

15 Changing Identities, Multi-local Politics and Citizenship: Reflections on the Agency of Migrants from Indonesia and their Descendants in the Netherlands

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15.1 Introduction¹

Studies on intergenerational identities of migrant groups – who originate from Indonesia and have been resident in the Netherlands for more than half a century – focus on the issue of their integration in Dutch society while maintaining their own but changing identities over generations. The change in identities is explained by the interplay between migrant policies in the country of settlement and shifts in the socio-economic and family positions of migrant generations, for example intermarriage with native Dutch (de la Croix/Dumpel/van Naerssen/Portier 2006; de Vries 2009; Rinsampessy 2008; van Leeuwen 2008). Some studies have compared the experiences of the two largest migrant groups from Indonesia, the *Indisch Dutch* or *Indo's* from mixed Asian and European descent² and the Moluccans, stressing differences in the expectations of the immigrants and the reception in the country of arrival (Bosma 2009; van Amersfoort/van Niekerk 2006).

This chapter elaborates on the same themes as it focuses on the identities of migrants from Indonesia spanning over three generations and explicitly compares the two migrant groups. However, contrary to the previous studies, the themes reside within the context of socio-political changes and events in *both* the country of settlement and the country of origin. The

underlying proposition is that the formation of migrants' identities can better be understood by using a transnational perspective (Levitt/Waters 2002; Levitt/Glick/Schiller 2004). It is argued that multi-local politics and the politics of international relations between the country of origin and the receiving country have inter-generational impacts that extend beyond the first generation. In particular, attention is paid to the ability of migrants and their descendants to respond to and to be able to change policies in their country of settlement and of origin. This chapter also differs from earlier studies by including the migration-development nexus and citizenship into the debate. The emergence of the migration-development nexus is acknowledged as a new space for the construction of meanings and practices that add new dimensions to the formation of migrant descendants' identities, including the meaning of their citizenship.

Examining the major activities and associations of the Eurasians and the Moluccans over three generations in the Netherlands shows that the contents and meanings of their identities are continuous, fluid and dynamic (de la Croix/Dumpel/van Naerssen/Portier 2006; de Vries 2009; Rinsampessy 2008; van Leeuwen 2008). The first and largest migrant group, the Eurasians, defines its citizenship as belonging to the Dutch nation-state. The second group, the Moluccans, seem to have a pervasive ambivalence among migrants of third generations towards the notion of citizenship and the nation-state, as well as more pronounced elements of transnational connections with the region of origin, the Moluccas (also called the Moluccan Islands). Understanding the formation of migrants' identities as co-created by migrants and the socio-cultural and political environment may help us to grasp the contextual and nuanced differences between the two groups.

1 The author wants to thank the anonymous reviewers for their comments on the first drafts of this contribution.

2 In other words, they are Eurasians. Most of them bear European family names. Their history can be traced back to the 17th century (Bosma/Raben 2003). Note that the *Indies Dutch* are different from other European repatriates such as the *piet noirs* and the *retornados* in respectively France and Portugal, since in the colonies of these countries less intermarriage between different ethnic groups had taken place (Smith 2003: 14-15, 22-23).

15.2 Theorizing Migrants' Identities and Transnational Connections

The main body of literature on intergenerational identity formation among migrant communities addresses issues concerning the second generation. A generally accepted idea is that contrary to the first generation that purportedly brings its identity to the country of destination, the second-generation migrant has to constitute an identity for itself. Portes' studies of 2nd generation *Latinos* in the US are representative of this view (1995, 1996). In an extensive longitudinal research on adaptation patterns, trajectories and social mobility of second-generation migrants, Portes and Rumbaud (1996) concluded that both upward and downward social mobility are part of adaptation patterns. In the latter case, the second generation adapts to the underclass in poor urban areas of the US. However, upward mobility is also significant; hence, they argued that *segmented assimilation* processes take place.

Levitt and Waters (2002) connected assimilation processes to transnationalism and argued that "although it is unlikely that the children of immigrants will be involved in their ancestral homes with the same frequency and intensity as their parents, the extent to which they will engage in transnational practices is still an open question" (2002: 2). An important aspect of these practices are the private (family) and development-oriented remittances (small-scale and locally situated economic and welfare development projects) to the countries and regions of origin. In this vein, the emergence of the migration-development nexus in policy circles (Nyberg-Sørensen/van Haer/Engberg-Pedersen 2002) has led many studies to focus on the positive role of migrants in development processes in countries of origin through remittances, knowledge transfer, investments and initiating trade (van Naerssen/Spaan/Zoomers 2008). An example of an in-depth study on the impact of remittances on a regional economy is a study by de Haas (2003) on the socio-economic impact of out-migration in the Todgha Oasis Valley in Morocco. He concluded that out-migration has led to a substantial improvement in the living conditions and new local economic activities in the region. Kabki (2007) and Smith (2007) each make an explicit link with transnationalism in their studies on the impact of remittances on both the countryside and the urban environment (Accra) in Ghana. In a general overview, Adams and Page (2005) reached the conclusion that a ten per cent increase in per capita official international remit-

tances will (on the average) lead to a 3.5 per cent decline of people living in poverty.

Remittances by individual migrants to their families at home, who use the money for food, consumer goods, education of children, construction and small business enterprises, attract most of the attention. The migration-development nexus as a space for constructing meanings and practices, however, also embraces remittances used for small development projects such as schools and health clinics, the transfer of knowledge, skills and ideas, investments in private businesses and support to political movements. Thus, migrants initiate what Farrant/MacDonald/Sriskandarajah (2006) have called *diasporic flows*, consisting of a triad of knowledge, investment and trade that has a direct and visible impact on the economic development in countries of origin.³ These flows exist because migrants and, to a greater or lesser degree depending on the specific context and history, their descendants maintain social relations in the regions or countries of origin. In the formal language of the United Nations, it is now commonly accepted that migrants of different types (diasporas, circular and return migrants) transfer knowledge, offer access to capital and information for companies, constitute markets that would otherwise not exist, and are a source of tourism (United Nations 2006; World Bank 2006; UNDP 2009).

While still embedded in transnational networks, migrants also establish their own social networks in the settlement countries. They create formal and informal ethnic, national or regional organizations to 'feel at home away from home' and to accommodate and facilitate the arrival and stay of newcomers in a foreign and largely unknown environment. The organizations usually aim at socializing in the countries of settlement, but members bring their transnational networks with them and these help establish linkages with areas of origin. In time, collectively contributing to development at home becomes an explicit goal of some of the organizations, which then commit themselves to small-scale development projects and programmes in education, health and infrastructure in the communities and regions of origin. Migrants

3 While the mainstream in the current discourse on the migration-development nexus stresses the positive impact of the diasporic flows, one should note that the concept of development remains often undefined and that more empirical evidence about the assumed positive effects is needed especially regarding sustainability aspects (van Naerssen/Spaan/Zoomers 2008: 8, 15-16).

might also collectively contribute through knowledge transfer (Meyer/Brown 1999), among other ways by temporary return of skilled people.

Individual migrants contribute to economic development through family remittances but they can also play an important role in social change by consciously or unconsciously breaking through traditional customs and taboos, for example, by promoting the emancipation of women and minority groups in countries of origin. Collectively, through their *transnational community organizations* (TCOs) migrants also strive to encourage political debates and democracy and to strengthen civil society through sustaining local organizations in the countries of origin.⁴ The direct role of TCOs in home politics is more problematic and contentious, as for example analysed by Ellis and Zafar Khan (2002) for the Kashmiri migrant and Oestergaard-Nielsen (2002) in the case of the homeland politics of Kurds in Germany. This role builds on a tradition (Sheffer 1986) and, in the case of TCOs involved in human rights advocacy at home, in Western Europe its roots go back to the Third World movement of the mid-1960's and 1970's.⁵ This tradition continues through the current interest in the role of TCOs in conflict interventions and peace initiatives (Nyberg-Sørensen/van Haer/Engberg-Pedersen 2002; University for Peace 2006)⁶.

National governments have discovered that they can use the development potential of their migrant (also former) citizens. Increasingly, home governments are capitalizing on migrant initiatives and multilateral organizations that widely propagate 'good practices' support them. As far as the economy is con-

cerned many developing countries now appreciate the role of TCOs. Previously, emigrants and their immediate descendants were looked upon as traitors but they are now considered as compatriots living abroad. There is thus a change in attitude in countries as diverse as Vietnam, the Philippines, India, Cape Verde and Kenya. International migration is regarded as a major instrument of national economic development, in which a combination of migration, remittances, brain-gain, government and organized migrant support might substantially contribute to economic growth in countries of the South. Interestingly, the concepts of nation and territory are increasingly becoming less intertwined, as expressed in the Philippine concept of the 'Global Nation' and the option of double citizenships in such countries as Argentina, Morocco and Turkey.

15.3 Identity Formation among Migrants from Indonesia in the Netherlands

In 2008, the population of the Netherlands was about 16.5 million persons. Of these, some 1.7 million were born abroad and 3.3 million were considered *allochtonen*; a term that comes close to but differs from words such as aliens, immigrants and foreigners. In the Netherlands it indicates that a person or one of his or her parents was born outside the country; there is no difference whether this person is a Dutch passport holder or not. Other Dutch are called *autochtonen*, which translates as indigenous or natives. The introduction of the notion of *allochtonen* in the debates on international migration issues in the Netherlands was originally to facilitate affirmative actions on behalf of migrants and to support the creation of a multicultural society. However, around 2000 with rising anti-immigrant and anti-Islamic sentiments within Dutch society, the expression *allochtonen* became a derogatory concept to many immigrants and their descendants. In their view, it implies that they are not fully recognized as Dutch citizens, since even if they possess Dutch nationality, as the majority of them do, they are considered different from 'real Dutch'.⁷

Migrants and their descendants from Indonesia constitute the largest group of the Dutch *allochtonen*. They entered the Netherlands shortly after the Second World War, during and after the Indonesian struggle for independence.⁸ Some 300,000 people with the status of 'European' in colonial Dutch East Indies, about half of whom were Indisch Dutch of

4 The expression 'transnational community organizations' (TCOs) is preferred to the notions of 'migrant' or 'diaspora' organizations because the organizations concerned do not, in general, encompass migrants only but their descendants and members of the native population such as spouses, friends and sympathizers. A diaspora normally concerns an entire ethnic group living abroad regardless of the length of stay in the country of settlement, which could be for centuries (Jewish and Armenian diasporas for example). TCOs comprise two or three generations and their members live, mentally as well as behaviourally, in two countries and are thus transnational although to varying degrees.

5 As the author can testify, since he was involved in activities of TCOs advocating and lobbying for human rights in various Southeast Asian countries from 1965-1995.

6 University for Peace, 2006: "Capacity Building for Peace and Development: Roles of Migrant", Final Report Expert Forum Migrant Conference 2006, 19-20 October (Toronto: University for Peace): Mimeo.

mixed ethnic origin⁹ and soldiers in service of the colonial army, many of them from the Moluccas, left Indonesia. Although for many of the Indisch Dutch it was the first time they had ever been to the Netherlands, in general they are considered as repatriates rather than refugees¹⁰ (Willems 2001: 332), since the latter usually have nationalities that differ from the people in the country of settlement. The Moluccans were soldiers in the Dutch army and came to the Netherlands on army orders.¹¹ They were opposed to the unitary Indonesian Republic and wanted to return to the Moluccas after the intended establishment of an independent *Republik Maluku Selatan* (RMS; South Moluccan Republic). Like other ethnic groups in the archipelago, interrelations, similarities and differences existed between the Indisch Dutch and the Moluccans, but as we will see, the variation in reception in the Netherlands accentuated and strengthened the differences.

The Indisch Dutch and their descendants currently number around 500,000. They consider themselves Dutch although with (traces of) a mixed, hybrid and transnational culture that came into existence near the end of the 19th century (Bosma 2005). Hence, there was a sense of Indisch Dutch ethnicity. Once they arrived in the Netherlands, they had no wish to return or were not able to do so because of the political and economic circumstances in Indonesia and the tense relations between the two countries up to the mid-1960's.¹² On the other hand, the Moluccan group

initially considered themselves as temporary guests in the Netherlands, as they expected to return to the Moluccas after the establishment of the South Moluccan Republic. However, this Republic never came about in an independent Indonesia and they had to stay in the Netherlands, where their current number is estimated at some 50,000 (Rinsampessy 2008: 16, 323).¹³ Including young children, both groups now consist of four or five generations. They have their own associations that substantially differ in activities and character. Immigrants do not constitute homogeneous groups and, particularly among the Indisch Dutch, many will not consider ethnicity as important to their identity in Dutch society. However, for the third generation of Moluccans, their ethnicity and the region of origin are still important.

15.3.1 The Indisch Dutch

Policymakers consider the integration of the Indisch Dutch in the Netherlands a successful case of assimilation and smooth absorption into the larger society. A quarter of a century after their arrival and contrary to the initial expectations, they were relatively easily absorbed in the Dutch labour market. On average, the Indisch Dutch were less skilled and educated than *autochthones* and the majority of them became lower skilled workers and employees in government services, the same positions they occupied in the former Dutch East Indies. The migrants' belief that there was 'no way back' facilitated assimilation. Vice versa, once the Dutch government realized that the deteriorating political relations between the Netherlands and Indonesia prevented return migration, "...politically as well as ideologically, tolerance and acceptance were stressed" (Willems 2001: 332). Knowledge of the Dutch language and the Christian background of most of the migrants were also favourable to the assimilation process.

The relatively quiet path followed by the integration process is the major reason why, in a report on ethnic minorities of the Ministry of Home Affairs in 1981, no mention was made of the Indisch Dutch (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken 1981). In other words, the report assumed that they had lost their specific *mestizo* culture and ethnic identity. However, there were efforts to preserve ethnic identity as demonstrated by the existence of Indisch Dutch organiza-

7 Based on personal communication. The author is member of the Global Society Foundation (SMS), a meeting point for refugee and migrant associations. SMS prefers the term *New Dutch* (www.sms-vluchtelingen.nl/english), which recently was adopted by the Minister for Integration in his "Integration Letter" to the Dutch Parliament (www.vrom.nl/). *NRC Handelsblad*, 7 November 2009: 1, headlined "Minister: *Integratie is voor een groot deel geslaagd*" ("Minister: Integration for a large part has succeeded"). Also see at: www.buitenlandsepartner.nl/forum for a discussion on the term.

8 In the 1960's, smaller groups consisted of Papuans, refugees from West Papua (*Irian Barat*) that became part of Indonesia, and Indonesian political refugees after the *coup d'état* of 1965.

9 The Indisch Dutch belongs to a larger group of immigrants, comprising also ethnic Dutch and Indonesians.

10 For an exception, see Ex (1966).

11 According to Smeets/Steijlen (2006: 64-68), the matter is more complex but here I follow the opinion of most of the Moluccans in the Netherlands.

12 But some 50,000 re-migrated to the United States; specifically to California and 7,000 went to Australia (Willems 2001: chap. 10 and 11).

13 Although Beets/Walhout/Koesoebjono (2002) estimated their number at 40,000 at the beginning of the 21st century.

tions, the popularity of the widely read periodical *Tong Tong* (in the Dutch East Indies this was a hanging wooden block beaten for announcements)¹⁴ and the activities of its vocal chief editor Jan Boon (1911–1974).¹⁵ In fact, many members of this model-assimilated group maintained major characteristics of their cultural background.

In the mid-1960's, Ex asked his Indisch Dutch respondents for their opinion of the native Dutch:

They're freer than we are in their relations with others. They are often tactless in what they say and sometimes downright rude. They lack courtesy, especially towards women, and their lack of respect for superiors is very noticeable. Whatever they are thinking and feeling, they are speaking it out loud, while we conceal it all; it's part of our Eastern mentality, I suppose (Ex 1966: 42).

This quote represented general opinion among the Indisch Dutch fairly. Moreover, as Dumasy, second-generation Indisch Dutch, born in 1948, recalled, "I learned from childhood to think in terms of 'us' and 'them'. Our Indo-European group was different from the Dutch group and again different from the Indonesian group" (2007: 58). This feeling was not only culturally related but was also an inheritance of the socio-economic position of Eurasians in the former Dutch East Indies, where they were considered inferior to the thoroughbred Dutch and superior to the native Indonesians. In the Netherlands, much of what was preserved of the Indisch Dutch culture remained inside the homes and concerned matters such as food, the importance of the grandparents and parents in family life, the way of receiving guests, and the belief in the supernatural. In due time these were mixed with typically Dutch customs, for example the celebration of St. Nicolas birthday (5 December) and the placing of a decorated conifer tree in the living room during the Christmas period. One can indeed say that the concept of a hybrid migrant or postcolonial culture also applied to the Indisch Dutch.

However, there were few public signs of the Indo culture. The most visible one was the yearly event *Pasar Malam Besar* (the Great Night Market) in The Hague that currently continues under the name *Tong*

Tong Fair. The *Pasar Malam Besar* started in 1959 and developed from a rather restricted ethnic event coloured by homesickness into a 10-day event with cultural shows of invited guests from Indonesia and other Southeast Asian countries and tens of thousands of visitors. Today many *autochthones* visit the market too, if only because of the food. It is a transnational and culturally hybrid phenomenon. The Indisch Dutch also claim to have introduced rock-and-roll to the Netherlands in the early 1960's by way of so-called 'Indo Rock' bands and they were or may still be over-represented in badminton clubs, an extremely popular sport among the Indisch Dutch.

In the 1960's, a shift in the geopolitical context occurred. After a bloody coup d'état in 1965, Sukarno, the first president of independent Indonesia, was removed and replaced by General Suharto in 1967, who established a military dictatorship with a friendly attitude towards Western countries – especially the United States. The first-generation Indisch Dutch applauded these developments, in particular because they regarded Sukarno as having been the major actor in driving their forced migration from Indonesia. The political relations between Indonesia and the Netherlands improved, strengthening economic as well as cultural links between the two countries. Because of these developments, many Indisch Dutch started to visit the country of their birth and found similarities as well as differences with the pre-war social and cultural situation. It is not a coincidence that at the same time, the hybrid Indisch Dutch culture gained a certain nostalgia to *Tempo Doeloe* (The Good Old Times) as expressed in songs, movies and TV series. The notion of *Tempo Doeloe* refers to the colonial period around 1870–1914 in the Dutch East Indies, when Dutch private capital entered the country to establish plantations (sugar, tea, coffee) and mines (tin, bauxite, petroleum), the Dutch established their colonial rule in the whole of the Dutch East Indies and everything looked so adventurous, exotic, peaceful and relaxed.¹⁶ However, sometimes the nostalgia embraced the entire pre-Second World War colonial period, which could be characterized as a post-colonial phenomenon, since its popularity also included many native Dutch with indirect or weak colonial ties. Thus,

14 In later years, the journal was re-named *Moesson* (Moonsoon).

15 Jan Boon wrote essays and short stories under the pseudonyms of Vincent Mahieu and Tjalie Robinson. A translation of short stories has been published under the title *Hunt to Heart* (Mahieu 1995). The Dutch scholar Wim Willems published an extensive biography of Jan Boon, titled *Tjalie Robinson: Biografie van een Indo-schrijver* (Biography of an Indo-Writer) (2008).

16 For Europeans of course. It should be noted that in 1908, at the end of the *Tempo Doeloe* period, the first native political society in the Dutch East Indies, *Budi Utomo* ('Pure Endeavour') was founded. Today, Indonesia commemorates 1908 as the birth year of nationalist awakening.

it is claimed as part of the colonial heritage of the entire Dutch society (van Leeuwen 2008: 125–137).

Another new development with an impact on identity formation concerned changes within Dutch society, which impacted the demands raised and the revival of Indo self-consciousness in the 1980's, after a quarter of a century of public silence. During these 25 years, substantial numbers of new migrants entered the Netherlands, in particular Surinamese from the former colony of Dutch Guyana (South America) and Moroccan and Turkish 'guest workers'. The latter groups came to the Netherlands as low-skilled migrant labour for factory work (textile, shipbuilding) during 1964–1974 and the intention was that they would stay temporarily. However, when the factory work shifted to low-income countries and many of the labour migrants became unemployed, they preferred to stay in the Netherlands. Return migration was low and this was precisely the reason why the Ministry of Home Affairs published the minorities report in 1981. The slogan was "integration with retention of culture" and the ethnic minorities as defined by the Ministry received special provisions to realize this aim (Obdeijn/Schrover 2008: 288–293; Slegers 2007: 9–16).

Many Indisch Dutch compared this policy with the one when they came to the Netherlands, which they perceived as forced assimilation. Thanks to the 'open society' that had developed in the Netherlands, grievances could now be voiced in public. Partly based on feelings of resentment, the first generation in particular demanded the payment of salary arrears of government employees and military due to Japanese occupation in Indonesia during the Second World War, and recognition of and compensation for suffering during the war. Among others, the intended visit of the Queen of the Netherlands to the Emperor of Japan led to an unexpected and strong reaction from the Indisch Dutch community, who recalled the traumatic events of the Japanese occupation. Since then, the Dutch state has changed its policy and supported various initiatives that made the Indisch Dutch more visible by proclaiming 15 August as Liberation Day (the day Japan surrendered) and the unveiling of an *Indisch Monument* in The Hague, commemorating the suffering in Indonesia under Japanese rule during the Second World War.

Nevertheless, this was not sufficient. A visit of the Japanese Prime Minister in July 1991 and a statement by the Dutch Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers that "it is all over" triggered new protests. The Dutch government then started discussions with a number of In-

disch Dutch organizations, which were encouraged to start a common platform for negotiations. It also started to fund historical studies and granted substantial financial support to the so-called *Indisch House*, which according to the stereotype of Indisch Dutch, went bankrupt within four years due to lack of management and financial skills. In 2001, the Dutch government initiated a foundation called *Het Gebaar* ('The Gesture') to grant financial compensations of some 175 million Euros to the first generation Indisch Dutch because of the "poor reception by the Dutch government in the 1950s". The foundation also manages some 125 projects and programmes¹⁷ (such as historical studies and a movie) initiated by members of the Indisch Dutch community.¹⁸

In the 1980's, a second generation of Indisch Dutch made itself visible. Alejandro Portes (1995), who studied 2nd generation *Latinos* in the USA, stated that, contrary to the first generation that has already found its identity, second-generation migrants have to create an identity for themselves. This is precisely what happened with the Indisch Dutch. The earlier quoted Dumasy (2007) expressed this as follows:

When I was about twelve years old, I felt I was confronted with an unavoidable dilemma and had to make a choice. I had to opt either for the Indo-European culture with the promise of better relations with my family or for the Dutch culture although it could mean estrangement and loss of identity (Dumasy 2007: 66).

Dumasy opted for Dutch culture but at a later age changed his mind and in an effort to confirm his Indisch Dutch identity, studied the history of the Dutch, the Indisch Dutch and Indonesia. Like many other second generation Indisch Dutch people, he visited Indonesia several times, staying with family members and travelling through the country.

In 1984, a group of second-generation Indisch Dutch held a large demonstration in Paradiso, the centre of youth culture in Amsterdam, to assert themselves as a group with its own culture. A year earlier, the then 30-year-old artist and novelist Marion Bloem, had published her *Not an Ordinary Indisch Girl* (1983) that became a bestseller. New Indisch Dutch organizations came into existence and along with supporting the claims of the first generation¹⁹ formulated their own political demands. In Paradiso, these were defined "in solidarity with other ethnic minority groups" (van Leeuwen 2008: 142).

¹⁷ The total budget was 17.5 million Euro.

¹⁸ See at: <www.gebaar.nl> for more information.

Another aspect of the second generation, stressed by de Vries (2009), concerns what she calls ‘mental decolonization’. In her view, the inferiority feelings of the first generation Indisch Dutch towards the ‘real Dutch’, a heritage of the colonial context wherein they had lived, transferred in part to the second generation. They had to liberate themselves from feelings of subordination and to develop a more assertive attitude in the country of settlement. According to her, this mental decolonization contributed to an increased self-awareness.

Today, the Indisch Dutch does not constitute a clear-cut community within Dutch society. Measured by indicators such as levels of education, employment and intermarriage, the Indisch Dutch are well integrated in Dutch society.²⁰ Nevertheless, it is striking how individual members of the third generation still cherishes an Indisch identity, denoted by certain qualities such as politeness, hospitality, conflict-avoiding behaviour, taking things easily and lack of initiative. Not all of these are perceived as positive, since functioning in Dutch society requires a more assertive attitude (de la Croix/Dumpel/van Naerssen/Portier 2006; de Vries 2009; Young/de Vries 2009).

The following quotes are from de la Croix/Dumpel/van Naerssen/Portier 2006 who interviewed 41 second- and third- generation Indisch Dutch.²¹ Robert, a third-generation male, answered the questions: “Does an *Indisch* identity exist and what is it based on” as follows.

Yes, if you mean with identity an ‘own’ culture, I am convinced that an Indisch identity exists. I notice that

when Indisch Dutch are sitting together they unerringly recognize each other because of a certain behaviour, appearance, and words. If such a feeling of solidarity exists then there is certainly a specific culture (de la Croix/Dumpel/van Naerssen/Portier 2006: 153).

Explaining a “typical Indisch lifestyle”, Ron says:

There exists, so to say, relaxed blood in Indisch Dutch, ‘lazy blood’ some people say.... Indisch Dutch don’t place themselves that easily in the forefront. They are quiet, calm, think twice before they decide to be involved into certain activities (de la Croix/Dumpel/van Naerssen/Portier 2006).

Due to widespread intermarriage of their parents, many third-generation Indisch Dutch do not distinguish themselves physically from native Dutch. For example, Elisa, born in 1985, says:

I don’t consider myself as very Indisch; I have no clear Indisch appearance such as my mother. I have a good relationship with my grandfather and grandmother who live in the house below ours. It is because of them that I feel Indisch.... I am fairly proud of this feeling, it is a part of me. Some people say that I possess a number of typical Indo characteristics (de la Croix/Dumpel/van Naerssen/Portier 2006: 159).

Significantly, de Vries titled her book on second- and third-generation Indisch Dutch *Indisch is een gevoel*, which translates as “Indisch is a Feeling” (de Vries 2009).

Some third-generation Indisch Dutch like to present themselves as Asian and organize Asian and ‘I love Indos’ parties together with new Asian migrant groups such as second-generation Filipinos. A third-generation organization, called *Darah Ketiga* (Third Blood) started in 2001, was blaming the second generation for not asserting their Indonesian roots (Molemans 2004: 120–136). There appears one important difference with the earlier, more demanding and politically involved, Indisch Dutch organizations. Indisch identity is limited to Indo culture or as *Darah Ketiga* states on its website, “We are an independent organization meant for the preservation of Indo culture and cultural development.”²² Another youth organization, called *Nasi Idjo* (‘Green Rice’, in other words young, not full-grown rice) established in 2003, aims at keeping the Indisch Dutch identity alive among the younger generation. It proclaims:

We, of the Indisch Dutch youth organization *Nasi Idjo*, are of the opinion that being Indisch Dutch has nothing to do with appearance. It doesn’t matter whether you are brown, white or black, or whether you wear jeans or

19 A typical example was the unveiling of a stone to commemorate the Second World War in the Dutch East Indies, in the hometown of the author of this chapter, Nijmegen, on 14 August 2007, more than 50 years after the war. It was an initiative of second-generation Indisch Dutch people involved in the Platform of Indisch Dutch Associations in Nijmegen.

20 This does not say that the differences in these fields are completely levelled out. Until now, systematic studies do not exist but it is the author’s clear impression that in higher education and political participation, the Indisch Dutch are still underrepresented.

21 The interviews were part of the book project initiated by the *Stichting Arisan Indonesia* (SARI; at: <www.stichtingsari.nl>). The Foundation is based in Gelderland province, where the interviews were carried out during the year 2004. The interviews were in-depth and with a few exceptions took place in the houses of the respondents. The authors of the book themselves are Indisch Dutch and the project received scientific backing from members of the Radboud University Nijmegen.

22 See at: <www.darahketiga.nl>.

a *sarong*.²³ No, being Indisch Dutch is about a feeling, a connection. Being Indisch Dutch is in your heart.²⁴

Although some will argue that only a small minority of the Indisch Dutch occupy themselves actively with this ‘optional ethnicity’ (de Vries 1999: 43),²⁵ it is striking that, up to now, the flow of publications and initiatives to keep the Indisch Dutch identity alive continues.²⁶ It is also surprising how many Indisch Dutch associations still exist at the national and local level. The database Postcolonial Migrant Organisations of the International Institute of Social History (IISG) comprises more than 300 Indisch Dutch organizations, with various aims (cultural, welfare, virtual meeting place), of which 58 started in the period 2000–2009.²⁷

With the normalization of relations between the Netherlands and Indonesia, remittances to Indonesia gradually surpassed the stage of family remittances and ethnic support to Indisch Dutch who had opted for Indonesian citizenship and lived in poverty in the country of origin. Transnationalism, in the sense of “...multiple ties and interactions linking people and institutions across the borders of the nation-states” (Vertovec 1999: 447), is not strong among the Indisch Dutch but many of their organizations initiate and support small-scale projects in Indonesia such as schools and clinics. The majority of these projects concern private initiatives. Some have the explicit aim of support to the country of origin; many more combine social or cultural activities in the Netherlands, with support to local projects in Indonesia. Disasters lead to social responses too. The tsunami in the beginning of 2004, showed an unexpected generous amount of donations for relief activities. More recently, an earthquake in the Javanese city and cultural centre of Yogyakarta in May 2006 resulted in sponta-

neous collections at the *Pasar Malam*, at locally organized dance parties and in (Indisch Dutch) homes for the elderly. These and other forms of altruistic collective behaviour have a welfare and symbolic value and keep the memory of the country of origin alive.²⁸ As Bosma remarks, “The postcolonial history of the Indisch Dutch is a fine example of the more it becomes clear that settlement in the Netherlands is for good, the more transnational ties are tightened” (Bosma 2009: 279).

15.3.2 The Moluccans

The case of the Moluccans in the Netherlands shows much stronger transnational ties. The ideal of a Moluccan republic, the *adat* (traditional law) and *pela* (kinship) connections have a strong impact in constituting the Moluccans as a social group with a specific ethnic identity. However, the cultural identity was reinforced by policies of the Dutch government, as spatially expressed by their housing. Upon arrival in the Netherlands, they were accommodated in special barracks or camps²⁹ all over the Netherlands and in later years in special designated neighbourhoods or streets. This policy is explained by the expectations of both the Moluccans and the Dutch government who, as we have seen earlier, during the first decades after arrival expected their stay in the Netherlands to be temporary. Nowadays most of the Moluccans live outside the special areas and among native Dutch, but the Moluccan neighbourhood still has a strong symbolic meaning (see for example Rinsampessy 2008).

The relation between the Dutch state and the Moluccans is substantially more contentious and complex than in the case of the Indisch Dutch. The major point of contention relates to the demands of the first-generation Moluccans that the Dutch government should support the claim of a free *South Moluccan Republic* (RMS). A government in exile, based in the Netherlands, cherishes the establishment of a free state, independent of the Republic of Indonesia, as an ideal. Politics are clearly decisive in the identity formation of the Moluccans in the Netherlands, although for successive generations, this ideal increasingly became and has become problematic. Among others,

23 Indonesian dress

24 See <www.nasi-idjo.nl>.

25 De Vries referred to a study of M.C. Waters (1990). Optional ethnicity is self-chosen it is not inescapable.

26 The extensive biography of Jan Boon, who played an important role for the 1st generation Indisch Dutch in the 1950's-60's, was published in 2008. In the same year, Hans van Wessel edited a book meant for secondary school teachers on Indisch Dutch history called ‘Indisch tracks’. In 2009, Dutch cinemas showed the first Indisch Dutch movie “Far from the Family”, a DVD titled “Indo Nu” (Indo Now) entered circulation, and Young and de Vries published a book on experiences of Indisch Dutch outside the Japanese camps. The Dutch government via the foundation, *Het Gebaar* (The Gesture) sponsored the movie, DVD and book.

27 See at: <www.iisg.nl/research/migrantorganisations>.

28 Guarnizo (2003) reminds us that along with contributing to development processes and keeping the homelands alive, motives such as obtaining status and recognition in the places of origin might also play a role.

29 Life in a barracks or camp is well pictured by Frans Lopalalan in his short novel, *The Barrack*.

Voutz and Rinsampessy (2008: 22–30) mention the increasing interaction with Dutch people, including intermarriage, the move from the barracks to urban neighbourhoods and the difficult position of second-generation Moluccans in the labour market.

Activist practices of the second generation were also of importance. In the 1970's, the feelings about a free South Moluccan Republic were still strong and dominant. Contrary to the Indisch Dutch, the coming to power of General Suharto was not perceived as a positive change because in April 1966, when he was already de facto leader of Indonesia, he ordered the execution of Chris Soumokil, the RMS leader of a guerrilla group on the island of Ceram. The Moluccans blamed the Dutch government for establishing good relations with Indonesia and not being supportive to their cause. The dramatic dilemmas facing the second generation were demonstrated when young radical Moluccans hijacked a train in 1975; two years later, they again hijacked a train and a school as well. The killing of the train driver and two passengers in 1975 and the military intervention in 1977 with eight deaths (two of them hostages) sent shock waves through both the Moluccan community and Dutch society. In 1978, a fourth armed action in the offices of the Province of Drenthe did not obtain the support of the Moluccan community and its leaders and by consequence, failed (Smeets/Steijlen 2006: 237–241).

The hijackings marked a turning point in the relationship between the Moluccans and the Dutch government. Sylvia, a second-generation Moluccan woman comments:

The government became conscious of the fact that the presence of Moluccans in the Netherlands was no more a temporary affair, for the Moluccans it meant that they could never count on the support of the Dutch government to realise the RMS ideal. For both parties it was a turning point, a turnover.... I personally decided to build my life in the Netherlands. It implies that I will fruitfully contribute to this society (Molemans 2004: 59–60).

The Dutch government took measures to encourage dialogue with the Moluccan groups in the Netherlands and in the Moluccas as well. The *Inspraakorgaan Welzijn Molukkers*, an official body to promote welfare among the Moluccans, started its activities after the first train hijacking (Smeets/Steijlen 2006: 242–243). There was an urgent need to devise a social policy for the Moluccans because the levels of unemployment and incomes were substantially worse compared with the Dutch, including the Indisch Dutch. Two years later, the government published a report on the problems among the Moluccans. Among other

measures, the Dutch government put efforts into training Moluccan social workers and funding 'orientation trips' to the Moluccas (Pollmann 1982). In fact, at the end of the 1970's, a process of integration into Dutch society, at that time defined by many as a multicultural society, was started (Voutz/Rinsampessy 2008; Smeets/Steijlen 2006: 281–329).

What does the integration process mean for third-generation Moluccans? A 31-year-old Moluccan woman with higher degrees in economy and communication management who works in Brussels says in her own words how she feels both Dutch and Moluccan:

I have long looked for my identity: the comparison with being Moluccan here in the Netherlands but also the feeling of being Moluccan with the family in the Moluccas. I have always had that bond but more when Moluccan family members visited us. Till 2006 I was never in the Moluccas.... In 2006 I went for the first time to the Moluccas, together with my grandparents and other family members.... Yes, in the Moluccas I had the feeling: 'Here I am really a Moluccan', while I am also Moluccan in the Netherlands. But here you have, so to say, to divide yourself in a Dutch and Moluccan part (Rinsampessy 2008: 315).

Although Moluccans are Dutch citizens in the formal sense of Dutch passport holders, the recognition that they are Moluccan Dutch is still not generally accepted. However, mixed marriages with native Dutch are increasingly common and the children feel more Dutch than the earlier generation. Verkuyten (1999) asked 20 young mixed origin Moluccans whether they felt Moluccan, Dutch or bicultural. Fourteen respondents defined themselves as both Moluccan and Dutch, and five answered that they considered themselves primarily Moluccan.

I don't think about whether I am Moluccan or not, I am, this is simply what I know. Am I Moluccan or Dutch? No, I am Moluccan. My friends usually call me a light half-breed. They consider me as Moluccan and not as Dutch (Verkuyten 1999: 99).

According to Verkuyten, the context determines which identity prevails but in general, these Dutch-Moluccans indicate that they do not belong to the Moluccans nor to the Dutch but that they are in-between (Verkuyten 1999: 100).

A powerful symbol of identification is the ideal of an independent Moluccan Republic that still exists, albeit less widespread among the third generation (Voutz/Rinsampessy 2008: 29; Smeets/Steijlen 2006: 340; van der Foort 2008). In September 2009, the new president of the Moluccan government in exile declared that the population of the Moluccas has to

decide in freedom about its future political structure and that both the government in exile and the Indonesian government have to commit themselves to the outcome of this referendum. In other words, the government in exile no longer has the creation of an independent South Moluccan Republic as its sole option.³⁰

The Moluccans in the Netherlands tend to organize according to villages of origin. Today, there are about 80 *kumpulans* in the Netherlands, meaning Moluccan groups from specific villages. Kinship relations are important in keeping up the links with Moluccan islands in East Indonesia and are often considered more important than religious bonds (most of the Moluccans are Christian but there is a Muslim minority). *Pela* refers to the relationship between two or more villages and traditional law forbids marriages between members of the villages. The *pela* is still important for understanding the Moluccans in the Netherlands, although the prohibition of marriages within the *pela* is less strict than before. The relation usually consists of mutual help. For the aim of this contribution, it is relevant to know that over the years, the Moluccans have supported their villages of origin as well as the villages by which they are linked through the *pela*.³¹ On a larger scale, an interesting, recent effort is the so-called ‘Hundred Villages Plan’ of the TCO TitanE that works together with the Moluccan TCO Women for Peace, the Moluccan History Museum and various other Moluccan organizations. The aim is to contribute to poverty alleviation and to the *Millennium Development Goals* (MDG) of the United Nations. The provision of clean water and good governance with 40 per cent participation by women are tools to reach the aims.³²

The Postcolonial Migrant Organisations’ database mentions some 450 Moluccan organizations. Of these 76 are classified as organizations with (primarily) “an orientation to the country of origin”, of which 22 were set up from 2000–2009.³³ Again, as in the case of the Indisch Dutch, but in the case of the Moluccans much stronger, transnational ties are alive and continue to be developed. Earlier in this chapter, we met second-generation Sylvia, who after the hijackings

of the 1970’s, decided to build a future in the Netherlands. She saw no prospect of an independent Moluccan Republic and decided to choose a ‘new route’:

Many of my family members live in the Moluccas. While I live in the Netherlands and lead a comfortable life, my family there has no easy life. If an independent RMS is not feasible, how can I support them? By looking around and observing that I live in a country of overabundance, in a country where you can obtain much knowledge. Money and knowledge are the best ways to help the people of the Moluccas (Molemans 2004: 60).

By consequence, via a *kumpulan*, she supports a potable water project in the village where her father was born.

In 1999–2001 (shortly after the Asian crisis and the fall of Suharto’s dictatorship), violent ethnic and religious conflicts occurred in the region of origin, during which at least 5,000 people died and 500,000 were displaced. Islamic groups attacked Christian villages and *vice versa*. Rumours blamed the Indonesian army for deliberately creating unrest and trying to abort the newly established Indonesian democracy of 1998.³⁴ The *kerusuhan*, as the riots in the Moluccas are called, led to the founding of a Union of *Kumpulans* (*Vereniging van Kumpulans*, VKN), since it was clear that the village-based organizations had to work together. The Moluccans in the Netherlands undertook various initiatives and demonstrations to express their solidarity, thereby stressing joint efforts by Christian and Muslim Moluccans. They pressured for peace, called for an end to the violence and approached politicians in the Netherlands and in Indonesia as well. A delegation of prominent members of the Moluccan Dutch community met political leaders in Indonesia twice.

The Moluccan TCOs also became involved in relief efforts. They held campaigns to collect money, at the national level by way of a national aid campaign supported by two Dutch mayors and the Dutch Red Cross, as well as through numerous local activities. The national campaign raised around 2.75 million Euros. Over time, the emergency assistance developed into development-oriented small-scale projects. The interethnic conflict of 1999–2002 in Indonesia has reinforced the ethnic identity of the Moluccan com-

30 *Eigen Molukse Republiek niet langer heilig* (Independent Moluccan Republic no longer sacred), in: *Nederlands Dagblad*, 17 October 2009: 1, 3.

31 See for example: <www.tuhaha.nl> and <www.tulehu.nl>.

32 See for example: <www.titane.org> and personal communication.

33 See for example: <www.iisg.nl/research/migrantorganisations>.

34 General Suharto was president of Indonesia from 1967 to 1998. The so-called ‘New Order’ was a military dictatorship that ended after the Asian crisis of 1997 and domestic unrest in 1997–98. Since then, a delicate balance exists between political parties, the elected president and the army.

munity in the Netherlands and strengthened transnational ties with an impact on the identity formation of the third generation (Steijlen 2004; Smeets/Steijlen 2006: 340–356). Many members of this generation seem preoccupied with their Moluccan identity and emphasize Moluccan values and use of the Malay language (Voutz/Rinsampessy 2008: 28, 31; Verkuyten/van de Calseijde/de Leur 1999).

15.4 Conclusion

The two migrant groups cited and their descendants from Indonesia show remarkable differences in their patterns of integration in the Netherlands, their agencies, their shift in identities over the generations, and their transnational relations. The cases demonstrate how relations between migrant groups and their regions and countries of origin could be controversial, maintained for decades and intergenerational. They show the mutual impact of the agencies of migrants and their descendants and multi-local policies, the latter in the sense of socio-political changes, events and trends in both the country of settlement and the country of origin and bilateral international policies as well. This interaction shapes and transforms identities over the three generations. The involvement in diasporic flows between the country of settlement and the country of origin, in particular in the sphere of social remittances, and, in the case of the Moluccans, ambivalent feelings of belonging towards the country of settlement all belong to this identity. Our contribution shows how state interventions can reconcile contentions between ethnic identities and Dutch citizenship. In particular, this occurs by mobilizing Dutch state institutions and funding agencies to support TCOs, among others for development in the region of origin.

In the old model of international migration, over the years the ties and interactions between people and institutions across the nation states fade away. However, globalization and new means of communication imply the start of new forms and meanings of transnationalism among the next generations. Significantly, among both the Indisch Dutch and the Moluccans, an increase is discerned in the number of organizations with a transnational orientation. For the period 1945–1989, the database of the International Institute of Social History classifies 1.5 per cent of the Indisch Dutch organizations and 9.3 per cent of the Moluccan ones as transnational, while for the period 1990–2007, the percentages are respectively 4.1 and 29.1.³⁵ It is diffi-

cult to predict the direction of the new forms of transnationalism. Much depends on the further development of means of transportation and communication techniques. Moreover, as argued, it depends on socio-political developments in both the country of origin and the country of settlement. In the contemporary Dutch context of strong resistance to both immigration and the idea of a multicultural society, it could well be that, as a response, second- and subsequent-generation descendants of immigrants will preserve more of their ethnic identity and cultural heritage than one would currently expect.

Would this affect their citizenship? This question is more relevant to the Moluccans than to the Indisch Dutch. The latter already possessed formal Dutch citizenship or easily obtained a Dutch passport upon arrival in the Netherlands. Transnational practices definitely still exist but compared to the Moluccans they are much weaker. The Moluccans were stateless until they could obtain Dutch passports in 1976 (Act relating to the Position of the Moluccans). As demonstrated, for decades, the relationship with the Dutch government was contentious. Transnational relations are still strong and cover a diversity of practices: family and social remittances, knowledge transfer, tourism and political activism. This relates to the specific identity of the Moluccan Dutch, who feel Moluccan and Dutch but for whom explicitly expressing the latter side of their identity is still a taboo. According to Voutz and Rinsampessy (2008: 16), the Dutch side of their identity will *preferably*, not be mentioned in public. Young Moluccans do not consider themselves foreigners in the Netherlands but they do not feel Dutch either (Smeets/Steijlen 2006: 353–358; Verkuyten 1999). In this sense, their citizenship continues to be ambivalent.

35 See: <www.iisg.nl/research/migrantorganisations>.