early 17th-century mansion of the Amsterdam mayor was nailed with a plaque indicating that one of its first inhabitants was an official of the WIC with a special assignment of the Atlantic slave trade.

Invariably, such inaugurations went accompanied with solemn declarations. Members of the Dutch cabinet expressed 'deep remorse', as did the future Dutch king, on a visit to Ghana. Cultural institutions financed by the Dutch state embarked on a wide variety of initiatives, ranging from the publication of books, through the creation of genealogical databases at the national archives and restoration projects, to a series of exhibitions in

various museums and documentaries aimed at school children. Media coverage was extensive and helped raise public awareness on the issue – possibly triggering the later chauvinistic backlash as well.

There is irony, perhaps bitter irony, in the fact that the initiative in all of this was definitely metropolitan, with Surinam and the Antilles obtaining second servings most of the time. The successful Caribbean lobby in the Netherlands to 'unsilence' the slavery past has inadvertently served to strengthen the metropolitan hold on the digestion of colonial history. Of course 'metropolitan' now includes views and players from the Caribbean community but, even so, the historical asymmetry continues to be reproduced.

Within the Netherlands, the urge to accept Atlantic slavery as part and parcel of Dutch history may have been spectacularly successful, but this does not mean that there is no dissonance. There is an at times heated debate about that. In a recent analysis of the debates, Dutch historian Van Stipriaan has made a telling distinction between 'white' and 'black' perspectives. His argument is well worth quoting at some length. He characterises the 'black' discourse as subaltern, Afro-centric, anti-colonial and inspired by US debates on slavery as the Black Holocaust and hence the claim to reparations. The 'white' discourse, in his perspective, is 'not white of an intrinsically racist character' and actually even anti-racist, but top-down, paternalistic, a product of the political, cultural and scholarly establishment. Van Stipriaan, himself a white, well-established historian with strong links to the Caribbean communities, thinks of himself as one of the few 'desperately' trying to build bridges between the two [discourses]' (Van Stipriaan 2006: 169).

There is a point in this distinction. At the turn of the millennium, the Dutch establishment engaged with a certain eagerness to the challenge to 'do good', to speak out against moral flaws of the nation in a distant past, to present conciliatory gestures. The new-found consistency was often summarised in affirmations to the effect that there was a hideous inconsistency in thinking of the Dutch Golden Age of economic and political ascendancy, religious and philosophical toleration and Rembrandt without also acknowledging this period as the starting period of the nation's involvement in the Atlantic slave trade. So initially, there was something of a feel-good dimension to all of this, coupled with political considerations akin to the multiculturalism paradigm and the accompanying commitment to inclusionary politics, as in the broadening of the narrative of the nation.

It soon turned out that there were more radical expectations within the Caribbean community. Anyone engaged in debates on the issue of slavery and its contemporary legacies was soon bound to be caught in heated debates on legitimacy, black-versus-white perspectives and eventually the question of apologies and reparations. Liberal white historians, operating within a reconciliatory mode, could easily find themselves exposed to

criticism of high-jacking a 'black' issue or, at best, of realising that their contributions were met with distrust and, at times, overt hostility by radical Afro-Caribbean protagonists.

Van Stipriaan encapsulates this well – even if perhaps not particularly encouraging to the present author – in his comments on two books edited for the Prince Claus Fund in 1999 and 2001. The first, in Dutch, made a chapter case for commemoration and a monument in the Netherlands, while the second, in English, provided a broader comparative context.

> These books have certainly influenced debates within the white discourse. Within the Black discourse they have played no role whatsoever in the Netherlands, with the exception that the editor of both books, Oostindie, is considered as belonging to 'them'. (Van Stipriaan 2006: 168 referring to Oostindie 1999 and Oostindie 2001)

This probably correct observation begs many questions. The first issue seems of a conceptual nature, but has a wider epistemological significance. Much of Van Stipriaan's 'white discourse' actually refers to the field of academia, the terrain of white as well as, indeed, a minority of black historians. Much of his 'black discourse', by contrast, is about grass roots feelings, memories and wisdoms that operate at an altogether different level. Within academia, there is, by definition, room for dissonance based on argumentation. In the field of the humanities, there is also a growing awareness of the significance and inevitability of multivocality. Yet it seems a risky – and to the present writer, in the end untenable – position to juxtapose two fundamentally different types of discourse as somehow of a same nature. After all, scholarship has higher claims than providing 'just another perspective' on, say, the origins of mankind, the treatment of cancer, quantum mechanics or the historical phenomenon of slavery. For that reason, we may well accept the fact that some feel there is a 'white discourse' out there that does not answer their needs in remembering slavery and pondering its legacies. But accepting that fact does not imply that scholarship need apologize for its own methods and epistemological claims.

While this argument leads to a rejection of the scholarly validity of the black-white dichotomy, there is also a sobering strategic concern. The same representative sample who ranked Dutch slave trade and slavery as the most shameful episode in national history demonstrated little sympathy for reparations (*De Geschiedeniskrant* 26 March 2008). More broadly, the growing popularity of right-wing populism in Dutch society and politics suggests that the room for a radical 'black discourse' to reach any broad backing seems slight. Wide disenchantment with the multiculturalism paradigm actually means that the liberal 'white discourse' itself is at the

defence. It might be wise therefore to think again about thinking of the differences between these two perspectives as crucial – there is another white world out there with little patience for either of Van Stipriaan's perspectives. This, incidentally, is one reason some influential African American intellectuals will not have anything to do with the reparations claim, feeling that it will only backfire on more moderate accomplishments in the civil rights movement (Torpey 2006: 122-123, 127).

Next, there are the questions about to what extent a professional historian should engage in this type of considerations in the first place and how a historian can relate to the fashionable cultural studies' concept of multivocality in this context. Both questions will be addressed below. But first some of the contents of the black-versus-white controversy in Dutch politics should be discussed. From this short survey, it will become clear that, as Van Stipriaan rightly observes, the 'white' perspective defines a good deal of the Caribbean participants as well – which again raises the question of whether this bipolar terminology is analytically helpful rather than confusing.

What have been the issues at stake? A good introduction is provided in a book co-authored by Van Stipriaan, Heilbron, Bijnaar and Smeulders, all linked in some way to NINSEE. In *Op zoek naar de stilte* ('*In search of the silence*'), as the title indicates, the authors – three of Caribbean origins – assume that Dutch involvement in the Atlantic slave trade and slavery itself has been intentionally put to rest ever since emancipation. The book intends to disclose hidden or forgotten legacies of this history in the Netherlands itself. Their tour brings us to museums that never before gave the black servants in their master paintings much thought; to archives and libraries containing a wealth of data, interpretations, ideals and prejudice; to associations and institutions claiming to operate from a genuine African diaspora perspective; to specialists in oral history and oral traditions referring to the slavery period; to participants in debates about legacies and trauma and so on (Van Stipriaan, Heilbron, Bijnaar & Smeulders 2007).

Op zoek naar de stilte offers many perspectives and certainly the first-ever attempt to provide a broader perspective on the ways slavery is or is not remembered in the Netherlands. The book confirms the perhaps sad but, after all, rather obvious conclusion that the slavery past has far more significance to descendants of once enslaved Africans than to white Dutch citizens and makes the normative point that this history should be accepted as a shared past for all Dutch people – this is of course fully in line with the liberal progressive politics that led the Dutch government to create a national monument and NINSEE in the first place.

New, refreshing but at times also worrying is the extensive discussion of the wide divergence in the way Dutch people of various backgrounds think about slavery and its legacies. Not surprisingly, much of what *Op zoek naar de stilte* details here concurs with Van Stipriaan's analysis of a divide

between white and black discourse. Extreme Afro-Centric positions are cited, e.g. the affirmation that white historians cannot possibly write a reliable history of slavery: 'You don't ask Nazis to write the history of the concentration camps either!' (e.g. Van Stipriaan et al. 2007: 121). But perhaps the more important observation is that *within* the Afro-Caribbean community in the Netherlands, too, there is a wide variety of ideas about slavery and its legacies.

What are these contestations all about? To start with, there are disputes about the legitimacy of intellectual and organisational leadership. Since the 1990s, a series of grass roots groups has been involved in the debate about slavery and the urge to recognise this past as integral to Dutch history. Dutch government recognition of the validity of these claims resulted in institutionalisation and a long series of projects entailing black and white cooperation and bridging. What transpires from *Op zoek naar de stilte* is that most participants value the results so far with a mix of satisfaction and uneasiness, but equally that there is dissonance within the Afro-Caribbean community. Thus, some radical grass-roots organisations perceive of national institutions now put in place, NINSEE, in particular, as too moderate.

What, then, is moderation? Which approaches generally banned from the 'white discourse' seem to be eschewed by NINSEE as well? Basically, these refer to concepts and approaches derived from radical African American discourse, such as the terminology of the Black Holocaust, the discourse of dehumanisation and cultural trauma, the insistence on formal Dutch apologies, more reparations and so on. Anyone following NINSEE over its first five years of existence will have perceived a delicate balancing act between responding to the claims of the more radical elements in its Afro constituency and fulfilling its bridging mission towards a wider and, after all, predominantly white society. That act was not always consistent or successful, but bearing in mind NINSEE's conflicting positions, it could hardly have been otherwise.

8.5 Black Atlantic orientations and the concept of cultural trauma

The Dutch 'rediscovery' of Atlantic slavery is part of a wider trend in Europe and the Americas and testifies to the impact of the Black Atlantic. Not all countries with a slavery past have responded in the same way to claims for recognition. Within Europe, France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom have been more responsive and self-critical than Portugal or Spain, a difference that may be accounted for by divergent cultural and political traditions and certainly by reference to the dissimilar volume and political clout of metropolitan Afro communities.

Debates and claims regarding slavery and its legacies have increasingly become framed in a seemingly delocalised transnational discourse that, at the end of the day, discloses a heavy predilection for radical African American perspectives grounded in US realities. At times, then, supposedly broad African diasporic conceptualisations might well be a mere transplanting of American ideas and realities to other contexts. This skipping over past and present differences in time and place is not necessarily useful to understand either the realities of slavery nor to weigh its contemporary legacies. Again, some examples from the Dutch debates may illustrate this point.

Terminology is an obvious illustration of American derivation, as seen in the use of the conceptually disputable and politically provocative notion of the Black Holocaust. The claim of 'reparations' is another idea inspired by US debates. These are appropriations one can appreciate or not, but there is no reason to propose these American concepts be less (or more) appropriate in a European – or, for that matter, Caribbean or Latin American – context. But once we read about black-versus-white perspectives, about a white 'silencing' of the past or about generalised legacies of slavery, historians should make amends.

American interpretations of slavery and its legacies are rooted in a unique historical experience with unique implications for race relations. Perhaps inevitably, the stark racial divide characterising US society both during and after slavery translated in strongly oppositional understandings of slavery and its legacies. Hence, the emergence and popularity of the idea of mutually irreconcilable perspectives, grounded in a long history of brutal suppression and cultural resistance, proudly celebrated by the civil rights' movement and given new credential by cultural studies' insistence on the inevitability and, indeed, legitimacy of partial truths and emic discourse.

Yet any historian of the Americas will appreciate that the US record of slavery and post-slavery and race relations is only one out of many models, a uniquely grim bipolar model at that. Throughout Latin America and even in the non-Spanish Caribbean, society and race relations during slavery and certainly after emancipation were not necessarily less violent, but certainly more fluid and ended up producing societies that defy the notion of bipolarity. To be sure, there was and has remained a class-cum-colour social hierarchy, persistent racism and so on. But it simply does not make sense to think of these societies and how its citizens think of themselves primarily in terms of 'race' and a black-versus-white polarity.

Narrowing understandings of slavery and its legacies to a simple division in a black-versus-white discourse therefore misses much of the complexities of the wider Afro-American experience. This should worry not just historians, but anyone engaged in the debate on the contemporary relevance of slavery. How, for instance, are we to understand the concept of

'silencing the past' itself? The idea gained currency with Trouillot's seminal book, *Silencing the past*. Trouillot's argument is straightforward. There are hegemonic versions of history that tend to actively silence subaltern voices. He applies this paradigm specifically to the 'unremembering' of the Haitian Revolution and the quincentenary of Columbus' 'discovery' of the New World (Trouillot 1995).

Seen from this perspective, one understands the popularity of the recurring trope of 'unsilencing' the slavery past – and indeed the title of *Op zoek naar de stilte*. The big question, however, is whether it really makes sense to always think of this kind of silence as engineered, as actively imposed by hegemonic forces. If one US plantation mansion converted into a museum tells a wondrous story about the antebellum Deep South while skipping over the harsh realities of slavery, yes, then the conclusion of silencing seems astute (Eichstedt & Small 2002). But how much credence can we give the idea of a determined political project of silencing the Dutch slavery past without taking into account that, unlike the Americas, there were hardly any slaves in the metropolis during slavery or Afro-Caribbean migrants afterwards and, subsequently, hardly any pre-1970s exposure to this grim and shameful history and its migratory aftermath? Or, from another angle, should we then also conclude that the persistent neglect of the Dutch participation in Asian slave trade and slavery is another instance of deliberate silencing – and, if so, by what hegemonic power and why?

In the Dutch debates, as elsewhere, dehumanisation and cultural trauma are recurrent concepts in the debate about slavery. Anyone familiar with travelogues, planters' manuals and abolitionist writings from the slavery period will recognise the idea of dehumanisation (see Davis 2006). This idea of dehumanisation has found its contemporary translation in the idea of cultural trauma (e.g. Alexander 2004; Eyerman 2001). This trauma, in turn, is sometimes advanced to explain psychological problems such as low self-esteem, underachievement and deviance. The very idea of cultural trauma and its consequences is fiercely debated, and it makes little sense to discern between a black trauma versus a white discourse in this respect – if only because another, often overlapping black discourse emphasises precisely the agency and resistance of enslaved Africans and their descendants.

Yet, it may be worthwhile to consider again how this trauma metaphor works out in the Dutch debates and how the arguments relate to empirical research (for a more extensive discussion, see Oostindie 2008c: especially 14-18). First, let us look at the concept of cultural trauma itself, which refers to a collective memory of a shocking formative period transmitted over several generations to the point that this memory becomes crucial to group identity. Trauma in this context refers not only, and perhaps not even primarily, to the dehumanising experience of slavery itself, but also and

perhaps more to the internalisation of racism and the deep disillusions of the post-slavery period. Trauma, the argument runs, inhibited the descendants to fully exploit the chances presented by freedom, and initiated a vicious and as yet unbroken circle of feelings of inferiority, lack of initiative and irresponsible behaviour.

The reasoning is not new. Contemporaries observed that European colonial slavery dehumanised the enslaved (as well the enslavers). This reasoning found its way to modern historiography in concepts such as 'dehumanisation' and 'traumatisation'. In political debates, this way of thinking is expressed in the thesis of internalised racism and self-victimisation. One line of argumentation emphasises the narrow limits of post-emancipation freedom and, hence, the *imposition* of marginality. The other, not necessarily opposing perspective, stresses *internalisation* of racism, resulting in low self-esteem and unconsciously chosen victimhood and hence irresponsible behaviour.

This approach is also discernible in debates on the legacies of slavery in the Dutch orbit, emic as well as etic. Such debates require precision, empathy and, among the descendants, the courage to speak out about delicate emotions. Yet, it remains problematic that the references to trauma remain speculative and ill-defined. We have no way of establishing what proportion of the descendants of enslaved Africans feels victimised in which ways and degrees, conscious or unconscious – individual suffering does not equal collective trauma. Moreover, the possible relation between 'trauma' and real-life behaviour is speculative. One should also wonder whether possible feelings of victimhood are eventually rooted in the period of slavery or rather in the subsequent period.

Such objections need to be taken serious. The contemporary template of Caribbean – and, to a lesser extent, Latin American – slavery bears the strong imprint of the US hegemony in Atlantic studies. Local specificity is often absent. But New World slavery was not uniform and neither was post-emancipation history, so we should not expect similar contemporary outcomes. Historical scrutiny, therefore, is crucial.

Indeed, most of the historiography of the last decades emphasises the vitality and agency of the enslaved, ranging from open and covert resistance to cultural creativity – and, hence, implicitly undermines the idea of collective trauma under slavery. The more or less hegemonic contemporary paradigm holds that no matter how repressive and alienating slavery in the Americas may have been, it did not really dehumanise its victims. Moreover, there were significant regional and longitudinal variants in Atlantic slavery. The lives of New World slaves were enacted between the extremes of subjugation and resistance. The seemingly outdated concept of 'accommodation', utilised in the study of foreign occupations, prisons and even concentration camps, is still a useful analytical tool. One crucial

contrast is that Caribbean slaves over time struggled to obtain more degrees of freedom, more autonomy within enslavement.

Two more comments on the idea of slavery trauma seem appropriate. The first relates to identity politics and political opportunity structures. Recent research on collective or cultural trauma stresses the processes in which past occurrences are or are not transformed into collective contemporary trauma. The emphasis on distinction is crucial. Not all communities define past suffering as traumatic, nor do all societies tolerate and/or support signifying institutions. This implies that not only the recognition, but the very existence, of *collective* trauma depends to a large extent on choice, both by descendants of past victims and the societies they inhabit.

A second comment refers to the issue of transgenerational transmission of trauma. Recent research of victims of traumatic events – in particular, survivors of the Holocaust – suggests a remarkable and successful determination among the majority to shield their children from their own trauma (Sagi-Schwartz, Abraham, M.H. van IJzendoorn, K.E. Grossmann, T. Joels, K. Grossmann, M. Scharf, N. Koren-Karie & S. Alkalay 2003; M.H. van IJzendoorn, M.J. Bakermans-Kranenburg & A. Sagi-Schwartz 2003). There seems to be no good reason to assume that Africans and their descendants, many generations away from the traumas of the middle passage and slavery, would think and act otherwise – perhaps the frustrations which led to the cultural trauma paradigm lie primarily in the present?

It is exceedingly difficult to answer such questions. Suffice it to conclude here that there is no scholarly substantiation – or refutation, for that matter – of the idea of transgenerationally transmitted slavery trauma and that explanations for contemporary behaviour referring to cultural trauma lack empirical substantiation and precision.

8.6 Slavery trauma in the Dutch orbit

The above section should be understood as a plea for analytical transparency and nuance rather than as an a priori refutation of the idea of slavery trauma. What we need is rigour alongside empathy, as well as an understanding of local specificities, then and now. This point may be illustrated by a brief discussion of three 'Dutch Caribbean' debates in which trauma is often evoked (Oostindie 2008c: especially 17-18).

The concept of internalised racism is neither new nor far-fetched. Centuries of exposure to racism left deep scars among the descendants of enslaved Africans, no matter how often white Dutch might have ridiculed or denied this. The challenge of mental redemption has been expressed by countless Afro-American leaders, intellectuals and artists. Inspired by the Haitian Revolution, the enslaved African Tula led a major slave revolt on Curaçao in 1795, arguing that all men are equal and entitled to live as

such. Some 70 years ago, the Surinamese activist and writer Anton de Kom criticised the 'slave mentality' of his compatriots. One still finds obsessions about blackness and 'improving' one's colour throughout the Black Atlantic decades after the 'Black is beautiful' concept was coined and Bob Marley's famous 'Redemption song' urged: 'Emancipate yourself from mental slavery/None but ourselves can free our minds.'

Ignoring such cultural legacies is at once pointless and demonstrates a lack of respect. But it remains an altogether different question whether such individual frustrations and pain should really be understood as collective trauma. Perhaps historians cannot bring much light to this debate. But serious historical research will underline once more the crucial distinctions of time and place. Just as New World slavery had many variants, so did race relations during and after slavery. This much is confirmed by decades of comparative research. Hence, the hypothesis that the evident *historical* variation resulted in divergent *contemporary* psychological legacies of slavery in the African diaspora. The historically unique case of US race relations should not be taken as a generalised Atlantic model for either history or its contemporary political and psychological legacies.

Next we turn to the oft-cited causal relation between slavery, trauma and deviant behaviour. Over the past decades, some 40 per cent of the total Curaçaoan population has settled in the Netherlands. A small but disproportional share of this group engages in often violent criminal behaviour. Frequently, the behaviour is explained with reference to slavery – much as it was before in debates about high rates of deviance among lower-class Afro-Surinamese or indeed of youth on Curaçao itself. Key terms in the discourse are low self-esteem, poor social and linguistic skills, macho behaviour, a culture of shame, failing socialisation and, in particular, matrifocality with its related images of teenage mothers and absent fathers. The link to slavery is easily made. Thus, some years ago the official representative body of Antilleans in the Netherlands known as the Overlegorgaan Caraïbische Nederlanders (OCAN) held a conference on what was referred to as 'collective trauma derived from the slavery past'. The 'slavery trauma' was defined among Antilleans as an 'unhealed – and unshared – psychic wound that is transmitted through the generations and makes victims into perpetrators', with potentially significant consequences 'for mutual trust, self image and self-confidence, family life or child-rearing'. At the same time, the report emphasises that many disadvantaged Afro-Caribbean people 'manage to liberate themselves from a subculture of poverty and collective trauma (OCAN 2006: 11). Again, this type of 'explanation' lacks precision. There was and is a broad variety of practices in kinship and upbringing, both during and after slavery in different parts of Afro-America. Dutch Caribbean slavery respected the integrity of slave families far more than was the case in the US. Moreover, matrifocality need not result in a deficient childhood and education. Part of the contemporary problems with

Curaçaoan youth derive not from the distant past, but from recent developments: the exodus to the Netherlands and the resulting destruction of previously functioning family networks. In addition, the external factors of geography and globalisation dictated the emergence of narco-trafficking as a hugely profitable crime-generating sector on the island and in the Netherlands. Curaçaoans are indeed disproportionately active in this sector, but slavery trauma provides no hard explanation in this respect and matrifocality based in slavery provides, at best, a remotely partial one. Undue emphasis on an alleged chain of causality that linked slavery in the Caribbean to integration problems in the Netherlands reminds one of Bosma's remarks in his introduction to this book on a 'culture of victimhood'.

Finally, what about the relevance of slavery and its legacies in contemporary debates about decolonisation and politics? Surely, the determination to part with a metropolis once responsible for slavery has been a strong element in Caribbean nationalist discourse – indeed, Surinamese political nationalism is a point in case. Yet the use of 'slavery' in debates about politics and, in particular, about the present constitutional status of the Dutch Antillean islands seems unproductive.

Unlike Surinam, the six Dutch Antillean islands have adamantly refused the Dutch 'gift' of sovereignty. The Hague's policy of bringing the federation of six to an early independence failed on both accounts: sovereignty is refused and cannot be imposed, and the six have managed to convince the Dutch to allow for the dismantlement of the Antilles-of-six. In different forms, all will end up having separate constitutional and governance links to the metropolis. The Hague has embarked on a course of strong involvement in local governance leading to Antillean resentment against 'recolonisation', but also internal dissent (Oostindie & Klinkers 2003; Oostindie 2008a.)

In the fiery debates on these issues, some protagonists at times invoke the issue of slavery. This seems not particularly helpful. The debates on the constitutional future needs another type of argument, an awareness of geopolitical context and small scale. Antilleans have good reasons to hold on to the metropolitan lifeline. Some feel this testifies to a slave mentality. It seems more appropriate to underline that this policy to minimise risk characterises all non-sovereign territories, wherever in the world and whether or not their past is scarred by slavery.

This is the crucial point in the Antillean debates as well. Support for independence is negligible. The bone of contention is really how much Dutch involvement is acceptable. In these debates one finds much anti-colonial rhetoric and references to slavery, but the political choices will remain pragmatic. As the Dutch will not find themselves able to withdraw from the Caribbean, Antilleans will continue to pick the fruits of their enslaved African forebears' victimisation: materially sweet fruits, psycho-

logically perhaps more bitter ones. No doubt bitterness will continue to inspire post-colonial anger and understandable albeit not very productive references to the horrors of slavery.

8.7 Historians and the legacies of slavery

In their highly entertaining book *Why truth matters* (2006), the philosophers Benson and Stangroom advocate scholarly rigour and intersubjectivity against postmodernist cultural studies' and other paradigms questioning the epistemological legitimacy of scholarly claims to uncover 'truth'. One argument against relativism exposed in the opening pages of the book is worth quoting in full.

> There are true facts about, for instance, how many people were murdered in horrible terrifying degrading circumstances in any one of history's many instances of massacres, war crimes and ethnic cleansings. (Benson & Stangroom 2006: 1)

No serious scholar of slavery could object to this statement, but it is as legitimate to engage in debates about the total volume of the Atlantic slave trade as it is to wonder aloud whether or how this particular trade is unique in world history, whether it should be classified among 'massacres, war crimes and ethnic cleansings', perhaps even as a Black Holocaust, or rather as something altogether different. Scholars should feel free to ask these and many other sensitive questions and should not be unduly concerned by questions of black-versus-white perspectives. And yet, in dealing with the issues of slavery, legacies and racism, no historian can ignore ethical and political sensitivities – and certainly, as Bosma points out in this book's introduction, no historian can circumvent the uneasiness of remaining 'pockets of silence' in a post-colonial world.

In this context, it is useful to return briefly to Van Stipriaan's reviews of the debate in the Netherlands and particularly the problematic distinction between 'white' and 'black' discourse. These two 'discourses' may cover much of the debate in Dutch Caribbean circles, but certainly not the entire spectrum in Dutch society, where leading populist politicians state that even the liberal 'white' discourse suffers from political correctness and unwarranted antinationalist sentiment. For historians, the more pressing question is how to prevent the study of slavery and its legacies from becoming divided in such closed compartments. Serious scholarship can and should defend itself against the idea of being 'just another discourse'. Much has been made in recent decades about 'multivocality'. Yet, while every serious scholar should allow for the fact that people experience and remember all sort of things differently today than in the past, a radical

reduction of interpretations to a priori positions or perspectives is no serious scholarly alternative to the comparative historical method.

Notes

1 An earlier version of this chapter was presented at conferences of the Association of Caribbean Historians (Paramaribo, 12-16 May 2008) and the Society for Multi-Ethnic Studies (MESA) (Leiden, 25-28 June 2008). Pieter Emmer and Alex van Stipriaan provided much-appreciated comments on it. The present version was published earlier in a slightly different version in Klooster (2009: 305-327).

2 Emmer (2006); Kardux (2004); Oostindie (2003, 2005b, 2001); Van Stipriaan (2001, 2004, 2006). Much more is written on this issue, but these references are to works in English.

3 The 2004 census presents ambiguous figures. The proportion of Surinamese of Asian origin is 42 per cent (27.4 per cent Hindustani and 14.6 per cent Javanese). At 32.4 per cent (17.7 per cent Urban Creole and 14.7 per cent Maroon), the proportion of Surinamese of African origins seems much lower, though we have reason to think that the 'Mixed' category (12.5 per cent) mainly also comprises people of African origins. Other census categories are 'Other' (6.5 per cent, comprising Amerindians, Brazilians, Chinese and Europeans) and 'Unknown' (6.6 per cent).

4 The argument in 2005 did not concern Verdonk's opinions about slavery and commemoration – but rather her tough anti-migration policies (speech of Rita Verdonk, Amsterdam, 3 April 2008).

5 For a reprint of the Drescher chapter and a dozen comments providing a comparative perspective on Dutch abolition and emancipation, see Oostindie (1995, 1996).

6 Due to space restrictions, the practice and memory of slavery in the former Dutch colonies in Africa is not discussed here (see Oostindie 2005b, 2008b).

9 Cultural memory and Indo-Dutch identity formations

Pamela Pattynama

9.1 Introduction

In his well-known *Culture and imperialism* (1993), Said argued that imperialism and colonialism are constructed not only on the basis of military or economic force, but on culture as well (Said 1994).[1] Culture and politics, he states, produce a system of control that goes beyond military power, as it works through representations and images. Such representations and images not only provide the underpinning and justification of colonialism and imperialism, but they have also continuously dominated the imaginations and memories of both colonisers and colonised. Said's emphasis on the ongoing influence of imperialism upon people and the cultures they live in relates to the continuing interdependent dialogue between peoples and the legacies of colonialism and imperialism: imperialism did not end with colonial rule and cannot be limited to a specific moment in history. Traces of Said's ideas about the continuing cultural influence of the colonial past are present in Dutch discourses on the critical appraisal of Dutch colonial rule in South-East Asia and the Caribbean. In 2000, Paul Scheffer published 'Het multiculturele drama' ('The multicultural tragedy') in the prominent Dutch newspaper *NRC Handelsblad*, which provoked heated discussions on the integration of newcomers into post-colonial Netherlands. In a later book, he wrote:

> If we don't reconsider our image of the past and if we don't grant our colonial history a definite space in our collective memory, we violate the truth and distort the historical record. (Scheffer in Boehmer & Gouda 2009: 37)

In this chapter, I wish to take up the notion that although colonialism is often thought of as a phenomenon of the past, it continues in fact in new shapes and forms in our present-day post-colonial societies. I would like to extend this idea by underscoring the imaginative processes of post-colonial memory-making. These will serve to underline my argument regarding the significance of a systematic analysis of cultural memory in order to

understand post-colonial migrant identity formations. Central in my argument is the notion of 'memory community', which will be used to refine the reductionist notion of identity politics. In contemporary discussions regarding the social and cultural integration of newcomers, a lack of social cohesion is often defined as the underlying cause of what Scheffer (2000)[2] termed the 'multicultural tragedy'. In this context, many have pointed to the absence of a shared cultural heritage and historical canon or, in other words, the failure to construct a national narrative in which all citizens can recognise themselves.[3] However, a collective canon cannot be constructed simply by replacing one set of texts or narratives with another. As post-colonial critics Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (1989: 189) point out, a canon is not a body of texts, but rather a 'set of reading strategies' based on histories and institutional structures. The subversion of a canon would therefore involve not only an analysis of these institutional practices, but also a systematic study of the many ways in which contemporary multicultural society is connected with the past history of Dutch colonisation in South-East Asia and the Caribbean. The fact that the Netherlands has failed to acknowledge the continuing influence of its colonial legacies – its history of participation in the slave trade, the huge profits made in Asia and the nineteenth and twentieth century dealings with Islam in the Dutch East Indies – reveals that the country has still not come to terms with its colonial past (see Boehmer & Gouda 2009; see also Barnouw, De Keizer & Van der Stroom 1985).

It should be mentioned that the Netherlands is not the only nation suffering from 'colonial amnesia'. For many receiving metropolitan societies, the colonial past has become an uncomfortable, often silenced, past that did not just go away. The way in which different metropolises have negotiated this uneasy subject is, however, widely divergent. As Bosma (2009: 11) argues, for example, in comparison with Great Britain, the Netherlands has never initiated a

> critical and systematic reflection on the political, historical and cultural consequences of Dutch colonialism per se, nor for the power relations in our present-day society, nor for the contemporary relations with Surinam, Indonesia and the Netherlands Antilles.

According to Bosma, the absence of post-colonial debates is a consequence of the disappearance of the Dutch language in post-colonial Indonesia. This major section of its ex-empire therefore cannot 'speak back' as still English-speaking India does. He also mentions the general lack of intellectual engagement with colonialism and the decolonisation processes in the Netherlands as another reason. Finally, his observation that in the Netherlands post-colonial immigrants have always been divided supports my argument about distinct memory communities. In Dutch minority discus-

sions, post-colonial immigrants from the Dutch East Indies, Surinam and the Dutch Antilles have never performed as one distinct group. This fragmentation, Bosma argues, is an important reason for their invisibility in the multicultural Netherlands.

Complaints concerning the failure to take the colonial past more seriously are not a new phenomenon. The absence of serious contemplation regarding the impact of the colonial past in the Netherlands and the necessity for a historical view of contemporary debates about multiculturalism are issues that have been raised before (e.g. Van Doorn 1995).[4] In a recent essay, post-colonial literary critic Boehmer and Dutch empire historian Gouda explore the post-colonial pedagogic landscape at the tertiary level in the 'diasporic' Netherlands through a discussion of the Netherlands' (Boehmer & Gouda 2009: 39) colonial legacies and the interpretation of the post-colonial in the Dutch present-day context. They argue that post-colonial critical writing is 'belated' and awaits its moment of articulation. As a consequence of this discursive belatedness, the status of the Netherlands as an ex-colonial power 'remains unproblematised', and the manner in which the history of colonialism might link up with the formation of contemporary national and migrant identities is left 'insufficiently examined'.[39] Boehmer and Gouda therefore point to literary texts as a rich source of information about the relationship between colonialism and post-colonialism. It is indeed remarkable that this site of active and lively post-colonial discussion has largely been overlooked. From the beginning of colonial literature until this very day, there has been a form of post-colonial reflection on, and reaction to, the colonial past and its aftermath.[5] VOC travelogues and later literary texts have all carried information and memories about 'exotic' faraway places and have served as mediators that constructed, transmigrated and transformed social meanings about intercultural encounters (see e.g Van Kempen 2003; Nieuwenhuys 1978). In the contemporary Netherlands, many, often bestselling, novels deal with the colonial past.[6] Their steady popularity testifies to the never-ending influence and fascination the colonial past exercises in a post-colonial society in which 'migration' and 'integration' have become major issues. In this context, it is not difficult to explain why migration and integration have recently come to be seen not merely as the objects of anthropological, sociological or historical analysis, but of cultural analysis as well. Cultural analysis involves the interdisciplinary analysis of culture at large. Its aim is to trace cultural meanings, social beliefs, value systems and implied discourses through the exploration and interrogation of cultural objects, practices and narratives, such as works of art and popular culture, events, rituals and cultural heritage.[7] These objects and practices have always interacted with each other and, by doing so, have participated in our collective memory in an important way.

9.2 Cultural memory

During the last decades, memory has emerged as a key concern and an important theoretical concept in American and European societies. Not only have psychologists and historians studied memory, but sociologists, philosophers, cultural analysts and media scholars also recognise the social, cultural and political factors in memory.[8] In most Dutch studies, post-colonial memory is conceptualised as psychological-individual.[9] However, memory can be understood as a cultural phenomenon as well as a personal or a social one. As the product of collective activity, rather than the result of individual psychic or mere historical accident, cultural memory connects individual and collective aspects of society. The idea of the intricate connection between the personal and the collective was introduced by French sociologist Halbwachs (1877-1945) in 1925 and extended into the 1990s. Halbwachs explained that memory is always a social activity, which is characterised by two important points. The first is that the remembered past is constructed by people in the present, who consciously or unconsciously shape and reshape the past in order to address their contemporary needs and interests. This explains why some groups of people remember some events and forget others, which, again, are major events for other groups. Halbwachs' second point is that a shared past is necessary for the creation and maintenance of a collective identity, shared by all members of the group. Such a 'memory community' is a group, be it a family, migrant, ethnic or national group, with collective memories, including a shared past. Through such processes individuals become socialised to what should be remembered and forgotten in order to develop a sense of belonging, togetherness and identity (see e.g. Halbwachs 1992; Sturken 1997; Van Dijck 2007). As such, cultural memory performs a central function in post-colonial processes of identity formation.

Cultural memory is embodied in oral and written texts, such as literature, which store meanings shared by a group of people. Rather than oral or textual media, however, visual images have become central to how we represent, identify and make memory in the world (see Sturken 2001). Apart from textual media, films, photographs, websites and museum collections or shared memorabilia erected as reminders (such as monuments, buildings or statues) serve as memory objects. 'Everyday myths' that circulate and disperse memories and narratives are also significant constructions of remembrance. Cultural memory is, moreover, embodied in repeated and repeatable practices, for example, the annual festivals organised by different ethnic communities, such as the Pasar Malam Besar (recently renamed the Tong Tong Fair), organised by the Indies community in The Hague, the Kwakoe Festival, organised by the Afro-Surinamese community in South-East Amsterdam and the Summer Carnival in Rotterdam, organised by people from the Netherlands Antilles. These regularly celebrated festi-

vals and ceremonies work as dynamic *lieux de mémoire* and attract thousands of people every year.[10] They demonstrate that cultural memory is connected to significant places associated with the colonial past in the East and the West. In a similar way, the Indies Monument in The Hague and the Slavery Monument in Amsterdam, where repeated commemorations take place, inform representations of the past and, for different memory communities, function as memory sites.

Nonetheless, the processes of interaction, memory-making and collective identity-making embodied by these objects and practices have scarcely been taken into account in political post-colonial discussions. The reasons for ignoring this genre of post-colonial reflection might be due, firstly, to the narrow economic paradigm with which 'post-colonialism', 'newcomers', 'integration' and 'migration' are approached. Another reason for dismissing discussions that are embodied in cultural forms may be the above-mentioned lack of intellectual engagement with colonialism and decolonisation, and it may also be a consequence of the prolonged tendency to consider all writing about the Dutch colonial experience as 'colonial', irrespective as to when or how it was written (D'haen 2002; Gouda and Boehmer 2009: 50 also mention this remarkable point of view.)

In this chapter, I argue in favour of a systematic study of cultural memory. If we do not engage with cultural memory, we are restricted in our explanations of how colonial representations exercise continuing memory effects. It is important, however, to acknowledge the dynamics of cultural memory, rather than understanding it as stored or buried static traces of a past that are to be retrieved. Cultural memory involves cultural negotiation, elaboration and constant reinterpretation of the present in terms of the past. Cultural memory is therefore never fixed. Below follows a first example concerning the Dutch East Indies, which will serve to illustrate how a perspective of cultural memory can work as a post-colonial tool.

9.3 Dogs and natives

There is a recurring story about the Dutch East Indies in which a sign features prominently. On this particular sign, so the story goes, was written: *Verboden voor honden en inlanders* ('Dogs and natives not allowed'). This information is continuously passed on and the story is told again and again by people who clearly 'remember' having seen these signs outside public swimming pools. They saw them, so they emphatically declare, with their very own eyes. Yet, despite the many 'witnesses', and although extensive research has been carried out, no solid proof (e.g. a photograph) for the existence of such signs has emerged (Beynon 1995).

Obviously, one should weigh carefully whether to consider personal memories as reliable sources of the colonial 'truth': whether these infa-

mous signs truly existed in the colony cannot be verified through personal memories or experiences. We need not, however, even put the question as to whether these memories are true or not if we see them in terms of cultural memory and conceptualise them as what Barthes (1970) called 'everyday myths'. Circulating in contemporary societies, such myths allow us to construct a world in which we can find a place and identity for ourselves.[11] If we examine the sign story, drawing on Barthes, it becomes one of those notorious colonial myths that keep circulating in the Dutch post-colonial zone. Its persistence indicates not only the continuing presence of the colonial past in contemporary Dutch culture. It also exposes how colonial segregationist policies and attitudes continue to haunt memories of lived experiences, while its repeated telling reveals how the colonial past keeps affecting present immigrant identities.

In addition, this myth supports the above-mentioned memory studies. In illustrating that personal memories are 'always already' collective or social, rather than exclusively individual or stable, it asserts the flexibility of memory. Individual memories, and consequently identities, change continuously as they, in our multicultural and globalised world, are affected by social, cultural and political factors, including other people's memories. The memory of Dutch colonial signs may, for example, have been influenced and transformed by the all too true South African apartheid signs, such as photographs of beaches and park benches marked 'for whites only'. When, in the late 1970s, memories of the East Indies began to emerge in the public domain, stories of the apartheid horrors had been circulating widely in post-colonial Dutch media. Events such as the shootings in Sharpeville (1960) and Soweto (1976) were highly visible and had wide renown. The similarities between late-colonial apartheid in the Indies and apartheid in South Africa might therefore have contributed to the shift in personal memories. Perhaps the post-colonial realisation of experienced benefits, from a system of cruel distinction between Indo Europeans and Europeans versus natives, might have triggered uneasy feelings of shame and guilt. Such uneasiness about the past may well be initiated by a specific TV programme. After decades of silence, the colonial past was publicly discussed in the revolutionary climate of the late 1960s. One of the veterans who fought in the War of Independence against Indonesian nationalists, J. E. Hueting, appeared on national television and appealed for research into war crimes committed by Dutch forces during what was called in the Netherlands 'police actions'. His call reactivated memories pertaining to the decolonisation and marked a dramatic change in thinking about the colonial past. In the post-colonial public mind, the Dutch East Indies emerged as a source of shame and guilt over racism, exploitation and war crimes. This upset deeply anchored myths of an idyllic, proud era and the 'unfairness' of having lost the precious colony (e.g. Breman 1987; Van Doorn 1994). Through conflations of time and space and the merging of

disparate moments in personal and public life, the *Verboden voor honden en inlanders* story becomes an act of memory – that is, an 'activity occurring in the present, in which the past is continuously modified and redescribed' (Bal, Crewe & Spitzer 1999: vii).

The case that best exemplifies how cultural artefacts embody shifts in memories of the colonial past may be the way in which Hella Haasse's novel *Oeroeg* was adapted for a film with the same name (1993). Published in 1948, Haasse's novel appeared a few years after the Japanese occupation of the Indies ended and just before the Dutch were forced to hand over their colony to the Indonesians. *Oeroeg* is situated in the colony, and tells the story of the unusual friendship between a wealthy Dutch planter's son and Oeroeg, son to one of the father's native workers. Their close friendship ends when Oeroeg as a young man becomes involved with Indonesian nationalists, turns against the Dutch colonisers and rejects his white friend. At the end of the novel, when the violent Bersiap announces the war of independence, the planter's son realises he never knew who his best friend really was.[12]

During the 45 years between the book's and the film's emergence, anti-colonial, guilt-ridden discourses about exploitation and racism had begun to circulate in Dutch public culture. After Hueting's dramatic accusation on TV, the image of the Indies turned from a beloved lost paradise into an uncomfortable, shameful memory. The shift in discourses is represented through the difference in memories embodied in book and film. In the book, which is focused on the loss of friendship and the beloved colony, colonial discourses on the relations between natives prevail, and Indo-Europeans are only described in very negative terms. The film, on the other hand, visualises the post-colonial guilt-ridden discourses in images of separate entrances for European and natives, tortured nationalists and racist whites. *Oeroeg*, the film, has two timelines and takes up the ending of the novel when the planter's son, after years, arrives back in the colony as a military army officer to fight the nationalists. Through the second timeline, his adventures dissolve repeatedly into images of the past that deliver memories of his youth. Whereas the flashbacks visualise his fond memories of a shared boyhood in an 'exotic' landscape, the timeline in the present foregrounds the chaos, violence and crisis that after the Japanese collapse emerged in the Bersiap. Interestingly enough, the shift in discourses between media can also be recognised through transnational imagery. Nearly half a century after the book, the film embodies an altered view on the colonial past, which has its roots in the international activist politics of the late 1960s. The film features, for example, an impressive sequence of a burnt-down Indonesian native village in the jungle, which inevitably reminds the audience of the My Lai atrocities often shown in contemporary American anti-Vietnam movies. After Hueting's notorious TV appearance, these scenes brought, by association, long-silenced Dutch war crimes to

the fore. The cultural memory embodied in the film thus works against the colonial discourse that permeated its literary source and reshapes public memories of the colonial past.

The term 'cultural memory' thus designates the margins between the public histories underlying national identities and the unrestricted realms of personal memory. While cultural memory transcends the individual, and has not (yet) become 'official' history, it does participate in the making of national collective memory (Sturken 1991). What counts from the perspective of cultural memory is how cultural forms, such as texts, films and myths, function in post-colonial memory-making and identity formations. According to Said, it is their 'worldly' position, rather than their aesthetic or artistic value, that should be studied. In *The world, the text and the critic* (1983), he called attention to the affiliations of texts, stating that texts should be questioned in their 'worldly' context of social and political realities and histories, rather than in terms of fiction and artistic traditions (Said 1983). Hence, before further focusing on the function of cultural memory in post-colonial Netherlands, a short historical detour through the colonial past of the Dutch East Indies is required. As my cases focus on the memories and identity formation of the Indo-Dutch, the following historical background is theirs as well.[13]

9.4 Indo-Dutch history

After Holland lost the Dutch East Indies in 1945-1949, Indies-Dutch migrants from various ethnic backgrounds, and for different reasons, came to the Netherlands following World War II. They were described as 'repatriates', even though a large number had never seen the 'fatherland' before. At the time, it was considered 'natural' that the 'pure' white settlers in the former Dutch colony, the so-called *totoks*, would return to Holland. It was, however, expected that most people of mixed race would give up their claims to Dutch citizenship and opt for Indonesian citizenship. Although they were formally members of the European community in the East Indies, the Dutch government maintained that these people of mixed-race belonged in Indonesia and viewed their integration into Dutch society as impossible and undesirable (Schuster 1999a). As a consequence of this attitude, the Indo-Dutch were initially discouraged from coming to Holland and their passage to the Netherlands was even impeded. Yet, their emotional and historical ties to the Netherlands were underestimated.

When large groups of mixed-race people began to arrive, the Dutch government perceived them as temporary immigrants and searched eagerly for an alternative, if not ultimate, destination for the Indo-Dutch. Their emotional ties to Holland and, specifically, their legal position as Dutch citizens proved, however, strong enough to give the migrants political strength.

After its initial reservations, the Dutch government opted for an intensive policy campaign aimed at resocialisation and assimilation of the group (Lucassen & Willems 1994; Lucassen & Penninx 1999: 140). After their arrival, Indies-Dutch immigrants found themselves both a problem to a nation recovering from German occupation and an unwelcome reminder of a colonial past the Dutch were eager to forget (Willems 2001). During the post-war reconstruction of the Netherlands, memories of the German occupation left little room for commemoration of the war in the Pacific. The colonial past seemed closed, like a finished, forgotten book. The East Indies disappeared from the public eye and became a well-kept 'family secret' – a blind spot on the national retina (Locher-Scholten 1995).

As a result of post-war rhetoric concerning reconstruction of the Netherlands, national unity and discussions about what was right and wrong, the immigrants from Indonesia soon realised that their individual recollections of suffering were irreconcilable with a mixture of nostalgia and amnesia about the East Indies that prevailed in the public domain until the 1970s (Withuis 1994; Timmerije 2002; Van Vree 1995). There is still bitterness among repatriates today at having received little recognition of their experiences. 'Overshadowed' by the victims of Germany, they feel that they were effectively silenced. While they were subjected – and also eagerly subjected themselves – to a rapid process of assimilation, their stories and memories were kept out of the public eye and banished to the domestic environment or the realm of social services (Ellemers & Vaillant 1985; Tinnemans 1997).

The 'national secret' only came out many years later. Public debate made its faltering entrance in the revolutionary climate of the late 1960s. The direct event that triggered this debate was veteran Hueting's previously mentioned appeal on national television for research into war crimes committed by Dutch forces during the so-called 'police actions', or rather, Indonesia's War of Independence. Even though neither this war nor colonialism as such had previously been subjects of public debate, they had 'gnawed' at 'the conscience of the nation' (Van Vree 1999: 205). The reactivation of memories pertaining to the decolonisation therefore marked a dramatic change in memories of the colonial past. In the post-colonial public mind, the Dutch East Indies emerged as a source of shame and guilt over racism, exploitation and war crimes. This upset deeply anchored myths of an idyllic, proud era and the 'unfairness' of having lost the precious colony. When the emotions finally became public, the Dutch East Indies was transformed from an arbitrary literary theme into a familiar theme in popular culture, art and historiography. Decades after their arrival, immigrants began to tell their own stories in which the other side of their integration was revealed. The first generation of immigrants integrated perhaps economically and materially, but their emotional and cultural adaptation faltered.

In the meantime, during the first decades after the end of World War II, both post-colonial migration and the influx of immigrant labourers, mainly from Turkey and Morocco, led to the formation of new, ethnically distinct populations in Holland. In search of a safe and better life, an increasing number of migrants and asylum seekers from the South began to seek entrance to the rich countries of the North. When family reunions followed and children of immigrant families started attending Dutch schools, the emphasis shifted to the long-term position of minorities. While they faced semi-permanent or permanent displacement, the issue of refugees was being pushed ever higher up on the Netherlands' political agenda (Essed 1995). In fact, since the 1990s, migration has become a central issue in international relations, not to mention a burning question. In the wake of 9/11 and subsequent terrorist attacks in London, Madrid, Mumbai and elsewhere, immigration and security policies, as well as social attitudes towards Muslim people, in particular, has changed and once more affected the self-perceptions of migrant and immigrant groups.

The processes of displacement, multiculturalism and globalism have consequences for the way the so-called established minority groups such as the Indo-Dutch are perceived and perceive themselves in relation to refugees and other newly arrived immigrants. For example, thanks to their supposedly rapid assimilation, Indo repatriates, much like the Hindustani Surinamese, came to be seen as a successfully integrated minority group. They even became model minority citizens, held up as an example to more unruly newcomers in the Dutch multicultural landscape (Wekker 1995). The story of successful Indo-Dutch assimilation can be regarded as a national narrative. It reveals Dutch self-images of 'race' and class and suits the existing ideas of national identity. Contrary to recurring signs of xenophobia, the Dutch have always fostered an image of their hospitality, tolerance and liberal attitudes. In this context, the official story of the successful integration of Indo-Dutch migrants can be interpreted as a sign of national tolerance. Perhaps the achieved assimilation may even be regarded as a final tribute to the once revered Dutch colonial enterprise. The memories and self-perceptions of Indo migrants themselves, however, suggest that integration into Dutch culture did not run quite as smoothly as has generally been assumed (Pattynama 2000).

Over time, the shared, if internally divided, memories of the distinct groups of Indo-Dutch immigrants and their children have complemented and complicated the circuit of national memory culture. The haunting colonial past has become one of the two yardsticks by which moral and political questions are judged in the Netherlands. In comparison to the other experience, that of the German occupation, however, it holds a very ambivalent position. Various groups contest the significance and interpretation of events (Legêne 1998). Tension between conflicting bodies of memory explains the powerful emotions repeatedly evoked by post-colonial dramas

like the Moluccan train hostage crisis of 1975 (see Steijlen in this volume), the exile of 'traitor' Poncke Princen, a re-emergence from oblivion of the women forced into prostitution by the Japanese (the so-called 'comfort women') and questions of financial compensation and back pay.[14] In the cultural landscape of the post-colonial Netherlands, memories of distinct groups have interacted and become interwoven. As a consequence, the memory of the colonial past has become an intricate, contested and contradictory 'texture of memory' (Young 1993). This complicated remembrance is inextricably linked to the memory communities and identity formations of the Indo-Dutch.

Knowledge of who we are is based on long-term remembrance of facts, emotions and experiences. Memory gives meaning to the present, as each moment is constituted by the past: memory is the means by which we remember who we are. That is why memory provides the very core of identity (Sturken 1999: 1). Such self-image or sense of identity is, however, never stable. It is subject to constant remodelling because our perceptions of who we are change, along with our self-projections and our desires to belong. When, as early as in 1925, Halbwachs emphasised that a collective imagined past is crucial for the unity of a society, he continued Durkheim's idea that every society displays and requires a sense of continuity with the past. As mentioned before, a shared past is, for Halbwachs, essential for the sense of a community and, like Durkheim, he assumes that the function of remembering is not to save or transform the past, but to support a commitment to the group (Misztal 2003: 50-51). According to Halbwachs, collective memory is always set in 'social frames', as groups themselves determine what is worth remembering and what is to be forgotten. The social frameworks of the communities we participate in tell us, in other words, what to remember and what to forget. Following this line of thought, we can assume that individual post-colonial migrants who identify with *de Indische gemeenschap* ('the Indische community'), adopt its social frames, which implies the sharing of memorable concerns, values, experiences and narratives: 'The individual brings recollections to mind by relying on the frameworks of social memory' (Halbwachs 1992: 182).

Through processes of shared remembering and forgetting, different groups articulate conflicting recollections of the East Indies. Struggling with traumatic recollections of a lost war, for example, East Indian veterans clash with first-generation immigrants who lost their homeland. Meanwhile, the immigrants challenge so-called 'imperialist nostalgia' (Rosaldo 1989). Despite gender, race, ethnicity, age and other differences, Indies-Dutch groups have claimed the colony as a collective identity marker through various acts of memory, including fictional narratives, autobiographies, sculptures, paintings, polemics, documentaries, websites and plays.[15] In so doing, they have formed memory communities and created a sense of togetherness through processes of shared remembering and forgetting

(Irwin-Zarecka 1994). Rather than understanding in terms of a search for authenticity or 'false nostalgia', these reconstructions of the past may be explored in terms of Barth's understanding of ethnic identity.[16] Barth argues that the identity of groups is developed through interactions, encounters and contacts that take place at the boundaries between communities. Groups achieve their collective identity by defining themselves as being different from other groups and drawing social boundaries from differences group members themselves regard as significant, while some other differences are 'forgotten'. Hence, instead of defining collective identity as a set of features that group members share, Barth looks at the dynamics of the formation and maintenance of boundaries. If we extend his ideas of community formation to cover post-colonial migration, then the research of migrant groups should not focus on the features, traditions, rituals or heritages that characterise their identity from within, but rather on the processes of interaction through which post-colonial migrant identity is maintained and reconfirmed. However, Barth's belief that ethnic groups are not only socially constructed, but that their identity is also 'situational' and flexible is often used by researchers who look at ethnic identity as a political tool and a source of power for subjugated groups. Obviously, it is useful and relevant to emphasise the empowerment and agency of migrants in the making of their own identities. However, the danger of placing too much emphasis on the deliberate adoption of particular identities by groups is that the involved restrictions are not adequately recognised. Identity formations come into being in a socio-cultural arena in which individual and collective identifications are constantly renegotiated. On the one hand, identity is the result of an active, dynamic process but, on the other, it is also severely restricted by established power relations and prevailing forms of stereotyping (see e.g. Appiah & Gates 1995; Hall & Du Gay 1996). As the contingent outcome of struggles over externally ascribed and self-acclaimed identities, individual identities are also limited by what Halbwachs calls 'social frames' within memory communities. For instance, one's individual memories of the colonial past cannot be disconnected from how the colonial past is remembered within the Indies community as a whole. It is this interaction between individual and collective memories that is embodied in the writings of second-generation migrants.

9.5 Second-generation migrants

Born in the Netherlands, second-generation immigrants grew up with their parents' silences and contradictory stories about the Dutch East Indies. Shaped by often traumatic events that took place before they were born, these fragmented narratives have framed the second generation's memories and identity formation. At the same time, the second generation developed

in an 'upfront' Dutch culture that made them expose the traumas of their parents. From the early 1980s onwards, second-generation Indo-Dutch began to resist their parents' silent adaptation and to oppose the colonial denial of their families' Indonesian 'roots'. Second-generation writer Theodor Holman (1953) articulates these tensions between the first and second generations in a telling short dialogue between himself and his mother:

> My mother, I say, has a – what shall I say – a small camp syndrome. Sometimes she is unable to escape a dream. Is that right, mother? She has nightmares then... [Mother:] 'Yes, that's awful. I leave my bed and I start to scream and do other things…' […] You don't talk about that, mum. [Mother:]'No, I don't talk about that. You wouldn't understand anyway'. What kind of nonsense is that, that we wouldn't understand? (Holman 2001: 264-265)

The time was ripe: in a changing multicultural Netherlands, new groups of immigrants were outspoken about their ethnic identities with a 'naturalness that made us jealous' (Seriese 1997: 208). For the first time in 1983, self-conscious second-generation Indo-Dutch writers began to write about their specific post-colonial position. The 'postmemories' they created are distinct from the recollections of the first generation, which are based on experiences, however imaginary they may be. The generational distance does, however, not keep them from having a 'deep personal connection' with their family history of colonialism and migration.[17] In their writings, the contested past continues to be a living source of knowledge and identification passed on in Indo-Dutch families (Boon 1994: especially 132). Precisely because colonial Indonesia no longer exists, and the source of identification consists of transferred, mediated and partly silenced stories, these writers' work is engaged with imaginary, recreated representations of the East Indies. Hence, although they cannot claim recollections of their own, their reconstructions of the ex-colony define their self-representations.[18] In fact, the Dutch East Indies have become a major identity marker for both Indies-Dutch immigrants and their offspring.

9.6 Family histories

In the work of Indo-Dutch author Adriaan van Dis, for example, the Dutch East Indies represents the transitory sense of self shared by the second generation. The eponymous protagonist in *Nathan Sid* (1983) is an Indo-Dutch boy growing up as the only son in a migrant family consisting of elder half-sisters. Not only is Sid different from them because of his white skin, but he is also the only member of this mixed family born in the

Netherlands. Furthermore, the other family members share the war years and a past in the camp, which excludes him. To make matters worse, he has to go through life as an illegitimate child, a complicated consequence of decolonisation and migration. Memory functions here on both a cultural and a personal level, to establish a narrative of origin and belonging. Incidentally, the surname Sid refers to the history of white fathers in the East Indies who acknowledged their children with indigenous women in a peculiar way: some bestowed their last name on their mixed descendants but spelled the name backwards. However, the father encountered in the work of Van Dis is not a white Dutchman, but an Indo-Dutch former soldier of the Dutch Indies army. Possessed by a Japanese camp syndrome, he unintentionally subjects his son to extreme demands and violence. As a symbol of a traumatic family history, such tragic father figures often appear in the literary writings of second-generation Indo-Dutch immigrants.

In *Geen gewoon Indisch meisje* (‘*An unusual Indo-Dutch girl*’) by Marion Bloem, the first-person narrator is engaged in a dialogue between individual identity and collective Indo-Dutch memory, which shapes the book’s theme and form. Its protagonist realises, for instance, that the process of assimilation, which the first generation of Indo-Dutch people was subjected to, entailed a fixing of origins and history. The book creates a dynamic female position within the second generation by revising family stories and youth experiences. Similarly, reflections on being an artist and travelling to post-colonial Indonesia to participate in the construction of a post-colonial identity.

The novel portrays two main characters. Sonja, the assimilated one, is ‘sunbathing among her white girlfriends’. Zon, on the other hand, is ambling ‘as if she had lost the greater part of herself somewhere’. The use of two characters is part of the tradition of the literary ‘in-between figure’, which is closely related to the ‘stranger’ or ‘social outsider’. More so, it is a sign of the Indo-Dutch transmigration of stories: one recognises E. du Perrons’ *Land van herkomst* (‘*Country of origin*’) and Multatuli’s *Max Havelaar* here. Literary critics could nonetheless not resist the temptation, and interpreted the dual characters of Zon/Sonja mainly as a signal of an ‘identity crisis’ or ‘discord’, even of ‘continuous problems with her Indo-Dutch identity’ (Goedegebuure 1983; Van Leest 1989). These interpretations of a migrant child torn between two cultures continue colonial representations of the ‘unreliable half-blood’ or the ‘tragic mulatto’ (Cottaar & Willems 1984; Pattynama 1998). A post-colonial perspective that, instead, would have taken cultural memory into account may reveal a dynamic identity formation, which recreates the past and connects it with the present and the future: ‘she cannot continue what is already dead. She has to create her own kin’ (Bloem 1983: 242). Rather than an in-between figure, Bloem’s protagonist is a socially framed post-colonial subject who still

shapes and transforms an identity through imagination and the revision of narratives and images.

Alfred Birney is another second-generation Indo-Dutch writer who makes use of his family history in the construction of Indo-Dutch identities. While Birney's early works are infused with the homesickness and homelessness by which postmodern Western literature is determined, in his later works, the Indo-Dutch diaspora, rather than the postmodern Western crisis, serves as a point of departure. Birney gives voice to a son telling stories full of the madness of a father who had survived a Japanese prison camp, fought on the Dutch side in the Indonesian War of Independence against the other half of his own family and subsequently had to migrate to the Netherlands. Through the son's perspective, second-generation migrant Birney turns the postmodern sense of homelessness into a post-colonial sense of homelessness. The post-colonial search for an identity is inextricably interwoven with the (painful) colonial past: 'there was a rat gnawing at my stomach, lapping its way up through a raw sadness' (Birney 2001: 288).

Birney's novel *Yournael van Cyberney* (2001) underlines a connection with the colonial past once more. In the title, the name Yournael – a seventeenth-century Dutch word for 'travel diary' or 'travelogue' – first reveals the Indo-Dutch roots by making reference to the old East India Company, in the Asian possessions of which the Indo-Dutch communities emerged. The pseudonym 'Van Cyberney' is a compound name indexing the Dutch colonial rule that initially encouraged interracial sexual activity (Gouda 1995; Stoler 2002; Pattynama 1998). It consists of the last name of Birney's Chinese grandmother, Sie – transliterated at Cy – and also refers to his father's mixed descent as Si is a well-known Indo-Dutch designation for a male person. However, Si Birney is more than an autobiographical product of history. He is also firmly positioned in the present-day world: *Yournael* begins as a series of emails in cyberspace, the virtual space corresponding with the imaginary space occupied by the East Indies. On an inter-textual level, the serial emails can be seen as the offspring of the popular serials written by authors in colonial times, *Yournael*, however, is arranged as a polemic collection. Just as his famous predecessor, Dutch writer Multatuli, criticised the nineteenth-century colonial bastion, Birney agitates against the twentieth-century 'Dutch literary bastion'. [64] He hits out at the marginalisation of authors whose work falls outside 'polder literature'. He mocks the referees of Indo-Dutch literature and denounces the establishment of publishers, literary critics and literary scholars. The noise is intended to provide him with the position of a Dutch post-colonial writer between other newcomers – the same, but different all the same.

In *Yournael*, Birney makes his point through an Indo-Dutch writing style comprising a mixture of distinct genres, a process that echoes the writing style of Indo predecessors such as E. du Perron and Maria Dermoût. As a result, *Yournael* is more like a collection of accidental websites than a

proper novel. With its apparent hotchpotch of genres and texts of unequal length, content, tone and form, *Yournael* continues an Indo-Dutch tradition of mixing that was begun in the East Indies and ended up in a Dutch polder, while also paying homage to the first generation. Its loose structure is, however, deceptive: the various chapters are interconnected by a typical post-colonial novelistic element, the *Bildung* of a protagonist who initially poses as what Pratt (1996: 7) calls an auto-ethnographic subject: a colonised subject representing himself in ways that 'engage with the coloniser's own terms' to turn into a self-conscious post-colonial subject. An example of the way the second generation borrows memories from the first generation is the Indonesian term '*kesasar*' ('being lost'), which Birney takes over from first-generation writer Frits van den Bosch. Displaced, the term then surfaces in a Dutch-speaking environment and is taken up by the second generation, turning it into a Dutch-Indo memory. But while for the first generation, *kesasar* is based on longing for the past, it acquires a perspective on the future for the present second generation. The narrative of travel to the 'homeland' with which *Yournael* ends exemplifies this. Post-colonial Indonesia does not provide the narrator with a home, but the erstwhile homeland does make him aware that homelessness itself may be a post-colonial identity. The last sentence of *Yournael* is as follows: 'It does not matter where you are when you are a restless Indo' (Birney 2001: 227).

9.7 Conclusion

In the inquiring works of self-aware Indo-Dutch writers, such as Bloem and Birney, the East Indies is a marker for a post-colonial identity that is sustained by memories of colonialism, family histories and migration. By appropriating self-definitions in post-colonial Holland, their Indo-Dutch central characters show how Indo-Dutch identity is shaped and transformed in the context of Dutch multiculturalism. As such, their work contributes to the urgent reflection on a transnational world.

In this chapter I argued for the significance of a systematic analysis of cultural memory in order to understand how post-colonial migrant identity formations are being shaped and transformed through memory-making. My point is that the central notion of cultural memory opens up opportunities to understand how the imagination of decolonisation processes is shaped and how this has affected the ways in which post-colonial migrants have come to perceive themselves and the culture in which they live. To me, it seems important to know how representations and images are used to characterise, embody, remember and come to terms with processes of decolonisation. Although colonialism is often thought of as a phenomenon of the past, it does in fact continue in our present-day post-colonial societies in new shapes and forms.

Notes

1 Since the appearance of Said's *Orientalism* in 1978, the complicity between historical discourse, literary representation and European strategies of cultural domination has emerged as a major preoccupation in post-colonial studies. Said shifted the study of colonialism to its discursive operations and showed that the history of colonialism and imperialism is intimately connected to language. Since the 1990s, scholars across a number of disciplines have begun to focus on the study of post-colonial visual culture as well.

2 www.nrc.nl/W2/Lab/Multicultureel/scheffer.html; accessed in 2008, no longer available in 2012.

3 As testified by the recently codified Canon of Dutch History made available online at www.entoen.nu.

4 In 1995, Ewald Vanvugt arranged the exhibit 'Nestbevuilers: Critici van het koloniale bewind' ('Those who foul their own nest: Critics of colonial rule') at the Letterkundig Museum in The Hague, which presented the biographies of a number of anti-colonial administrators, such as Jacob Campo Weyerman, Willem van Haren, Dirk van Hogendorp and Multatuli (see also Vanvugt & Van Campenhout 1996; Vanvugt 2002).

5 I wish to emphasise here that with the term 'post-colonialism' I sometimes refer to the period after the colonial era, though also mean 'to cover all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonisation to the present day' (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 1989: 2-13).

6 See e.g. bestselling works written by Adriaan van Dis, Hella Haasse, Marion Bloem and Yvonne Keuls. Writers with neither an Indies family history nor other ties with the colonies have also inscribed colonial elements in their works; see e.g. Jan Wolkers, Gerard Reve, W.F. Hermans, Maarten 't Hart and Doeschka Meijsing.

7 An example of the recent level of attention given to the study of culture is the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research programme known as 'Cultural dynamics', which seeks to solve social problems from the perspective of culture and cultural heritage (see www.nwo.nl/nwohome.nsf/pages/NWOA_6J8FRJ). For an excellent historical discussion of Indo-Dutch cultural heritage, see Van Leeuwen (2008).

8 While for some historians, use of memory in their quest for the truth about the colony is still a matter of concern, for others, the distinctions between 'objective history' and 'subjective memory' have become blurred. The latter group acknowledges that archival material is also selective and that the mechanisms of imagination, narrative order and subjectivity associated with memory are present in accounts of 'proper history' as well (see White 1987). One step further involves acknowledging the significance of cultural memory for the relation between colonialism and post-colonialism.

9 For a psychological-individual approach, see Tinnemans (1997), Captain (2002) and Steijlen (2002). For a social-historical view, see Bossenbroek (2001) and Scagliola (2002).

10 These national festivals were introduced with the arrival of post-colonial migrants to the Netherlands: Pasar Malam Besar in 1958, Kwakoe in 1975 and the Summer Carnival Rotterdam in 1984. The festivals reflect the multicultural society that the Netherlands has become over the past decades (see Alferink in this volume).

11 A myth can be seen as a fictitious or unproven story. Barthes (1970), however, was fascinated by the meanings of cultural objects, practices and stories, and explored such myths as 'dominant ideologies of our time' in which fiction and reality may overlap and become fused.

12 Known as the Bersiap, the Indonesian War of Independence lasted from about October 1945 to the beginning of 1946. People remember this period as most violent, cruel and chaotic. It began after Japanese capitulation when the former Dutch East Indies were left with a vacuum of power.

13 In this chapter, I make a linguistic distinction between migrants from the Dutch East Indies with a 'mixed-race' background (Indo-Dutch) and migrants who may have lived in the Indies for generations, but come from a white family (Indies-Dutch). In the ex-colony, both groups belonged to the group of so-called 'Europeans', although many Indo-Europeans remember being treated as second-rate citizens in the late colonial East Indies. Often these two groups have overlap, but there are also significant differences, particularly in matters of identification and memory.

14 Bootsma, Dortmans and Roelofs (2000). For enforced prostitution, see Ruff-O'Herne (1994) and also *Troostmeisjes en Japanse militairen* (2000); for payback issues, see Keppy (2006).

15 For a heated polemic about literature, memory and Indo and Indies identities essays, see Boon and Kousbroek in Boon (1994).

16 For a discussion of false nostalgia, see Jameson (1991). In the late 1960s, Barth (1969: 14-16) conceptualised what has become a central notion of group formation.

17 Hirsch's (1997: 22 in Pattynama 2003) term 'postmemory', used to designate the Jewish second generation, is also appropriate to characterise the work of the Indo-Dutch migrant second generation.

18 Other recurring elements are the usually disappointing journey to the former colony, the autobiographical genre, the far-reaching effects of the war (personified by a 'war father') and the generational transference of stories (see *Indische Letteren* 18 (4), a special volume from 2003 entitled 'De tweede generatie').

10 Why is there no post-colonial debate in the Netherlands?

Ulbe Bosma

10.1 Introduction

The era of decolonisation coincided with Europe's changing status from a continent of emigration to a destination for immigrants. At least five to seven million post-colonial immigrants came to Europe. In today's Portugal, the Netherlands, France and the United Kingdom, first- and second-generation post-colonial immigrants comprise up to 6 to 8 per cent of the population. These countries differ, however, markedly with respect to how they deal with their colonial pasts. In the Netherlands, traces of the colonial past are everywhere, but rarely in an explicit post-colonial context. The flourishing cultural market for ethnic literature and cuisine, the well-visited post-colonial ethnic festivals and the serious attempts to integrate the history of slavery into the Dutch historical canon, all these phenomena are just fragments of a consciousness that the Netherlands was once an important colonial power, with all its moral implications. Moreover, in comparison to France and the UK, the Netherlands was, for example, relatively late in acknowledging its role and responsibility in the international slave trade, nor has it yet come to terms with its colonial war against the Republic of Indonesia shortly after 1945.[1]

And this is not a matter of colonial amnesia; the facts of the Dutch colonial wars are openly exposed in television series. What is missing is moral indignation. There is no sense of continuity with the colonial past and the concepts of post-colonialism and multiculturalism are hardly connected. This applies both to literature and to academia. Of course, as Pattynama has made clear in the previous chapter, second-generation Indo-Dutch authors like Alfred Birney and Marion Bloem clearly position their work in multiculturalism, but this does not change the general pattern, as observed by Boehmer and Gouda (2009: 39).

> So the status of the Netherlands as an ex-colonial power remains unproblematised, and consequently the manner in which the history of colonialism might link up with the formation of contemporary national and migrant identities is left insufficiently examined.

The lack of resonance explains why colonial amnesia was unnecessary. There were national stirrings concerning atrocities during the colonial war in Indonesia in 1969, not by coincidence during the Vietnam War. It was already forgotten the day after, disappearing into the margins, and could never become a central theme in post-colonial Netherlands, as was the Algerian War of Liberation in France. Here, the pledge to put the past to rest had been part of a negotiated ending to a violent and cruel decolonisation process. This was in vain, as we know now, because the book was reopened in the 1990s, at the time that civil war raged in Algeria. There was a sense of urgency to stop the work of forgetting and to acknowledge how the violent decolonisation process had marked the national histories both of Algeria and France.

If France suffered amnesia, in the Netherlands the proper diagnosis would be the absence of a post-colonial debate.[2] Let me first define 'post-colonial debate' by quoting Van Leeuwen (2008: 12) who refers to it as

> a critical and systematic reflection on the political, historical and cultural consequences of Dutch colonialism, per se, and for the power relations in our contemporary society and for relations with Indonesia, Surinam and the Netherlands Antilles and other former colonial powers.

This chapter is an attempt to explain why such a debate has been practically absent in the Netherlands. I will not deal with the question of why it is important to have this post-colonial debate. Even if we differ on how much of the post-colonial thinking that has made such progress in the Anglophone world we would like to take on board, we can easily agree that it is both a matter of *l'intérêt bien entendu* as well as a moral obligation to look critically at one's national past. (A mildly post-colonial position is expressed in e.g. Oostindie 2009.) What I will try to uncover are the causes of this absence of debate. For that, we may have to look at the decolonisation process itself, transnational mechanisms, the way in which colonial boundaries are transmitted to the metropole and the visibility (or lack thereof) of post-colonial immigrants. And, of course, our search should include the identity formations of the various post-colonial migrant groups in the Netherlands, as well as the roles of intellectuals and the media. And this would only be the first step towards a comparative understanding of the European 'post-colony'.

10.2 The decolonisation process

The Dutch decolonisation process began immediately after the Japanese capitulation in August 1945. Four traumatic years of protracted negotiations

and colonial wars followed, before a settlement was reached. The transfer of sovereignty to the Republic of Indonesia took place on 27 December 1949. The Dutch, who had been around in the archipelago for more than three centuries, and their colonial interest groups, in particular, had great difficulty in accepting the new situation. What Algeria was to the French, so, with a slight variation, was Indonesia to the Dutch: part of their national identity. Whilst the conservative French considered Algeria simply a part of metropolitan France, their Dutch counterparts saw the unification of the Indonesian archipelago, the Netherlands Indies, as a Dutch creation. If it had only been Java's independence they might eventually have accepted this as an outcome of Dutch colonial policies, perhaps even with some pride. That the Javanese-dominated republic became master of the entire archipelago caused, however, a lot of resentment in the Netherlands. These emotions were quite an impediment to the Dutch seeing their proper interests in improving their relations with Jakarta. In the early 1950s, more than 100,000 Dutch were still living in Indonesia, Dutch was still one of the official languages – as was English in India – and the leadership of the republic was Dutch-educated. In spite of the dirty colonial warfare – the Dutch cannot be acquitted of war crimes –a lot of goodwill was still left. At the political level, however, tensions rose so rapidly that Dutch-Indonesian relations became practically unmanageable. In the mid-1950s, the heyday of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Indonesian revolutionary fervour increased. The Dutch, who had kept West New Guinea, were branded as a colonial power by Indonesia, which decided to break diplomatic relations completely with the Netherlands. This took place in 1956, not coincidentally in the same year the Suez Canal was confiscated by Nasser.

When the Indonesian revolution came to a halt amidst violence and bloodshed in the mid-1960s, and Suharto rose to power, an entire generation had grown up practically outside Dutch culture. In colonial times, Dutch was never conceived of as the first language of Indonesia, but on the eve of the Japanese occupation in 1942, about 860,000 Indonesians nevertheless had some command of Dutch (Groeneboer 1997). During the occupation, Dutch had been banished and in 1956, lost its status as an official language in Indonesia. It was even outlawed and could no longer be used in schools or any other public institution. Meanwhile, much of the exchange that had existed between Dutch and Indonesian intellectual and literary circles shrunk to contacts at the individual level or ebbed to Indonesian students, for example, those who came to study in Rotterdam at the economics department of Nobel Prize winner Jan Tinbergen. The few platforms for public intellectual exchange between Indonesia and the Netherlands that had come into existence in the 1930s and 1940s, however, collapsed in the early 1950s (Nieuwenhuys 1978: 394-428).

The developments in Indonesia definitely had repercussions for cultural relationships between metropolitan Netherlands and the Dutch West Indies. The popularity of the Dutch language was already somewhat on the decline among the educated in the 1940s, since Afro-Surinamese nationalists promoted Sranan and on the leeward islands of the Antilles, an official status for Papiamentu was advocated. In the eyes of nationalists, Dutch became the language of colonialism and, particularly on the largest Antillean island, Curaçao, Papiamentu became the vehicle of nationhood. In Surinamese plural society, there was no common vernacular and therefore the position of Dutch continued to grow even after decolonisation in 1975.[3] There was, however, not much enthusiasm for the way Dutch was tying the Antilles and Surinam to the Dutch cultural zone. The spread of Dutch language and culture had never been key to Dutch imperial ambitions anyway. But with the loss of cultural relations with Indonesia, the idea that Dutch constituted a language zone of any international consequence disappeared altogether. Only the political far right indulged itself with illusions of a Dutchophone commonwealth, including Flanders and South Africa.

Concomitant with the diminishing importance of Dutch language in the post-colonial realm, intellectual engagement with colonialism and its consequences almost disappeared in the Netherlands. This stood in marked contrast to France, where the Algerian War from 1954 to 1962 brought the tensions of empire right to the heart of the nation, as it considered Algeria just part of its metropolitan heartland. It was in the middle of this conflict that Sartre made his analysis of the dehumanising character of colonialism, which turned the colonised into a thing: into the 'other'. Together with his rejection of the universalist pretentions of Enlightenment, this set the parameters of a post-colonial debate long before post-colonialism became an academic discipline. French was not just the language and philosophy of hegemony, but continued to be the language of counter-discourse as well. This has been spelled out excellently in Majumdar's (2007) *Postcoloniality: The French dimension*.

Apart from the fact that many post-colonial thinkers in the Anglophone world feel indebted to Sartre, and of course to Foucault as well, his contribution has also resonated in France itself and has encouraged the country's attempts to uncover its post-colonial amnesias. Even though it has been argued that there is little reflection on the condition of France as a post-colonial state and society, a lot is going on in comparison to the Netherlands (Hargreaves 2007: 26). The political and social contexts of these societies certainly differ. This, in turn, influences the extent to which academic and political elites were prepared to revisit the decolonisation process and how decolonisation history had been recorded in pre-eminent historiography. When the French government, for example, acknowledged in 1997 that it had fought a colonial *war* in Algeria and no longer used the words '*événements*' or 'police actions',[4] it did so against the backdrop of

the bloody civil war in Algeria in the 1990s, the reverberations of which were felt in France. That the Netherlands was not reminded in such graphic way about its own decolonisation process could therefore be an obvious explanation of why the term 'police actions' for its war in Indonesia is still in use. But I would not take this as a sufficient explanation. It seems to me that intellectual traditions do play an independent role, and recent publications concerning French post-colonialism tend to confirm this impression.

The historian Achille Mbembe, born in Cameroon, accused 'France' of '*ne pas penser de manière critique la postcolonie*'. He did this in a short essay in *La fracture coloniale* (2005), a book that is an attempt to map France as a post-colonial society and to come to terms with the colonial past that has been now 'haunting' France for decades (Mbembe 2005: 143; Bancel & Blanchard 2007: 40). There is some irony in the fact that his assertion was printed in a book that attracted hundreds of reactions in France – both approving and disapproving. It suggests that there is a French tradition of lively conversations about silences, while the Dutch habitually remain silent about the untidy things they dig up from their past. At least, there is nothing that would ever justify the publication of a book entitled *Post-coloniality: The Dutch dimension*.

10.3 Dutch post-colonial migrants and Dutch minorities policies

Apart from lacking a towering figure like Sartre, we have seen how the revengeful aftermath of decolonisation and the dramatic shrinking of Dutch's status as a language in its former colonial realm played a major role in the avoidance of a post-colonial debate in the Netherlands. The second factor is that post-colonial migrants are not perceived as a distinct group in minority discourses. Though many Dutch have their roots in the former colonies, they do not share a 'post-colonial' label. This modest visibility can be attributed to a number of factors. First (setting the Netherlands apart from France, the UK and Portugal), post-colonial migrants make up only half of the immigrants from outside Europe. Most non-European immigrants in France, the UK and Portugal are from former colonial territories. In these countries, perceptions of immigration and migrants are still linked to the colonial past, which as a matter of fact is even the case in contemporary Spain. Here, anxieties about immigration from North Africa seem to hark back as far as the Reconquista, disregarding the fact that most immigrants come from China and Latin American countries (see Agrela 2002).

The visibility of, and anxieties about, newcomers are linked to the national imagination. In that respect, the *repatriated* from Indonesia were accepted as victims of revolution and chaos. It was grudgingly of course because the Netherlands was a poor emigration country at the time. Most

of all, the colonial war in Indonesia was presented to the Dutch public as an aftermath of World War II, as a noble effort to 'liberate' the Indonesian people from Sukarno, who had collaborated with the Japanese during the war. Those repatriated from Indonesia were placed in the role of victims, their 'colonial complicity' to colonialism only to become an issue in the early 1980s, as I shall explain later on. The situation for the West was quite different. In the course of the 1960s, the Dutch government was facing fairly rapidly expanding migratory flows from the Antilles and Surinam, which were fed by the combination of economic decline and rising political tensions overseas – culminating in strikes and rebellions – and the successful post-war economic recovery of the metropolis. It was against this backdrop that the Dutch government decided to urge Surinam and the Antilles to apply for independence in the early 1970s. Even though the Surinamese began to arrive in large numbers less than ten years after the last waves of repatriates from Indonesia, they found a radically changed political-cultural setting. In this respect, the year 1968 marked a watershed, dividing the immigrations from the East and the West into two totally unrelated narratives of decolonisation. This, in spite of the fact that the immigrants shared many important characteristics, as most of them were steeped in Dutch culture or at least in a colonial version of it.

Although experiences with post-colonial migrants in the 1970s played an important role in the formulation of the 'minorities policies' at the end of that decade, post-colonial immigrants themselves did not figure in them as a single category. First of all, the Indische Netherlanders did not become part of the 'minorities'. They had been declared to be fully integrated more than a decade earlier (Willems 2001: 197-203). This meant that more than half of the post-colonial migrant population in the Netherlands was excluded from the minorities discourse and later on from the multicultural discourse as well. The parameters of the minorities policies were social marginalisation and political exclusion. Labour migrants were both politically excluded, as they were not citizens and thus socially marginalised.[5] The Surinamese were citizens albeit socially marginalised ones, and the same applied, if only to a lesser degree, to the Antilleans. Indische Netherlanders were neither socially nor politically marginalised. On the contrary, the vast majority did pretty well on both accounts.

The problems with post-colonial migrants played an important, but secondary and not necessarily distinctive, role in the formulation of the 'minorities policies' around 1980. First and foremost, the fact that the circular migration of labour migrants from the Mediterranean came to a halt after the Dutch government had closed its borders to them, drove the Dutch to rethink their migration policies. The labour migrants already in the Netherlands – called 'guest workers' at the time to emphasise, at least nominally, the temporary nature of their stay – became permanent residents and brought over their families, instead of returning to their relatives.

Second, after train hijacks by some radical Moluccan youngsters in the 1970s, it became clear that some minorities would continue to make political claims. The Moluccan case convinced the government of the Netherlands that integration was more than a matter of newcomers learning how to adapt to society. Some kind of negotiating mechanism had to be put in place as well. That also applied to Surinamese newcomers. While the spokesmen of the over 100,000 Surinamese who had come to the Netherlands between 1970 and 1978 argued that their presence in the country was only temporary, the Dutch authorities rightfully were convinced that they had come to stay. None of these concerns of how to integrate the newcomers were necessarily post-colonial in character. On the contrary, particularly with regard to the question of how to transform visitors into citizens, the distinction between labour migrants and post-colonial migrants lost its relevance.

When, around 1980, the Dutch government became aware of the fact that the Netherlands had turned into an immigration country and published its first policy memoranda to address the problem of 'minority formation', only scant reference was made to Dutch colonial legacies. This awareness of being a multi-ethnic society led to two important reports in 1979: one written by Penninx for the Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid (Scientific Council for Government Policy Scientific Council for Government Policy, WRR) (WRR 1979) and the other by Campfens (1979) for the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Recreation and Social Welfare. From both reports, particularly the latter, it became clear that Canada's experiences with multiculturalism influenced Dutch minorities policies, even to the extent that we can consider Dutch policies as moderate multicultural policies. Dutch multiculturalism prioritised education and political participation of 'minorities', for example, by granting voting rights to non-Dutch residents at the municipal level. But if Dutch multicultural policies did apply some of the mechanisms of Canada's multiculturalism, they did not take on board the post-colonial philosophy behind them.[6] The paradigm of social marginalisation, rather than post-colonialism, suited the progressive self-image of a staunchly conformist society, which indeed had already absorbed the first waves of post-colonial immigrants almost 'without a trace'.[7]

For their part, post-colonial migrant organisations were not at all interested in a common post-colonial discourse. In 1979, at perhaps the only 'post-colonial' meeting that brought together Surinamese, Antillean and Moluccan organisations, the complete lack of synchronisation between various post-colonial experiences became apparent. The only thing in common that was mentioned was their irritation about Dutch conformism. Neither race nor religion was considered to be a post-colonial marker of difference. In that respect, the situation in the Netherlands was markedly different from the UK as well as France. As James (1974: 154) remarked in his

essay 'Black intellectuals in Britain': 'There is a systematic persistent tendency to call all members of the "Third World" black.' Gilroy (1993: 1), on the very first page of his famous *The Black Atlantic*, mentions the symbiotic antagonism between 'black and white'. In France, colonial boundaries had been drawn between French secularism and religion, as was the case in Algeria where Islam formed the central colonial boundary. This boundary was brought back home to France (Silverstein 2004: 51, 123). Neither race nor religion constituted dividing lines, per se, in Dutch society; as a consequence, they did not act as mobilising mechanisms for minorities. This may explain why Dutch post-colonial migrant organisations contented themselves with a rather dull critique on Dutch conformism.[8]

Should we conclude from this that there was no post-colonial boundary in the Netherlands? In that case it would make little sense to discuss colonial legacies in the context of contemporary Dutch society. I would, however, argue that there does exist a post-colonial boundary, as in any other post-colonial society in Europe, but that the Dutch one is rather hard to trace, precisely because it is not a racial or religious one, but a social-cultural one. The counterpoint to the 'racial blindness' of the receiving society was its heavy emphasis on assimilation. A handful of books and articles looked back on the Indische repatriation and its aftermath as an almost invisible integration process, though probably at the price of turning into a merely functional assimilation (Ex 1966; Surie 1971). Indische Netherlanders had to take courses on proper housekeeping, the Dutch way. Lesson number one was how to do it as cheaply as possible. Only those who followed the entire course were eligible for 'how to party the Dutch way'.[9] Many may have lost their interest in the subject by that time. One may conclude that if race hardly played a role to the Dutch – which is not entirely true – it was mainly because every newcomer was put into a 'cultural laundry' and came out of it as Dutch, at least functionally speaking. This cultural laundering was a necessity to cross a cultural boundary, a post-colonial 'ethnic' boundary. And here we have analogies to the UK's racial boundary and France's religious one.

Let us take one step further, seeing how this 'assimilationist divide' connects with Dutch colonialism. Dutch official documents on immigrants systematically distinguish between 'Western' and 'non-Western' immigrants. The word 'Western' is not used in a strictly geographical sense, but as a way of measuring the distance from Dutch mainstream culture. This could be abstracted from its colonial origins and applied to all newcomers from outside Europe, the US and Japan. In 1979, all the minorities (post-colonial and labour migrants) were lumped into the single category of 'non-Western allochthonous native' residents. Purely for reasons of statistical technicalities, country of birth was the criterion for being considered 'Western' or 'non-Western'. Immigrants from Indonesia (regardless of their ethnic

background) became 'Western allochthonous' residents and those from Surinam became 'non-Western'. The fact that most immigrants from Indonesia were Dutch citizens explains, for example, why *all* immigrants from Indonesia are counted as 'Western'. The entire distinction between people who are allegedly capable of functioning in our culture and those who are allegedly not, was deeply rooted in the Dutch colonial past. It was the flexible cultural divide that had always been in use in the context of colonial Indonesia; it simply resurfaced in the Dutch minorities policies. Or to phrase it more precisely, it had never gone away but was repatriated after the decolonisation of Indonesia. In the 1950s, the Dutch government, for example, was quite reluctant to admit Dutch citizens if they were, in the language of those days, 'rooted in Indonesia' or 'Oriental Dutch' (Meijer 2004: 335). In this transitional episode, the colonial category of 'Western' or 'European' was narrowed down to those who were considered by the Dutch authorities to be fully acculturated to the Dutch way of life.

While the British had their obsession with colour and the French with secularism and religion, the Dutch cultivated their distinction between 'Western' and 'non-Western'. In all three cases, we are dealing with colonial and post-colonial boundaries. In the Dutch case, the divide was directly derived from the way in which they had once drawn the bureaucratic and legal boundaries in the Netherlands Indies. Historically, these were based on a mixture of religion, ethnicity and national origin, but not of race as such. This point is illustrated by the fact that the Japanese, subjects of an independent Asian power, were legally treated as equal to Europeans in colonial Indonesia from 1899 onwards. The bureaucratic colonial boundaries of the late colonial state, shored up by many statistical and legal devices, are still present in Dutch post-colonial boundaries. They are far more difficult to discern than racism or 'Enlightenment fundamentalism', but are therefore no less powerfully present.

Paradoxically – but understandably – post-colonial migrants did not emerge as a separate category after the large immigration of Surinamese in the 1970s. The old colonial boundary proved to be perfectly applicable to both labour and post-colonial migrants and, as result, the post-colonial migrant was partly subsumed into the category 'non-Western'. On average, however, the position of the post-colonial migrants was completely different from that of the labour migrants from the Mediterranean who came from economically and socially arrested regions. After all, the reason they had come to Northern Europe was to escape from these conditions. In contrast to this, in the late 1970s, the largest and most dominant group within the post-colonial migrants were Dutch repatriates from Indonesia, who had been a colonial elite, and simply disappeared into Dutch society. They were the truly 'invisible immigrants' (the term is derived from Smith 2003). This set the norm for other post-colonial immigrants, if not for all immigrants.

10.4 The post-colony and its fragments

Post-colonial identity discussions in the Netherlands took rather divergent directions. But before we start to discuss this fragmentation, things should be put into correct perspective. In general, post-colonial boundaries are differently framed for Asia than for the West Indies and Africa. Central to the post-colonial 'othering' are the legacies of Orientalism and slavery, which led to different types of struggles. But it is important to see that there have always been conscious attempts to bridge the gap. The Universal Races Congress of 1911, the anti-imperialist movement of the 1920s, the anti-fascist movement of the 1930s and the Non-Aligned Movement of the 1950s and 1960s were platforms where the two struggles came together. The most recent attempt was made in the 1980s, when post-colonialism became closely linked to cultural studies and, particularly with a rereading of Gramsci, to the so-called 'cultural turn'. A few examples among many others of the impact of the cultural turn are seen in India's famous Subaltern Studies Group and the appearance in Great Britain of cultural studies pioneer Hall and the aforementioned Gilroy. Even if one may wonder about the lack of cross-fertilisation between the same Subaltern studies and writings about the Black Atlantic, these intellectual domains use the same theoretical baggage and are very much aware of the racist notions underpinning British identity. Of course – and here is the difference with French, Dutch and probably other European post-colonialism – there is synergy with the academic community in the US, after all the most powerful and most cosmopolitan academic community in the world.

There is no reason to assume that a coherent post-colonial debate exists outside the Netherlands. It is fragmented everywhere, but what is missing in the Dutch case is the ambition to achieve an overarching theoretical perspective on its colonial legacy. Absent is the idea that other post-colonial immigrant groups might have the same type of post-colonial questions and that these questions may even be relevant to Dutch society at large. On the contrary, there is some irritation about the Anglophone post-colonial debate, as it is considered over-theoretical and somewhat pretentious. The way in which post-colonial identity discourses are fragmented and positioned in an often hierarchical relationship with each other plays its own role in the absence of the post-colonial debate.

Let us have a look at how this fragmentation is constructed, particularly at its inherent logic. In the Netherlands, post-colonial identity politics can be divided along two axes. One concerns the politics of 'alterity'; the other stresses the 'similarity' with 'hegemonic' national identity. The alterity axis runs from Sartre's 'anti-racist racism' and underlines the problematic of colonial boundaries and the radical difference in experience. These identity politics aim at a fundamental change of metropolitan memory politics.

The identity politics of 'similarity' do not aim at change, but at inclusion. This is particularly the case with regard to the role World War II plays in the imagined community of the receiving societies. Whether in Japan or the Netherlands – and probably also in France – post-colonial immigrants were excluded or only partially included or, even worse, turned into scapegoats. Stories of shame were heaped on the shoulders of the three million brought home, when the capitulation in 1945 ended Japan's Pan-Asian colonial expansionist dreams altogether (Watt 2005). Less dramatic, but still unfriendly, was the reception for the 580,000 *retornados* coming back to Portugal. They were looked down upon as colonial parasites now coming home to rely on their metropolitan relatives (see Ovalle Bahamón 2003).

In 1998, the Dutch government commissioned an extensive research project from the Nederlands Instituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie (Dutch Institute for War Documentation, NIOD) to report on the allegedly cold reception of Dutch people who came back from concentration camps or prisoner of war camps in both Europe and Asia (Bossenbroek 2001). From this project it clearly emerged that it had been difficult for the Dutch who had stayed at home to imagine what these returnees had gone through. And that was also absolutely the case for the 'repatriates' (the majority of whom was born in Asia) who on average had suffered more than the metropolitan Dutch. One third of the Dutch prisoners of war and 10 per cent of the internees lost their lives during Japanese occupation. Material losses in terms of possessions, salaries and entitlements were immense.

What happened to the Indische Netherlanders nonetheless did not fit the meta-narrative of metropolitan Netherlands: a country occupied and liberated. In Indonesia, a colonial society had been occupied by an Asian power. That humiliated the Dutch who had until then been the (politically, but also economically, oppressive) masters of the Indonesians. The whole scheme of occupation and liberation became twisted when transplanted from the Netherlands to Indonesia. And twist is exactly what marks the fourteen-volume official national history on World War II (authored by NIOD director Lou de Jong and appearing between 1969 and 1991). De Jong's simple but effective scheme of good versus bad, Dutch versus German and the collaborationist shades in between misrepresented colonial realities. In the 1980s, some tried to argue that Dutch rule had not been that bad, but hardly anyone listened. In fact, in the 1990s when the abovementioned NIOD project was conducted, this entire debate had already been swept under the carpet. What was left was the hegemonic notion of the victim – in Dutch a new word was constructed for it: '*slachtofferschap*', i.e. victimhood – a notion that always seems to imply the loss of historical agency.

Victimhood overshadowed the story of alterity within the group of Dutch who had been repatriated. This alterity is related to a racial-cum-

class divide within this group. With some simplification, one can say that a substantial minority was white and born in the Netherlands; another minority was of colour but belonging to the colonial elite; and a substantial minority was of colour and had never been in the Netherlands. This divide, to a certain degree, runs parallel to the divide between Western and non-Western, though is simultaneously incongruent with it, thus calling it into question. The racial divisions, however, run through Indische identity politics and were reinforced after the Japanese occupation.[10] Though one should be careful about tying racial categories within European colonial society to different post-war identity politics, a distinction can still be made between the identity politics of 'similarity' claiming rehabilitation, war pensions, back pay of salaries that were withheld during internment and everything on an equal footing as the Dutch who had been in Europe during the War. The other story traces back to the Indo-Dutch emancipation against the (white) prejudice of the colonial elite. This story stands for alterity, which advocates resistance to assimilation, resistance to the Dutch dividing line between Western and non-Western and, to some extent, glorifies a mestizo culture. The story of Tjalie Robinson and his Tong Tong movement of the 1950s and 1960s was both one of a revival and a continuation of the Indo-Dutch emancipation movement that had constituted such a powerful force in colonial days. But in contrast to the colonial situation, it was not an emancipation that sought acceptance by colonial elites and that was heavily tilted towards metropolitan European cultural hegemony. The cultural agenda of Robinson was inspired partly by what he considered to be mestizo cultures in Mexico and Brazil.[11]

The emancipation of the Indo-Dutch (in colonial times first named Indo-European and later on Indische Netherlanders) that had already begun in the 1880s was far from complete when they arrived in the Netherlands in the 1950s. This was the task Robinson took on with his Tong Tong movement. He died, however, in 1974 (see Willems in this volume). In the course of the 1970s, public opinion became more responsive to the lasting damage World War II had caused to those who had suffered from persecution and imprisonment. The discourse on Indische alterity became a secondary issue in comparison to this discourse on the war. In this regard, the popularity among Indo-Dutch of Jean Gelman Taylor's *The social world of Batavia* (1983) (about Batavia's mestizo culture that disappeared under the pressure of white imperialism at the end of the nineteenth century) can be explained in two different ways. The book was taken as a vindication of the historical mestizo roots of Indische identity, but also as a recognition that the same mestizo narrative was historically doomed to an inferior position vis-à-vis the hegemonic white one.

Let us now shift to the identity politics that originated in the Dutch West Indies and, in particular, Surinam. The rise of Afro-Surinamese and Afro-Antillean consciousness – and how young black intellectuals propagated

Sranan or Papiamentu from the 1950s onwards – led to a division of identity politics in the West Indies. In Surinam, the already strained relationship between Hindustani, Javanese and Afro-Surinamese became increasingly tense after World War II, notably in the 1950s and 1960s. The Surinamese plural society was in itself a source of fragmentation of the 'post-colonial discourse'. The divisions between Hindustanis and Afro-Surinamese are deep. Afro-Surinamese nationalism, being the driving force behind Surinam's independence, was resented by Hindustanis, most of whom did not share the ideal of an independent Surinam. This resentment has somewhat diminished recently, but it has not changed the divergence of their identity politics. As a result, today there are four main groups of post-colonial discourses; of them, commemoration of the war on the Indische side and the trauma of slavery on the Surinamese side receive most public attention. There is no relationship whatsoever between these two. The other two identity discourses, concerning the Hindustani and Indo-Dutch, are more or less secondary and equally unrelated, though they share some important characteristics. The Hindustani discourse boasts about their loyalty to the House of Orange and their easy integration into Dutch society, while maintaining their own culture, thanks to their own hard work. This is almost the same story as the one we heard from the Indo-Dutch. Hindustani identity politics are articulated in competition with the Afro-Surinamese and stress successful integration. When the Afro-Surinamese and Afro-Antillean communities in the Netherlands succeeded in placing the Slavery Monument in Amsterdam, Hindustani residents in The Hague responded by offering a Gandhi monument to their municipality as a sign 'of their integration into Dutch' society.

10.5 The 1980s and 1990s: 'Globalisation' and Dutch post-colonial identity politics

The Indo-Dutch discourse on alterity lost much of its distinct mestizo flavour with the death of Robinson in 1974. The other post-colonial identity discourses took equally dramatic turns. The anti-colonial movements of young Moluccans, leftist Antilleans and Surinamese reached their peak in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The language was of anti-colonialism, even of Black Power. Notable chapters in this sprit were that of the Moluccan youngsters, the 1969 revolt on Curaçao, the 1973 strikes in Surinam, the train hijackings; these were the years of anti-colonialism, sometimes perceived too literally as a fight against oppression. It is not a coincidence that during the uprisings in Surinam and Curaçao, 'Black Power' was heard often, and that even the Moluccan youngsters drew their inspiration from the Black Panthers. Neither is it a coincidence that the first train hijacking and the independence of Surinam both took place in 1975. After the Moluccan

terrorist acts between 1975 and 1978 and army sergeant Bouterse's coup d'état in Surinam in 1980, political militancy dwindled.

Internationally and in the Anglophone world, in particular, the late 1970s and early 1980s marked the beginning of an emphasis on cultural trauma, identity politics and, in academics, an industry of diaspora studies and cultural studies. There is no need here to elaborate on the connections between the rise of electronic media, the cultural turn in human sciences and the fragmentation of grand narratives. What matters here are the parallels between the emerging search for 'roots', its ensuing focus on the cultural trauma of slavery for the Afro-Surinamese and Afro-Antilleans, the 'nostalgia' of immigrants from Indonesia and a reinforcement of the already strong connection of Hindustanis to South Asia. To complete the list, let us add the narrative of the Indo-Dutch's mestizo roots that had become marginalised in the days of high imperialism. While the colonial legacy moved from the political to the personal, the old colonial boundaries began to lose some of their weight. Identity discourses for Moluccans and Indische Netherlanders, as well as for Afro-Surinamese and Afro-Antilleans, began to converge. Indische Netherlanders and Moluccans shared an increasing cultural connection with Indonesia, whereas Afro-Surinamese and Afro-Antilleans became increasingly oriented towards the commemoration of slavery.

In the 1980s, there was a general decline in *political* transnationalism among Moluccans and Surinamese. According to Steijlen (see Smeets & Steijlen 2006; Steijlen 1996a), the train hijackings paradoxically led to the Moluccans' integration into Dutch society, which went very well, along with their cultural emancipation in the Netherlands. For the Surinamese, the coup d'état by Bouterse and his associates marked the dissolution of the strong political transnationalism between Amsterdam and Paramaribo. But even if tendencies in terms of identity, history, culture and transnationalism – and the languages in which they are framed – move in the same direction, they do not have a common point of reference. The counterpoint of these attempts of immigrants to anchor themselves in their new country is a reshaping of their relations with their countries of origin. Every post-colonial group engaged in the general tendency of intensifying contacts with their country of origin by way of remittances, solidarity with relatives suffering from violence (Moluccans), family visits or simply holidays. The dividing lines between the different post-colonial identity discourses may have become less politically informed and less hierarchically positioned towards each other. However, the identity formations around the themes of the trauma of slavery, the Indian diaspora and the imagining of Indische and Moluccan as 'Asian' became increasingly linked to *globalised* rather than *national* post-colonial identity discourses. The questions surrounding these identity formations are of a fundamentally different order to the questions about Dutch post-colonial boundaries between 'non-Western' and

'Western'.[12] This becomes even more pertinent when we shift our focus to the intellectuals and the media.

10.6 The role of intellectuals

In Great Britain, post-colonialism and cultural studies as academic subjects are inextricably linked to multiculturalism. A central position is taken by the aforementioned Hall, as one of the founding fathers of cultural studies. He was born in Jamaica and brought up in Kingston, amidst the 'signs, music and rhythms of this Africa of the diaspora, which only existed as a result of long and discontinuous series of transformations' (Hall 1990: 231). He is not a lone voice in Great Britain. Other prominent authors in this field also have roots in the former British colonies. Among them are the aforementioned Gilroy, Modood and Parekh. They, too, have played an important role in debates about post-colonial identities and 'Britishness'. Member of the House of Lords Parekh chaired the Commission into the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain, sponsored by the Runnymede Trust. Its report incensed part of its English audience by contending that the word 'Britishness' no longer fitted a future multicultural UK because of its racist connotations (see Parekh 2000).

In contrast to Great Britain, in the Netherlands, multiculturalism and post-colonialism are neither philosophically nor historically linked. Sometimes this may just be a matter of coincidence. Within the relatively small circles of intellectuals engaged in this debate, personal relationships make a difference. The *négritude* movement, for example, was fostered by a personal friendship between Senghor and Césaire. Such friendships did not exist in the Dutch case. Contacts between Dutch intellectuals and novelists from the Eastern and Western corners of the empire did exist in the 1930s, but disappeared in the 1950s.[13] At that time, Sartre was pioneering post-colonial thinking and laying down the groundwork for the subversion of the 'universal claims of enlightenment' with his concept of the 'other'. He was a spider on the web of political thinkers about the anti-colonial struggle, writing prefaces to classics by Memmi (1966), Fanon (1961) and Senghor (1948). For writing about post-colonialism, one is inclined to look at Foucault, whose publications were so influential in shaping the field of cultural and post-colonial studies. Moreover, in May 1968, Foucault worked at the University of Tunis, which would have provided another link to the post-colonial cause, although as Stoler (1995) has explained at length, he did not seem to go the extra mile to reach post-colonialism. By contrast, the relationship between academic work and personal experience is manifestly present in Bourdieu's work. During his military service in the colonial army in Algeria between 1958 and 1960, he carried out field-work among the Kabyle. Concepts like 'social capital' and 'symbolic capital' that have

enriched the social sciences originate from that research. In the 1990s, Bourdieu took a stand against what he called the 'ghettoisation' of Algerians, whose entry to France was practically blocked (from 800,000 down to 100,000 visa permits per year), because of the fundamentalist violence in Algeria (Bourdieu & Leca 1995).

The Netherlands has the example of the late sociologist Van Doorn, who had been drafted for military service in Indonesia between 1945 and 1949. He was the co-author of a book published in 1970, *Ontsporing van geweld* ('*Derailment of violence*') about what we now may consider war crimes committed by the Dutch colonial army (at that time the word 'excesses' was used instead of war crimes). This book created a modest political row at the time, as Pattynama has described in the prior chapter of this volume. Van Doorn also published a book and some essays on Indonesian colonial history, but he was generally considered to be a non-conformist conservative and never took a position against colonialism as such. At the very end of his life, however, he publicly denounced Islam-bashing by the extreme right in the Netherlands, anchoring himself on a perceived tradition of religious co-existence practised in colonial Indonesia (Van Doorn & Hendrix 1983; obituary of Van Doorn in *NRC Handelsblad* 15 May 2008). The same mechanism of the subversion of national history, in which colonial society is portrayed as oppressive, collaborationist and shameful, was applied by the Japanese returnees (the *hikiagesha*, meaning 'salvaged') and the French *pied-noirs*. Some spokespersons defended their colonial background as being multiculturally *avant la lettre* and, in that respect, more advanced than metropolitan Japan or France (Watt 2005: 251). But turning the tables on the perception of European colonial societies as being basically racist and intolerant does not constitute a post-colonial debate. There is perhaps only one writer in the Netherlands who has made some consistent efforts in that direction, the Surinamese-born Anil Ramdas. He wrote in a post-colonial style and has, on quite a few occasions, demonstrated his familiarity with what is going on in this field outside of the Netherlands.[14] Although as a widely read journalist he had access to public debates, his influence was greatly diminished because of his solitary professional position.

All over the world, scholars of human and social sciences have been drawing their inspiration from Gramsci, the Frankfurter Schule and Foucault. Encouraged by the academic prestige of cultural studies, they have left classical Marxism behind. Post-colonialism as an academic trend has made progress in the US, Australia, Latin America, India and even in Indonesia; in the Netherlands some scholars relate to it. But as far as there is a Dutch post-colonial academic tradition, its centre of gravity lies within literary sciences. It concentrates on the pantheon of novelists writing in Dutch: Louis Couperus, E. du Perron, the Surinamese Albert Helman and Edgar Cairo, the Antilles' Frank Martinus Arion and Cola Debrot. And

although their books sometimes sold tens of thousands of copies, their work is not advancing a post-colonial debate. In spite of their often politically powerful messages, these books have become part of Dutch literary tradition. They are treated just as literature, something that belongs to a realm far removed from the mundane matters of day-to-day politics in a multicultural society. There is limited space for how the colonial past can be imagined in the Netherlands.[15] Moreover, it is difficult to compare the impact of post-colonial literary work to authors like Sartre, Parekh and Bourdieu, who engaged with the lower world of politics. Such a position is rare in the Netherlands at present. Frank Martinus Arion, a public intellectual and a popular Dutch novelist, is probably an exceptional case, although he is not active in the metropolitan Netherlands, but rather in Curaçao. Despite the fact that his work is topical for understanding the desperate social situation for many Afro-Antilleans – a problem spilling into the Netherlands due to uneducated, unskilled Antillean youngsters roaming the Dutch cities – the political impact of his work in the Netherlands is fairly limited.

In other words, the immense amount of historical and literary production that finds its inspiration or roots in the colonial past and the post-colonial present is sitting on coffee tables, not fuelling debates. Its attraction lies in its exoticism or even outright Orientalism. In that respect, it is nothing new. This Orientalism had already existed in colonial times and has always been a bestseller. The legacy of the Indo-Dutch, mestizo culture, in particular, has become a commodity, an ethnic top trademark. And while it is commercially attractive, its 'exotic' alterity makes it harmless as it does not question, but reinforces, the distinction between 'non-Western' and 'Western'. The hegemony of remembrance of the war does the rest needed to eclipse the presence of Indische identity as a possibly disturbing post-colonial heritage. The attempt to create the Indisch House – a centre for commemoration and Indische culture – in The Hague is a case in point.[16] This was initiated by the Dutch government as part of the commemoration of the war, but in that capacity it never became a fair representation of the histories and cultural legacies of the Indische Netherlanders.

Considered to be fully integrated into Dutch society, the only way to receive subsidies for cultural expression of Indische identities is under the heading of the war. Rather inconsistent with the government's position of ignoring the cultural dimension of 'Indische' is that some of representatives – former Minister of Foreign Affairs Ben Bot provides an outstanding example – refer to 'Indische' as being multiculturally *avant la lettre* in defence of religious tolerance towards Islam. And here we arrive to the intricacies as well as dangers of 'memory politics'. The notion of colonial multiculturalism contains some serious flaws, it would mean that we need, for example, to look away from the fact that European colonial society was deeply suspicious of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century

Islamic revivalist movement on Java (Van Leeuwen 2008: 305-306, 315-316). The idea of Dutch-Asian coexistence is also inconsistent with a commemoration of the war that portrays Europeans as victims of Asian aggression (first from the Japanese and subsequently of the Javanese revolution). It is impossible to do justice to the nuances of history – and definitely would be asking too much of politicians – but how the Indische past plays in the 'memory politics' in the Netherlands is glaringly inconsistent.

10.7 The media and the absence of a post-colonial debate

Though there is a diversity discourse in the Netherlands, it has hardly resonated in policymaking. Neither did it have any reverberations in mainstream public opinion. Dutch integration policies, as I have argued elsewhere, are basically assimilationist and barely address the issue of cultural diversity (Bosma 2009). In contrast to what many may believe, in Dutch society most of the activities of post-colonial migrants in the cultural sphere are not subsidised by the Dutch government. In the media, the position of post-colonial migrants – of any migrants, as a matter of fact – is one of underrepresentation. In the mid-1990s, only 1 per cent of people employed in the media were of non-Western allochthonous descent, while according to official Dutch sources, at that time more than 10 per cent of the population belonged to this category. Over the past ten years, the numbers might have improved – there are no recent figures available – but probably not by much. There are no figures for Dutch universities or the higher echelons of enterprise and government, but there is no reason to assume the situation is any better there. However, I must add to this that presently the political representation of non-Western allochthonous residents is on a par with their proportion of the Dutch population. This is the result of the minorities policies of the early 1980s, which, as mentioned, took inspiration from Canada. As far as the priority areas of political empowerment and citizenship for newcomers are concerned, the Dutch moderate multicultural policies have become a success, despite what populist politicians in the Netherlands claim in this regard. But in terms of allowing cultural diversity into how the nation presents and perceives itself, the performance of the Netherlands is rather bleak.

What this means can be illustrated by the contrasting example of Great Britain. In 2007, there was a nation-wide commemoration of the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade, as enacted by the British Parliament in 1807. These celebrations were steadfastly promoted by Afro-British politicians – some of whom held cabinet positions in the Blair government – and by Afro-British journalists. The BBC created a special web portal linking national debates, historical snapshots and radio and television

programmes. Most fascinating was the way in which the 'regionalisation' of the bicentenary was announced:

> Think your area had no connection to the history of slavery and abolition? Then think again. BBC Local teams have found stories in every corner and community of the United Kingdom.[17]

For a number of reasons, such a nationwide involvement in commemoration, fanning out to every hamlet in the country, would be unthinkable in the Netherlands. First of all, the chances for a nationwide commemoration of the abolition of the slave trade or slavery would be very slim, since slavery was abolished at an embarrassingly late stage for a country that considers itself progressive (in 1860 in Indonesia and in 1863 in the Dutch West Indies). There have, however, been some isolated attempts to bring the commemoration of slavery to the local or municipal level in the Netherlands. A group of Surinamese in Amsterdam, for example, has been advocating a different commemoration spanning 30 June and 1 July (already celebrated as Emancipation Day) that is more inclusive. As one of its spokespersons told a newspaper:

> There is a common history of us, the descendants of the slaves and white Dutch, a common history that should not be ignored, but it is time that we look each other straight in the face. *(NRC Handelsblad* 1 July 2008)

This is exactly the same type of overture that was made to overcome amnesia about the Algerian War. It is also the official point of view of the Nationaal Instituut Nederlands Slavernijverleden en Erfenis (National Institute for the Study of Dutch Slavery and its Legacy NINSEE), as specified on its website.

> The mission of NINSEE is to develop and position itself as the national symbol of the shared legacy of Dutch slavery and the collective future of all Dutch people. We strive to shed light on the history of Dutch slavery and its impact on Dutch society from varied and diverse perspectives, on an international and national level.[18]

Yet the shared legacy is becoming multifarious, if only because major Dutch cities comprise populations that are almost half of 'non-Western' origin. This underscores the need for a post-colonial debate in the sense of a systematic contribution to understand how Dutch society has changed and will further change in the future.

Notes

1 See Oostindie (2001). For the Indonesian-Dutch conflict, see Van den Doel (2001). Some newspaper articles have also pleaded for apologies for Dutch war crimes against Indonesians. This happened after residents of an Indonesian village took legal action against the Kingdom of the Netherlands (see *NRC Handelsblad* 18 October 2008).

2 A French example of such an interrogation is Blanchard, Bancel and Lemaire (2005). In 2002, the Belgian government decided to offer its apologies to the family of Congolese statesman Patrice Lumumba and the Congolese people for its responsibility in the murder of the (see Gillet 2007: 71).

3 For a concise discussion on language and nationhood in the contemporary Dutch West Indies, see Oostindie (2005a: 125-131).

4 For decades, the Algerian War remained a '*guerre sans nom*', a blank page in French history, according to Stora (1992).

5 Moluccan former soldiers of the colonial army who came to the Netherlands in 1951 were in a comparable position. In the 1970s, almost 80 per cent of them were stateless and unemployment was high among second-generation Moluccans.

6 For the post-colonial backgrounds of Canadian multiculturalism, see Day (2000).

7 For comments on this conformism, see Bagley (1973) and Verwey-Jonker (1971).

8 As for the Afro-Surinamese, this changed in the early 1980s when racism did become a serious issue in the Netherlands.

9 CCKP (1969).

10 For a proper understanding of this divide, one should know that all white Dutch people in Indonesia were interned in camps during Japanese occupation, while many of the Indo-Dutch, because of their partly Asian descent, remained outside. But, and here comes the caveat: many Indo-Dutch men were in camps as prisoners of war and the women and children who stayed outside the camps were increasingly confined to districts; their lives, too, became increasingly miserable towards the end of the war.

11 An authoritative biography on Robinson by Willems (2008).

12 A more extensive discussion of this theme is offered in Bosma (2009).

13 We refer to the so-called 'Forumgroup' (see e.g. Oostindie & Maduro 1986: 75).

14 Among his many publications, we would mention Ramdas (2000).

15 For a discussion on this reception, see Pattynama (2007).

16 The history of the Indisch Huis demise is extensively discussed in Van Leeuwen (2008: 225-272).

17 www.bbc.co.uk/local/abolition; accessed in 2012.

18 See www.ninsee.nl; accessed in 2012.

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