

**Across the Pond:
A Comparative Look at the Indonesian Diasporas of the United States and Netherlands**

By: Marco Abisha Samosir - s1075635

**Supervised By: Dr. Paul Puschmann
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Ever since its independence from the Netherlands in 1945, Indonesia has left behind a complicated history. From a tumultuous decade spent consolidating an Indonesian identity to a violent 1960s that led to a brutal 30 year long dictatorship which would eventually be overthrown in another violent eruption in 1998. While comparatively shorter than most European nations, it has started to become an interest for a number of scholars worldwide. A specific topic that has become an interest for a number of scholars around the world is the topic of Indonesian diasporas.

While previously left behind in the annals of history, more scholars have turned towards the impact that post-colonialism has had on Indonesians within the country and ones who have left for a more suitable destination country. This research paper will take a look at these individuals who have left, and come to a better understanding of their stories that they have left behind.

More and more works have covered the history of specific Indonesian diaspora groups throughout the world. One of the most studied groups of Indonesian diasporas are the former KNIL soldiers of Maluku. These Moluccans have become a key figure in the discussions of post-revolutionary war Indonesia. Indonesian scholars have provided a number of works that detail the general history of the KNIL soldiers and their experiences early on in the migration process, such as with Abdul Haris Fatgehipon article on the exodus from Indonesia.¹ While other scholars chose a more specific part of this history, Indira Ismail's article is a good example of this as he covers the organization of Moluccans within the Netherlands and the camps that they were set in.² The Netherlands would also contribute works in the history of Moluccans, a great example is the book *Post-colonial Immigrants and Identity Formations in the Netherlands*. Articles contained in this book would dive deeper into the topic of Moluccans in the Netherlands. Ulbe Bosma's article on the creation of a Moluccan identity in the 1950-60s details the development in the relationship between Moluccans, the Dutch government and the wider Dutch society.

¹ Abdul Haris Fatgehipon, "The Exodus of KNIL Soldiers from Maluku to the Netherlands in 1950s," *TAWARIKH: Journal of Historical Studies* 12, no. 2 (April 2021).

² Ismail Indira, "Postcolonial Immigrants: The Moluccan Diaspora in the Netherlands," *International Review of Humanities Studies* 8, no.2, (July 2013).

The aforementioned groups do discuss a variety of other diaspora groups within the Netherlands from other colonies such as Suriname, but they do shine light on another group of Indonesian diasporas; Indos. European-Indonesians, or Indos as they are more commonly referred to as, have also become a topic of discussion by multiple scholars. The book would dive deeper into the history of Dutch Indos, including the effect the 1950s had on the migration patterns of Indos and the formation of identity within the Netherlands. Some researchers have started to look at specific subgroups of Indos, including American Indos³. These are typically Dutch Indos who have gone to move to the United States as a result of the discrimination that they felt in the Netherlands.

One group that has gained increased interest in Indonesia are the *eksil*, or exiles that were banished from the country as a result of the 1965 30th September Movement. These exiles originated from a particularly violent period of Indonesia's history, and has attracted a lot of attention from scholars around the world. Wahyudi Akmaliah's article on these people chronicles the start of their lives as exiles.⁴ David T. Hill has published articles that covered their experiences in foreign countries such as the USSR and the Netherlands. This interest would go beyond academic circles, as in 2023 a documentary regarding the exiled would release and garner widespread attention in Indonesia. That is to say that this specific group has become a trending topic in both academic and non-academic circles in Indonesia.

Other scholars have also picked up interest in specific migrant groups from Indonesia, but these groups have unfortunately not garnered as much attention as the previously mentioned three. These include groups such as Chinese-Indonesians in the United States, which have become a topic of interest for a number of researchers such as Gregory S. Urban, but a lack of previous interest means that there is unfortunately a lack of information surrounding these people. Other more specific areas of research have included the development of Indonesian/Malay speech of diaspora groups such as the Southwest Moluccans in the Netherlands and the return migration of

³ Azlan Tajuddin and Jamie Stern, "From Brown Dutchmen to Indo-Americans: Changing Identity of the Dutch-Indonesian (Indo) Diaspora in America," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 28 (2015).

⁴ Wahyudi Akmaliah, "The Imagined Indonesia: The 1965-1966 Tragedy and the Emergency of Indonesian Exiles," *Jurnal Masyarakat & Budaya* 17, no.1 (2015).

Indonesian diasporas. However, these are more piecemeal articles rather than a general trend into those specific parts of migrant research.

That is to say that there is an increase in interest in the topic of Indonesian diaspora in the twenty-first century, both from domestic scholars and international scholars looking into the country. This paper will look to contribute to the discussion regarding Indonesian diasporas. A particular focus will be held on the acculturation debate, and regarding how Indonesian diaspora groups have reacted to the acculturation process in both countries.

The debate surrounding the model of acculturation is going to be an important part of this paper. Acculturation is described as the process of “culture change that results from continuous, first-hand contact between two distinct cultural groups.”⁵ In the context of migration, acculturation can be best seen as the way migrants have changed as a result of continuous cultural contact with the culture of the host nation. It has been the subject of a number of published works by various researchers throughout the years. One of the most important works in the debate is Berry’s 1992 paper where he presents an acculturation model. In this model

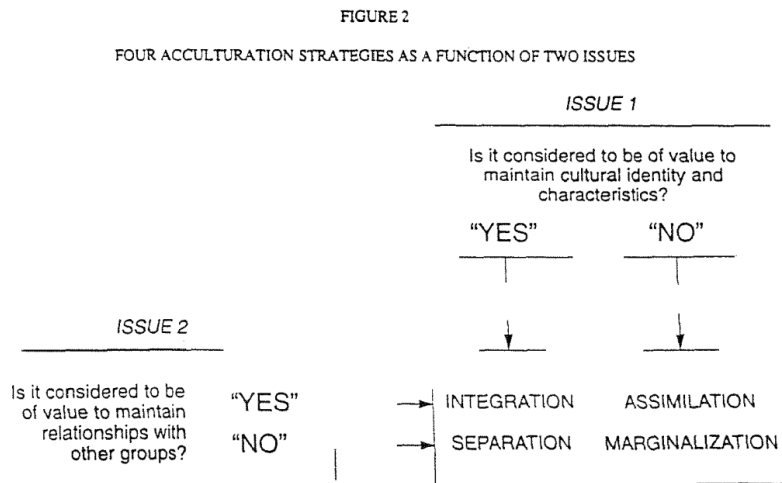


Figure 1: Berry’s Model of Acculturation⁶

⁵ J.W. Berry, “Acculturation and Adaptation in a New Society,” *International Migration* 30 (1992): 69.

⁶ Berry, “Acculturation and Adaptation,” 82.

Berry categorizes the process of acculturation into 4 distinct categories depending on two questions; if the individual considers it valuable to maintain their original cultural identity and characteristics and if the individual considers it valuable to maintain relationships with other groups. Assimilation as a category happens when the individual accepts the cultural identity of the host country while they reject their own cultural identity. Separation occurs when the individual instead rejects the host culture and keeps within their own culture. Marginalization is described as the most isolated category as they reject both their original cultural identity and the hosts, while integration materializes when the individual is able to both maintain their original cultural identity and accept the culture of the host nation.

This model of acculturation has become a topic of debate by numerous researchers ever since it was published in 1992. A number of researchers have used this model to great effect while others have criticized it and offered rethinks or changes in the model. The bi-dimensional nature of the model lends itself to criticisms regarding its ‘oversimplified’ structure.⁷ Other criticisms include the over-generalization that the model uses to conceptualize the four categories. This is because the use of yes or no questions results in the categorization of possibly very different cases into only 2 distinct categories.⁸ Other researchers have developed this model further with the use of new factors, such as the use of different marriage patterns to determine the acculturation models. Puschmann et al. utilizes different marriage patterns to fit family units within the four categories as defined by Berry.

This research paper will be a comparison between the acculturation process of the Netherlands and the United States. By using Indonesian diasporas as a point of comparison, we could come to a better understanding on how different acculturation processes have affected the lives of migrants who had come from the same origin point. The paper will also look between the periods of 1950 to 1970 as those represented the most important decades in diaspora research for the early part of Indonesian history. In essence, what are the differences and similarities between the Indonesian diaspora community in the Netherlands and the United States between the period of

⁷ F.W. Rudmin, “Critical History of the Acculturation Psychology of Assimilation, Separation, Integration, and Marginalization,” *Review of General Psychology* 7, no. 1 (2003).

⁸ Seth J. Schwartz, Jennifer B. Unger, Byron L. Zamboanga, and José Szapocznik, “Rethinking the Concept of Acculturation: Implications for Theory and Research,” *American Psychologist* 65, no. 4 (2010).

1950 to 1970? To this end the paper will look at two different sub-sections; the experiences of Indonesian diasporas in the Netherlands and the United States and the marriage pattern of Indonesian diasporas. To achieve this the paper will primarily be looking at secondary sources that have covered these topics. Looking into how they have described the experiences of Indonesian diasporas throughout the world, and assessing how that fits into the wider acculturation debate.

An Exploration of the Various Indonesian Diaspora Groups

As previously discussed in the introduction, the first chapter will focus on the lives of the Indonesian diaspora in the Netherlands and the United States through a qualitative lens. What must be pointed out is the diverse experiences that Indonesian diasporas go through within the new environment that they find themselves in. For one, the United States and the Netherlands could be observed to have different acculturation models, which would have affected the way the Indonesian diaspora could have interacted with their host country. Secondly, Indonesia as a country is made up of over 1300 ethnic groups, each with their own distinct historical context, cultural practices and beliefs. In essence, there are a wide variety of different experiences that Indonesian diasporas have gone through and this chapter will be a study of these different experiences.

This chapter will be a further exploration into qualitative sources on Indonesian diasporas in the Netherlands and the United States of America to uncover the various experiences felt by these people in their host country. It will look at a variety of sources including first hand accounts and secondary sources that have been written about these diasporas. It is important to remain within the scope of this research, and as such the analysis of these experiences will follow a sort of conceptual framework. The conceptual framework will consist of three questions that it would 'ask' the stories. The conceptual framework is as follows:

- (I) What motivated the group to move away from Indonesia and into the new host nation?
- (II) How did the group interact with the society and community of the host nation?
- (III) Has the diaspora community maintained ties with Indonesia, if so how? And, if not why?

The ultimate objective with the conceptual framework is to understand these stories through the context of acculturation. How did these people go through the process of acculturation, and did it ultimately succeed or fail. This chapter will look into a number of groups that have been identified as important for the purpose of this paper; ex-KNIL soldiers who have settled in the Netherlands, Indonesian exiles post-1965, Chinese-Indonesians and America/Dutch Indos. These groups have been selected as their stories represent an important part of Indonesian history, or can be identified as a wave of migration and not piecemeal movements.

KNIL Soldiers and Eastern Indonesians in the Netherlands

While emigration out of Indonesia has been identified as a continuous movement during the colonial era, the first mass wave of emigrants out of the country could be identified as former KNIL soldiers who were looking to leave the country. Indonesia shares a particularly complicated and bloody history with the KNIL, or the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army. As the primary fighting force for the Dutch government in the East Indies, it would become the primary ‘enemy’ for ethnic groups throughout the colonial period. This would eventually continue into the *bersiap* era and into the revolution as Indonesian freedom fighters would engage in violent fights with the Dutch and the KNIL. To attempt to fight off revolutionary fighters, the Dutch would attempt to bolster the fighting force in the archipelago by hiring from the east, particularly from the population of Moluccans and Ambonese.⁹ Although many of them joined as they were looking for a well paying job, this would be seen as a treacherous move by the Indonesian revolutionaries.¹⁰ Associating Moluccans and Ambonese with charged terms such as ‘*andjing NICA*’, literally dog of the Netherlands Indies Civil Administration, and primarily as colonial sympathizers.¹¹ The use of particularly violent tactics would not help with this stereotype, as KNIL soldiers were noted to have been particularly fierce in engagements, and were also disproportionately used in high violence activities by their Dutch superiors such as interrogations of Indonesian revolutionaries.¹² There are a number of explanations as to why the Moluccans were so passionate in their service for the KNIL. One could attribute this as revenge

⁹ Gert Oostindie and Fridus Steijlen, “Ethnic ‘Ferociousness’ in Colonial Wars: Moluccans in the Dutch Army in Indonesia, 1945–1949,” *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde* 177, no. 4 (2021): 496.

¹⁰ Oostindie and Steijlen, “Ethnic ‘Ferociousness,’” 496.

¹¹ Oostindie and Steijlen, “Ethnic ‘Ferociousness,’” 496.

¹² Oostindie and Steijlen, “Ethnic ‘Ferociousness,’” 497.

for violence against Moluccans perpetrated during the *bersiap* era.¹³ Oostindie and Steijlen have also proposed the idea that these people were fighting for their lives, as the idea of defeat could very well end their way of life.¹⁴ In general, this shows a deep disconnection between the Moluccans who were fighting for the KNIL, thus aligning themselves to the colonial identity, and the revolutionaries, who were aligned to the ‘Indonesian’ identity.

Towards the end of hostilities, it had become apparent that the war was turning to the side of the Indonesian revolutionaries. As a result, a number of topics were being discussed between the leaders in regards to a number of issues, important for this research is the demobilization of KNIL fighters. While a great number of KNIL fighters would end up turning over to the side of the revolutionaries, there was still a significant population that were at odds with the new Indonesian state.¹⁵ Particularly as a result of the newly formed *Republik Maluku Selatan*, or RMS for short. Formed in the waning days of the war, the republic was an attempt to form a separatist state in the islands of Maluku. Even though largely unsuccessful as the newly formed Indonesian government gained control of the islands fairly quickly, they continued the fight into guerilla warfare. The Indonesian government was primarily worried that the immobilized KNIL soldiers upon return to Maluku would only join the RMS against the Indonesian government. To prevent this a decision was made to discuss with the Dutch government regarding the KNIL soldiers.¹⁶

Ultimately, the decision was made for the Dutch government to transport these soldiers into the Netherlands.¹⁷ The Dutch would envision a temporary scheme, in which they would house these former soldiers and their families in former concentration camps and after time the situation with the RMS would settle down and they would be able to return to their home in Maluku. Unfortunately, this plan would end up faltering. The Indonesian government would continue to consolidate their power throughout the archipelago, meaning that the Dutch weren’t able to secure a return to Maluku for the former soldiers. They would find the first couple of years in the Netherlands to be difficult. For one, the cold Dutch climate was notably different to the warmer

¹³ Oostindie and Steijlen, “Ethnic ‘Ferociousness,’” 496.

¹⁴ Oostindie and Steijlen, “Ethnic ‘Ferociousness,’” 497.

¹⁵ Indira, “Postcolonial Immigrants,” 503.

¹⁶ Indira, “Postcolonial Immigrants,” 503.

¹⁷ Oostindie and Steijlen, “Ethnic ‘Ferociousness,’” 498.

climate of Maluku which was much closer to the equator. Their temporary housing situation also meant that they were generally isolated from the rest of the Netherlands. The Dutch government was also noted to have been particularly unwilling to accept the Moluccan former soldiers as they were seen more as colonial subjects than they were Dutch citizens.¹⁸ They were deemed as ‘unfit’ for Dutch society, and as a result a degree of separation was maintained between the Dutch citizen, and the Moluccan. In this regard, this degree of separation was similarly maintained by the Moluccans. Under the belief of a return, there was a large focus throughout the community towards maintaining their own culture and on the mainland.¹⁹ An example of this is the setting up of ‘Ambon evenings’ in multiple camps throughout the country, where they could celebrate their own music within the community.²⁰ Another example was the continuation of the traditional marriage structures of the Moluccan people.²¹ Dismissal from the KNIL also meant that the soldiers and their families would find themselves with a lack of income.²² Initially, they were able to survive on an allowance from the Dutch government, although this would stop after the initial six years.²³ As a result, these soldiers would find themselves reliant on seasonal unskilled labor to make ends meet, with some eventually resorting to stealing from local Dutch farmers for survival.²⁴

The separation between Dutch society and Moluccan society alongside the desire to go back to their homeland would ultimately erupt into violence throughout the country in the late 1960s and early 1970s.²⁵ Second generation Moluccans would utilize violence to shift both Dutch and international interests towards Indonesia and the RMS. Moluccan nationalists would attack the Indonesian embassy multiple times, such as an arson attack in 1966, and initiated a number of hostage crises, such as multiple train hijackings in the 1970s and a primary school in 1977, in the

¹⁸ Guno Jones, “Dutch Politicians, the Dutch Nation and the Dynamics of Post-Colonial Citizenship,” in *Post-Colonial Immigrants and Identity Formations in the Netherlands*, ed. Ulbe Bosma (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012), 32..

¹⁹ Rein Spoorman, “Tradition and Creative Inspiration: Musical Encounters of the Moluccan Communities in the Netherlands,” in *Recollecting Resonances: Indonesian-Dutch Musical Encounters*, ed. Bart Barendregt and Els Bogaerts (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 285

²⁰ Spoorman, “Tradition and Creative Inspiration,” 285.

²¹ Fatgehipon, “Exodus of KNIL Soldiers,” 199.

²² Indira, “Postcolonial Immigrants,” 507.

²³ Indira, “Postcolonial Immigrants,” 507.

²⁴ Indira, “Postcolonial Immigrants,” 507.

²⁵ Oostindie and Steijlen, “Ethnic ‘Ferociousness,’” 498.

name of RMS separatism.²⁶ But this would yield little to no results as both the Dutch and Indonesian governments refused to acknowledge the separatist state.

But even during this time period, the tide was turning and there was an observable normalization of the relationship between the Dutch and Moluccans. Generally speaking, this was an observable change that impacted Dutch-Indies people as a whole. This included cultural groups such as mixed Eurasians, known as Indos, and Moluccans to name a few. The Dutch government enacted programs meant to assimilate and socialize these groups into Dutch society.²⁷ Another key movement of this time period was the growth of the Indo-Rock genre. Spearheaded by musicians such as the bands Dragonfly, The Blue Diamonds and the Tielman Brothers between the late 1950s and 1970s, Moluccan musicians would find themselves as celebrities within Moluccan communities, and this would soon extend into the general Dutch mainstream. Eventually, Moluccan musicians would find themselves playing in venues outside of the camps, and young Moluccans following these musicians would start to regularly encounter Dutch youth, eventually leading to an increase in mixed marriages around this time period.²⁸ The former KNIL soldiers would also start to see appraisals by their fellow Dutch veterans during this period. The violent actions that the second generation committed in the 1960s and 70s would lead to a change of heart in the way KNIL soldiers were perceived, in a way there was a revival in the concept of the Moluccan as a ‘martial race’.²⁹ More and more Dutch soldiers would put in testimonials regarding their Moluccan brothers, describing them as loyal and using words like ‘brave’ to describe these soldiers.³⁰

Coming back into the conceptual framework, we can identify how the Moluccans interacted with the very start of the acculturation process. They arrived into the Netherlands as rather unwilling migrants, being displaced by an agreement between the Dutch and Indonesian governments. They were also displaced with the promise of returning home to their homeland under rule of the RMS government, this would eventually lead to a degree of separation maintained by both the

²⁶ Oostindie and Steijlen, “Ethnic ‘Ferociousness,’” 498.

²⁷ Pamela Pattynama, “Cultural memory and Indo-Dutch identity formations,” in *Post-Colonial Immigrants and Identity Formations in the Netherlands*, ed. Ulbe Bosma (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012), 183.

²⁸ Spoorman, “Tradition and Creative Inspiration,” 288.

²⁹ Oostindie and Steijlen, “Ethnic ‘Ferociousness,’” 498.

³⁰ Oostindie and Steijlen, “Ethnic ‘Ferociousness,’” 503.

Dutch government, which saw the arriving Moluccans as unfit for Dutch society, and the Moluccan community itself, who chose to focus on their own community. As a result, there was a lack of interaction between the Moluccans and the new host community, but this would soon change. These initial interactions were primarily violent ones, such as in hostage situations throughout the country. But towards the end of the 1970s, the Dutch government would start enacting an acculturation process towards migrants who had come from Indonesia in general, including the Moluccans. From then on, we can start to see the Moluccan community reciprocate this attempt. Dutch and Moluccan youth would start interacting with one another, and veterans of the revolutionary war would start looking at each other in a more positive light.

Dutch-Indos and Colonial Identities

There are another group of migrants that moved out of the country as a result of the revolutionary war, and those are the mixed ethnic Dutch-Indonesian population, or more commonly referred to as the Indos. Similar to the case of the Moluccan KNIL soldiers, the end of the war would prove to be a tumultuous time for the Indos. As the Indonesian government would seek to unify the people under an 'Indonesian' identity, and the Indo minority were expected to follow suit.³¹ They were given the choice of 'repatriating' as Dutch or embracing their 'Indonesianess' by identifying more with their Indonesian identity.³² This became the first wave of Indo migration, as affluent Indos who had the resources to leave the country would take the opportunity to throw away their Indonesian identity and accept full Dutch citizenship.³³ Other Indos chose to stay in Indonesia mainly due to two reasons; (i) the inability to move to the Netherlands owing to a lack of resources to complete the move, and (ii) their alignment to the Indonesian revolution and the Indonesian identity, which can be seen in popular Indonesian figures like politician Ernest Douwes Dekker and soldier Pierre Tendean.³⁴ The majority however stayed as a result of their inability to move, but racial tensions in the following years would eventually force them to move away from the country anyway. This would affect a number of other cultural groups, such as the Chinese-Indonesians, as the country would become even more hostile to minority groups in the 1950s.³⁵ This can be identified as the second wave of Indo

³¹ Tajuddin and Stern, "Brown Dutchmen to Indo-Americans," 357.

³² Tajuddin and Stern, "Brown Dutchmen to Indo-Americans," 357.

³³ Tajuddin and Stern, "Brown Dutchmen to Indo-Americans," 357.

³⁴ Tajuddin and Stern, "Brown Dutchmen to Indo-Americans," 358.

³⁵ Tajuddin and Stern, "Brown Dutchmen to Indo-Americans," 358.

migration. Indos who had initially chosen to stay but had no other choice except to leave Indonesia in the face of increasing discrimination.

Generally, life as an Indo would be very different in the Netherlands depending on the social context of their departure from Indonesia. Much like Moluccans, Indos were primarily thought of as unfit for Dutch society.³⁶ Thus an important part of the early migratory wave was the hiding of their ‘Indonesianess’. During this period, the Dutch government was actively screening migrants who wanted to move from Indonesia to the Netherlands, and it was made clear that really only ‘pure’ European settlers were granted access to the country by the Dutch government.³⁷ Thus the first wave primarily consisted of rich migrants that were able to assume a Dutch-European identity and successfully hid, or even left behind, their Indonesian identity.³⁸ In this sense, they were largely able to escape discrimination as they primarily positioned themselves as Dutch-European, instead of Indo-Dutch. The second wave was, in this sense, not as lucky as the first wave of migrants. Their arrival to the Netherlands would be met with hardships not too dissimilar to the ones experienced by Moluccans. They were now in a foreign land completely different to the warm climate that they came from. Additionally, they also found themselves at odds with the Dutch people owing to their identity as Indos, or “Brown Dutchmen”.³⁹ Causing widespread discrimination towards these recent migrants.

Although, there were noticeable differences between the two groups. The first difference was in the legal distinctions of each group. Most Indos fell under Dutch citizenship, as opposed to Moluccans who were categorized as Dutch subjects.⁴⁰ This generally meant that they weren’t as excluded as the Moluccan people. Additionally, Indos weren’t coming into the Netherlands under the pretense of a temporary migration, even though the Dutch government were actively seeking for a new ‘fatherland’ to house the Indo population.⁴¹ But the primary difference between the two groups was that the Dutch government would work quicker to integrate these people into the wider Dutch society. Their emotional ties to the Netherlands, as a result of the political situation

³⁶ Jones, “Dutch Politicians,” 32.

³⁷ Jones, “Dutch Politicians,” 36.

³⁸ Tajuddin and Stern, “Brown Dutchmen to Indo-Americans,” 357.

³⁹ Tajuddin and Stern, “Brown Dutchmen to Indo-Americans,” 358.

⁴⁰ Jones, “Dutch Politicians,” 36.

⁴¹ Jones, “Dutch Politicians,” 36.

that forced them to leave Indonesia in the first place, and their legal status as Dutch citizens meant that they still had political strength in the Netherlands.⁴² This led the Dutch government to form a commission to evaluate the possibilities of assimilating the Indos.⁴³ The commission would end up passing along a judgment that it would be highly likely that these Indos would be able to assimilate into European culture as they were at the end of the day ‘European’ in values and outlook.⁴⁴ Another important factor was the worsening situation in West Papua, which had triggered another big migratory wave of Indo towards the Netherlands. It was amongst the chaos of the population transfer that the narrative of national unity started to appear in the Dutch mainstream.⁴⁵ It is as a result of this larger narrative that the Dutch public started gaining sympathy for the Indos, and thus started the process of assimilation.

The assimilation process for the Indos would start relatively slowly. While the Dutch government seemingly no longer saw a fundamental biological difference with the Indos, there was still a societal gap that could be felt between the Dutch-Europeans and the Dutch-Indonesians.⁴⁶ But soon that gap would shrink as the process of assimilation would continue, and more and more Indos were forced to adopt Dutch cultural beliefs and traditions in place of their own beliefs.⁴⁷ But there were Indos that fought to center their own Indonesian identity in the Indo discourse. Writer Tjalie Robinson was one such figure who fought for the acceptance of Indo identity in wider Dutch society, while simultaneously maintaining a degree of separation between the two.⁴⁸ Among his achievements was the *Pasar Malam Besar* and the *Tong Tong* journal, both spaces where Indos were able to practice and engage in discourse regarding their Indo identities. This discourse surrounding the assimilation process would continue towards the 1970s, in which there was another noticeable change. But it would be beneficial to now discuss another sub-category of Indos, ones who have moved away from the Netherlands.

⁴² Pattynama, “Indo-Dutch identity formations,” 183.

⁴³ Andrew Goss, “From Tong-Tong to Tempo Doeloe: Eurasian Memory Work and the Bracketing of Dutch Colonial History, 1957-1961,” *Indonesia*, no. 70 (2000): 17.

⁴⁴ Goss, “Tong-Tong to Tempo Doeloe,” 17.

⁴⁵ Goss, “Tong-Tong to Tempo Doeloe,” 19.

⁴⁶ Jones, “Dutch Politicians,” 38.

⁴⁷ Goss, “Tong-Tong to Tempo Doeloe,” 22.

⁴⁸ Gert Oostindie, “The Individualization of Identity,” in *Postcolonial Netherlands: Sixty-Five Years of Forgetting, Commemorating, Silencing* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011), 107.

In the face of widespread discrimination shown towards them, a large number of Indos chose to move away from the Netherlands. While some would seek a new home in countries such as Australia, a majority of them saw the United States, and especially Southern California, as an ideal destination.⁴⁹ Around 60,000 Dutch Indos would make their way into the United States between 1960 and 1965, with the majority of them settled in by Christian charitable organizations.⁵⁰ This however meant that they were generally spread around, and that there was not really a Indo community in the United States as a result of their relative isolation with one another, although soon after a number of Indos would congregate in Southern California owing to the improved employment opportunities there.⁵¹ There are identifiable similarities and differences that we can draw between the experiences of Dutch Indos and American Indos during this time period. Similar to the experiences in the Netherlands, ethnic/racial identity would play a significant part in the way they were perceived. White passing Indos typically found themselves assimilating much easier, as their ‘whiteness’ granted them a greater degree of acceptability by the majority white Americans.⁵² This is similar to the Indos, particularly of the first wave, who were able to much more easily conceal their Indonesian identity in the Netherlands and assimilate much quicker. But one key difference is that they were continuously being seen as a minority group, no matter how well they passed on as white. While Indos in the Netherlands were going through a process of assimilation into the wider Dutch society, American Indos found it hard to ‘escape’ their minority title.⁵³ This can be attributed to the general differences between the acculturation process of both countries. The Netherlands in the 1960s was still a very inexperienced country when it came to a multicultural society, thus they were looking towards the complete assimilation of Indos into the wider Dutch society. On the other hand, the United States has been a multicultural society throughout its history, thus there is a precedent that has already been set when it comes to the relationship between the majority white population and the numerous minority groups that call the country home. Dutch Indos coming into the United States found themselves having to adapt to a multicultural society that was very different to the society that they just left.

⁴⁹ Tajuddin and Stern, “Brown Dutchmen to Indo-Americans,” 358.

⁵⁰ Tajuddin and Stern, “Brown Dutchmen to Indo-Americans,” 359.

⁵¹ Tajuddin and Stern, “Brown Dutchmen to Indo-Americans,” 359.

⁵² Tajuddin and Stern, “Brown Dutchmen to Indo-Americans,” 359.

⁵³ Tajuddin and Stern, “Brown Dutchmen to Indo-Americans,” 360.

In general, first generation American Indos would find it difficult to find consistent work, as white collar work experiences that they have had in the Netherlands and potentially in Indonesia would be of limited use in the US.⁵⁴ It would be through education that American Indos were given opportunities that were not accessible to them at first. Interestingly, it would be the later generation of Indos that would start to seek to connect with their identities as Indos. There had been earlier attempts to connect the Indo diaspora of the United States to Holland, including an attempt by the previously mentioned Tjalie Robinson to set up an Indo social organization, *De Soos*, in the United States. This attempt would unfortunately be met with little to no response.⁵⁵ It was found that the earlier generations were rather unmotivated to practice their own culture, perhaps as a result of a desire to integrate and assimilate with the wider American culture and to ‘minimize’ their status as minorities. The later generations would be the first ones to have tried to explore their identities, but as American Indos are a relatively recent diaspora these efforts are primarily done in the modern age, outside the scopes of this research paper.

What is particularly interesting to note is the similar process that Dutch Indos would end up experiencing across the Atlantic in the 1970s. While reminiscing about Indonesia was actively frowned upon in the 1950s and 1960s during the active assimilation process, more and more Indos would start to interact with their identities as Dutch-Indonesians. A particularly interesting development of this time period was the *tempo doeloe*, literally ‘good old times’, phenomenon, wherein Dutch Indos would look back fondly at colonial era Indonesia and their homeland. Within this movement you had musicians such as Wieteke van Dort who would release songs such as *Geef Mij Maar Nasi Goreng*, a song that idealized Wieteke’s life in Indonesia in particular her admiration towards the traditional Indonesian dish of fried rice. This song would resonate with both Dutch Indos and Dutch Europeans, peaking well into the top 20 in the Dutch music charts. Van Dort herself would prove popular enough to run her own TV show *Tante Lien* in which she and her guests would reminisce about the good old days of the Dutch East Indies. What is important to observe in this case is how much the Indo identity of the *tempo doeloe* phenomenon is tied to the colonial era, perhaps as a reaction towards the social standings of Dutch Indos in the wider Dutch society.

⁵⁴ Tajuddin and Stern, “Brown Dutchmen to Indo-Americans,” 360.

⁵⁵ Tajuddin and Stern, “Brown Dutchmen to Indo-Americans,” 361.

The Indos present themselves as a very valuable source for information, primarily as they have existed both as diasporas in the Netherlands and the United States. It is through this group that we could show a direct comparison between the acculturation processes of the Netherlands and United States. Both Dutch Indos and American Indos left their host countries for similar reasons, while Dutch Indos were forced out of Indonesia as a result of the increase in racial tension of 1950s Indonesia, American Indos would also move on from the Netherlands as a result of the discrimination that they felt in the Netherlands. Both groups also chose to identify with their Indonesian identities in a similar pattern; the first generations weren't that interested with the idea of interacting with their Indonesian identities, an exception can be seen however as some individuals attempted to set up organizations and events to celebrate their Indonesian identity with limited to no success. The later generations however are shown to be more willing to interact more with their Indonesian identities, even though the Dutch Indos were more likely to have engaged with this through a colonial lens. A notable difference however lies with the way they interacted with their host country, primarily as a result of the different acculturation process found in the Netherlands and United States. Through Dutch assimilation, the government idealized a homogenous society in which Dutch Indonesians had to fit in. They were expected to abandon their own beliefs and adopt Dutch traditions and values. On the other hand, there was not a particular expectation set upon American Indos, as America has always been a multicultural state. They would however permanently be seen as a minority, no matter how much they try to integrate into American society.

Eksil: Indonesian Exiles

The next group to be discussed in this research are the Indonesian exiles. The 1960s would prove to be another tumultuous decade for the new republic. While the 1940s saw the fight for independence and the 1950s saw a fight for the consolidation of an Indonesian identity, the 1960s would see Indonesia go through a violent period of a change in leadership. The mildly Eastern Bloc aligned Soekarno would make way for the Western aligned Soeharto, who had started to consolidate his power in the archipelago as a result of the killings in the 30th September Movement. Communist and socialist sympathizers were becoming an alarming

presence for this incoming regime, and thus appropriate measures had to be taken in the perspective of the Soeharto regime.

In the context of this research, these exiled Indonesians are most likely the most heterogeneous group to be discussed. Exiled individuals may include left leaning political figures to enemies of the new '*Orde Baru*' regime and even include Indonesian students who were unfortunate enough to find themselves studying in a foreign land under government sponsorships. However, these exiles are still an interesting group to look at considering how important the events of 1965 prove to be in general Indonesian history and the interesting potential implications of a sudden forced exile on the way Indonesians abroad interact with the host country. In general, exiled Indonesians found themselves in a variety of destinations; some found refuge in Eastern Bloc countries such as the Soviet Union or Romania while others were left stranded in western countries such as the United States and the Netherlands.

The most affected by the sudden exile were Indonesian students. The Soekarno presidency was fond of sending students to communist countries in international exchange programs.⁵⁶ Starting from 1966, the Indonesian embassy started calling for screenings in which these students would be quizzed on the ideological background of themselves and their families, they would also be forced to sign loyalty waivers to the '*Orde Baru*' regime.⁵⁷ If a student were to refuse or presented themselves as an ideological threat they would have their passports taken and citizenship revoked, leaving them stateless in a foreign country. Other victims of this exile would include politicians and government employees who had previously worked with the previous regime, thus leaving them as ideological enemies of the new regime.

Those who have been exiled resided all over the globe, but a vast majority would find themselves coming to the Netherlands.⁵⁸ The primary reason for the selection of the Netherlands as a host nation comes down to citizenship laws, an 1848 law made it possible for Indonesian exiles who were born in the Dutch East Indies to claim Dutch citizenship without the need to

⁵⁶ Bambang Alfred Sipayung, "Exiled Memories: The Collective memory of Indonesian 1965 exiles" (Masters diss., Institute of Social Studies, 2011), 16.

⁵⁷ Sipayung, "Exiled Memories," 16.

⁵⁸ David T. Hill, "Indonesian political exiles in the Netherlands after 1965; Postcolonial nationalists in an era of transnationalism," *Wacana, Journal of the Humanities of Indonesia* 23, no. 3 (2022): 583.

present a case for political asylum.⁵⁹ While this loophole would be closed by the Dutch government in 1985, the large community of Indonesian exiles in the Netherlands would ensure that it would still be a primary target of destination for Indonesian exiles throughout the years. An interesting phenomenon to note about these exiles was how fiercely nationalistic they were. Even after the violence of the 1960s and the sudden revoking of their citizenship, these exiles would continue to foster a positive image of Indonesia. Different exiled Indonesians had their own reasons for maintaining a connection to their homeland, but a general consensus can be seen that a majority of them chose to identify with Indonesia before the events of 1965.⁶⁰ Thus regardless of what the ‘*Order Baru*’ regime had done to them, a majority of the exiles still felt a ‘patriotic’ connection to the homeland.

This ‘patriotic’ connection to Indonesia presents a very interesting observation in regards to the acculturation process for a number of these exiles. Ibaruri Putri Alam would put forward a question in regards to her French citizenship, does she feel French after acquiring a French passport? She would answer and rationalize that at the end of the day, she feels like an adopted child.⁶¹ While they did belong to the new country, social, culturally and personally she still felt Indonesian. In general, this was the consensus shared by Indonesians exiles throughout the world including the Netherlands and the United States. While they did go through the acculturation process, acquired jobs in the host country and would even end up marrying their local partners, a part of them remained fiercely loyal to Indonesia and would rather identify as Indonesian rather than a citizen of their host nation.

The exiles provide another interesting example of an unwilling migrant and their interaction with the host country. While initially stranded in a wide variety of different countries, a majority of them had chosen the Netherlands as the end destination. Primarily as a result of citizenship laws that would grant them Dutch citizenship easier compared to other countries but also as a result of a widespread community of fellow Indonesian exiles. Additionally, they were shown to have gone through the acculturation process well, being a well functioning member of the host society in the Netherlands and even other countries that they would find themselves in. But a particular

⁵⁹ Hill, “Postcolonial nationalists,” 583.

⁶⁰ Akmaliah, “The Imagined Indonesia,” 72.

⁶¹ Henri Chambert-Loir, “Locked Out: Literature of the Indonesian Exiles Post-1965,” *Archipel* 91(2016): 122.

difference compared to the other two is an even more in depth and ingrained connection to Indonesia than in the case of the Moluccan and American/Dutch Indos. One could attribute this to the fact that they have spent more time in Indonesia than the aforementioned groups who were forced away in the first few years of the republic. They most definitely had time to develop a deeper emotional connection with the Indonesian identity, and as a result would not have lost that identity in place of the host country's identity as easily. Another attribute could be their positions as academics and politicians. As previously established, most exiles were either students, government workers or political figures that fell out with the '*Orde Baru*' regime. Unlike the, comparatively, unskilled workers that formed the majority of the Moluccan and Indo population, these exiles would not have needed to hide or abandon their Indonesian values and beliefs to be able to assimilate into the larger society and make a living. The exiles are an example of the importance of migratory context in the process of acculturation, while they were able to pass along and become functional members of society the context of their departure from Indonesia ensured that they had a very different relationship to their diaspora identity compared to the Dutch Moluccans and American/Dutch Indos.

Chinese-Indonesians in the Netherlands and United States

The last group to be discussed in this chapter are the Chinese-Indonesians. Much like the previous three, Chinese-Indonesians were found to be rather unwilling migrants. As they were primarily forced away from their homes in Indonesia as a result of the political and social climate of the new Indonesian Republic. There are three primary reasons as to why Chinese-Indonesians left Indonesia. (i) The first reason is the Indonesian Revolution of 1949 which caused Dutch sympathizing individuals to leave the country, including a number of Chinese-Indonesians. (ii) The second reason is the Presidential Decree No. 10 in 1959, which prohibited foreign nationals from opening businesses in rural areas. While it specified foreign nationals, Chinese-Indonesians who were citizens of the countries would end up becoming targeted by racist crowds who were acting under the pretense of this law. (iii) The last reason is the 30th September Movement and the general violence after 1965 which had resulted in Indonesia taking an anti-communist stance. Under the guise of anti-communism, Chinese-Indonesians and other minorities would become the target of violent mobs who were impassioned in their acts against the 'terrors of

communism'.⁶² These three events eventually lead to the mass exit of Chinese-Indonesians as they wanted to seek a more peaceful destination away from the violence and discrimination felt in Indonesia. Such destinations would include the Netherlands, People's Republic of China and the United States.

One important identifiable feature of the Chinese-Indonesian diaspora in the Netherlands is a lack of focus on them. This is in contrast to how they were perceived in Indonesia, as they were always among the main targets of ethnic violence for displeased Indonesians. A majority of them have positioned themselves as "well-educated, Dutch-speaking (post)colonial migrants" whose socio-economic integration into the Netherlands has proved successful.⁶³ They were able to identify and assimilate well with the wider Dutch society. Their invisibility was also of their own accord, as they chose to remain low profile amongst the other minority groups. It is possible that the decision to maintain a low profile was done as a result of their shared experiences in Indonesia, as they had previously become a target of racist mobs and discriminatory laws meant to disadvantage them. High education and an assimilated position in Dutch society could have provided a safer environment for Chinese-Indonesians in the Netherlands.

This 'invisibility' could also be seen in the state of California, a popular destination for Chinese-Indonesian migrants. In his research on the local population of Chinese-Indonesians in Los Angeles, academic Gregory S. Urban noted that there was a lack of information regarding the Chinese-Indonesian population. This can perhaps be linked back to the Dutch diaspora, in which invisibility was idealized as a way to escape unwanted negative attention of the general US population. Another reason this could be attributed to is the lack of a well ingrained community like Chinatown and Koreatown that would have helped incoming Chinese-Indonesian migrants.⁶⁴ This was also observed at the start of the Dutch Indo move to the United States, the general isolation between individuals who came from the same community.

⁶² Yumi Kitamura "Long way home; The life history of Chinese-Indonesian migrants in the Netherlands," *Wacana, Journal of the Humanities of Indonesia* 18, no.1 (2017): 25

⁶³ Patricia Tjiook Liem, "The Chinese from Indonesia in the Netherlands and their heritage; Chinese Indonesian Heritage Center (CIHC)," *Wacana, Journal of the Humanities of Indonesia* 18, no.1 (2017): 2.

⁶⁴ Gregory S. Urban, "The Eternal Newcomer: Chinese Indonesian Identity from Indonesia to the United States," *LUX: A Journal of Transdisciplinary Writing and Research* 3, no. 1 (2013): 7.

Based on previous information researched regarding Chinese-Indonesians, they are unfortunately a rather obscure group that is in need of more research.

The Chinese-Indonesian diaspora in the Netherlands and the US prove to be another interesting case. As their main identifiable feature is their relatively innocuous and invisible place in both Dutch and US society. Both through positioning themselves as a silent minority and a lack of research, not much else is known of them, especially in contrast to their Moluccan and Indo neighbors. What this does show in the context of acculturation however, is a reminder of the impact that the migrant group might have on the acculturation process. As it is by their own volition that they were able to successfully integrate into the wider Dutch society.

Indonesian Diasporas and Marriage Patterns

The third and last part of this research paper will look into the marriage patterns of Indonesian diasporas throughout the Netherlands and the United States. This chapter will utilize the theoretical framework put forth by Puschmann et al. to explain the paths of acculturation through different family units. In this framework, it is said that migrants who have married natives have assimilated into the culture as they have blurred the invisible boundaries between them and the native population.⁶⁵ Integration is described as when the migrant has married with someone from another geographic background that is different from the native population, stating that the migrant has experienced a change in identity but has not aligned themselves with the native culture.⁶⁶ When a migrant marries another migrant from the same geographic background that is described as separation, as they continue to maintain a boundary between themselves and the native culture but have had a certain level of social inclusion to marry in the first place.⁶⁷ Lastly is marginalization, wherein a migrant is not able to marry a partner. Potentially due to a number of different issues such as discrimination, but they are classified as marginalized as a result of this.

⁶⁵ Paul Puschmann, et al. "Paths of Acculturation and Social Inclusion. Migration, Marriage Opportunities and Assortative Mating by Geographic Origin in Antwerp, 1846–1920," *Journal of Migration History* 2 (2016): 184

⁶⁶ Puschmann et al., "Paths of Acculturation," 184.

⁶⁷ Puschmann et al., "Paths of Acculturation," 184.

Initially, the two primary Indonesian diaspora groups in the Netherlands would have different marriage patterns. Indos, as they came from a mix between indigenous Indonesian and Dutch parents, would see a consistent pattern of intermarriages. Historically, the more common pair has been the Dutch man and the indigenous woman, with the opposite being seen as controversial.⁶⁸ It is as a result of this that their children would come to see intermarriages as a normal occurrence, with the number of intermarriages in Indo adult children being half of the total marriage count for Indo adult children.⁶⁹ This specific marriage pattern would lend itself well to the belief that Dutch Indos were generally well assimilated into Dutch society, considering how much intermarriages would occur.

On the other hand, the Moluccan population would maintain separation, as they would primarily enter into marriages with members of their own communities. The first Moluccans of course arrived into the Netherlands with their own families, and they were also initially adamant in maintaining their own marriage patterns in a bid to maintain their own culture.⁷⁰ Although, over time as the native Dutch population would start interacting with the Moluccans, the number of mixed couples would start increasing around this time period.⁷¹ While an exact figure is unknown, we could also attribute this to the increase in the start of the assimilation process of Dutch Moluccans.

On the other side of the pond, there is unfortunately not as much research done on Indonesian diasporas in the United States. Census Data on Asian-Americans really only started becoming more detailed in the 2000s, and as a result marriage data on Indonesian-Americans are not as readily available. What is known is in regards to American Indos. Where it is said that they were generally more interested in intermarriage than marrying members of their own community.⁷² This can be attributed as marital assimilation was seen as one of the ways they were able to assimilate into American culture.

⁶⁸ Charlotte Larmaan, "Representations of post-colonial migrants in discussions on intermarriage in the Netherlands, 1945-2005" in *Post-Colonial Immigrants and Identity Formations in the Netherlands*, ed. Ulbe Bosma (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012), 53.

⁶⁹ Larmaan, "Discussion on intermarriage in the Netherlands," 57.

⁷⁰ Fatgehipon, "Exodus of KNIL Soldiers," 199.

⁷¹ Spoorman, "Tradition and Creative Inspiration," 288.

⁷² Tajuddin and Stern, "Brown Dutchmen to Indo-Americans," 357.

This chapter shows a direct relation between marriage patterns and paths of acculturation. As both diasporas in the Netherlands and the United States have shown to both desire intermarriages as a result of the assimilation process, and desire intermarriages for the sake of the assimilation process. While it is ultimately unfortunate as data in regards to this specific topic is not as readily available, as we are not able to completely compare the two acculturation processes among each other.

Conclusion and Final Remarks

Returning to the main research question, what are the differences and similarities between the Indonesian diaspora community in the Netherlands and the United States? In truth this question is one that isn't as focused on the destination as it is at the diaspora group in question and the context surrounding their departure from Indonesia. The four groups in question would react in similar but distinct ways to the acculturation process in both countries. Moluccans were initially put in the Netherlands as a group of temporary migrants, thus there was a degree of isolation maintained by the Dutch government that was reciprocated by the Moluccan people. As time went on, the Dutch government would start the assimilation process in an attempt to integrate the Moluccan people, a process that would simultaneously be replicated by the Moluccan people as they had started to come out of the camps and interact with the Dutch youth. But they would maintain their own cultural identities as Moluccans. This case study shows the importance of reciprocation in the acculturation process, as it was the intentions of the Moluccans that would end up dictating the acculturation process. Indos are another example, as they would also go through the process of assimilation in the Netherlands. This time they were not as reciprocal as the Moluccans, as they were forced to abandon their values and beliefs and adopt the mindset of the general Dutch culture or face discrimination. Although it is important to note the importance of colonialist race identities here, as the discrimination came as a result of their Indo identities. European passing Indos were able to assimilate much easier into Dutch society. Some Indos would seek to escape the discrimination that they were facing and would end up in the United States, interestingly enough in yet another process of assimilation, this time into American society. But they were shown to be much more willing to move up in this society, chasing education and marital assimilation to this end. The Indonesian exiles are another interesting group as they are generally shown to be quite willing to undergo the assimilation

process, they would go on to marry their local partners and work in local jobs. But unlike the previous groups, they were also noted to have been fiercely loyal to Indonesia, even going on to continue describing themselves as Indonesians well after they received their new citizenship. Lastly, is the repeated lessons of context that can be studied through the Chinese-Indonesian diaspora community. As they have shown to be both successful and innocuous in their successful acculturation process possibly owing to their history in Indonesia.

Instead of finding remarkable differences between the two countries in regards to the acculturation process, this research pointed out the similar process of assimilation that the United States and the Netherlands went through between the 1960s and 1970s. There are, however, still slight differences in the way both countries desired assimilation. While the Netherlands desired a sort of 'uniform' society where diaspora groups would abandon their own cultural beliefs to adopt Dutch cultural beliefs, the United States maintained a separation between the majority white and the minorities. No matter how much American-Indos adopted American cultural beliefs, they would still primarily be seen as minorities, while this was hoped to be avoided in the Dutch assimilation process.

Another interesting point is just how distinct these groups are with the acculturation process. While all the groups were seemingly going through a similar process of assimilation, the different context of departure that each group had meant that they interacted with their original identities in the new host country differently. Ranging from exiles that were adamant on maintaining their Indonesian identities, to Indos who identified through a colonial lens to Chinese-Indonesians who were noted to have been invisible as a result of the experiences surrounding their departure.

There are further remarks to be had on this research, and that generally has to do with statistical sources. Unfortunately, both the US Census Bureau and the Dutch Statistics Bureau did not hold as much information regarding details such as the economic situation and marriage patterns of Indonesian diaspora. Further research into this topic would primarily focus on the quantitative sources as the majority of this paper is based on qualitative secondary sources that have been written on these diasporas. Additionally, the time period proved to be relatively limiting for the

purposes of studying the United States. Not only does the Census Bureau only make distinction between Asian-American groups in the twenty-first century, but a number of other research that does discuss Indonesian-Americans primarily focused on the 1990s onwards. If possible, an extension in the time period could yield more information regarding this matter.

However, even with these constraints, there are important lessons to be learned with Indonesian diasporas. Such as the role that migrant agency plays in the process of acculturation for migrants.

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