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# Jakarta and Paramaribo Calling

## *Return Migration Challenges for the Surinamese Javanese Diaspora?\**

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### Abstract

The Surinamese Javanese diaspora includes distinct Surinamese Javanese communities living in Suriname and the Netherlands. Inspired by the success of diaspora policies launched by the Indian government recently the Indonesian and Surinamese governments have started to consider the introduction of similar initiatives. As a result the Surinamese Javanese diaspora has been confronted with requests to contribute more substantially to their homeland and contemplate “going back home.” This article argues that the Indonesian and Surinamese governments have no reason to set their expectations too high. Jakarta and Paramaribo are reluctant to take necessary legal action which negatively impacts the effectivity of their diaspora policy. Overall Surinamese Javanese in Suriname are unwilling to settle in Indonesia, whereas Surinamese Javanese in the Netherlands contemplating return to Suriname carefully weigh their chances. For most of them, family, friendship and community ties and concomitant socio-cultural, spiritual and religious motives override economic motives as pull factors.

### Keywords

Surinamese Javanese – diaspora – return migration – Indonesia – Suriname

Homeland connections have been a feature of the Surinamese Javanese population group ever since the first Javanese indentured laborers left Indone-

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sia and settled in Suriname in 1890. For many decades these links were confined to well-demarcated Javanese communities living across the Indian and Atlantic Oceans. Mutual relationships were shaped and nurtured by the continuous movement of newly recruited workers going to Suriname and ex-contract laborers returning to Indonesia, and by ongoing flows of goods and ideas between the two former Dutch colonies. In 1930, the abolition of Javanese contract labor marked the end of the sizeable influx of Javanese workers into Suriname. Free labor substituted contract labor and smaller numbers of Javanese laborers continued to settle in Suriname until 1939.<sup>1</sup>

Following World War II, Javanese workers, pushed by unpromising socio-economic prospects in Suriname and pulled by high expectations accompanying the Indonesian independence struggle, resumed return migration. In 1954, however, mass return migration to Indonesia came to a standstill. Facing overpopulation and economic pressure, Jakarta no longer wished to receive overseas co-ethnics in Java anymore. To most Surinamese Javanese, Indonesia gradually lost the status of a tangible homeland. Although they prolonged orientations rooted in ancestral traditions and maintained cultural and religious ties with what they considered their country of origin, over the years they increasingly developed a symbolic interest in return to Indonesia.<sup>2</sup>

When Suriname became an independent state in 1975, a major split occurred in the Surinamese Javanese community. Most members adopted Surinamese nationality and accepted Suriname as their home country, but a substantial number of them migrated to the Netherlands. The latter were driven by a desire to escape the ethnic tensions that characterized the process of independence in Suriname and to benefit from the social security provisions the Netherlands could offer them. In the Netherlands, Surinamese Javanese created a third homeland which has to a large extent satisfied their need for economic stability and social mobility. Enjoying a higher standard of living compared to their community members in Suriname and Indonesia and occupying a geographical position halfway between both countries, the Surinamese Javanese diaspora

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- 1 Javanese migration to and settlement in Suriname in the 1890–1939 period (totaling close to 33,000 people) and the return of almost 25 percent of this population group back to Indonesia are examined in Hoefte 1998. Although before 1945 Indonesia was officially named *Nederlands-Indië* (Netherlands East Indies), for reasons of convenience I will use the term Indonesia in this article even when referring to this territory in the pre-independence era.
  - 2 Breunissen 2001; Kopijn & Mingoen 2008; and Djasmadi, Hoefte & Mingoen 2010 make special note of the last large-scale ship transport of Surinamese Javanese back to Indonesia in 1954 and the divergent experiences of the participants ever since.

in the Netherlands fulfills an intermediate role between the Javanese communities in Suriname and Indonesia.<sup>3</sup>

The Surinamese Javanese diaspora offers an exceptionally understudied case in the field of migration and diaspora studies. It constitutes a lesser known transnational community connecting Southeast Asia, the Caribbean, and Europe, and encompassing three different homelands. Although the existence of a Surinamese Javanese diaspora dates back to 1890 and was extended to the Netherlands from the 1970s,<sup>4</sup> allowing transnationalism<sup>5</sup> to increase its impact on Indonesian-Surinamese-Dutch relations, the degree of involvement of the three nations has received little scholarly attention so far.<sup>6</sup> A core feature of the Surinamese Javanese diaspora, return migration has been the object of substantial research primarily with regard to the 1890–1954 period.<sup>7</sup>

Recent academic and political shifts provide a good opportunity to re-examine the contours of this diasporic landscape. First, the past few decades have

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- 3 On the dimensions of home (a locale, a perception, a political tool, a means of identification) and the role of home and homeland attachments in mobility decision-making and identity formation, see De Souza 2005. The genesis of the Surinamese Javanese homelands, their development over time and their mutual relations as perceived by Surinamese Javanese are treated in Meel 2011.
  - 4 According to 2012 census data, the Surinamese Javanese diaspora consisted of 74,000 Surinamese Javanese living in Suriname (total Surinamese population 542,000), *De Ware Tijd*, September 6 and 7, 2013. According to 2008 census data, 22,000 Surinamese Javanese resided in the Netherlands (total Dutch population 16.5 million) (Oudhof et al. 2011). The latter number is low compared to earlier data which estimated the number of Surinamese Javanese residents in the Netherlands at 43,000 (Meel 2011:96). Different research methodologies and (to a lesser extent) an apparent (but statistically underreported) increase in return migration to Suriname seem to explain the halving of this number. Bearing in mind that in the mid-1970s between 20,000 and 25,000 Surinamese Javanese moved to the Netherlands (Djasmadi, Hoefte & Mingoen 2010:xvi), it can be concluded that demographic stagnation has characterized this population group in the former mother country. In 2013, the Indonesian embassy in Paramaribo estimated that 250 people holding Indonesian nationality were living in Suriname. They were mainly employed in the fishing and logging industry on contracts lasting between six months and two years, *De Ware Tijd*, September 13, 2013.
  - 5 In their well-known definition of transnationalism Bash, Glick Schiller & Szanton Blanc (1994:7) term it a “process by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement.” Emphasizing its multiple forms, Faist (2000:189) identifies transnationalism as “sustained ties of persons, networks and organizations across the borders across multiple nation-states, ranging from little to highly institutionalized forms.” This multifacetedness applies to the Surinamese Javanese case.
  - 6 A pioneering study by Lockard 1971 should be regarded as an important exception.
  - 7 See for instance Hoefte 1998 and Breunissen 2001.

given rise to a proliferation of diaspora studies and have produced important developments in the field of return migration theory. These have generated new research tools and provoked challenging research questions, making elaborate examinations of the Surinamese Javanese diaspora useful, if not urgent. Second, due to new power configurations and relationships between states, Jakarta and Paramaribo, both in their own way and with different levels of determination, have expressed an inclination to explore the advantages of diasporic connections more thoroughly and to seek ways to foster collaboration between ethnic kinsmen across national borders in a more institutionalized way. The option of return migration forms an intrinsic part of their considerations.

In this article I will investigate the current diaspora initiatives of the Indonesian and Surinamese governments and establish what challenges they entail for the Surinamese Javanese community. Will the Jakarta and Paramaribo agendas enhance Surinamese Javanese engagement with Indonesia and Suriname and encourage the diaspora to return home? In addressing these questions I will pay attention to the return migration of Surinamese Javanese living in Suriname contemplating settlement in Indonesia, and Surinamese Javanese living in the Netherlands thinking about relocation to Suriname. I will focus on return migration motives in order to profile Surinamese Javanese returnees and draw conclusions with respect to the effectivity of the diaspora policies of the Indonesian and Surinamese governments.

### Return Migration Theory

Various theories have been developed and applied to arrive at a better understanding of the dynamics of return migration: neoclassical economics and new economics of labor migration (Constant & Massey 2002), structuralism (Byron & Condon 1996; Gmelch 1980, 1983), transnationalism (Al-Ali & Koser 2002), and social network theory (Nohria & Eccles 1992). All these approaches have produced valuable insights into the driving forces behind return migration and the many variables at work. Among return migration theories that have been discussed in recent times, the achievements of Tsuda and Cassarino have attracted particular attention.

Takeyuki Tsuda presents an appealing theory in that he builds on the available body of literature and identifies two key return motives which are positioned in a subtle hierarchy (Tsuda 2009a). According to Tsuda, economic motives *trigger* ethnic return migration, whereas ethnic ties and affinities *channel* migrant flows to the ethnic homeland (Tsuda 2009a:21). In the Surinamese

Javanese case this approach seems to make sense. After all, both aspects play a role in their return migration decisions. Furthermore, given their migration history, it seems plausible that in many instances material considerations take precedence over more immaterial concerns.

Prior to Tsuda, Jean-Pierre Cassarino took the various approaches to return migration a step further by persuasively distinguishing types of returnees and incorporating their pre- and postreturn conditions and levels of “preparedness” into an elaborate matrix (Cassarino 2004). Addressing their status, motivation, resource mobilization, and length of stay as core prereturn conditions, and their reintegration process as the main postreturn condition, Cassarino focuses in a more comprehensive way on the agency of the return migrant and the vibrant and multifaceted context the migrant is part of. The granularity of Cassarino’s theory differs from the straightforwardness of Tsuda’s theory.

I have benefited from both these theoretical approaches, as well as from the complementary perspectives taken by scholars working on Caribbean return migration.<sup>8</sup> These have helped me to distinguish the various factors that play a role in return migration discourse, investigate the causes and effects of return migration processes, and gain a firmer grip on the nature of and interrelationship between the return motives of migrants. Nevertheless, I wish to emphasize that my underlying research has been primarily data driven and is based on empirical evidence extracted from newspaper articles, policy reports, government publications, and personal communication.<sup>9</sup>

The present article brings together and organizes for the first time scattered and partly obscure facts about a transnational community distributed over three independent states which, in contrast to the Indian diaspora, only started to define itself in diasporic terms in the past decade. The article assesses contemporary Surinamese Javanese cross-border linkages at the intersection of diaspora policies advocated by Jakarta and Paramaribo, and the return migration motives of Surinamese Javanese diaspora members.<sup>10</sup>

8 For substantial overviews and critical assessments of this literature, see Conway, Potter & Phillips 2005; Conway & Potter 2007; and Plaza & Henry 2009.

9 I have systematically investigated the Surinamese newspapers *De Ware Tijd*, *Dagblad Suriname*, and *De West* as well as the Surinamese news website *Starnieuws* for the 2010–16 period. These important primary sources were supplemented by articles from *The Jakarta Post* and *Jakarta Globe*. I consulted most policy reports and government publications online. Finally, I interviewed key figures in Suriname and the Netherlands who have been involved in various capacities in the diaspora and return migration discussions addressed in this article.

10 It is my belief that an article questioning diaspora policies and return migration motives

In the introductory section of this article, I focus on the political ambitions of Indonesia and Suriname in the post-Cold War world order. Subsequently, I discuss the diaspora agendas of Jakarta and Paramaribo, explaining the objectives formulated and strategies applied by the Indonesian and Surinamese governments in order to connect to their diaspora. The next two sections deal with the effects of Jakarta's diaspora policies on Surinamese Javanese living in Suriname and of Paramaribo's diaspora policies on Surinamese Javanese living in the Netherlands. In order to explore these effects properly, due attention is paid to the motives of Surinamese Javanese considering return migration to Indonesia and Suriname. The main questions with regard to the effects of Indonesia's and Suriname's diaspora policy and Surinamese Javanese return migration motives are answered in the concluding paragraph.

### International Setting

The recent diaspora initiatives independently launched by Jakarta and Paramaribo are linked to post-1990 global developments which have greatly affected state and nonstate actors all over the world. Spurred by advanced and more affordable transportation facilities and communication technologies, transnational ties have become stronger and have more firmly contextualized and influenced pre-existing (inter)nationalist orientations. Accordingly, the global connections of people and the circulation of goods and ideas have significantly expanded and have brought the power and impact of networks more to the fore, particularly in the fields of trade, migration, and cultural exchange (Held et al. 1999).

Against this backdrop, following 2000 a new economic configuration seems to have taken shape. The emerging national economies of Brazil, Russia, India, and China (commonly known as the BRIC economies) have demonstrated their increasing influence owing to the huge markets they represent and the sustained economic growth they have attained. Lately South Africa has joined this association of developing and newly industrialized countries, which have then been labeled BRICS. Mexico, Indonesia, South Korea, and Turkey have been identified as MIKT countries, showing a high potential of becoming,

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as explained above can be a fruitful starting point for a systematic inquiry into the generational experiences of Surinamese Javanese return migrants, preferably via questionnaires and one-on-one in-depth interviews.

along with the BRICS, one of the world's largest economies in the twenty-first century.<sup>11</sup>

This alluring prospect has prompted Jakarta to seek to benefit more substantially from its human resources in order to accelerate its national productivity and bolster its regional prestige as a member state of the Association of South-east Asian Nations (ASEAN). Compared to this trend that indicates an economic power shift toward Asia and a strengthening of South-South collaboration, Europe and the United States have suffered economic misfortune. The financial crisis of 2008 and the subsequent economic recession have shaken the Western world to its foundations. These have severely increased public debt and the rate of unemployment and have dramatically lowered the rate of investment and the purchasing power of EU and North American citizens (Roberts, Habir & Sebastian 2015; Wolf 2015).

In contrast to the Netherlands' economic decline and in parallel with sustained economic growth in Indonesia, the increase in national income in Suriname—propelled by the high gold and oil prices in the world market—has also boosted governmental self-confidence. This has contributed to a re-articulation of Paramaribo's policy toward the Netherlands. In Suriname the waning power of the Netherlands as a donor partner was already evident, since both governments reached an agreement in 2008 on phasing out the development aid the Netherlands had granted Suriname since 1975. According to The Hague, the Republic of Suriname had reached the status of an upper-middle-income country and for this reason did not qualify for Dutch development aid anymore.<sup>12</sup> However, the special relations both states wished to maintain allowed for a continuation of cooperation projects. Financial support by NGOs replaced government funding, making development in Suriname less dependent on the political issues of the day (Hoeft 2014).

Official relations between the two countries became strained in 2010 when "The Hague's all-time adversary" Desiré Delano (Desi) Bouterse was elected president of Suriname. In 2012, the Surinamese parliament passed an amnesty

11 The MIKT countries are considered major members of the so-called Next Eleven, a group which also includes Bangladesh, Egypt, Iran, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Vietnam. The BRIC(S), MIKT, and Next Eleven categories are creations of former Goldman Sachs investment bank economist Jim O'Neill. In early 2015, O'Neill remarked that BRIC might very well become IC if Brazil and Russia failed to revive their flagging economies, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-01-08/bric-in-danger-of-becoming-ic-says-acronym-coiner-jim-o-neill>, accessed April 12, 2016.

12 Rating by the World Bank, see <http://data.worldbank.org/country/suriname>, accessed March 14, 2016.

law aiming to pardon Bouterse who was subject to trial on charges of involvement in the 1982 December killings.<sup>13</sup> This act—considered a violation of the Surinamese constitution by many observers—incited The Hague to suspend development aid, upon which both governments withdrew their ambassadors.<sup>14</sup> In 2015, after the Dutch ambassador had returned to Paramaribo, Bouterse was reelected as president. Ever since, relations at the governmental level have remained uneasy. In mid-2017, the Suriname government revoked the approval of accreditation for the new Dutch ambassador. At the level of administrative subdivisions, private organizations, and family networks, however, intensive contacts between the two countries have been maintained.

The troublesome relations with the North Sea—as Bouterse mockingly labeled the former mother country—have encouraged the Surinamese government to employ initiatives to more productively engage with its diaspora in the Netherlands, facilitate cooperation between Surinamese in both countries, and foster the connections Surinamese maintain with their ethnic homeland. Simultaneously, Paramaribo is facing a financial crisis that broke out in 2015 as a result of socioeconomic mismanagement and the dropping prices of gold and oil in the world market. In order to cope with this situation, the Surinamese government is resorting to donor countries such as China and India, regional organizations such as the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Unión de Naciones Suramericanas (UNASUR), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB).

In their diaspora policies, Indonesia and Suriname take different points of departure. Indonesia focuses on India, the world's second most populous country, to boost its economic expansion and realize its political ambitions. Suriname, dealing with economic setbacks and political vulnerabilities, is reaching out to a wider circle of possible donors, among them China, India, and Indonesia, the three nation states that are linked to the Chinese, Indian, and Javanese population groups in Suriname. Due to its quantifiable success and the Indian

13 The December killings involved the torture and summary execution of 15 opponents of the then military regime under the leadership of Commander Desi Bouterse. His adversaries favored a return to democratic rule via the concerted action of civil society organizations. Although Bouterse took political responsibility for the killings, he denied having played any role in the massacre himself. In 2012, the Surinamese parliament adopted an amnesty law that considerably complicated the trial that had started in 2007 against 25 suspects of the killings—including Bouterse.

14 Opposing the political views and actions of Bouterse-led governments, the Netherlands suspended this aid between 1982–88, 1990–91, 1997–2000, and 2012–present.

community being the largest population group in Suriname, the Indian model, however, is also attracting most attention in Suriname.<sup>15</sup>

### The Indonesian Agenda

The Congress of Indonesian Diaspora, held in Los Angeles from July 6 to 8, 2012, was the first attempt made by Jakarta to bring together representatives of the Indonesian diaspora from all over the globe.<sup>16</sup> According to the Indonesian government, the capital, expertise, skills, and networks of members of this diaspora should be acknowledged as a formidable asset to foster Indonesia's economic growth, push back social inequality, and contribute to the realization of the regional ambitions of the leading Southeast Asian state. The creation of synergy and the establishment of a dynamic partnership between Indonesia and its diaspora would benefit all members of the "big family of the Indonesian nation." Conveying messages of unity and inclusivity, Jakarta called generosity part of the "Indonesian character." In this context the Indonesian government highlighted *gotong royong* (community-driven teamwork) as a well-established cultural practice strengthening collaboration. Apparently aiming to avoid religious discord, it refrained from mentioning the importance of *zakat*, *infaq*, *sadaqa*, and *wakaf*. These relate to Islamic giving practices and the doctrine of charity to those in need.<sup>17</sup>

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- 15 Ethnic composition of the Surinamese population (census 2012): Indian (27.4%), Maroon (21.7%), Creole (15.7%), Javanese (13.7%), Mixed (13.4%), Other (7.6%), Unknown (0.6%). Chinese, together with (among others) Dutch, Guyanese, and Brazilians, are included in the "Other" category. See <http://www.statistics-suriname.org/index.php/statistieken/downloads/category/30-censusstatistieken-2012>, accessed March 14, 2016. Meel 2015 contains a historical overview of the transnational connections of the different Surinamese population groups.
- 16 The Indonesian diaspora includes Indonesian citizens (WNI) who live overseas, Indonesians who have migrated from Indonesia and acquired foreign nationalities (WNA), and Indonesian descendants or people of Indonesian origin. Muhidin & Utomo (2013) estimate the size of the Indonesian diaspora between 2.9 and 6 million people depending on definitions, data sources, and choice of variables. The Indonesian government usually assumes the diaspora to consist of 8 million people.
- 17 Rusdiana & Saidi 2008:159, 164–66. Data on the Congresses of Indonesian Diaspora have mainly been collected from internet sources. Many of these sources are no longer accessible or have disappeared altogether. A major source of information has been <http://www.tabloiddiplomasi.org/pdf/2016/Januari/Diplomasi%20Agustus%202015%20english.pdf>, accessed March 14, 2016.

Adopting “the power of harmony in diversity” as the congress theme, the Indonesian state took the lead during the convention. In a video speech, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono presented Indonesia as a new regional power with a global outreach, ranking as the world’s third largest democracy and Southeast Asia’s largest economy. Yudhoyono urged his audience to join forces in order to transform Indonesia into one of the world’s top-ten largest economies. The Indonesian ambassador to the United States (and a driving force behind the diaspora congress) Dino Patti Djalal estimated that the per capita income of the Indonesian diaspora was five times higher than the per capita income of Indonesia. He stated that the transfer of remittances by the Indonesian diaspora totaled US\$7 billion per year and predicted that these capital flows would substantially increase in the near future. In his opinion the secret of the Indonesian diaspora was the availability of “brain power, heart power and willpower.” These would cement the establishment of an Indonesian Diaspora Network which was expected to feed Jakarta with ideas, connect Indonesian communities more closely and conclude strategic alliances with public and private organizations.<sup>18</sup>

The convention’s organizers asserted that the encouragement of outmigration by the Indonesian government as a means to ease national unemployment and increase currency flows to the country was ready to enter a new stage. Jakarta wished to transform incidental diaspora philanthropy directed at addressing immediate needs and fulfilling family obligations into strategic diaspora philanthropy aimed at funding sustainable social change in the home country. Government officials particularly focused on the capital accumulation and brain gain to be obtained from the approximately 150,000 Indonesians and Americans of Indonesian descent living in the United States.<sup>19</sup>

In order to meet some of the practical needs of the Indonesian diaspora, President Yudhoyono declared his willingness to ease visa procedures and consider the introduction of a special visa. He dealt cautiously with the possibility of allowing dual citizenship, an idea applauded by a significant part of the Indonesian diaspora, but at odds with Indonesian law. He explained that holding passports of two states would not only hinder Indonesian emigrants from adjusting in their country of settlement, but would also cause divided loyalties

18 See <http://cid2012.wordpress.com/2012/06/22/indonesia-embraces-its-diaspora-2/> and <http://www.indonesia-ottawa.org/2013/03/indonesian-diaspora-no-matter-where-forget-not-motherland/>, both accessed March 14, 2016.

19 Also compare Rusdiana & Saidi 2008:163–64, 168–69. The interrelationships between migration, remittances, development, and state policies are explored in Carling 2008a and b, De Haas 2005, and Thomas-Hope 1985 and 1999.

and thwart political calm and social cohesion in the “extended Indonesian family.” After all, dual citizenship would disconnect citizenship from residence and disrupt the notion of a nation-state viewed as an undivided territory administered by representatives of a population sharing a common history and culture. More specifically, it would provide populations outside the borders of the nation-state political rights without demanding substantive obligations in return. Most likely Indonesian residents would perceive this as unjust and unfair and raise their voices against it.<sup>20</sup>

The second Congress of Indonesian Diaspora was held in Jakarta from August 18 to 20, 2013. Under the motto “Diaspora pulang kampung” (Diaspora Return Home),<sup>21</sup> President Yudhoyono pointed out that he expected at least three synergies to emerge from the convention. The first was the synergy among groups within the diaspora itself. Yudhoyono informed his audience that the Indonesian Diaspora Network had considerably expanded. A total of 55 chapters had been set up in 26 countries and the network was waiting to welcome more groups that were not included as yet. The two other synergies Yudhoyono wished to evoke were those between the diaspora, the central government, and local administrations, and between the diaspora and the Indonesian community at home. He applauded the memorandum of understanding signed between the Indonesian Diaspora Business Council and the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry as a way to accelerate business initiatives, and strongly urged congress participants to engage in infrastructural projects executed in Indonesia. He perceived the signing of a memorandum of under-

20 On dual citizenship and dual nationality, see Conway, Potter & St Bernard 2008, Faist 2000, Leblang 2013, and Vertovec 2009:90–93. According to Hamedan 2015, more than 60 countries have implemented full or partial dual citizenship and are reaping the benefits of this policy. Hamedan denies dual citizenship to be antithetical to patriotism. In his opinion, maintaining exclusive citizenship does not make people patriotic by default or more patriotic than people who hold multiple citizenships. Hamedan made a case for a new definition of patriotism as actively serving one’s fatherland and countrymen irrespective of one’s legal status. Unlike President Yudhoyono, current Indonesian President Joko Widodo seems more receptive to the idea that larger remittances and a higher likelihood of return migration could be expected if the Indonesian diaspora were granted political rights.

21 Data about diasporic homecomings are scarce. The most reliable and up-to-date statistics relate to the year 2000 when the number of immigrants in Indonesia consisted of 0.07 percent of the population. This percentage includes return migrants belonging to the Indonesian diaspora. In 2000 the highest number of immigrants came from China (63%) and the Arab world (7%), see Van Lottum 2014:263–66.

standing between the Indonesian Diaspora Network and the state-owned Bank Negara Indonesia as a promising step toward a solid financial partnership.<sup>22</sup>

During the third Congress of Indonesian Diaspora, which took place on August 12 and 13, 2015 in Jakarta, government representatives were quite critical about the accomplishments made so far.<sup>23</sup> Under the slogan *Diaspora bakti bangsa* (Diaspora Devoted to the Nation) Vice-President Jusuf Kalla and Minister of Foreign Affairs Retno Marsudi applauded the growing Indonesian Diaspora Network—at that time encompassing 76 chapters in 44 countries—and the efforts of the 12 task forces established to boost development programs in Indonesia. These forces center on energy, employment, immigration and citizenship, education, science and technology innovation, livable cities, green economy, health, business and investment, cuisine, aerospace, and youth. Kalla and Marsudi were also pleased to announce that the value of remittances to Indonesia had significantly increased again.<sup>24</sup>

However, both the vice-president and the minister confirmed that in terms of organization there was still much to be desired. They argued that the diasporic communities lacked connectivity between themselves and with stakeholders in Indonesia. A common understanding of the notion of diaspora among state and nonstate actors was still absent. In their opinion, prolonged socialization processes were required to remedy this. Furthermore, the planned special desk at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to coordinate diaspora affairs was still not in place. Other speakers at the congress called attention to the need to introduce dual citizenship (still an object of study), promote financial investments (not only venture capital in Silicon Valley), and create an overseas constituency (ensuring the constitutional rights of Indonesian citizens abroad). They considered these actions pivotal to maximizing the potential of the Indonesian diaspora.<sup>25</sup>

22 *Jakarta Globe*, 21 May 2013; *The Jakarta Post*, August 10 and 20, 2013; and Reeve 2014.

23 *The Jakarta Post*, July 30, 2015.

24 *The Jakarta Post*, August 13, 2015. Indonesian reception of remittances: 2012—US\$7.2 billion; 2013—US\$7.6 billion; 2014—US\$8.5 billion; 2015—US\$10.5 billion. Putting these data in perspective: in 2015 the largest recipients of remittances were India (US\$72 billion), China (US\$64 billion), and the Philippines (US\$30 billion). [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPROSPECTS/Resources/334934-1199807908806/4549025-1450455807487/Factbook2016\\_Countries\\_A-L.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPROSPECTS/Resources/334934-1199807908806/4549025-1450455807487/Factbook2016_Countries_A-L.pdf), accessed March 18, 2016.

25 <http://www.tabloiddiplomasi.org/pdf/2016/Januari/Diplomasi%20Agustus%202015%20english.pdf>, accessed March 14, 2016. The Indonesian focus on the United States, and on Silicon Valley in particular, is to large extent inspired by the success of Bangalore, which was developed by Indians having studied and worked in the high-tech sector

Statements delivered during the three diaspora congresses reveal the influence of previous operations initiated by the Indian government. Since the early twenty-first century, Delhi has organized Indian diaspora conferences, awarded legal privileges to Persons of Indian Origin (PIO), and put responsibility for coordinated action with respect to its diaspora in the hands of a Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs. These initiatives are a shining example to Jakarta. On top of this, the Indonesian government has shown a determination to outshine the Filipino diaspora, half the size of the Indonesian equivalent but three times more successful in generating remittances. In order to accomplish this goal, Indonesian embassies diligently support the establishment of new chapters of the Indonesian Diaspora Network and the realization of diaspora projects. In addition, Jakarta has made some concessions in order to encourage return migration. Members of the Indonesian diaspora no longer need a visa and a residence permit if they wish to stay for an extended period of time in Indonesia.<sup>26</sup>

### The Surinamese Agenda

The proclamation of Surinamese independence was accompanied by a speech delivered by Prime Minister Henck Arron which was directed at “all Surinamese in all parts of the world.” With the aim of sending a message of inclusiveness, Arron particularly turned to Surinamese living abroad: “Your country is

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of the economy in the San Francisco Bay Area. In October 2015 and February 2016, President Joko Widodo had meetings with the Indonesian diaspora in Washington DC and San Francisco respectively. In the latter city, he made a strong plea to Indonesians with IT knowledge and experience to return home for good. *The Jakarta Post*, February 18, 2016, <http://www.globalindonesianvoices.com/25050/the-presidents-talent-hunt-in-san-fransisco/>, and <http://www.antarajatim.com/berita/172822/president-meets-indonesia-diaspora-in-san-francisco>, both accessed April 12, 2016.

26 <http://www.tabloiddiplomasi.org/pdf/2016/Januari/Diplomasi%20Agustus%202015%20english.pdf>, accessed March 14, 2016 and Kenny 2013:100–3. Under the slogan Bersinergi Bangun Negeri (Together We Build the Nation) the fourth Congress of Indonesian Diaspora was held on July 1–4, 2017 in Jakarta. Former U.S. President Barack Obama in his keynote speech staunchly defended pluralism, religious tolerance, and mutual respect. His presence underscored Jakarta's continuous preference for reaching out to the Indonesian diaspora in the United States. During the convention Indonesian diaspora members repeated their plea for the introduction of dual citizenship, a move opposition parties in the Indonesian parliament still considered controversial, *The Jakarta Post* and *Jakarta Globe*, both July 3, 2017.

ready to receive you with loving arms. Come back! This country needs you.”<sup>27</sup> Arron’s call to return—specifically meant for Surinamese who had settled in the Netherlands—did not have the intended effect, which is hardly surprising. The road to independence had been rocky and many people—particularly of Hindustani and Javanese descent—had left Suriname to escape ethnic strife and socioeconomic insecurity. Before they would return, they expected the government to demonstrate that, having obtained independent status, things would change for the better (Meel 2014).

In subsequent years substantial improvements did not materialize. In order to regulate the movement of people between the two countries, Surinamese governments primarily clung to the 1975 Toescheidingsovereenkomst (nationality assignment treaty) which granted Surinamese nationality to Surinamese-born citizens living in Suriname and Dutch nationality to Surinamese-born citizens living in the Netherlands. The Toescheidingsovereenkomst offered people of Surinamese descent possessing Dutch nationality unconditional admission to Suriname and the opportunity to apply for Surinamese nationality. Upon arrival in Suriname they were to be treated as Surinamese citizens in every way and be automatically granted Surinamese nationality after having resided in the republic for two years (Article 5). Practically, however, this arrangement did not work out. The Toescheidingsovereenkomst incited ongoing debate with regard to the interpretation of a number of clauses. In 1994, Suriname and the Netherlands agreed to adjust Article 5. The phrase about the automatic granting of Surinamese nationality after two years of residence in the republic was dropped retrospectively from January 1, 1986. As a matter of fact, this stipulation had already lost much of its meaning since in 1980 Paramaribo (in response to a similar measure taken by The Hague) made it compulsory for holders of a Dutch passport to obtain a visa to travel to Suriname, and in 1983 decided that people of Surinamese descent holding Dutch nationality could be refused a visa to enter the country.<sup>28</sup>

The legal controversy surrounding the Toescheidingsovereenkomst reflected the strained relations between Surinamese living in Suriname and abroad. Most Surinamese who had moved to the Netherlands in the 1970s and early 1980s decided to stay there. Surinamese who had remained loyal to the young republic, particularly those championing nationalist views, often considered these expatriates cowards if not traitors. They branded them disloyal

27 Arron 1975:5. Translation from the Dutch by the author.

28 In the context of this article, it is impossible to address the Toescheidingsovereenkomst with due sensitivity to the complexity of the text, the comments it generated, and the lawsuits it provoked. Abhelakh (2010) provides an overview of these.

and dishonored members of the “national family” who selfishly abandoned their native country when things got tough. Those outmigrants who ventured to return, whether for personal reasons or compelled by patriotic zeal, regularly encountered suspicion. Particularly those possessing a higher level of education and a greater fluency in Dutch (including a Dutch accent) not uncommonly gained a reputation for looking down on their fellow countrymen and for being headstrong by taking matters into their own hands. Although this perceived arrogance and intention to control frequently led to Surinamese nationals resenting return migrants, many of them, whether or not implicitly, appreciated the contributions of returnees if these were properly reconciled with prevailing social conventions and codes of conduct.<sup>29</sup>

In 2000, the government coalition disclosed in its program that they would modernize nationality law and consider the possibility of introducing dual nationality. Subsequently, a coalition member of parliament submitted the suggestion of a Surinamese version of the PIO (person of Indian origin) card as an alternative travel document. A conference on dual citizenship in Paramaribo in 2004 produced a legislative proposal which was offered to the Surinamese parliament. The National Assembly, however, refused to put it on their agenda. A parliamentary majority rejected it in advance, labeling it the opposite of “full solidarity” with Suriname. Their principal argument was that people of Surinamese descent holding a Dutch passport and aiming for “the best of both worlds” should not be awarded preferential treatment compared to Surinamese nationals. Nonetheless, in 2005 the government stipulated that people of Surinamese descent holding Dutch nationality would be admitted freely to Suriname having applied for a visa, and could no longer be denied a visa. A follow-up to this provision was presented in 2009 when Paramaribo introduced a tourist visa for all foreigners with Surinamese roots. Valid for three years, this visa provided them with unlimited access to Suriname for visits up to a maximum of 60 days each (Abhelakh 2010:38, 67–81, 98, 126).

Representatives of the administrative elite in Suriname increasingly felt that a shift in mindset was needed. Issues of nationality and residence could no longer be considered in isolation, but should be incorporated into an encompassing project directed at the promotion of the national interest. They believed that politicians should take the lead in constructing a legal framework

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29 According to Tsuda (2009b) a diasporic return can create a disconnection between the homeland (place of origin to which one feels emotionally attached) and the home (a stable place of residence that feels secure, comfortable, and familiar), particularly so if one has arrived home in terms of racial affinity and identification, but fails to obtain the “cultural citizenship” necessary for socioeconomic integration and national belonging.

to allow people of Surinamese descent living abroad to participate in Surinamese society to the benefit of the entire nation without creating improper distinctions between citizens. On Independence Day 2011, following on initiatives taken by the previous government, the Bouterse-led administration introduced a tourist card for foreigners of Surinamese descent and travelers holding Dutch nationality.<sup>30</sup> Residents of the Netherlands could easily obtain the tourist card at Schiphol Airport (Amsterdam) or Johan Adolf Pengel Airport (Zanderij, Suriname). For many people traveling to Suriname, the relatively inexpensive card (allowing holders to stay for 90 days in Suriname) replaced the visa as an entry document.<sup>31</sup>

In the autumn of 2012, the Surinamese government expressed an intention to further investigate whether the multiple connections Surinamese in the Netherlands maintained with Suriname might be strengthened to the mutual benefit of those living in both countries. Following the Indian example, Paramaribo coined the term *Personen van Surinaamse Afkomst* (people of Surinamese origin, PSA) and members of parliament belonging to the government coalition issued a draft bill aiming to list the rights and obligations of this particular category of people. The PSA bill was subject to public consultation in Suriname and the Netherlands, and on December 20, 2013 the Surinamese

30 Quite rapidly Paramaribo extended this regulation to other groups of potential visitors to Suriname, mainly to people holding nationalities of countries in Europe and Latin America, but including Canada, the United States, and Singapore. From March 1, 2016, citizens of countries belonging to UNASUR, CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States), and CARICOM, and those of the People's Republic of China, India, Indonesia, and Turkey were also offered the opportunity to obtain a tourist card if they wished to visit Suriname for touristic purposes. <http://www.gov.sr/ministerie-van-buza/consulaire-diensten/toeristenkaart.aspx> and <http://www.gov.sr/ministerie-van-buza/consulaire-diensten/toeristenkaart/persbericht-toeristenkaart-maart-2016.aspx>, accessed March 14, 2016.

31 In early 2016, the Surinamese government, in dire need of foreign currency to control a rampant financial crisis, increased the price of a tourist card from €20 to €90. This act aroused vehement protest within the Surinamese community in the Netherlands. Arguing that this measure would have the opposite effect, the Surinamese parliament opposed the government's initiative. Paramaribo then set the price of a tourist card at €30. The affair underscored the success of the tourist card as both a travel document and a source of revenue for the Surinamese government. See *Dagblad Suriname*, February 26 and March 15, 2016; *De Ware Tijd*, February 29 and March 2, 3, and 8, 2016; <http://www.stamieuws.com/index.php/welcome/index/nieuwsitem/34254>, accessed March 14, 2016.

parliament adopted it. President Bouterse ratified the law on January 21, 2014. Three months later the PSA bill came into effect.<sup>32</sup>

### Mapping the Indonesian Agenda and the Surinamese Javanese Diaspora in Suriname

The Congress of Indonesian Diaspora in Los Angeles was attended by a small delegation from Suriname. Three representatives (two female, one male) delivered papers, took part in discussions and engaged in networking activities.<sup>33</sup> Their participation was in line with other attempts to intensify Surinamese-Indonesian relations.<sup>34</sup> Since 2000 these connections have been characterized by extension and deepening of cooperation in the fields of culture and religion. Under the aegis of the *Pertjajah Luhur*, the foremost Surinamese Javanese political party chaired by Paul Somohardjo, ties of friendship with the Sultan of Yogyakarta (protector of Javanese culture) were reconfirmed and a memorandum of understanding signed between the national archives of the two countries (focusing on the disclosure of the shared history of Indonesia and Suriname). Furthermore, (Surinamese) Javanese communities in Indonesia, Suriname, and The Netherlands became more closely connected through radio and television stations broadcasting in (Surinamese) Javanese and Bahasa Indonesia, internet websites dedicated to Javanese culture, and increased social media interactions. Through Islamic teachers from Indonesia (but also from other countries in Asia and the Middle East), orthodox Islam seems to be gradually

32 [http://www.dna.sr/media/50202/SB\\_2014\\_\\_no\\_8\\_Wet\\_PSA.pdf](http://www.dna.sr/media/50202/SB_2014__no_8_Wet_PSA.pdf) and <http://www.gov.sr/ministerie-van-buza/consulaire-diensten/personen-van-surinaamse-afkomst.aspx>, accessed March 14, 2016. The first PSA documents were distributed in August 2014, the first PSA cards in December of that year. For more information on the PSA bill, see the last section of this article.

33 Interviews by the author with the former ambassador of Suriname to Indonesia, A. Alihusain-del Castilho (Leiden, May 25, 2013) and Surinamese National Army officer E.M. Redjopawiro (Paramaribo, June 8, 2013), two of the Surinamese attendees who presented papers on Surinamese-Indonesian diplomatic relations and Javanese culture respectively. The third participant, Surinamese National Archives director R. Tjien Fooh-Hardjomohamad, addressed the position of Surinamese Javanese women. See also <http://www.caribbeannewsnow.com/headline-Suriname-participates-in-first-Indonesia-Diaspora-Conference-11782.html>, accessed April 12, 2016.

34 *Dagblad Suriname*, July 15, 2012.

gaining ground among Surinamese Javanese in place of a hitherto dominant trend amalgamating Muslim orthodoxy and pre-Islamic traditions.<sup>35</sup>

The presence of Suriname's Minister of Home Affairs, Soewarto Moestadja, at the second Congress of Indonesian Diaspora in Jakarta was a testimony of the importance Paramaribo attached to Jakarta's diaspora initiatives. Moestadja—at the time a political ally of Somohardjo—favored the maintenance of close relations with Indonesia not only as a government representative, but also personally, as a descendant of Javanese immigrants. At the conference Moestadja advocated the erection of a monument in Central Java depicting the departure of Javanese indentured laborers to Suriname, as a complement to an immigration memorial initiated by a Moestadja-led foundation and donated to the Surinamese community in 2010. In his view, the monument in Central Java should be built in conjunction with a Suriname Institute in Yogyakarta, which would provide information on Surinamese history and promote the country among the Indonesian business elite and Java's expanding middle class. The Congress of Indonesian Diaspora awarded Moestadja the title “Most Senior and Outstanding Member of the Indonesian Diaspora” as a mark of respect for his services and ideas.<sup>36</sup>

During the Jakarta convention, the former Surinamese Ambassador to Indonesia, Angelic Alihusain-del Castilho, stressed the importance of democracy, good governance, and pluralism. In her opinion, a strong civil society, full participation of women and youth, education, and poverty reduction were critical prerequisites for sustainable democracy. She emphasized that political leaders were required to ensure accountability, transparency, and compliance with laws, rules, and regulations. According to Alihusain-del Castilho, the mobilization of manpower, expertise, and skills by members of the Indonesian diaspora

35 Meel 2011:112–17; Ramadhin & Moestadja 2013:174–81, 193–96; and interview by the author with S. Soeropawiro, head of the department of Religious Affairs of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Paramaribo, June 30, 2016.

36 *De Ware Tijd*, September 18, 2013. The Immigration Memorial in Mariënborg—designed by John Djojo, a sculptor, and representing the arrival of the first 94 Javanese immigrants in Suriname in 1890—was initiated by Moestadja's Jamu Foundation. See <http://www.starnieuws.com/index.php/welcome/index/nieuwsitem/15349>, accessed April 15, 2016. *The Jakarta Post*, August 20, 2013, reported that Moestadja (b. 1949) “in broken Javanese” had explained how he had come to live overseas. The Dutch had deceived his father and grandfather about living a better life in another place. They thought they would move to Sumatera, the large island in western Indonesia, but it turned out to be Suriname. Moestadja's grandparents returned to Indonesia in the 1960s. See also *De Ware Tijd*, August 20, September 1 and 20, 2013. The monument in Central Java and the Suriname Institute have not yet been established.

deserved major attention, but would be most rewarding if these could be translated into feasible projects. She strongly advocated the creation of a scholarship program for young Indonesians allowing them to reach high levels of advancement in the field of administration (Alihusain-del Castillo 2013).

The absence of Surinamese delegates at the third and fourth Congress of Indonesian Diaspora was indicative of Suriname's limited room for maneuver. The financial crisis that began in 2015 prevented the Surinamese government from funding the travel and accommodation costs of a delegation to Jakarta. At the same time, one cannot disconnect this nonattendance from the nonexistence of a Surinamese chapter of the Indonesian Diaspora Network. Although there is local support for such a chapter, the natural inclination of Surinamese Javanese to demonstrate their solidarity with Indonesia is challenged by the unitary loyalty Jakarta is demanding from its diaspora. Likewise, the Indonesian embassy in Paramaribo has operated prudently to prevent the establishment of a chapter upholding Surinamese Javanese (party political) objectives instead of Indonesia-centered goals.<sup>37</sup>

In spite of persuasive calls for trade and industrial cooperation by representatives of both countries, no substantial economic links have been forged between Indonesia and Suriname so far. Although it is well known that Jakarta considers Suriname a potential springboard to the rest of the Caribbean (particularly the larger markets on the main islands), Indonesians have not been involved in major business activities in Suriname, apart from some logging operations that peaked in the 1990s. Conversely, Paramaribo has failed to launch substantial investment and trade projects with Indonesia despite the presence of a Surinamese embassy in Jakarta since 2002 and the travels of Paul Somohardjo between 2010 and 2014 as special government representative authorized to reinforce economic relations between the two countries. Neither has Suriname attempted to use Indonesia as a gateway to establish business alliances with other Southeast Asian countries and Australia (Alihusain 2016:81, 99).<sup>38</sup>

37 Interview by the author with R. Tjien Foooh-Hardjomohamad (Paramaribo, June 21, 2016).

38 In order to obtain capital to promote agricultural, infrastructural, and private sector development and trade with other member countries—including Indonesia—in the past few years the Surinamese government has aspired to collaborate more closely with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the IsDB, of which Suriname has been a member since 1996 and 1997 respectively. See <http://www.starnieuws.com/index.php/welcome/index/nieuwsitem/34584> and <http://www.starnieuws.com/index.php/welcome/index/nieuwsitem/34701>, accessed April 15, 2016.

The Surinamese Javanese population group in Suriname is well represented in many sectors of the local economy. However, there is no sizeable and powerful Surinamese Javanese entrepreneurial class. Identifying potential collaboration projects with Indonesia, Surinamese Javanese political leaders routinely connect to the (semi)rural background of the majority of their supporters. Consequently, there have been talks between Surinamese and Indonesian officials about projects related to crop production, animal husbandry, fishery, and forestry, but no feasible initiatives have yet been developed.<sup>39</sup> Like members of other Surinamese population groups, Surinamese Javanese have increasingly turned their backs on rural occupations and have focused on obtaining jobs in the service industry.

From an economic point of view, Suriname has little to offer Indonesian business partners. Potential traders and investors face a small market, a lack of local capital and expertise, obsolete infrastructure, suboptimal production facilities, and administrative and legal deficiencies.<sup>40</sup> Besides this, they are confronted with the limited added value of Surinamese products (lacking labels such as “organic” or “fair trade”), relatively high wages, and reluctance on the part of the Surinamese government to grant Indonesian firms preferential treatment (such as tax exemptions or transport advantages).<sup>41</sup> Understandably, Indonesian corporations turn to neighboring Caribbean governments to investigate business opportunities. They consider Trinidad and Tobago particularly attractive due to its relatively strong economic performance, advanced business climate, and CARICOM-centered position.

39 Palm oil production was on the Surinamese-Indonesian business agenda for a number of years. Interview by the author with the first Surinamese ambassador to Indonesia S. Rasam (Paramaribo, November 3, 2011). More recent examples of possible joint ventures have been the cultivation of rambutan (a tropical fruit), the commencement of aquaculture activities, and the production of jati (a teak hardwood species), *De Ware Tijd*, April 25, 2013. In the past few years, trade between Suriname and Indonesia has mainly consisted of export of furniture, clothes, and food from Indonesia to Suriname. Trade volumes: 2012—US\$8.9 million; 2013—US\$7.4 million; 2014—US\$8.2 million (*De West*, September 25, 2015).

40 Assessing the ease of doing business in 189 economies in 2016, the World Bank ranked Suriname 156 and Indonesia 109. In the categories Starting a Business and Enforcing Contracts Suriname held position 183 and 186 respectively. See <http://www.doingbusiness.org/rankings> (accessed April 15, 2016). In the 2017 World Bank report, which judged the ease of doing business in 190 economies, Suriname ranked 158 and Indonesia 91. See <http://www.doingbusiness.org/Rankings> (accessed October 28, 2016).

41 *De Ware Tijd*, April 26, 2013.

Moreover, Indonesian trade and industry actors are well aware that since the 1990s Paramaribo has predominantly focused on collaboration with Chinese enterprises. These have become a major player in the Surinamese commodity extraction industry (logging), have built up a reliable reputation as partners in technical cooperation projects (public housing, road rehabilitation), are a dominant force in retail trade, and have demonstrated a keen interest in participating in agricultural projects. It is likely that Indonesian firms will refrain from attempts to catch up with Chinese rival companies. Currently, in terms of capital, expertise, and assertiveness they are no match for corporations supported by Beijing (Tjon Sie Fat 2009).

If we examine the attitude of Surinamese Javanese in Suriname toward (re)migration to Indonesia, the picture is clear. Taking into account the standard of living in the archipelago, Indonesia does not rank high on their list.<sup>42</sup> Although their visits to Indonesia (notably as roots tourists) have become more frequent in the past decades and have allowed them to contemplate return migration, they have rarely ventured to reside there. This primarily has to do with family, friendship, and community ties which span a greater distance (physically and psychologically) and are experienced as less intense and sophisticated compared to similar connections Surinamese Javanese maintain with relatives and acquaintances in the Netherlands (Meel 2011).<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, Indonesia's administrative track record and political culture, particularly pertaining to the observance of human rights, feed Surinamese Javanese skepticism about moving to the ancestral homeland.<sup>44</sup> Their full participation in

42 Ranked by gross national income per capita (average income of a country's citizens according to 2014 World Bank data), differences between the three homelands stand out: the Netherlands (high income) 15; Suriname (upper-middle income) 75; and Indonesia (lower-middle income) 122. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_countries\\_by\\_GNI\\_\(nominal,\\_Atlas\\_method\)\\_per\\_capita](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GNI_(nominal,_Atlas_method)_per_capita) (accessed April 15, 2016). The 2015 UNDP Human Development Report ranks the Netherlands 5th, Suriname 103th, and Indonesia 110th. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries> (accessed April 15, 2016).

43 In their overview of factors involved in making a decision to return, Plaza and Henry (2009:166–71) pay special attention to the determining role of social capital and transnational reciprocal linkages.

44 According to the Freedom House rating *Freedom in the World 2016*, the Netherlands and Suriname enjoy "free status," Indonesia is judged "partly free." Scores Suriname: Political Rights: 2; Civil Liberties: 3; Freedom Rating: 2.5. Scores Indonesia: Political Rights: 2; Civil Liberties: 4; Freedom Rating: 3 (1 = most free and 7 = least free). See <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2016> (accessed April 15, 2016). On the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index 2015, the Netherlands rank 5th, both Suriname and Indonesia are 88th. See <http://www.transparency.org/country> (accessed

parliamentary politics in Suriname and attachment to democratic power sharing and the rule of law are assets that members of this population group do not easily abandon.<sup>45</sup>

From the Indonesian point of view, Surinamese Javanese do not correspond to Jakarta's preference for highly educated knowledge workers who wish to dedicate themselves to reinforcing Indonesia's economic growth and accomplishing the country's regional ambitions. The level of education and the standard of living of most Surinamese Javanese in Suriname are modest, particularly compared to diaspora members living in high-income countries. Surinamese Javanese in Suriname maintaining personal connections with Indonesia only infrequently transfer money or goods to overseas family members. Given the limited volume of their remittance transactions, Surinamese Javanese contributions to Indonesia's gross national income must be considered negligible.<sup>46</sup>

The modest socioeconomic position and education level apply specifically to older-generation Surinamese Javanese, who identify more closely with Indonesia than the younger generations of Surinamese Javanese. The latter have better job market potential on average, but as a rule only symbolically relate to the country of their ancestors. However, for all generations it holds true that the strength of family, friendship, and community ties, attachment to liberal democracy and contentment with existing socioeconomic status explain why Surinamese Javanese in Suriname do not demonstrate a willingness, let alone a readiness, to return to Indonesia.<sup>47</sup> Paraphrasing Tsuda: Surinamese Javanese in Suriname are neither triggered by economic motives to move to Indonesia nor do their ethnic ties and affinities channel their "going back."<sup>48</sup>

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April 15, 2016). On the AON Political Risk Map 2016 Suriname, Indonesia, and the Netherlands are listed in the categories "medium high risk," "medium risk," and "not rated" respectively. See <https://www.riskmaps.aon.co.uk/site/map.aspx> (accessed April 15, 2016).

45 Although Surinamese Javanese in Suriname do not perceive a physical return to Indonesia as an attractive prospect, it can be assumed that among the older generation Indonesia will continue to serve as "a multi-faceted canvas for projections of longings for a better tomorrow and of a golden yesteryear" (Missbach & Myrntinen 2014:142).

46 Reliable data with respect to the flow of remittances from Suriname to Indonesia are not available.

47 According to Cassarino (2004:271), willingness and readiness are the key elements constituting the preparedness of return migrants.

48 Tsuda 2009a. Unlike return migration from Suriname to Indonesia, immigration from Indonesia to Suriname has been the object of official negotiations between the two countries a number of times. In the mid-1980s talks were held on the governmental level about the admission of sizable numbers of Javanese workers to Suriname. Paramaribo had set its sights on Javanese who had completed intermediate vocational education and were

## Mapping the Surinamese Agenda and the Surinamese Javanese Diaspora in the Netherlands

The PSA initiative of five members of the Surinamese parliament—among them *Pertjajah Luhur* leader Paul Somohardjo—provoked considerable public debate in Suriname. Preceding the drafting of the bill on January 14, 2012, the *Vooruitstrevende Hervormingspartij* (Progressive Reform Party, VHP) scheduled a conference which recommended the formulation of an integrated diaspora policy of which a PSA bill was to be a vital part.<sup>49</sup> In the Netherlands, the *Surinaams Inspraak Orgaan* (Surinamese Consultative Body, SIO)—linking the Surinamese community, Dutch societal actors, and the Dutch government—together with four Surinamese associations, organized hearings and opinion polls.<sup>50</sup> Although it is hard to tell whether the results of their investigations

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ready to bolster a Surinamese middle class at that time suffering from economic hardship. Jakarta supported outmigration to Suriname, judging it a welcome opportunity to reduce overpopulation on the Indonesian core island. However, Surinamese fear of upsetting the existing ethnic equilibrium eventually blocked the adoption of this plan. See Archives of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Hague, Code 9/1985–1989/1224, 2457 and 3376–912.2 Indonesië-Suriname. In 2015, a similar situation occurred when news reached Surinamese media that government ministers were negotiating with the governor of Central Java the immigration of 500 Javanese nurses. Although details about a possible deal have remained obscure and misconceptions seemed to have affected the reporting, public debates reflected concern over a peaceful consolidation of the Surinamese plural society. See <http://www.starnieuws.com/index.php/welcome/index/nieuwsitem/31836>, <http://www.starnieuws.com/index.php/welcome/index/nieuwsitem/31873>, <http://www.starnieuws.com/index.php/welcome/index/nieuwsitem/31893> (all three accessed April 15, 2016); <http://www.starnieuws.com/index.php/welcome/index/nieuwsitem/34981> (accessed May 2, 2016), *De Ware Tijd*, October 22, 2015 and *Dagblad Suriname*, October 22 and 23, 2015. Philippine medical doctors and nurses have temporarily filled vacancies in the Surinamese public health sector.

49 “Aanzet tot een diasporabeleid voor Suriname. Conferentie georganiseerd door de VHP in het IGSR gebouw, Universiteitscampus. Verslag, conclusies en aanbevelingen. Paramaribo, 14 januari 2012”; this document is no longer downloadable from the VHP website. The VHP is one of Suriname’s oldest and foremost political parties, with a strong Indian support base.

50 The four associations were *Vereniging Surinaamse Nederlanders* (VSN), *Vereniging van Reizigers* (VVR), *Vereniging Oudere Surinamers* (VOS), and *Collectief Overzee Surinamers* (COS). In November 2013, SIO, VSN, and *Stichting Kenniskring Nederland-Suriname* (KK) proclaimed the *Platform Surinaamse Diaspora* (PSD), *De Ware Tijd*, November, 23, 24, 25, and 26, 2013. The author is indebted to Owen Venloo for sharing his thoughts on the consultation process in the Netherlands and to Roy Ashruf for sending him the

adequately represented the viewpoints of the Surinamese population group in the Netherlands, it is striking to see that they largely overlapped with the proposals and suggestions generated by participants in the VHP conference.

There seemed to be a *communis opinio* with respect to the size of the PSA group. Discussants agreed that this category should not be confined to first-, second-, and third-generation descendants, but had to include all people of Surinamese origin who felt emotionally connected to Suriname. Mutual understanding, acceptance, and respect should mark the relations between the diaspora and Surinamese nationals. Representatives of both groups were expected to regard each other as partners cooperating on an equal footing and on a complimentary basis for the benefit of the Surinamese nation to which they all belonged. Members of the diaspora should hold the same rights as Surinamese nationals in matters related to ownership, possession, permits, and public facilities. However, members of the diaspora could not vote or run as a candidate at elections. These privileges required possession of Surinamese nationality. The same conditions applied to candidates standing for public office such as prosecutor, judge, or chairman of the board of directors of a state company. Finally, a majority of those engaged in the PSA discussions unequivocally rejected the introduction of dual nationality.<sup>51</sup>

More fervently than members of the Surinamese diaspora in the Netherlands, participants in the VHP conference argued that an effective and sustainable diaspora policy should be part of an overall development policy, founded on the principle of good governance and public-private partnerships, and supported by a separate Ministry of Diaspora Affairs (or a diaspora desk at the central ministries engaged in these matters).<sup>52</sup> They maintained that the state should mainly act as facilitator, providing the necessary legal framework, guaranteeing security, socioeconomic and political stability, investment protection and transparent financial transactions, and promoting business productivity. Furthermore, the Surinamese government should emphasize the acquisition

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final SIO report containing recommendations of the Surinamese diaspora directed at the Surinamese government.

51 Since 2008, Paul Somohardjo has indicated that he is in favor of the introduction of dual nationality. See Abhelakh 2010:110–11, 127, 129, and 134, and *De Ware Tijd*, February 20, 2014.

52 The conference attendees recommended that the outcome of future discussions between Paramaribo and The Hague concerning the Toescheidingsovereenkomst should be incorporated into the new diaspora policy as well. Although Suriname and the Netherlands concur that a new agreement should replace the Toescheidingsovereenkomst—in hindsight awarding the treaty a transitional status—differences of opinion regarding the accommodation of the Surinamese diaspora have hindered consensus thus far.

of expertise and experience and the tapping of networks in order to foster the country's planning and execution capacity. The conference attendees believed that allowing reliable corporations and institutions to issue diaspora bonds could supplement the flow of remittances to Suriname and create an additional source of investment.<sup>53</sup>

The PSA bill the Surinamese parliament adopted unanimously in December 2013 only partly reflected the views of the Surinamese community in the Netherlands and the participants in the VHP conference.<sup>54</sup> The new law stipulated that those eligible for PSA status either do not hold Surinamese nationality but were born in Suriname, or were not born in Suriname but have at least one parent or grandparent who were born in Suriname. People can apply for PSA status and will receive a PSA document signifying that their status has been activated. Those who choose to become a *resident* of Suriname will obtain a PSA card. According to the bill, people holding PSA status enjoy rights that foreigners lack: (a) they have access to Suriname anytime and from any location without being obliged to apply for a tourist card or another entrance document; (b) in case of an emergency in the country where they stay, they can receive Surinamese diplomatic support; (c) they are allowed to stay in Suriname for six months and can extend their stay for another six months provided that they can cover their own living and housing expenses; (d) having obtained permission to stay for six or twelve months they can register as residents of Suriname; (e) they receive a residence document from the moment they set foot on Surinamese soil; (f) during their stay in Suriname they are free to work without a work permit. People holding a PSA card have the right to stay in Suriname permanently. Whether holding a PSA document or PSA card, people with PSA status are not allowed to vote, nor can they hold public office in Suriname.<sup>55</sup>

53 In 2014, Suriname received remittances totaling US\$151 million, which is close to 4 percent of Suriname's GDP. The latter percentage fluctuated between 3 and 4 percent in the 2008–14 period, <http://idbdocs.iadb.org/wsdocs/getDocument.aspx?DOCNUM=39619143> (accessed April 30, 2016). The money transfers are mainly used to cover the recipient's basic living expenses and boost his/her purchasing power.

54 *De Ware Tijd*, December, 20, 21, and 22, 2013.

55 [http://www.dna.sr/media/50202/SB\\_2014\\_no\\_8\\_Wet\\_PSA.pdf](http://www.dna.sr/media/50202/SB_2014_no_8_Wet_PSA.pdf) and <http://www.gov.sr/ministerie-van-buza/consulaire-diensten/personen-van-surinaamse-afkomst.aspx> (accessed March 14, 2016). Shortly after the adoption of the PSA bill, the nationality question briefly gained momentum. The Surinaamse Voetbal Bond (Surinamese Soccer Union, SVB) instigated the preparation of two draft bills intending to introduce dual nationality for Surinamese residing in the Netherlands. The bills were primarily targeted at talented Dutch soccer players of Surinamese descent. If they could be awarded Surinamese nation-

The PSA bill can be considered a cautious step forward in engaging the Surinamese diaspora in Surinamese affairs. Paramaribo is discreetly reaching out to overseas Surinamese and has created some provisions, but shies away from recommendations to include the PSA bill into an integrated development policy (Gowricharn 2015). Basically, the government is balancing the desire to collaborate more closely with the Surinamese diaspora and benefit from their contributions, and the need to protect the rights and freedoms of Surinamese nationals, preventing nonnationals from relegating them to the position of second-class citizens. This tension is particularly noticeable in Paramaribo's struggles with the issue of dual nationality.

Does the PSA bill encourage return migration to Suriname? Before embarking on this issue it is worthwhile to chart the motives return migrants put forward during interviews conducted in the context of the 2012 census. Their responses ranged from "Suriname is fatherland" (31%) and "family reunion" (11%) to "has completed a study" (11%), "homesickness" (7%), "traveled with parents/family" (6%), and "started a business/accepted a job" (4%).<sup>56</sup> Apart from the possibility that the high percentage of interviewees commenting "Suriname is fatherland" might be giving a socially desirable response, it should

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ality alongside their Dutch nationality, they could play for the Surinamese national soccer team, bringing qualification for the next World Cup closer. The Surinamese parliamentary opposition, sympathetic to these ideas and thrilled by the prospect that Suriname might play a role on the world stage, adopted the svb draft bills and submitted them to parliament. The government coalition, also in favor of the plans, accused the opposition of performing a solo act and revealing a nonnationalist stand. Moreover, they argued that the bills had been handed in too hastily, since they had not passed the parliamentary legal department. Sustained tensions between the two political camps—both increasingly aiming at greater popularity on the eve of new elections—hindered a serious discussion of the draft bills in parliament. Observers claimed that the initiators had erroneously neglected Dutch law, which excluded the possibility of holding dual nationality. If Surinamese with Dutch nationality adopted Surinamese nationality they would automatically lose their Dutch nationality. It seemed unlikely that Dutch soccer players of Surinamese origin would consent to this. Following these sobering comments, the discussion concerning dual nationality petered out. Many Surinamese on both sides of the Atlantic consider dual nationality beneficial for maintaining diasporic connections. Nevertheless, they cannot but acquiesce to the existing legal impediments and the patriotic sentiment reflecting a firmly rooted belief that dual nationality poses a threat to nation-state sovereignty and integrity (*Dagblad Suriname*, October, 6, 13, and 14 and December 11, 12, and 29, 2014; *De Ware Tijd*, December 1, 15, and 27, 2014 and January 6, 2015).

56 Gmelch (1980, 1983) was one of the first to observe the importance of pull over push factors in return migration decisions.

be acknowledged that a large number of alternative responses were listed in the categories “different reason” (19%) and “unknown” (6%). The last two replies might hide a reluctance to be open about return, but a valid explanation could also be that the motives people referred to were too numerous to justify the use of simple keywords. The answer least given was “retirement” (1%). Given the fact that quite a few Surinamese in the Netherlands had reached the retirement age in 2012, it is difficult to judge the infrequency of this response. Since the above replies were recorded without registering the ethnic origin of the respondents, it is not possible to convincingly connect motives relating to return migration to the Surinamese Javanese diaspora.<sup>57</sup>

Keeping this in mind, we can argue that for Surinamese Javanese living in the Netherlands the possession of PSA status has the potential to propel return migration to Suriname. As postcolonial migrants their integration into Dutch society has progressed well, particularly taking into account their labor market participation, educational achievement, and health, but less so when examining their sociocultural and religious inwardlookingness, reliance on family relations, and corresponding low preference for interethnic marriages.<sup>58</sup> To the general Dutch population, Surinamese Javanese have remained a subgroup difficult to distinguish from the (much larger) Indo Dutch and (considerably smaller) Indonesian community, and are rather invisible in daily life.<sup>59</sup> In the Dutch branch of the Indonesian Diaspora Network, Surinamese Javanese are outnumbered by Indonesians and Indo Dutch. On the basis of these (admittedly still scanty) data, we can postulate that different generations of Surinamese Javanese in the Netherlands experience varying degrees of integration and can be assumed to have different reasons to consider (re)settlement in Suriname.

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- 57 <http://www.statistics-suriname.org/index.php/statistieken/downloads/category/30-censusstatistieken-2012> (accessed April 30, 2016). From 2000, up to and including 2012, a total of 13,000 persons holding Dutch nationality (predominantly of Surinamese origin) migrated to Suriname; ultimately 5,200 of them returned to the Netherlands (*De Ware Tijd*, October 28, 2013). In 2013 and 2014, 2,056 and 2,067 Surinamese migrated to Suriname and 1,724 and 1,609 Surinamese went to the Netherlands (*De West*, September 9, 2015). Although estimates rather than facts, and not in every respect conclusive about the type of migration, these data indicate a small return migration surplus. It is not feasible to correlate these data to individual ethnic groups.
- 58 Oostindie (2012:106–10) rightly points to the absence of hard data with respect to their integration.
- 59 For most people in the Netherlands, the Surinamese Javanese presence in public space seems to be confined to their family-based ethnic restaurants which serve well-liked dishes (see Djasmadi, Mingoen & Soemopawiro 2015).

First-generation migrants are mainly tempted by the quality of life available in their native country (physical and social climate, cultural and religious codes of conduct, language familiarity) and by the opportunity as retirees to share job experiences and skills, use social and cultural capital, and invest financial capital in small businesses. There are indications that between 2005 and 2015—years of economic progress in Suriname—return migration (of a temporary and permanent nature) by first-generation Surinamese Javanese increased. Generally preparations for retirement migration are carried out well in advance by accumulating savings and investing in house construction at the future place of residence during the time spent in the Netherlands. Resettlement aspirations are mainly targeted at living in an urban or suburban environment (Greater Paramaribo) and presuppose the maintenance of strong family ties and regular visits to children and grandchildren who have stayed in the Netherlands, particularly on occasions of birth, marriage, and burial.<sup>60</sup>

Second-generation Surinamese Javanese are attracted by the prospect of actively contributing to the development of the country of their parents, boosting production in sectors such as health, education, banking, housing, agriculture, and tourism, and molding a life targeted at personal growth. They perceive the opportunity to obtain PSA status as advantageous, although their background as midcareer professionals and their relatively high standard of living do not deter them from seeking new challenges. This often inspires them to combine temporary residence in Suriname and elsewhere. Depending on their personal experiences and job preferences, at a certain point in time they commonly trade Suriname permanently for the Netherlands or a different destination.

Third-generation Surinamese Javanese weigh the costs and benefits of staying in Suriname as exchange students or interns and contemplate whether their future life should be more structurally connected to this country. They regard the provision of security and socioeconomic and political stability by the Surinamese state as a crucial factor in making a decision to leave for Suriname. This holds particularly true for third-generation migrants, since they have generally been well assimilated into the networks and institutions of Dutch society and have adopted a more cautious stance toward the homeland of their parents.

60 Information shared by Hariëtte Mingoen, chair of the Stichting Comité Herdenking Javanese Immigratie (Foundation of Slavery and Indentured Labour: Past, Present and Future, Paramaribo, Suriname, June 6–10, 2013. See also Potter et al. 2004:84–86.

Third-generation Surinamese Javanese are equally prone to the ambivalence demonstrated by Surinamese society toward “newcomers” from the Netherlands, although their inquisitive outlook and more cosmopolitan values allow them to escape social tensions better than members of the first and second generations of Surinamese Javanese.<sup>61</sup>

Following Cassarino’s model, Surinamese Javanese in the Netherlands about to return to Suriname can be said to demonstrate low as well as high levels of preparedness, hold residence status but most often also citizenship status, possess property in proportion to their employment history, have reached their migration objectives (if they were not born in the Netherlands), identify new opportunities in their (or their parents’) country of origin, rely on savings, networks, work experience and various levels of education, and have stayed in the Netherlands for a varying numbers of years, mainly depending on the generation they belong to. Adding to Cassarino’s findings, Hein De Haas and Tineke Fokkema contend that sociocultural integration in the receiving country has a negative effect on return migration intentions, while economic integration and transnational ties have more ambiguous and sometimes positive effects (De Haas and Fokkema 2011). These observations also have relevance for a better understanding of Surinamese Javanese return migrants.

With regard to the Surinamese Javanese diaspora in the Netherlands, Tsuda’s theory is more difficult to apply. This stems from the fact that his insights are informed by research on diasporas territorially connected with Europe and East Asia. Notably, countries that accommodate population groups dealing with the effects of (post)colonialism are disregarded, as are ethnic communities with a tradition of mentally and physically crossing North-South boundaries. More specifically, Tsuda is unfamiliar with the Caribbean region, where (return) migration decision-making has always been greatly determined by ethnic-based sociocultural motives. In common with Afro-Caribbean and Indo-Caribbean migrants, Surinamese Javanese migrants attribute great importance to the maintenance of family ties, corresponding values of communal solidarity and safety, and shared cultural, spiritual, and religious beliefs. Even

61 Keeping track of the movements of second- and third-generation Surinamese Javanese return migrants will require much more research than has been conducted so far. Data available on these generations are scarce and sketchy, and have mainly been obtained by personal communication with the informants whose names are listed in the footnotes. See also Cassarino 2004:271–75; De Souza 2005:139–41; and footnote 10. For all three generations the facilitating role of the Surinamese embassy in The Hague is important. On the performance of Caribbean diplomatic representations, see Joseph, Franklin & Hosein 2013:126–33.

during a protracted absence from Suriname, they remain closely connected to their Caribbean-based households. Tsuda's theory does not sufficiently account for this.<sup>62</sup>

Both Cassarino and De Haas and Fokkema pay attention to the family ties migrants tend to maintain. They acknowledge the power and importance of this resource, predominantly from the perspective of social network theory. It is useful to reemphasize the pivotal role of family relations in the Caribbean and summarize the functions households play in Surinamese Javanese life. Annemarie de Waal Malefijt distinguished six types of household, ranging from the nuclear family and variations of the extended family, to families consisting of a single person (De Waal Malefijt 1963:44–150). Over the years in Suriname and the Netherlands the composite family has increasingly made room for the nuclear family, but basically their functions have remained unchanged: they are sources of belonging, providers of support, bearers of social-cultural capital, and repositories of norms and values. Surinamese Javanese families to a large extent safeguard the continuation of the Surinamese Javanese population group.<sup>63</sup>

### Conclusion

The call to the Indonesian diaspora to come “home” has been heard by Surinamese Javanese in Suriname and the Netherlands. Jakarta's and Paramaribo's outreach policies have intuitively struck a responsive chord, invoking a stronger awareness of a shared identity with overseas co-ethnics and reaffirming a sense of belonging to the “big Indonesian family.” Surinamese Javanese engagement in the Congresses of Indonesian Diaspora is a testimony of this. Experiences with respect to the Indonesian Diaspora Network differ. There is no chapter of this network in Suriname. The chapter in the Netherlands has attracted Surinamese Javanese, but its membership is dominated by representatives of the Indonesian and Indo-Dutch community.

The effects of the Indonesian diaspora policy have been limited thus far. This is due to the ambivalent nature of this policy and to Jakarta's focus on

62 On the importance of family ties within the Surinamese Javanese diaspora, see Djasmadi, Hoeffte & Mingoen 2010; Grasveld & Breunissen 1990; Kopijn & Mingoen 2008; and Van Walsum 2000.

63 Caribbean transnational families and family relations are examined in Chamberlain 1997, 1998, 1999, 2006; Goulbourne 2002; Goulbourne et al. 2010; Goulbourne & Chamberlain 2001; Olwig 2007, 2012; Reynolds 2004, 2010; and Thomas-Hope 1998.

a particular type of return migrant. Indonesia has turned its attention to the potential contributions of its diaspora and for this reason has vigorously promoted the strengthening of the “big Indonesian family.” However, it has avoided taking legal action to convince aspirant return migrants that Jakarta is ready to wholeheartedly receive them. The debate about dual citizenship reflects an Indonesian state falling back on established notions of state and nation, and circumventing the creation of proper preconditions for return migrants. Jakarta’s outspoken preference for highly developed knowledge workers and providers of remittances primarily exposes Indonesia’s self-centeredness.

Although operating in a different power configuration, the effects of Suriname’s diaspora policy are similar. Representing a small Caribbean state encumbered by economic constraints, Paramaribo has a limited capacity for connecting its diaspora more closely to Suriname. Still caught up in a process of phasing out bilateral economic relations with the Netherlands, Paramaribo has difficulty developing a policy that honors the wishes of the Surinamese diaspora while guaranteeing the rights and freedoms of Surinamese nationals. The government pays lip service to the expected advantages of stronger diasporic connections, but its discourse revolves around surviving concepts of nationalism and sovereignty, creating a legal puzzle which is problematic. Paramaribo does not hold strong opinions about a preferred type of return migrant, but seems determined to allow only a manageable flow of migrants to enter Suriname.

Surinamese Javanese in Suriname carefully weigh the political, economic, and sociocultural pros and cons when considering return migration. As a rule, the net result of such reflection is to highlight their achievements in Suriname, which unmistakably discourages them from moving to Indonesia. The strength of their family, friendship and community ties, their attachment to liberal democracy, and their contentment with their socioeconomic status in Suriname simply rule out any ambition to trade that life for a future they deem less safe and lacking a clear perspective. They acknowledge that their socialization in a Creolized setting and their more Westernized outlook would make living in Indonesia more complicated than living in Suriname.

When considering residence in Suriname, Surinamese Javanese in the Netherlands identify several options. Retired Surinamese Javanese receiving their pension in euros can live quite a comfortable life in Suriname. Surinamese Javanese professionals hiring themselves out on contracts can be semipermanent or temporary residents in Suriname, whereas Surinamese Javanese youngsters can take part in traineeships and might consider sojourning in Suriname as a transitory phase of their life. However, the postcolonial conditions they have to deal with, including the recurring financial crises Suriname has been

facing, will persuade most Surinamese Javanese not to give up residence in the Netherlands for good.

Tsuda has incorporated two factors—economy and ethnicity—into his return migration theory. He is right in that economy matters, although for Surinamese Javanese economic conditions do not constitute the prime pull factor when considering return. Obviously, they are not willing to accept a deterioration of their socioeconomic and financial position, but overall they lack the ambition to embark on a new career in order to substantially improve their standard of living. Financial aspects seem more important for second- and third-generation Surinamese Javanese in the Netherlands than for first-generation Surinamese Javanese, but these groups also understand that Suriname is not a preferred destination for accumulating capital and creating opportunities for upward mobility.

Unlike Tsuda, who refrains from articulating the family-related motives that encourage people to contemplate return, Cassarino offers a more balanced and comprehensive alternative addressing a broader spectrum of opportunities and restraints in both the pre- and postreturn stage of migration movement. Although he pays due attention to household relations, it is very important to emphasize the pivotal role family ties play in return migration discussions. Surinamese Javanese still attribute considerable significance to the manifold functions of the ethnic family, in the metaphorical sense as advertised by Jakarta and Paramaribo, but particularly in daily practice. In most cases household membership and connections trigger Surinamese Javanese return migration, and corresponding sociocultural, spiritual, and religious motives do not so much go hand in hand with, but ultimately override economic motives.

Despite the fact that Jakarta's and Paramaribo's diaspora policies are still in their infancy, there is reasonable doubt whether Indonesia and Suriname will be able and willing to provide legislative creativity, socioeconomic opportunities, political stability, and an inclusive approach to nation building. It can be taken for granted that symbolic and temporary returns to Indonesia and Suriname, and the maintenance of sociocultural, spiritual, and religious connections with their ancestral heritage will remain features of Surinamese Javanese life. Under the present circumstances, however, it seems unlikely that Surinamese Javanese return migration will receive a significant boost and will enter a new stage comparable in size and impact to Surinamese Javanese remigration in the first half of the twentieth century.

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