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Leiden

The Netherlands

Social Subjecthood? The inclusion of (post)colonial migrants in Dutch, French, and British welfare states, 1945-1970

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Citation

Wolff, E. A. (2024, June 18). *Social Subjecthood?: The inclusion of (post)colonial migrants in Dutch, French, and British welfare states, 1945-1970*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3763857>

Version: Publisher's Version

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Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

6. The struggle over Westernness: (post)colonial migrants in the Dutch welfare state

[Our] task involved - and still involves - the integration of an important number of citizens, who were attuned to the way of life in Indonesia, into the cultural and social system here. This integration entails the *transformation of the entire relocated person*, not only in a material, social and cultural sense, but also in a spiritual sense.

Report by Protestant Churches of the Netherlands, 1950¹

6.1. Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the provisions made available to migrants from present-day Indonesia in the Netherlands. The analysis is divided by attention to social assistance (6.2) and old-age pensions (6.3), which was the first national (rather than employee) insurance scheme in the Netherlands. I find that exclusion from the distributive community was mostly accomplished through citizenship and immigration law, while social legislation was relatively inclusive: all migrants from Indonesia could request social assistance under the municipal system of poor relief (although assistance was granted at the discretion of local officials until 1965), and all residents of the Netherlands were mandatorily included in the General Old Age Act (AOW).

However, the texture of inclusion varied across differently racialised groups of migrants. A relatively generous regime including income transfers under national group schemes for war victims and repatriates, the 1965 General Assistance Act and entitlement under the transitional rules of the AOW awaited those whom the colonial state had recognised as Dutch citizens, whom the postcolonial state recognised as repatriates. However, those who were racialised as culturally distant “Eastern” citizens experienced paternalistic forms of welfare that involved elaborate efforts to stamp out culturally deviant traits. Regrettants, despite mostly lacking citizenship upon arrival, ultimately joined repatriates in a regime of hyper-assimilation as, driven by an ideological contest over their cultural proximity, their exclusion from the AOW transitional rules was reversed in 1961. Moluccans benefited from these lobbying efforts as policymakers could see no valid reason to exclude them from the transitional rules once regrettants had access. However, their experience of the post-war Dutch welfare state still most closely resembles ghettoisation.

6.2. Targeted, in-kind social assistance

6.2.1. Formal entitlements

In the immediate post-war period, the administration of social assistance in the Netherlands was largely in the hands of municipal social services departments that had emerged out of

1 NL-UtA-1405-391-“Rapport inzake de geestelijke verzorging der gerepatrieerden namens de Protestantse Kerken in Nederland (ZD).”

civic poor boards and poor councils prior to the Second World War (see 4.2.5). These services were responsible for offering financial assistance and for coordinating the efforts of charitable organisations and churches who were interested in staying involved in helping the needy but lacked sufficient resources of their own.

The entitlement of (post)colonial migrants under this system was not guaranteed, but neither was the entitlement of *anyone*. During the discussions of the “new” 1912 Poor Law, a socialist MP proposed such an entitlement, and it was explicitly rejected.² Until 1965, assistance was granted on a case-by-case basis, rather than as a right. In practice, local institutions (charitable, private, or civic) did assist needy foreigners, suggesting that nationality was not a criterion of entitlement.³ Oostindie has argued that “there were few political debates about limiting access to [this] social assistance [for Indonesian migrants]. At the time of the mass migration from Indonesia, the overall level of such assistance was very modest anyway.”⁴ Ellemers and Vaillant confirm that in emergency situations, repatriates could claim municipal assistance.⁵ Indeed, the CCKP, an umbrella organisation for the private care of repatriates from Indonesia (see 6.2.3), admitted that financial assistance, or “material care,” required the involvement of municipal services. “Appeals to municipal social services will be necessary on several occasions,” a CCKP official admitted, and strongly recommended that local committees of their organisation include a representative of municipal services for this reason.⁶

When in 1963 the General Assistance Act was introduced, it explicitly renounced government obligations toward non-citizens.⁷ The first article of the law reads that municipal assistance will be granted to “every Dutch citizen who finds himself [*sic*] or threatens to find himself in such circumstances that he lacks the means to provide for the necessary costs of existence.”⁸ Practically speaking this meant that regretants would be excluded unless and until they could naturalise as Dutch citizens, which frequently took place years and sometimes decades after their arrival in the Netherlands.⁹ Equally, Moluccans, most of whom were stateless, lacked entitlements under the General Assistance Act. For both these groups, a targeted scheme was in place instead, as described in sections 6.2.4 and 6.2.5.

6.2.2. Evacués

If repatriates formally had access to social assistance until 1965, the inclusion of repatriates was primarily assured through targeted assistance schemes. The first such scheme fell under general provisions for emergency evacuation. Back in the Netherlands Indies, liberating British forces

2 van Leeuwen, “Armenzorg 1912-1965: Van Centrum Naar Periferie,” 522.

3 Inventory of the archives of the *Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken: Afdeling Volksgezondheid En Armwezen, (1892) 1910-1918*, 2.04.54, Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, 2021, 10.

4 Oostindie, “Postcolonial Migrants in the Netherlands: Identity Politics versus the Fragmentation of Community,” 112.

5 Ellemers and Vaillant, *Indische Nederlanders En Gerepatrieerden*, 49.

6 NL-StRo-1402-614-“Leidraad,” August 1950, p 6.

7 “Memorie van Toelichting - Wijziging van de Algemene Bijstandswet, Inzake de Bijstandsverlening Aan Vreemdelingen,” Pub L No 20459, KST20459N3K2 (1988), https://www.socialezekerheidssstelsel.nl/id/vk11nknnpqz9/memorie_van_toelichting_wijziging_van_de.

8 Wet van 13 juni 1963, houdende nieuwe regelen betreffende de verlening van bijstand door de overheid (Algemene Bijstandswet), Stb. 284

9 Laarman, *Oude Onbekenden: Het Politieke En Publieke Debat over Postkoloniale Migranten, 1945-2005*, 69–70.

set up an emergency military apparatus called the Recovery of Allied Prisoners of War and Internees (RAPWI). RAPWI offered war victims medical assistance and, where necessary, evacuation to the Netherlands.¹⁰ Upon arrival, in keeping with the Dutch dualistic welfare tradition, non-governmental organisations and religious institutions played the main part in repatriates' reception, and the central government a supportive, but substantial, role. In an initial phase, the Dutch Red Cross supplied medical assistance aboard repatriating ships and, together with local NGOs, packages of foodstuffs, blankets, bed linens, and toiletries for reception centres.¹¹ A non-governmental fundraising campaign under the name *Nederland Helpt Indië* rallied to assist those suffering in "our Kingdom territory."¹² Another organisation, called *Stichting Pelita* after the Indonesian word for an oil lamp which symbolised a beacon of light, was established in 1947 to offer social and financial assistance to those suffering in the East Indies after the war with Japan.¹³

Central government, although generally reluctant to assume responsibility for its citizens' welfare at this time, also participated in repatriates' emergency reception. Upon their arrival in the Dutch metropole, many were shocked to find that war victims from the Dutch marines were getting full payment of lost income and material war damage.¹⁴ The Central Bureau for the Care of War Victims (*Centraal Bureau Verzorging Oorlogsslachtoffers*, CBVO)¹⁵ at the Interior Ministry responded to this consternation by coordinating public assistance for *évacués* from 1945 to 1948, together with its regional and local affiliates. This assistance was the product of negotiations between a representative of the Netherlands Indies government, an interest group established in 1945 under the name Dutch-Indisch Alliance for Ex-Prisoners of War and Internees (*Nederlands-Indische Bond van Ex-krijgsgevangenen en Geïnterneerden*, NIBEG), a federation of Indische trade unions, and a Dutch-Indisch employers' association.

In-kind assistance was paramount at this stage. After the war, the Netherlands operated a food and firewood rationing system as import infrastructure gradually recovered from its wartime interruptions.¹⁶ The CBVO offered repatriate evacuees *extra* coupons for rationed food and firewood.¹⁷ This was the subject of some controversy and resentment for those metropolitan Dutch who had lived through the *hongerwinter*, a severe famine in the winter of 1944-45 caused by a Nazi food embargo. The repatriates acquired derogatory nicknames like '*bonnenvreeters*' ("coupon eaters") for their double rationing.¹⁸ Besides this, the costs of transport to the Netherlands were covered with an advance payment known as a *rijksvoorschot* charged to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.¹⁹ In one quarter of 1963, this cost the Ministry

10 C Schouten, *RAPWI: Geschiedkundig Overzicht*, 1947.

11 Willems, *De Uittocht Uit Indië, 1945-1995*, 31-36.

12 Willems, 31.

13 Griselda Molemans, *Opgevangen in Andijvelucht: De Opvang van Ontheemden Uit Indonesië in Kampen En Contractpensioens En de Financiële Claims Op Basis van Uitgebleven Rechtsberstel* (Amsterdam: Quasar Books, 2014), 30.

14 NL-UtA-1405-81-Memo, "het Indische Oorlogsslachtoffers-probleem en wat daarmee samenhangt."

15 Inventory of the archives of *Het Centraal Bureau Verzorging Oorlogsslachtoffers En de Rijksdienst Voor Maatschappelijke Zorg, 1945-1949*, 2.04.48.14, Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, 1986.

16 Johan van Merriënboer, *Mansholt: Een Biografie* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Boom, 2006), 118.

17 Willems, *De Uittocht Uit Indië, 1945-1995*, 68.

18 Willems, 53.

19 NL-HaNA-2.27.02-1010-"Verslag 4e Kwartaal 1963: Verzorging Gerepatrieerden" 1964.

around 145,768 guilders.²⁰ This would have been a fraction of their overall expenditure for 1963, which was about a quarter of a billion guilders.²¹

As Dutch authority in the East Indies waned and it became increasingly clear that repatriates were in the Netherlands permanently, their reception entered a new phase. In particular, public efforts were substantially reorganised. In 1948, formal responsibility for repatriates shifted to the newly founded department of Social Care (*Dienst Maatschappelijke Zorg*; DMZ) in the Ministry of the Interior. In 1949, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs set up a Council for Indonesian Matters (*Raad voor Aangelegenheden met Indonesië*; RAVI) charged with deciding repatriate policy. RAVI was a sub council to the Council of Ministers; i.e. a place for ministers to discuss complicated or technical subjects prior to placing the subject on the agenda of the Council of Ministers. Its importance was signalled by the fact that prime minister Drees himself chaired the commission. The council was supported in administrative matters by the Commission for Indonesian Affairs (*Commissie voor Aangelegenheden van Indonesië*, CAVI).

After Indonesian independence and as the numbers of migrants picked up, the perceived magnitude of the task at hand grew. On the advice of the Ministry of Union Affairs and Overseas Territory, the interministerial Commission for the Coordination of Repatriates (*Coördinatie-Commissie Gerepatrieerden*, CCG) was founded in April 1950 and entrusted with offering policy advice and coordinating efforts across the eight ministries it convened.²² The Chair of CCG was Hr. J.M. Kiveron, who was the Secretary-General (i.e. highest ranking civil servant) of the Ministry of Union Affairs and Overseas Kingdom Territories.²³ The jurist Philip Werner chaired a subcommittee on labour market activation and would in 1958 become its Chair. The subcommittee for social assistance was chaired by Dr. J.Th.A.H. van der Putten, who was the Director of the DMZ at the Ministry of the Interior.

Even then, government capacity was deemed insufficient without the help of private organisations.²⁴ In 1950, the same year that CCG was founded, Prince Bernhard penned a letter to Drees requesting that a “Repatriation Council” be established by churches and civil society.²⁵ Bernhard explained that repatriates “generally find themselves in very difficult circumstances,” and that it was the joint responsibility of the Dutch government and the

20 NL-HaNA-2.27.02-1010-“Verslag 4e Kwartal 1963: Verzorging Gerepatrieerden” 1964.

21 Statistiek der Rijksfinancien, “Herleiding van de Uitgaven En Inkomsten van de Hoofdstukken Der Rijksrekeningen En Der Ingewerkte Fondsen Enerzijds Tot de Volgens de Codering Verkregen Uitgaven En Inkomsten Anderzijds” (1963), Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, https://historisch.cbs.nl/STATISTIEK%20DER%20RIJKSFINANCIEN/34?nav_id=0-1&id=559230424&index=62.

22 J Van Winkel, inventory of the archives of the *Centraal Comité van Kerkelijk En Particulier Initiatief Voor de Sociale Zorg Ten Behoeve van Gerepatrieerden (CCKP) van de Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk (1948) 1950-1968 (1969)*, 2.8.4.1 Bestuursinstellingen: Landelijk, Het Utrechts Archief, Utrecht. 2006.

23 NL-StRo-1402-614-“Leidraad,” August 1950.

24 Van Winkel, inventory of the archives of the *Centraal Comité van Kerkelijk En Particulier Initiatief Voor de Sociale Zorg Ten Behoeve van Gerepatrieerden (CCKP) van de Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk (1948) 1950-1968 (1969)*, 2.8.4.1 Bestuursinstellingen: Landelijk, Het Utrechts Archief, Utrecht. <https://hetutrechtsarchief.nl/onderzoek/resultaten/archieven?mivast=39&mizig=210&miadt=39&miaet=1&micode=1405&minr=2454488&miview=inv2inv3t0>. 2006.

25 NL-HaNA-2.04.48.16-11-“Letter,” Prins Bernhard, 1950.

Dutch people to do something about it.²⁶ The government, for its part, passed this request on to churches and other organisations active in the domain of social work.²⁷ This was consistent with a longer Dutch tradition of functional cooperation among welfare providers: because so many different charities were operative in different domains, the need for cross-organisational subcommittees that dealt with specific policy areas or target groups had become increasingly acute. For example, the Federation of Institutions for Child Protection was founded in 1924.²⁸ In this case, the response to the Prince's appeal came under the particularly unwieldy name of the "Central Committee of Clerical and Secular Initiatives for Social Care of Repatriates" (*Centraal Comité voor Kerkelijke en Particulier initiatief voor sociale zorg ten behoeve van gerepatrieerden*, CCKP).

6.2.3. A "Repatriation Council" and cultural conversion

The CCKP became the cornerstone of in-kind social assistance for repatriates. It united around twenty private and religious organisations, including the Roman Catholic Church, a union of Protestant churches, a humanist representative ('Humanitas'), the Dutch Red Cross, federations of trade unions, and organisations specifically devoted to the cause of repatriates, like *Nederland Helpt Indië* and NIBEG.²⁹ Its most important source of financing was a "modest" subsidy from the Ministry of Internal Affairs.³⁰ It was designed to cooperate with government on reception, housing, and education, but also to act independently in policy areas seen as more appropriate at their level, such as spiritual care and the recruitment and management of social workers.³¹ The latter role would be the prerogative of churches represented in CCKP exclusively.³²

The remit of CCKP's activities was vast. Its chair, J. Moora, is reported as saying that every repatriate had a right to a vase with a flower on their table.³³ It saw its mandate as "look[ing] after everything that benefits the mental and physical well-being of the repatriates."³⁴ It set out to accomplish those tasks by promoting the work of its constituent organisations. Each local committee needed to have a representative of both the Catholic Church, the Protestant churches, and, ideally, the municipal service of social affairs.³⁵ Depending on the organisation, these, in turn, offered informal education in the realm of "family and household" spheres (*Gezins- en Huishoudelijke Voorlichting*), provided "relaxation and distraction" by organising leisure activities or distributing literature, and recruited social workers.³⁶

26 NL-HaNA-2.04.48.16-11-"Letter," Prins Bernhard, 1950.

27 NL-StRo-1402-614-"Leidraad," August 1950.

28 van Leeuwen, "Armenzorg 1912-1965: Van Centrum Naar Periferie," 525.

29 Van Winkel, inventory of the archives of the *Centraal Comité van Kerkelijk En Particulier Initiatief Voor de Sociale Zorg Ten Behoeve van Gerepatrieerden (CCKP) van de Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk (1948) 1950-1968 (1969)*, 2.8.4.1 Bestuursinstellingen: Landelijk, Het Utrechts Archief, Utrecht. 2006.

30 Willems, *De Uittocht Uit Indië, 1945-1995*, 185. Ellemers and Vaillant, *Indische Nederlanders En Gerepatrieerden*, 51.

31 NL-HaNA-2.20.48.16-11-Task description CCKP.

32 NL-StRo-1402-614-"Leidraad," August 1950, p 6.

33 Laarman, *Oude Onbekenden: Het Politieke En Publieke Debat over Postkoloniale Migranten, 1945-2005*, 81.

34 NL-StRo-1402-614-"Leidraad," August 1950, p 6.

35 NL-HaNA-2.20.48.16-11-Task description CCKP.

36 NL-StRo-1402-614-"Leidraad," August 1950, p 6.

CCKP operated through a series of local committees (*Plaatselijke Comit  s*), which acted, in their own words, as a “local reflection and representation of the CCKP.”³⁷ Illustrative of the lengths to which the CCKP went to assure a warm welcome for repatriates are its efforts in the domain of labour market policy. Not only did it coordinate counselling on labour market opportunities to repatriates, but it cooperated with the official Labour Bureau to instruct Dutch employers about the repatriates “with an eye to removing prejudices that [they] might have toward the labour force from Indonesia.”³⁸

With the generosity of private and religious solutions came the caveat of rather extensive involvement in the private lives of beneficiaries. In keeping with the Dutch history of linking poor relief with moral education, CCKP was deeply involved in the “personal and spiritual functioning” of repatriates. One pamphlet by a local Protestant church advertised household courses on interior design, washing clothes, nutrition, sewing, budgeting, heating a home, knitting, acquiring household items, and treating modern textiles, all for the price of 45 cents per person per lesson with the “number of ladies” varying from 8 to 10.³⁹

One of the main policy areas in which the central government was active was housing. In 1950 the use of guesthouse contracts (*contractpensions*) took off. This was made possible by the Housing Law for Repatriates (*Wet Huisvesting Gerepatrieerden*) passed on 8 December 1950 (SK 555). Guesthouse contracts were agreements between municipalities and hundreds of hotel owners around the country, whereby the latter would provide room and board to repatriates in exchange for a per-person allowance from the former.⁴⁰ They fell under the DMZ, still part of the Ministry of the Interior. Experiences in these guesthouses varied; some repatriates reported that the owner of the pension stole their food coupons.⁴¹ Schrover notes that guesthouse owners in Utrecht took advantage of their position in a tight housing market by increasing the prices of a bed.⁴² Other reports suggest that those living in guesthouses were so content that they were fearful of moving out.⁴³ Residence included added bonuses; for example, by 1952, the government would cover the cost of sending children in contractpensions, whose parents lacked sufficient means, to summer camp or on hikes for holiday.⁴⁴ Symbolising the state’s continued sense of duty toward offering shelter, Princess Wilhelmina offered spots at the summer residence of the royal family, Palace het Loo, for 84 repatriates over the course of a year.⁴⁵ To phase out guesthouse contracts, the government would eventually subsidise and reserve around

37 NL-StRo-1402-614-“Leidraad,” August 1950.

38 NL-HaNA-2.27.02-1037-Brochure ‘Voor Het Eerst Naar Nederland.’”

39 NL-HaNA-2.27.02-49-“Folder van de Protestantse Zorg t.b.v Hen Die Uit Nieuw Guinea Gekomen Zijn, Uitgaande van de Hervormde Stichting voor Kerkelijk Sociale Arbeid.”

40 Molemans, *Opgevangen in Andijvielucht: De Opvang van Ontheemden Uit Indonesi   in Kampen En Contractpensions En de Financi  le Claims Op Basis van Uitgebleven Rechtsherstel*, 44.

41 Molemans, 25.

42 Marlou Schrover, “Rats, rooms and riots: usage of space by immigrants in the Dutch town Utrecht 1945-1970,” *Journal of Migration History*, 7 (2021): 244-271. <https://doi.org/10.1163/23519924-00703003>, 252.

43 NL-HaNA-2.04.48.16-11-Memo, 8 November 1950.

44 NL-UtA-1405-391-“Derde rapport inzake de sociale verzorging der gerepatrieerden namens de Protestantse Kerken in Nederland.” Juli 1952-Juni 1954 Contact in Overheidszaken.

45 Molemans, *Opgevangen in Andijvielucht: De Opvang van Ontheemden Uit Indonesi   in Kampen En Contractpensions En de Financi  le Claims Op Basis van Uitgebleven Rechtsherstel*, 20.

5 per cent of houses built for the 1962 Housing Act (*Woningwet*), a law governing construction of public housing, for repatriates.⁴⁶ The last contract pension was eventually dissolved in 1969.

6.2.5. “No worse than refugees”

As mentioned in Section 5.2.6, about 12,000 of the migrants coming from present-day Indonesia came from the Moluccan islands. Assigned the nationality of their former enemy, most were stateless by the early 1970s. This meant that they could not access assistance under the targeted schemes for repatriates outlined in 6.2.4.

They were also excluded from the activities of non-governmental organisations. CCKP, in its communications, made clear that, like Minister van Thiel who had proposed deporting them, it saw “Moluccan” as incompatible with repatriate status. In 1951, the Chair of CCKP reported that cooperation with Moluccan organisations had failed, because the latter had insisted on introducing ‘politics’ into the domain of social work.⁴⁷ That same year, headquarters wrote to local CCKP committees informing them of the option to keep Moluccan communities out of their work. They announced the creation of a separate committee for Moluccans, which would not host any representative from CCKP (unlike CCG), and explained, “CCKP must stick to its original task, that is, the assimilation of *repatriates*. As such, CCKP has nothing to do with the Ambonese, who will not be assimilated but only sheltered here temporarily... in connection with all kinds of complications that arise around the issue of the Ambonese, the CCKP deems it appropriate to remain far removed from Ambonese affairs.”⁴⁸

One month later, during a meeting of the local Rotterdam branch of the CCKP, a question about the inclusion of Moluccans was answered in the negative: “Ambonese soldiers ... must be regarded as guests of the Dutch government. Aid to this group is not within the Committee’s domain.”⁴⁹ Two years later, CCKP wrote to the Ministry of Social Work complaining that an office for Moluccans had been established in collective repatriate housing centres.⁵⁰ They argued that such an office would have “far-reaching psychological consequences” for other residents and lamented that the Dutch public already could not distinguish between the repatriates and Moluccans.⁵¹

To some extent, public social assistance stepped in where private assistance balked. Initially, the Dutch government paid Moluccans’ housing, clothes, food, and an allowance.⁵² This was a joint responsibility of the Ministry of Union and Overseas Relations, the Ministry of Foreign

46 Ellemers and Vaillant, *Indische Nederlanders En Gerepatrieerden*, 47; Laarman, *Oude Onbekenden: Het Politieke En Publieke Debat over Postkoloniale Migranten, 1945-2005*.

47 By politics was meant their advocacy for the right to self-determination on the Moluccan islands. NL-UtA-1405-34-Meeting minutes of CIO social care, 3 April 1951.

48 NL-UtA-1405-10-Letter from CCKP to Provincial, regional, local committees of CCKP, 16 April, 1951.

49 NL-StRo-1402-Meeting minutes, Sub-Comité Rotterdam van het CCKP, 9 May 1951.

50 NL-UtA-1405-11-Letter to Hoofd Bijzondere Maatschappelijke Zorg, Ministerie van Maatschappelijk Werk, 29 January 1953.

51 NL-UtA-1405-11-Letter to Hoofd Bijzondere Maatschappelijke Zorg, Ministerie van Maatschappelijk Werk, 29 January 1953.

52 Jones, “Tussen Onderdanen, Rijksgenoten En Nederlanders: Nederlandse Politici over Burgers Uit Oost En West En Nederland, 1945-2005,” 120.

Affairs and the Ministry of Recovery and Public Housing.⁵³ From 1952 a separate division was created at the Ministry of Social Work to coordinate this: the Commission of Ambonese Assistance (*Commissariaat Ambonezenzorg*; CAZ). The head of CAZ (the commissioner) regularly met with the Minister of Social Work.⁵⁴ One of its central tasks was organising accommodation. Quite distinct from the contractpensions available to other repatriates, much of the housing provided by the CAZ consisted of wooden barracks in isolated camps (*woonoorden*). The two largest camps had been Nazi concentration camps during the Second World War: *Lunetten* (formerly Kamp Vught) and *Schattenberg* (formerly Kamp Westerbork), with almost 3,000 residents each as of October 1, 1953.⁵⁵ Indische Nederlanders had also been housed in Schattenberg, but for less than a year, from July 1 1950 until March 1951.⁵⁶ In contrast, the residence of Moluccans - the longest group to reside in the camps - was to last over two decades. Officials justified the camps as a “choice born purely out of necessity, in terms of both time and space,” and with reference to their supposedly temporary character of their stay.⁵⁷

Moluccans mostly found basic material needs met. There was a central kitchen, food coupons and a weekly allowance. However, camp life was without much privacy or autonomy. Social workers intervened in family life. Residents were not allowed to work, and had to report to the camp administration if they wanted to visit relatives.⁵⁸ The conditions were harsh enough that by late 1959 CAZ officials were suggesting shutting them down.⁵⁹ However, residents reportedly resisted moving out for fear of falling “under the surveillance of the alien police,” so to facilitate their transition, a CAZ official requested leniency from the Head of Police.⁶⁰ The latter forwarded the request to his superior at the Ministry of Justice, scribbling in the margins: “I find the feelings expressed by the Ambonese concerned grossly exaggerated.”⁶¹ Yet he ultimately acquiesced because, “if the proposal [to acquire travel documents] would run into unwillingness on the part of the Ambonese, we would have no stick; at least no stick that we want to use (internment). I am thinking here of the difficulties that we have already had in the past in this respect with these *difficult* people.”⁶² The Head of Police’s sentiment reflects not only a dismissal of their emotional and psychological reality but a tendency to assign traits to the entire group.

53 Inventory of the archives of the Commissariaat van Ambonezenzorg, (1949) 1952-1970, 2.27.148, Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, 1985, 3.

54 Centrale Archief Selectiedienst, 8.

55 Laarman, *Oude Onbekenden: Het Politieke En Publieke Debat over Postkoloniale Migranten, 1945-2005*, 104.

56 Roy van Gool, “70 Jaar Geleden Kwamen Indische Nederlanders Aan in De Schattenberg,” July 4, 2020, <https://www.rtdvrenthe.nl/nieuws/161311/70-jaar-geleden-kwamen-indische-nederlanders-aan-in-de-schattenberg>.

57 H. Akihary, “Van Almere tot de Zwaluwenberg: Molukse woonoorden in Nederland,” in *Tijdelijk Verblijf: De opvang van Molukkers in Nederland, 1951*, ed. Wim Manuhutu and Henk Smeets (Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 1991), 66.

58 Fridus Steijlen, “In and out of Uniform: Moluccan Soldiers in the Dutch Army,” in *Colonial Soldiers in Europe, 1914-1945: “Aliens in Uniform” in Wartime Societies*, ed Eric Storm and Ali Al Tuma (New York: Routledge, 2017), 240.

59 NL-HaNA-2.09.52-264-Letter from A.J van Raalte, 19 November 1959.

60 NL-HaNA-2.09.52-264-Letter from A.J van Raalte, 19 November 1959.

61 NL-HaNA-2.09.52-264-Letter forwarded by Head of Police, 14 December 1959.

62 Emphasis added; NL-HaNA-2.09.52-264-Letter forwarded by Head of Police, 14 December 1959.

Such internment was not completely foreign to the Dutch welfare apparatus, although the setting of former Nazi transit camps added some alarm. As described in 4.2.3, re-education villages and internal colonies intended to promote “moral elevation” dated back to the late nineteenth century and picked up steam in the antebellum period. These initiatives were reserved for families deemed maladapted or anti-social. In general, this betrays the context, not of recognition as a moral equal, to borrow Somers’ definition⁶³ and in direct contrast to the Dutchness of regretants, but of mutual resentment. Tellingly, in 1960, the Foreign Minister, Joseph Luns of the KVP promised Parliament that Moluccans be treated in the domain of social policy *no worse than refugees*.⁶⁴ Obviously distinct from equal treatment with Dutch citizens, this minimal promise formed the cornerstone of subsequent claims to social rights.⁶⁵

In addition, as non-citizens, Moluccans were not eligible for National Group Schemes for Repatriates. However, in 1956 a separate legislative framework was drawn up. The Ambonese Benefit Scheme (*Uitkeringsregeling Ambonezen*) was introduced on May 14, 1956. Rather than signal an era of generosity, however, it marked the withdrawal of the government from the provision of their food (through central kitchens of the camps), clothing, and cash allowances. The Scheme required Moluccans to register with a labour agency and stipulated the conditions under which they might still be eligible for benefits. In early 1962, it was replaced by a National Group Scheme for Ambonese (*Rijksgroepsregeling Ambonezen*).⁶⁶ As the Group Scheme for Repatriates, adjustments were made to accord with the provisions of the general welfare schemes such that the provisions of the AOW would become applicable to Moluccans.

The specific bundle of welfare available to Moluccans is not easily explained without considering their racialisation as an inherently separate and biologically fixed group. In 1959, Minister Klompé justified their treatment with the need to take into account the “strength” of their “collective mentality.”⁶⁷ The observations of social workers visiting houses with mixed marriages is illustrative. One reports a white Dutch woman adapting to the Moluccan “lifestyle” through cooking and language. In the margins of her report, an official writes: “A bit fanatic, no? I think it’s a little creepy.” Two years later, when the social worker describes the woman adopting “Dutch” traits, the official scribbles in the margins again: “thank goodness. Blew over. It just goes to show: nature is always stronger than nurture!”⁶⁸

By 1968, public officials planned to liquidate all camps by January 1, 1970, the date at which CAZ itself would close its doors.⁶⁹ The goal was to transfer Moluccans out of wooden barracks and into neighbourhoods (*woonwijken*) with stone houses which would be

63 Somers, *Genealogies of Citizenship: Markets, Statelessness and the Right to Have Rights*, 6.

64 NL-HaNA-2.15.5142-356-Letter, from Gevolmachtigd minister van de Republiek Malutu Selatan, 26 September 1960.

65 NL-HaNA-2.15.5142-356-Letter, from Gevolmachtigd minister van de Republiek Malutu Selatan, 26 September 1960.

66 NL-HaNA-2.27.02-1008-“Toelichting behorende bij het ontwerp Rijksgroepregeling Gerepatrieerden.”

67 Jones, “Tussen Onderdanen, Rijksgenoten En Nederlanders: Nederlandse Politici over Burgers Uit Oost En West En Nederland, 1945-2005,” 150.

68 Laarman, *Oude Onbekenden: Het Politieke En Publieke Debat over Postkoloniale Migrantten, 1945-2005*, 115.

69 NL-HaNA-2.09.52-264-Letter from Th H.A Booms to dhr Hoofd van de Afdeling Toezicht Vreemdelingen en Grensbeveiliging, 4 June 1968.

incorporated into local municipalities.⁷⁰ There is evidence that this process took longer than planned, with the last residents leaving the camp of Schattenberg (former Camp Westerbork) in 1971.⁷¹ Once they left the camps, surveillance was made more difficult. In fact, officials at the Ministry of Justice expressed their trepidations about the transfer exactly for this reason: the CAZ had been supplying the Ministry with up-to-date personal information about the Moluccans, and lacking this data made oversight of the group “very difficult,” according to the head of the department of Immigration Affairs and Border Control at the Ministry of Justice.⁷² At the same time, those same officials wondered whether targeted attention was justified any longer. “After a stay of around 17 years in The Netherlands,” one official wrote, “one is inclined to ask whether the Moluccans ought still to assume an exceptional position and if they should not be treated just like *any other foreigner*. This would be the easiest, at least for the Ministry of Justice. Given the misery which we have had with this rather easily irritated group [however], I expect that such equalisation would provoke resistance.”⁷³ The fact that a 17-year-stay was interpreted as a call to treat Moluccans like foreigners rather than as insiders speaks to the extent to which officials doubted their assimilability. Furthermore, officials continued to dismiss their emotional experience, portraying their irritation as an unjustified nuisance rather than as something to be taken seriously.

Either way, even after they moved out, Moluccans did not entirely escape state surveillance. One former soldier in Roermond writes to the public prosecutor in 1969, complaining that “policemen have repeatedly visited my house in all kinds of ways.”⁷⁴

6.2.6. National group schemes

Previous sections discussed targeted in-kind assistance, which was provided by a consortium of actors devoted to the repatriate cause. Repatriates also had access to targeted cash assistance. In Dutch law, schemes devoted to a target group are known as (national) group schemes (*groepsregelingen* or *rijksgroepregelingen*). These would later include target populations as diverse as artists, the blind and the partially disabled.⁷⁵ Repatriate care fell under the remit of several different group schemes, depending on the time period.⁷⁶ The first set of schemes offered material aid to war victims, former resistance members and demilitarised soldiers. Repatriates fell within its remit. In 1950, these schemes were transferred to the Assistance Scheme for War Victims 1940-1945 (*Regeling Hulpverlening Oorlogsslachtoffers, 1940-1945*). Making claims under the scheme meant access to financial assistance and housing, funded by the CBVO.⁷⁷

70 NL-HaNA-2.09.52-264-Letter from A.J van Raalte (Commissary's van Ambonezenzorg) to the Director-General of the Police, November 19, 1959.

71 Herinneringscentrum Kamp Westerbork, “Schattenberg 1950-1971,” n.d., <https://kampwesterbork.nl/plan-je-bezoek/40-schattenberg-1950-1971>.

72 NL-HaNA-2.09.52-264-Letter from Head of Department of Immigration and Border Control, Ministry of Justice, to Director of Police, 28 May 1969.

73 NL-HaNA-2.09.52-264-Letter from Th H.A Booms to dhr Hoofd van de Afdeling Toezicht Vreemdelingen en Grensbewaking, 4 June 1968.

74 NL-HaNA-2.09.52-264-Letter from I Amanupunnio to Officer van Justitie, 30 January 1969.

75 Oude Nijhuis, *Religion, Class and the Post-war Development of the Dutch Welfare State*, 110–11.

76 Ellemers and Vaillant, *Indische Nederlanders En Gerepatrieerden*, 49.

77 Molemans, *Opgevangen in Andijvielucht: De Opvang van Ontheemden Uit Indonesië in Kampen En Contractpensions En de Financiële Claims Op Basis van Uitgebleven Rechtsherstel*.

Repatriates who were former bureaucrats, military personnel, resistance fighters and forced labourers in the East Indies were eligible.⁷⁸

However, the scheme was not considered sufficient for the circumstances of repatriates. As one official from the Ministry of Union Affairs and Overseas Kingdom (*Ministerie van Uniezaken en Overzeeserijksdelen*, MINUOR) stated in a memo, repatriates faced specific difficulties that others not coming from the “tropics” might not have faced, such as acquiring appropriate clothes.⁷⁹ Additionally, officials were concerned about the diversity of circumstances in which repatriates found themselves, given, for example, that some had been assigned places in guesthouses, and others had not. Therefore, a new group scheme was drafted, which had repatriates from the Netherlands Indies, specifically, as its specific target group.

The goal of drafting targeted legislation, the MINUOR official clarified, was to “integrate [repatriates] into normal Dutch affairs.”⁸⁰ The Minister of Foreign Affairs had clarified that the government viewed as its responsibility the task of offering “sufficient support that the repatriates are able to reach an adequate standard of living in our society.”⁸¹ The result was the Assistance Scheme for Repatriates (*Regeling Hulpverlening Gerepatrieerden*), which entered into force in 1956. In practice, this represented rather an update of existing guidelines, and assistance was still mostly granted under the legal provisions of the previous scheme for war victims.⁸² When the Ministry of Social Work changed the requirements for war victims, the scheme in place for repatriates was revisited.⁸³ Consequently on 1 January 1961, the new National Group Scheme for Repatriates (*Rijksgroepsregeling Gerepatrieerden*) came into force.⁸⁴ The new scheme was still very similar to the Assistance Scheme for War Victims, which still applied to the repatriates who qualified as war victims and had arrived in the Netherlands prior to 1950.⁸⁵

The National Group Scheme for Repatriates offered those who qualified as repatriates two different types of cash transfers. The first were regular allowances (*periodieke uitkeringen*) at fixed benefit levels for heads of family, single persons, or jobseekers, as well as one-off loans for housing or furniture, with repayment plans determined by the municipal council.⁸⁶ One brochure designed for repatriates reassured readers that “when the debt is collected, account will be taken of the financial security of repatriates,” suggesting that repayment was flexible.⁸⁷ Indeed, from 1957-59, the Ministry of Social Work spent around f. 45 million on furniture loans, less than half of which was paid back.⁸⁸ Nonetheless, repatriates interviewed by

78 Dineke de Visser, “Ontwikkeling van Het Denken over Materiële Vergoeding” (Onderzoeksgids Oorlogsgetroffenen WO2, n.d.), https://www.oorlogsgetroffenen.nl/thema/wetgeving/01_01_Ontwikkeling_van_het_denken_over_materiele_vergoeding.

79 NL-HaNA-2.27.02-Nota, MINUOR, 8 November 1950.

80 “Het inpassen van de gerepatrieerden in de normale Nederlandse verhoudingen,” NL-HaNA-2.27.02-Nota, MINUOR, 8 November 1950.

81 NL-HaNA-2.27.02-Memo containing proposals formulated after CCKP’s meeting of November 9, 1950

82 NL-HaNA-2.27.02-1008-“Toelichting behorende het ontwerp Rijksgroepregeling Gerepatrieerden.”

83 NL-HaNA-2.27.02-1008-“Rijksgroepregeling Gerepatrieerden,” 20 January 1961.

84 NL-HaNA-2.27.02-1008-“Toelichting behorende bij het ontwerp Rijksgroepregeling Gerepatrieerden.” Published in *Staatscourant* 1960, nr 237.

85 NL-HaNA-2.27.02-1008-“Toelichting behorende bij het ontwerp Rijksgroepregeling Gerepatrieerden.”

86 NL-HaNA-2.27.02-1008-“Rijksgroepregeling Gerepatrieerden,” 20 January 1961.

87 NL-HaNA-2.27.02-1037-Brochure ‘Voor Het Eerst Naar Nederland.’

88 Ellemers and Vaillant, *Indische Nederlanders En Gerepatrieerden*, 47.

Molemans did describe the debt as particularly burdensome. As soon as they could pay their own rent, they were expected to start paying back the cost of the guesthouse as well as the aforementioned clothing and furniture loans.⁸⁹ One respondent described deductions being levied on her husband's salary over the course of about ten years.⁹⁰

The eligibility criteria for the National Group Scheme for Repatriates were specified in Article 3 as follows.⁹¹ To qualify as a repatriate, the individual must have Dutch citizenship, have arrived from Indonesia after 27 December 1949, and have done so either "as a consequence of events in Indonesia" after or around January 1 1958, or beforehand with an eye to the "expected deterioration of relations between the Netherlands and the Netherlands." The definition was thus fixed by their citizenship, the date of their migration, and their motivation for leaving Indonesia. Moreover, the beneficiary's need had to be directly related to their arrival in the Netherlands.⁹² As officials at the Ministry of Social Work would later clarify, betraying their specific interpretation of what an undeserving repatriate would look like, this meant that if someone found themselves in a difficult situation because they were "divorced in the Netherlands" or were "pregnant and unmarried," they would not qualify for assistance under the act.⁹³ Additionally, for regular allowances, the repatriate needed to be registered as job seeker at the regional employer exchange, and be willing to undergo further education unless they were a woman, for whom "on social grounds" it was "not desirable" for her to fulfil these conditions.⁹⁴ One-off special transfers were reserved for former KNIL members, or those who were sick, injured or otherwise incapacitated.⁹⁵

Group schemes were implemented by municipalities, usually within the framework of their municipal services for social affairs, who received compensation from the Ministry of the Interior for associated expenditure.⁹⁶ The municipality of The Hague, exceptionally, initially had a separate department devoted to the care of war victims and *évacués*, for which they received a special subsidy for several years.⁹⁷ Protesting the planned reduction in this subsidy, the Director of the Municipal Service of Social Affairs wrote to the Minister of Interior in 1951 stressing the value of their work by referencing the elites they had managed to help: "we received many (immaterial) tokens of appreciation from numerous persons from higher circles, such as chief officers, university educated, etc., who held prominent positions in the Netherlands Indies."⁹⁸

89 Molemans, *Opgevangen in Andijvielucht: De Opvang van Ontheemden Uit Indonesië in Kampen En Contractpensions En de Financiële Claims Op Basis van Uitgebleven Rechtsherstel*, 219.

90 Molemans, 220.

91 NL-HaNA-2.27.02-Rijksgroepregeling Gerepatriceerden, sent 20 January 1961 Nr U 36000.

92 NL-HaNA-2.27.02-1008-"Toelichting behorende bij het ontwerp Rijksgroepregeling Gerepatriceerden."

93 NL-HaNA-2.27.02-1008-Verslag van de op vrijdag 15 oktober 1965 op het Districtskantoor te Arnhem gehouden bespreking omtrent vraagstukken betreffende de Rijksgroepsregeling Gerepatriceerden.

94 NL-HaNA-2.27.02-1008-"Rijksgroepregeling Gerepatriceerden," 20 January 1961.

95 NL-HaNA-2.27.02-1008-"Rijksgroepregeling Gerepatriceerden," 20 January 1961.

96 NL-HaHG-0502-01-Afschrift, Minister of Interior, to College van Burgemeester en Wethouders van 's Gravenhage, 15 December 1948

97 NL-HaHG-0502-01-Afschrift, Minister of Interior, to College van Burgemeester en Wethouders van 's Gravenhage, 15 December 1948

98 NL-HaHG-0502-01-Letter, Director of Gemeentelijke Dienst van Sociale Belangen, Den Haag, to the Minister of Interior, 20 January 1951.

CCKP organised educational evenings all around the country to inform repatriates of their social rights.⁹⁹ If ineligible for these schemes, repatriates could make recourse to poor relief, which, as mentioned in 6.2.1, would be granted at the discretion of municipal authorities. Central government, however, would subsidise the costs that municipalities would incur.¹⁰⁰ This was somewhat exceptional but not completely unheard of.¹⁰¹

When it entered into force, the General Assistance Act (1965) did not replace existing group schemes. Many of them remained intact and were significantly improved in subsequent years.¹⁰² Article 11 of the General Assistance Act had stipulated that “further rules may be laid down by executive order with regards to persons belonging to a specific group.”¹⁰³ On December 15, 1964, modifications to the National Group Scheme for Repatriates were made to accord with the General Assistance Act and the Act.¹⁰⁴ It adjusted the benefit levels of the periodical transfers in accordance with other transfers to which a claimant might be eligible. Notably, the eligibility criteria of the modified National Group Scheme contained an exception for non-Dutch nationals that specifically included regretants who would have otherwise been excluded from the General Assistance Act. Namely, in Article 3, the text specified that the Minister of Social Work could equalise a non-Dutch citizen who, prior to April 1, 1964 - the date at which the special admissions scheme for regretants ended¹⁰⁵ - had handed in a request to reside in the Netherlands and whose request had been successful.¹⁰⁶

By 1960, there was increasing talk of transitioning out of targeted assistance and toward reliance on general social policy institutions.¹⁰⁷ This took time. The 1965 Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Social Work (*Ministerie van Cultuur, Recreatie en Maatschappelijk Werk*, CRM) still contained a separate office for repatriates.¹⁰⁸ However, by 1970, “repatriate care” had disappeared from the government’s accounting.¹⁰⁹ By the 1980s, CRM no longer listed Indische Nederlanders as foreigners or minorities.¹¹⁰ At the same time, repatriates reported feeling that they were treated as so unequivocally Dutch that their unique group identity was being erased.¹¹¹ Hence, in 1963 a foundation was established to preserve the cultural values of the Indische Nederlands community in Dutch society and abroad.¹¹²

99 NL-UtA-1405-81-Letter from a social worker named A Chr Baëhr to Mv Wetn van de Vring, 27 July 1954.

100 NL-HaNA-2.27.02-1008-“Rijksgroepregeling Gerepatrieerden,” 20 January 1961.

101 Algemene Bijstandswet, 1963, Articles 48 and 49.

102 Oude Nijhuis, *Religion, Class and the Post-war Development of the Dutch Welfare State*, 135.

103 Algemene Bijstandswet, 1963.

104 NL-HaNA-2.27.02-1008-“Toelichting behorende bij het ontwerp Rijksgroepregeling Gerepatrieerden.”

105 Laarman, *Oude Onbekenden: Het Politieke En Publieke Debat over Postkoloniale Migranten, 1945-2005*, 72.

106 Besluit van 15 december 1964, houdende nadere regelen als bedoeld in artikel 11 van de Algemene Bijstandswet ten aanzien van gerepatrieerden (Rijksgroepsregeling Gerepatrieerden), Stb. 550 (1964).

107 NL-HaNA-2.20.27-24, Periodical SIWO, November 1960.

108 Ellemers and Vaillant, *Indische Nederlanders En Gerepatrieerden*, 51.

109 Ellemers and Vaillant, 51.

110 Jones, “Tussen Onderdanen, Rijksgenoten En Nederlanders: Nederlandse Politici over Burgers Uit Oost En West En Nederland, 1945-2005,” 178.

111 Willems, *De Uittocht Uit Indië, 1945-1995*.

112 NL-HaNA-2.20.27-50-“Statuten en Huishoudelijk Reglement van de Vereniging Indische Culturele Kring ‘Tong-Tong’ 1962.

6.3. Constructing and discouraging ‘Eastern’ citizens

6.3.1. The Werner report

In this section I document how repatriates were classified according to geographical and cultural ‘rootedness,’ a racialised variable which cut across formal citizenship. This distinction had its roots in the colonial-era nationality code, but the evacuation guidelines issued immediately after the Second World War refashioned it. These guidelines stipulated that potential évacués were to be differentiated according to whether the Netherlands was their “mother country.”¹¹³ In 1948, Minister without portfolio Lubbertus Götzen openly worried that a larger number of individuals “rooted in the Indies” had arrived in the Netherlands than what we thought desirable.”¹¹⁴

The meaning of “rootedness” came into focus in 1952, when CAVI commissioned the jurist Philip Werner and a team from the Ministry of Union Affairs and Overseas Territories to travel to Indonesia to investigate the conditions of Indische Nederlanders there. The committee “seriously considered... where the most and greatest opportunities for [their] current and future happiness” lay, by which they largely meant whether they should be transferred to the Netherlands.¹¹⁵ Werner concluded that a “correct and useful criterion” for making this decision was the “distinction, which already exists in practice” between two types of people: “Western” or “Western-oriented” and “Eastern” or “Eastern-oriented” Dutch citizens. He described the latter as “physically, psychologically, socio-economically and culturally attuned to Indonesia by origin, nature, aptitude and environment.”¹¹⁶ The committee recommended they stay in Indonesia, not least because their children were “in more urgent need of being raised at home in the tropics” and because, due to their “inherently slow pace of work and other specific Eastern characteristics and behavioural traits,” they would not find a place in the Dutch labour market¹¹⁷ and their chances of assimilation would be “extremely small, if not non-existent.”¹¹⁸ Notably, this conclusion blatantly and deliberately contradicted the preferences of members of the Indische Nederlanders themselves, many of whom saw their interests “exclusively in terms of ... a new future for themselves and their children in the Netherlands or in other parts of the Dutch empire... in any case outside of Indonesia.”¹¹⁹ This, Werner and colleagues concluded, was due to “completely erroneous and fantastical insights and ideas,”¹²⁰ and, as a result, argued

113 Jones, “Tussen Onderdanen, Rijksgenoten En Nederlanders: Nederlandse Politici over Burgers Uit Oost En West En Nederland, 1945-2005.”

114 Schuster, *Poortwachters over Immigranten: Het Debat over Immigratie in Het Naoorlogse Groot-Britannië En Nederland*, 86.

115 NL-HaNA-2.27.01.01-128-Werner, “Verslag van de Commissie Ter Bestudering van het Indo-Europese Vraagstuk in Indonesië,” 32.

116 NL-HaNA-2.27.01.01-128-Werner, “Verslag van de Commissie Ter Bestudering van het Indo-Europese Vraagstuk in Indonesië,” 32.

117 Translation by Schuster, 101.

118 NL-HaNA-2.27.01.01-128-Werner, “Verslag van de Commissie Ter Bestudering van het Indo-Europese Vraagstuk in Indonesië,” 32.

119 NL-HaNA-2.27.01.01-128-Werner, “Verslag van de Commissie Ter Bestudering van het Indo-Europese Vraagstuk in Indonesië,” 27.

120 NL-HaNA-2.27.01.01-128-Werner, “Verslag van de Commissie Ter Bestudering van het Indo-Europese Vraagstuk in Indonesië,” 27.

that the decision of where it would be in someone's interest to live "cannot and should not be left to the individuals themselves," and that the "government had a responsibility to protect the concerned against themselves."¹²¹

The report was handled secretly and never published, under the suspicion that it would harm relations with Indonesia.¹²² However, CAVI incorporated Werner's recommendations in their advice to RAVI, suggesting that the future of "Eastern" Dutch citizens was in Indonesia.¹²³ In 1958, Werner would assume the chairmanship of the CCG. Accordingly, the government made informal attempts to shape immigration flows in line with the 'rootedness' criterion. Discouragement policy (*ontmoedigingsbeleid*) centred on keeping 'Eastern-oriented' Dutch citizens in Indonesia. The Werner committee had concluded that it was "absolutely necessary" to "regulate departure to the Netherlands and find some method to prevent it."¹²⁴ However, it was technically illegal to forbid the entry of citizens. Therefore, strict conditions were attached onto the advance transport payments and 'contact officials' (*contactambtenaren*) boarded repatriating ships to report on passengers' 'orientation' to the DMZ.¹²⁵ One contact official reported that when their ship docked in IJmuiden on 30 December 1959, Minister Beerman of Justice boarded to ask her about the passengers' integration prospects.¹²⁶ The contact official reassured him that "this group of repatriates is very certainly not more Eastern oriented than the group that is already staying in [the Netherlands]," adding that at the captains' dinner, they took their place at the table in "full regalia."¹²⁷

The so-called "orientation" of Dutch citizens was not only used to shape entry rights, but also had a bearing on social rights. Social workers paying home visits could deny a repatriate permanent housing if they failed to pass as Western-oriented, due, for instance, to eating rice rather than potatoes, furnishing their house in an "Indisch style" (this was not further elaborated), or walking around in a sarong instead of European clothes.¹²⁸ A 1954 brochure of Pro Patria, an organization representing the interests of Indische Nederlanders, protested that families deemed 'Western' received two times as much in financial support as those deemed Eastern.¹²⁹

6.3.2. The distinction takes hold

Meanwhile, the Western-Eastern distinction became a central aspect of a broader project of categorising newcomers from the Netherlands Indies. A social Catholic magazine dated

121 NL-HaNA-2.27.01.01-128-Werner, "Verslag van de Commissie Ter Bestudering van het Indo-Europese Vraagstuk in Indonesië," 28.

122 Willems, *De Uittocht Uit Indië, 1945-1995*, 127.

123 Willems, 127.

124 NL-HaNA-2.27.01.01-128-Werner, "Verslag van de Commissie Ter Bestudering van het Indo-Europese Vraagstuk in Indonesië," 29.

125 Jones, "Tussen Onderdanen, Rijksgenoten En Nederlanders: Nederlandse Politici over Burgers Uit Oost En West En Nederland, 1945-2005," 160.

126 NL-HaNA-2.27.02-1018-"Verslag van de reis met het s.s Zuiderkruis," February 1960

127 NL-HaNA-2.27.02-1018-"Verslag van de reis met het s.s Zuiderkruis," February 1960

128 Jones, "Tussen Onderdanen, Rijksgenoten En Nederlanders: Nederlandse Politici over Burgers Uit Oost En West En Nederland, 1945-2005," 175; Willems, *De Uittocht Uit Indië, 1945-1995*, 189.

129 Schuster, *Poortwachters over Immigranten: Het Debat over Immigratie in Het Naoorlogse Groot-Britannië En Nederland*, 108.

December 1951 contains several pieces that shed light on how the Catholics - coalition partners in government - thought about the distinction. In an introduction penned by J. Moora, chair of the CCKP, Moora explains to readers that “besides your own family members and friends who returned from Indonesia, and the many other Dutch citizens who are also *repatriates* in the real sense of the word, there is also a large group of Indische Nederlanders of whom a significant number are physically and psychically, in terms of culture and development, partly focused on the East (Indonesia) rather than on the West (the Netherlands).”¹³⁰ Moora explained that this was a function of both “race and environment,” and, although he technically places more emphasis on the “environment” part, goes on to list a series of group-specific physical attributes, encouraging the reader to “think about their dexterity and agility, of their diligence, and of their athletic and artistic achievements.”¹³¹

In this way, the CCKP engaged openly in the racialisation of Dutch citizens. Later in the edition, a member of Parliament for the KVP betrays a comparable commitment to understanding Dutch citizens in racial terms. Theo De Graaf explains that many newcomers belong to a group of “small Indo-Europeans with little education, a typical Eastern lifestyle, often *lethargic and apathetic in nature* when faced with difficulties. *They are Dutch* and they feel 100 per cent Dutch. *But they are different people; they almost belong to a different race.*”¹³² He suggests that their only chance at succeeding in the Dutch economy is to learn manual labour in the countryside or in industry, and cautions that they should not be entrusted with financial resources or in-kind benefits, which are “conducive to the cultivation of a resignation to poverty [and] to the cultivation of a spiritual pauperism.”¹³³

At the end of 1952, the Werner report was leaked and a summary published in a national newspaper.¹³⁴ The newspaper was incensed at the implication that some Dutch citizens were assimilable while others were not, and that Indische Nederlanders were not expected to be able to reason for themselves what was in their own interest. Parliament was quick to pile on the criticism. Jan van Baal, MP for the Protestant ARP (who would later be governor of Netherlands New Guinea), accused the Eastern distinction of being stigmatising, and argued that the Werner committee “proceeds from a racial doctrine which does not differ much from that of Hitler and Alfred Rosenberg.”¹³⁵ To clarify what he meant by racial doctrine, he pointed out that the suggestion that “Eastern” Dutch will have greater difficulty establishing themselves in the Netherlands, even once they have been educated in Europe, relies on a belief in “inheritance factors of an unfavourable nature which stem from Indonesian ancestry.”¹³⁶ Despite the upheaval, discouragement policy remained intact until 1956, when strict eligibility criteria for advance transport costs were ended by the first female minister, Minister Marga Klompé of Social Work. “In my opinion,” Klompé said, “a simple investigation of whether the

130 NL-UtA-1405-391-Katholiek Sociaal Tijdschrift, Vierde Jaargang, Nr 4, December 1951.

131 NL-UtA-1405-391-Katholiek Sociaal Tijdschrift, Vierde Jaargang, Nr 4, December 1951, p 76.

132 Emphasis added; NL-UtA-1405-391-Katholiek Sociaal Tijdschrift, Vierde Jaargang, Nr 4, December 1951, p 94.

133 NL-UtA-1405-391-Katholiek Sociaal Tijdschrift, Vierde Jaargang, Nr 4, December 1951, p 94.

134 Laarman, *Oude Onbekenden: Het Politieke En Publieke Debat over Postkoloniale Migranten, 1945-2005*, 61.

135 Willems, *De Uittocht Uit Indië, 1945-1995*, 128.

136 Willems, 128.

concerned party is able to make the transport on their own costs - or by making recourse to a third party - should be sufficient to ascertain whether a Dutch citizen should get an advance payment to come to the Netherlands.”¹³⁷

That said, I found evidence that the Western-Eastern distinction remained in use by social workers far later than that date. In November 1963, a local diaconal committee devoted to repatriate affairs in Breda was evaluating repatriate assistance on the occasion of its transition out of the targeted domain in which religious actors played a major role, and towards a regime of general assistance.¹³⁸ For the purposes of their inquiry, the committee had distributed a survey to local social workers that included the question of whether the family’s “mentality” was “predominantly Western or Eastern,” alongside questions about the appearance of the women and children, the relationship between the husband and the wife, the cleanliness of the household and how well the children were being raised.¹³⁹ That said, the committee admitted that the question about Westernness “sometimes gave rise to different interpretations.”¹⁴⁰

6.4. Securing old-age pensions for all

6.4.1. Formal entitlements

Since its introduction, national insurance in the Netherlands has not been conditioned on nationality. It is intended for all residents, plus non-residents whose income is taxed in the Netherlands because they have a job in the Netherlands.¹⁴¹ The General Old Age Act (AOW) was no different. In the bill presented to the Second Chamber, Article 6 specified the “circle of insured”¹⁴² as follows. Everyone who was between 15 and 65 years old was mandatorily insured if that person was either a) a resident, b) subject to payroll tax due to having worked in the Dutch kingdom, or c) a Dutch citizen who received wages or performed work for the kingdom elsewhere. Article 2 specified that a “resident” in the context of this law meant “someone who lives within the Kingdom.”¹⁴³

Because Indonesia was almost a decade into independence by the time the legal gazette (*Staatsblad*) published the AOW, there could be no confusion about whether Indonesia constituted part of the Kingdom. Therefore, in the first instance the eligibility of repatriates under this Act was relatively straightforward: if they made it to the Netherlands, they were required to contribute to national insurance and they would build up rights to an old-age pension. As I documented in previous sections, residence was not always an easy condition to fulfil, even if a repatriate had Dutch citizenship, as the discouragement policy for “Eastern-oriented” Dutch citizens suggested.

137 Molemans, *Opgevangen in Andijvelucht: De Opvang van Ontheemden Uit Indonesië in Kampen En Contractpensions En de Financiële Claims Op Basis van Uitgebleven Rechtsherstel*, 202.

138 NI-UtA-1405-392-“Onderzoek aanpassingsmoeilijkheden Gerepatrieerden,” November 1963.

139 NI-UtA-1405-392-“Onderzoek aanpassingsmoeilijkheden Gerepatrieerden,” November 1963.

140 NI-UtA-1405-392-“Onderzoek aanpassingsmoeilijkheden Gerepatrieerden,” November 1963.

141 Goudswaard, de Kam, and Sterks, *Sociale Zekerheid Op Het Breukvlak van Twee Eeuwen*.

142 Wet van 31 mei 1956, inzake een algemene ouderdomsverzekering (Algemene Ouderdomswet), Stb. 281 (1956)

143 Algemene Ouderdomswet, 1956.

6.4.2. Transitional rules in the Kingdom

Transitional arrangements (*overgangsbepalingen*) under the AOW, however, came with separate entitlement conditions. When new insurance legislation is introduced, there is a need to consider how to handle the cases of individuals who qualify for a benefit in some respects, but did not pay premiums.¹⁴⁴ The full AOW pension was only possible for those who had worked and paid contributions for the full 50 years. Someone who worked for fewer years would receive a reduction of two per cent in their total benefit per year that they were not insured.¹⁴⁵ Therefore, legislators deemed transitional rules necessary to cover those individuals who, because of their age when the law entered into force, could never contribute enough years to qualify for the benefit to which they are entitled. This would ensure that no retiree was left worse off compared to past retirees (who likely benefited from Drees' 1947 means-tested emergency provision) and future retirees (who could build up larger pensions).

The transitional rules were laid out in Articles 43 and 46. Taken together, Articles 43 and 46 stipulated that those who were over the age of 15, but had not yet turned 65, *and* had lived for six years (interrupted or not) in the Kingdom, Netherlands New Guinea, Suriname, or the Netherlands Antilles, would be considered to have been insured for the time period stretching from when they reached age 15 and when the AOW entered into force. The six-year requirement was taken from Drees' emergency law on old-age pensions.¹⁴⁶ Those who qualified under these rules would be eligible for a transfer funded by contributions, but not their own. Thus, the transitional arrangements represented a severance with contribution-based financing, as officials themselves in the Department of Social Insurance recognised in a discussion of whether foreigners and refugees ought to have access under the arrangements.

In view of the rather special nature of the transitional arrangement - the pension to which it confers a right being a cash transfer based on contributions but not on the contribution of the pensioner themselves - even though the AOW establishes a close link between benefits and contributions - the Dutch government has decided to consider the transitional pension as a benefit which is *not* based on contributions.¹⁴⁷

Tellingly, eligibility under these arrangements constituted the only part of the AOW legislation which was conditioned on citizenship. According to Articles 44 and 47, beneficiaries under the transitional arrangements must also be Dutch citizens.¹⁴⁸ Those articles also specified that the benefits contained in Articles 43 and 46 were reserved for residents of "the Kingdom." Even for contemporaries, the territories to which this referred was unclear. On the one hand, in Articles 43 and 46, Netherlands New Guinea, Suriname and the Netherlands Antilles had

¹⁴⁴ NL-HaNA-2.15.5142-356, Second reading of "Besluit tot vaststelling van een algemene maatregel van bestuur, als bedoeld in artikelen 45 en 48 der Wet op de algemene ouderdomsverzekering," 3 December 1955.

¹⁴⁵ NL-HaNA-2.27.02-Letter from Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Volksgezondheid, Afd Sociale Verzekering II, 18 April 1958.

¹⁴⁶ NL-HaNA-2.15.5142-356, Second reading of "Besluit tot vaststelling van een algemene maatregel van bestuur, als bedoeld in artikelen 45 en 48 der Wet op de algemene ouderdomsverzekering," 3 December 1955.

¹⁴⁷ NL-HaNA-2.27.02-Letter from Afdeling Sociale Verzekering II, "Betreft: bijzondere regeling voor vluchtelingen en staatlozen in het kader van de overgangsbepalingen der AOW," 4 August 1956.

¹⁴⁸ Algemene Ouderdomswet, 1956.

been listed alongside one another, signifying that rights under the transitional rules could be built up on the basis of six uninterrupted years of residence in any of those territories. Pursuant to this, the logically consistent next step would be to pay out benefits on the basis of residence in any of those same territories. In addition, the 1954 Charter of the Kingdom of the Netherlands had, two years prior, made crystal-clear that the Kingdom of the Netherlands contained the 'equal' and 'autonomous' countries of the Netherlands, Suriname, and the Netherlands Antilles.¹⁴⁹ On the other hand, just as explicitly as Articles 43 and 46 had listed Netherlands New Guinea, Suriname, and the Netherlands Antilles, Articles 44 and 47 had omitted them. This suggested that, although residence in those territories would count toward their contribution record, they could not access rights to an old-age pension under the AOW as long as they lived in those territories.

The Social Insurance Bank, the implementing agency of national insurance schemes,¹⁵⁰ adopted the latter view. In January 1966, Renardel de Lavalette, director of the Governor's cabinet in Suriname wrote from Paramaribo to the Social Insurance Bank asking for clarification.¹⁵¹ Lavalette explained that an elderly man by the name of Dupont, who had already reached the age of 65 by the entry into force of the AOW, had approached the cabinet to ask whether he could receive his old-age pension in Paramaribo, Suriname's capital. Lavalette explained that Dupont, who was a Dutch citizen (as this preceded Surinamese independence), had cited Article 46, in which residence in the Netherlands was equalised with residence in Suriname and the Netherlands Antilles. "In that case," Lavalette pondered, "Mr Dupont, who lived for more than six years uninterrupted in Suriname, would qualify for the award and payment of an old-age pension in Suriname."¹⁵² The answer from the Social Insurance Bank, however, came two months later in the negative: "The Kingdom means the Kingdom in Europe."¹⁵³ As Westra and Van Hooren have shown, this accords with the interpretation of both the 1848 and 1919 Dutch constitutions.¹⁵⁴ This principle, which directly contradicts the spirit and text of the 1954 Charter, is the reason for the "AOW hole" that has affected some thirty thousand elderly Dutch citizens who came from Suriname after 1975 (see Conclusion).

6.4.3. Relaxing requirements through Royal Decree

Interest groups dedicated to the plight of Indische Nederlanders received the eligibility criteria for transitional arrangements with concern. In October 1955, about eight months before the publication of the AOW in the *Staatsblad*, several groups representing their interests drafted a

149 Jones, "Tussen Onderdanen, Rijksgenoten En Nederlanders: Nederlandse Politici over Burgers Uit Oost En West En Nederland, 1945-2005," 187.

150 In the implementation of the AOW, the Labour Councils (*Raden van Arbeid*) also played a role. They had been responsible for overseeing and calculating premium and pension payments in employee insurances.

151 NL-HaNA-2.10.26-148-Letter to the Sociale Verzekeringsbank from Mr W.A Renardel de Lavalette, 22 January 1966.

152 NL-HaNA-2.10.26-148-Letter to the Sociale Verzekeringsbank from Mr W.A Renardel de Lavalette, 22 January 1966.

153 NL-HaNA-2.10.26-148-Letter to Mr W.A Renardel de Lavalette from the Social Insurance Bank, 9 March 1966.

154 Eline Westra and Franca van Hooren, "Social rights in a post-colonial welfare state: revisiting 'universality' and 'inclusivity.'" (Unpublished manuscript, 2024)

memo to consolidate their position on the draft legislation. Represented groups included: the Catholic Civil Servants and Private Employees from former Netherlands Indies (*Katholieke Ambtenaren en Particuliere Werknemers uit het Voormalige Nederlands-Indië*, KNAF), *Indische Pensioenbond*, and NIBEG.¹⁵⁵ The memo read that, despite their “great respect for this undeniably important draft,” they requested the serious consideration of the residence requirement of the transitional rules.

Their logic was as follows. Under pressure by the Dutch government, many former Dutch citizens and subjects had continued to work in Indonesia after its independence. Because this formally constituted residence in a foreign country, any repatriate in the Netherlands after the 1950s would not have had time to build up six years in the Netherlands to qualify for an old-age pension under the transitional rules. The authors of the memo explained that those individuals who remained did so under “the pressure that the Dutch government applied to those working in Indonesia to continue working there in the interests of the Netherlands and the Dutch economy” (see Lamping’s speech in 5.2.5) and that therefore “it would be wrong and unjust to withhold rights from those who followed those instructions compared to those who did not.”¹⁵⁶ The groups stated their goal, which was to obtain commitment from the Dutch government that residence in the Indonesian republic after independence could be equalised with residence in the Kingdom.

The lobbying efforts of these interest groups appears to have been successful. The discussion made it to the Ministerial Council of 30 January 1956.¹⁵⁷ The ministers agreed that it would be “reasonable to assume” that Dutch people who lived in the former Netherlands Indies met the residence requirement of if they repatriated within ten years of the sovereignty transfer. Their request would be met on 20 December 1956 with a Royal Decree (Stb. 628b). The Royal Decree stipulates that for Articles 43 and 46, in which transitional rules are laid out, “living in the Kingdom” would be equalised with: “a) living in former Netherlands Indies, b) living in Indonesia to the extent that this took place *after* 27 December 1949 and the leaving of that country took place before December 28, 1964.”¹⁵⁸ With this adjustment, repatriates who moved from Indonesia after independence *with Dutch citizenship* would be equalised with those Dutch citizens who had built up six years in the Netherlands.

Any migrants from the former Netherlands Indies without Dutch citizenship - like Moluccans and (most) regretants - would still be excluded from the aforementioned Royal Decree. Two days prior to the decree that equalised residence in Indonesia with residence in the Kingdom, a Royal Decree of 18 December 1956¹⁵⁹ equalised *refugees* living in the Kingdom with Dutch citizens. This had itself been the subject of some debate. In 1955 the justice minister had worried that it would encourage refugees to come to the Netherlands. The head of Immigration Affairs at the Ministry of Justice explained: “We have too many people and too few houses; we spend a lot of money for Dutch people to emigrate; our country is not

155 NL-UtA-1405-80-Memorandum re: het Wetsontwerp Algemene Ouderdomsvoorziening, 20 October 1955.

156 NL-UtA-1405-80-Memorandum re: het Wetsontwerp Algemene Ouderdomsvoorziening, 20 October 1955.

157 NL-HaNA-2.15.5142-356-Letter, to Minister without Portfolio, “Uit Indonesië gerepatrieerde Nederlanders en de AOW,” 6 July 1956.

158 NL-HaNA-2.20.27-24-SIWO no 57, “De AOW ook voor ‘spijtoptanten,’” November 1960.

159 Published in Stb 627

suitable for taking in refugees on a large scale.”¹⁶⁰ In another note, he specified that, “if we include refugees in the AOW, that is charity. We ought to consider whether we are not already going far enough by letting refugees into our overpopulated country, and if it is therefore not fairer simply to leave their social care to private initiative.”¹⁶¹ However, two years prior, the Dutch government had ratified the Geneva Convention, some five years after its signature thereof. Under the Convention, as the Dutch representative of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reminded the Minister of Social Affairs and Public Health (then Jacobus Suurhoff of the Labour Party) in 1955, those with refugee status must receive preferable treatment to foreigners in general.¹⁶² Specifically, according to Article 24 of the Geneva Convention, refugees must be equalised with citizens for the purpose of contributory social security systems. The Royal Decree of 18 December 1956 was the result.

On paper, regrettants could not make use of this provision. Requests for pension payments were handled by the Labour Councils (*Raden van Arbeid*). Democratically elected tripartite institutions (representing employers, labour, and the state), Labour Councils historically administered premiums and payments for employee insurance schemes, and shared responsibility for the implementation of the AOW with the Social Insurance Bank. Appeals could be made to local Boards of Appeal, who largely ruled in favour of regrettants when their request for AOW pensions was rejected by the Labour Council.¹⁶³ However, the Central Board of Appeal annulled the decisions to grant regrettants pensions on the grounds that they could not be considered refugees. The Central Board of Appeal argued that at the time the Refugee Convention was signed in July 1951, conditions in Indonesia did not conform to the conditions of persecution as referred to in that treaty (on the grounds of race, religion, nationality, political beliefs, or belonging to a specific group).¹⁶⁴ Therefore, the Central Board of Appeal ruled, it could not be assumed that the Refugee Convention would apply to regrettants. The Board admitted that this put them in a “less favourable position” than refugees, which raised the question of whether this was in accordance with the commitment expressed by the Dutch government in 1955 not to treat Indonesians worse than refugees.¹⁶⁵ However, the Board considered its hands tied, suggesting that this was the only ruling possible given the existing text of the Royal Decree.

Moluccans were equally excluded from the provisions of this Royal Decree. In April 1957, Marga Klompé, as Minister of Social Work, wrote to Suurhoff concerning the case of the Moluccans.¹⁶⁶ She explained that the question has been raised in the Moluccan community about whether those who had already reached the age of 65 could also access old-age pensions. She reminded Suurhoff about Luns’ promise (see 6.2.5), according to which Moluccans were not to find themselves in a worse position than refugees according to the Geneva Convention.

160 NL-HaNA-2.15.5142-356-Letter, “Bijzondere regeling voor vluchtelingen en staatlozen in het kader van de overgangsbepalingen der AOW,” 4 August 1956.

161 NL-HaNA-2.15.5142-356-Interim toelichting bij ontwerp-besluit en artikelen 45A en 48A AOW.

162 NL-HaNA-2.15.5142-356-Letter to the Minister of Social Affairs from C Brouwer, 21 July 1955

163 NL-HaNA-2.20.27-24-SIWO no 57, “De AOW ook voor ‘spijtoptanten,’” November 1960.

164 NL-HaNA-2.20.27-24-SIWO no 57, “De AOW ook voor ‘spijtoptanten,’” November 1960.

165 NL-HaNA-2.20.27-24-SIWO no 57, “De AOW ook voor ‘spijtoptanten,’” November 1960, p 8.

166 NL-HaNA-2.15.5142-356-Letter from Minister of Social Work to Minister of Social Affairs and Public Health, “Ouderdomspensioen voor Ambonezen.” 3 April 1957.

A month later, an official from Suurhoff's ministry responded. The official explains that, "under current legislation, Ambonese residents in the Netherlands will generally not be able to claim the benefits arising from the transitional provisions regarding the general old-age pension included in Articles 43 and 46 of the AOW."¹⁶⁷ The official explained that although their residence in Indonesia after 1949 would be equalised with residence in the Dutch kingdom, as per the Royal Decree of 20 December 1956, they still did not have Dutch citizenship, nor could they claim access under the Royal Decree of 18 December 1956 since they did not have refugee status. A representative from the Ministry of Social Affairs would later comment that the discussion at this stage - 1957 and early 1958 - led to a dead-end, as concerns like those raised by Klompé were set against a backdrop of public opinion that viewed equalising Moluccans as "undesirable."¹⁶⁸

The discussion was revived shortly later, as the camps in which Moluccans were housed were being shut down. In December 1959, A.J. Raalte, a director of the CAZ, took up correspondence with the Ministry directly.¹⁶⁹ Raalte stressed that Moluccans had not have the possibility to opt for Dutch nationality, and that it was increasingly clear that their stay in the Netherlands would be long-term. He requested a modification of the Royal Decree of 18 December 1956 to include Moluccans above the age of 65, and added that "the financial consequences" of this proposal were "minor" given that "the elderly Moluccans staying in our country are few in number."¹⁷⁰

6.4.4. Moluccans and regrettants

By 1960, the Ministry of Social Affairs, then under Catholic leadership, was more favourable to the idea. This coincided with the formation of the National Action Supporting Regrettants From Indonesia (Stichting *Comité Nationale Actie Steunt Spijtoptanten Indonesië*, or NASSI). NASSI became an official foundation on April 5, 1960, aiming to "give expression to the belief of the Dutch people that our fellow 'tribespeople' ... should be helped, which mostly means that those who are forced to seek refuge in the Netherlands by applying for a visa can come here as soon as possible" and to "ensure that help is actually given."¹⁷¹ NASSI involved parliamentarians and public figures to plead the cabinet for leniency vis-à-vis regrettants. Key to NASSI lobbyists' strategy had been racialising these non-citizens as insiders, to which 1960 radio speeches testify. A Liberal MP based her assertion of the Netherlands' "moral obligation" toward repatriates on it being "inhumane to let so many *Dutch* men, women and children

167 NL-HaNA-2.15.5142-356-Letter from Head of Department of Social Insurance at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Public Health, to the Minister of Social Work, 16 May 1957.

168 NL-HaNA-2.15.5142-356-Letter from Ministry of Social Affairs and Public Health to Minister of Foreign Affairs, 19 July 1960.

169 NL-HaNA-2.15.5142-356-Letter from Mr Raalte of CAZ (Social Work) to the Ministry of Social Affairs and Public Health, "Toepassing overgangsbepalingen Algemene Ouderdomswet op Ambonezen," 21 December 1959.

170 NL-HaNA-2.15.5142-356-Letter from Mr Raalte of CAZ (Social Work) to the Ministry of Social Affairs and Public Health, "Toepassing overgangsbepalingen Algemene Ouderdomswet op Ambonezen," 21 December 1959.

171 Inventory of the archives of the *Stichting Comité Nationale Actie Steunt Spijtoptanten Indonesië (NASSI)*, 1960-1969, 2.20.27, Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, 2019.

perish.”¹⁷² The actress Nel Oosthout invoked the hardship of those “born and raised under the tropical sun; of ‘mixed blood’ if you will and slightly darker skinned than you and I, but who have Dutch names.”¹⁷³ This last subclause was crossed out and replaced with “but who are Dutch, regardless of their origin, like you and I,” suggesting that the qualities that determined Dutchness remained under negotiation. The fact that, with the stroke of a pen, a group could be moved from merely “hav[ing] Dutch names” to “[being] Dutch, regardless of their origin,” bespeaks not only the discretion of local actors in shaping national belonging at the time, but the frail, unfinished fabric out of which this belonging was fashioned. The salience and sensitivity of race in this process is reflected in Oosthout’s decision not to mention regrettants’ “mixed blood,” and later to emphasise that they had “remained Dutch in their *appearance*, in their ways of life, in their views.”¹⁷⁴ “In their clothing” was also struck through; fashion, as ephemeral as it is, presumably too weak a drywall on which to hang national identity. The importance of clothing, like all other traits, was subject to popular debate, however, since in the same year as Oosthout’s speech, a contact official on board an arriving ship had used the fact that Indische Nederlanders had worn “full regalia” at a captains’ dinner to reassure the Justice Minister of their “Westernness.”¹⁷⁵

NASSI’s efforts were central in heightening the quota of regrettants who could enter The Netherlands under the special admissions scheme. By February 1960, their treatment raised eyebrows at the Council of Ministers. A minister (whose anonymity the archival record preserved) asked whether regrettants “were not too well-cared for?”¹⁷⁶ Another responded, “as a rule, the standard is indeed higher than that of the Poor Law,” and went on to justify this outcome: “the repatriates require a higher standard than the Poor Law because they find themselves under difficult circumstances, coming from another country.”

Arguably one of the NASSI’s major successes was the reversal of their exclusion from AOW transitional rules. On 21 September 1960 Senator de Vos van Steenwijk asked the Minister of Social Affairs about the ineligibility of Indonesian citizens (regrettants) for the AOW transitional rules, asking whether this “injustice [ought not] be removed.”¹⁷⁷ Nine days later, the answer came in the affirmative: the Royal Decree would be modified at the shortest delay to accommodate regrettants. By 1960, representatives of the Moluccan community had also mobilised, specifying that “since 1957, refugees falling under the [Geneva] Convention have enjoyed an AOW old-age pension, but despite all the efforts made by ... the representation of South Moluccans in the Netherlands, up until now, a similar pension is not being granted to South Moluccans.”¹⁷⁸ By 1960, the Ministry was favourably disposed. Their only concern was that it might create a welfare magnet for other Moluccans or “other groups of people who are coming from Indonesia,” and therefore turned to Luns, who was still Minister of Foreign

172 Emphasis added, NL-HaNA-2.20.27-24-“Onze Indische Nederlanders,” 1960.

173 Emphasis added, NL-HaNA-2.20.27-24-Radio speech, Oosthout, 1960.

174 Emphasis added, NL-HaNA-2.20.27-24-Radio speech, Oosthout, 1960.

175 NL-HaNA-2.27.02-1018-“Verslag van de reis met het s.s. Zuiderkruis,” February 1960.

176 NL-HaNA-2.27.02-1013-Minutes of Ministerial Council, 4 February 1960.

177 NL-HaNA-2.20.27-24, Periodical SIWO, November 1960.

178 NL-HaNA-2.15.5142-356-Letter from the Plenipotentiary Minister of the Republik Maluku Selatan to Minister van Rooy of Social Affairs and Public Health, 26 September 1960.

Affairs.¹⁷⁹ Luns did not seem as concerned with the possibility of a welfare magnet, and in fact stressed the importance of offering this equalisation to other non-citizen repatriates who had also not received refugee status.¹⁸⁰ He agreed to the equalisation of Moluccans “gladly” and added that such an equalisation also apply “to other non-Dutch citizens from Indonesia who have obtained permission for permanent residence in the Netherlands (in particular the so-called ‘regrettants’ and other groups).”

By 1961, preparations for a provision providing access for non-citizen repatriates to the transitional rules of the AOW were in full swing. It was ultimately achieved on 26 January 1961 by modifying the Royal Decree of 18 December 1956 to include a third article.¹⁸¹ This article stipulated that, “for the application of Articles 44 and 47 of the General Old Age Pensions Act, as long as they live within the Kingdom, non-Dutch nationals, originating from Indonesia, who have settled in the Netherlands with the permission of the Dutch government and who were 50 years or older at the time of their establishment in the Netherlands.” Officials at the Ministry of Social Affairs explained that “insistence from multiple sides” prompted this modification.¹⁸² Later, Luns’ colleague in the Catholic-conservative coalition cabinet of the late 1960s would express that he was less glad about the equalisation of Moluccans. Polak, a Catholic, wrote to an interlocutor at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Public Health, stating that the modification to the Royal Decree was “actually intended” for regrettants and the “social Dutch” (*maatschappelijke Nederlanders*).¹⁸³

As the special admissions scheme for regrettants drew to a close in April 1964, members of parliament continued to draw attention to their plight. Christian symbolism and appeals to morality featured prominently, even by members of secular parties. The Labour MP Johan Scheps likened admitting regrettants to admitting Jews during the Second World War, before referring ominously to a biblical symbol for the Anti-Christ by noting that on 1 Jan 1964 there were 666 requests for admission and that “the number is of great significance.”¹⁸⁴ Unsurprisingly, Jan Meulink of the prominent Protestant party at the time (ARP) retained a focus on moral duty, arguing that benevolent immigration policy is “above all a demand of Christian morality.”¹⁸⁵

179 NL-HaNA-2.15.5142-356-Letter from Department of Social Insurance to Minister of Social Affairs, “Gelijkstelling van Ambonezen met Nederlanders voor de toepassing van de overgangsbepalingen der AOW,” 14 January 1960

180 NL-HaNA-2.15.5142-356-Letter from Minister of Foreign Affairs to Minister of Social Affairs and Public Health, 28 April 1960.

181 NL-HaNA-2.15.5142-356-“Besluit van houdende wijziging van het Koninklijk Besluit van 18 december 1956”

182 NL-HaNA-2.15.5142-356-Letter from the department of Social Insurance at the Ministry of Social Affairs to Minister/State Secretary “Ontwerp-besluit tot wijziging K.b van 18 december 1956 (Stb 627)(gelijkstelling niet-Nederlanders met Nederlanders) en ontwerp-besluit ex art 60, onder a van de Algemene Weduwen en Wezenwet (Gelijkstelling niet-Nederlanders met Nederlanders),” 13 November 1960.

183 NL-HaNA-2.15.5142-356-Letter from Minister of Justice to Ministry of Social Affairs, 12 November 1968,

184 NL-HaNA-2.27.19-18503-Parliamentary discussion, “Ontwerp Vreemdelingenwet 1965 en Vreemdelingenbesluit,” 23 June 1964.

185 NL-HaNA-2.27.19-18503-Parliamentary discussion, “Ontwerp Vreemdelingenwet 1965 en Vreemdelingenbesluit,” 23 June 1964.

6.5. Analysis

As I have shown, the public and private provisions available to repatriates with citizenship were considerable. At the level of proximate causes, this is largely attributable to the fact that the Dutch government viewed itself as responsible for providing enough support that repatriates could reach an “adequate standard of living,” to which its foreign minister admitted in 1950.¹⁸⁶ But why did it assume responsibility over this population? Until 1965, not even the standard of living of needy *metropolitan* Dutch citizens was considered a government responsibility. By 1960, when an anonymous minister responded behind closed doors that the “standard [for regretants] is indeed higher than that of the Poor Law,” it was clear that the goal of providing welfare to repatriates was distinct from that of metropolitan Dutch citizens.

The stated justification for discrepancy was simply of need. Prince Bernhard had invoked the neediness of repatriates when he wrote to prime minister Drees,¹⁸⁷ and ten years later, the minister had justified generous policy toward regretants – indeed of a “higher standard than the Poor Law” – on the grounds that repatriates “find themselves in difficult circumstances, coming from another country.”¹⁸⁸ Granted, need is one of many criteria flagged by existing literature as an important determinant of potential welfare claimant’s deservingness.¹⁸⁹ However, in this context it is a red herring, as access to welfare was not fragmented along lines of need. Moluccans were not excluded from the CCKP’s remit and placed under constant surveillance in military camps because they had different needs than Indische Nederlanders. Nor were regretants excluded from the transitional rules of the AOW – notably the only part of the legislation that entailed noncontributory rather than contributory benefits – because they fared better than their Dutch citizen counterparts.

Rather, fragmented patterns of inclusion reflect contestation over cultural proximity, and ultimately mirrored the messy racial classifications that this contestation produced. In a war-torn economy about to lose its crown imperial jewel, Dutch policymakers faced cross-pressures as they fumbled for national identity. On the one hand, they had inherited ready-to-use racial ideology from their colonial past. Europeanness and so-called “civilisation(al attainment)” had been deployed to make sense of difference in The Netherlands Indies, and “indigenous” and “Foreign Oriental” subjects had been denied political rights on this basis since 1892. This provided an attractive template for group constitution after Indonesian independence. At the same time, explicitly racial language had been expunged from the public sphere after the Holocaust. Just two years before the Werner Report was leaked, UNESCO had published a report condemning race on moral and analytic grounds and undertaken a broad campaign to disseminate its findings.¹⁹⁰

The Western-Eastern or *rootedness* distinction, popularised by the 1952 Werner report appeared to offer government officials an appealing way out. The distinction made no formal reference to skin colour, but its racial meaning was clear, as it assigned immovable, fixed

186 NL-HaNA-2.27.02-Memo containing proposals formulated after CCKP’s meeting of November 9, 1950

187 NL-HaNA-2.04.48.16-11-“Letter,” Prins Bernhard, 1950.

188 NL-HaNA-2.27.02-Memo containing proposals formulated after CCKP’s meeting of November 9, 1950

189 van Oorschot, “Who Should Get What, and Why?”

190 *The Race Question* (Paris: UNESCO, 1950), <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000128291>.

attributes to complex individuals on the basis of ancestry and geography, leaving discrete, self-contained categories amenable to public policy in its wake. In the same way that Hall argued that the crisis of social authority in 1980s Britain was thematised through race, anxieties about national identity were thematised through Westernness. The distinction supplied the basis, as I have shown, for the distribution of citizenship and entry rights among Dutch citizens in Indonesia, and continued wielding power over repatriates upon their arrival in The Netherlands since the “Eastern” label could purportedly lead to reduced cash assistance¹⁹¹ or denial of permanent housing.

The placement of (post)colonial migrants along this dimension, however, was not obvious nor fixed. Moluccans, for example, had historically been regarded as culturally and religiously proximate, but ultimately fell in no uncertain terms on the outside of the boundaries of the sphere of justice, as the first Minister of Social Work (van Thiel) proposed their “repatriation” to Asia,¹⁹² signalling their status as symbolic foreigner to the Dutch *patria*, and the second Minister of Social Work (Klompé) justified their treatment with reference to a nebulous and indubitably racialised cultural essence. In keeping with the social interpretation of welfare expansion, this may have been because they had less powerful advocates in their corner compared, for instance, to regretnants. A cross-party coalition joined by prominent public figures contested the state’s placement of regretnants as outsiders, and successfully appealed for their entry rights and entitlement under the transitional rules of the AOW.

Importantly, these lobbying efforts both pulled regretnants across the boundaries of the welfare state, *and* revised or reverse-engineered the dimensions with which boundaries were being made. When the actress Nel Oosthout highlighted that regretnants “remained Dutch in their appearance, in their ways of life, in their views,” and reduced emphasis on whether they “had Dutch names” or wore Dutch clothing by crossing out these attributes, she was both portraying regretnants as Western *and* curating which features mattered for Westernness.¹⁹³ Meanwhile, one month prior, the contact official on board the SS *Zuiderkruis* *had* felt that the choice and ability of the repatriates on board her ship to dine in “full regalia” was an important way to reassure the Minister of Justice of their Western orientation.¹⁹⁴ If access to welfare changed over time for regretnants, it is because racial classifications are a notoriously fragile basis for establishing the imagined community.

The reversal of the regretnants’ exclusion from the AOW not only coincided with the amplified lobbying efforts of the NASSI coalition, with its advocates in high places, both academically and politically. It also happened against the backdrop of a changing political landscape in which Christian social doctrine began to play a more important role. In 1958, a thirteen-year period of “Roman-red” coalitions, i.e. of cooperation between Labour and confessional or Christian Democratic parties, came to an end, and the Catholic Peoples’ Party assumed the next three premierships. Oude Nijhuis argues that this created more room for

191 Schuster, *Poortwachters over Immigranten: Het Debat over Immigratie in Het Naoorlogse Groot-Britannië En Nederland*, 108.

192 Jones, “Tussen Onderdanen, Rijksgenoten En Nederlanders: Nederlandse Politici over Burgers Uit Oost En West En Nederland, 1945-2005”, p. 104.

193 NL-HaNA-2.20.27-24-Radio speech, Oosthout, 1960.

194 NL-HaNA-2.27.02-1018-“Verslag van de reis met het s.s Zuiderkruis,” February 1960.

the “Christian-democratic emphasis on social justice and solidarity,” as opposed to the social democratic emphasis on formal equality.¹⁹⁵ This created a favourable context for “demand[s] of Christian morality” like those made by regretants in the Second Chamber.¹⁹⁶ The effect was no doubt particularly pronounced when peppered with references to Hitler and Rosenberg, in a country that had sought to create distance from Nazi rule through the large-scale “purification” (*zuivering*) of collaborators from public office.

¹⁹⁵ Oude Nijhuis, *Religion, Class and the Post-war Development of the Dutch Welfare State*.

¹⁹⁶ NL-HaNA-2.27.19-18503-Parliamentary discussion, “Ontwerp Vreemdelingenwet 1965 en Vreemdelingenbesluit,” 23 June 1964.