

TJAKALELE AT FULL MOON

Prof.dr. Fridus Steijlen

**Inaugural lecture on the Occasion of the Acceptance of the Endowed Professorship of Moluccan Migration and Culture in Comparative Perspective, on behalf of the Foundation of the Moluccan Historical Museum, at the Faculty of Social Sciences of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.
(shortened delivered version, a longer version in available in Dutch)**

Amsterdam, 9 February 2018

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Mr Rector Magnificus, highly esteemed listeners,

On the evening of Friday, 23 December 1988, the last full moon of that year, I stood with some friends, most of whom were Moluccans, in the middle of Lunetten (Vught), the only remaining Moluccan camp. We were gathered around an oil drum in which black cloths were being burnt. As the clock struck 12, we started striking *tifas*, a type of drum, and the Moluccan artist Willy Nanlohy performed a war dance, the *tjakalele*. As the moon kept disappearing behind the clouds, it was sometimes impossible to see Willy. But we could hear the swishing of grass and the sound of the *parang*, the machete, with which he was attacking his imaginary enemy. The beats of the tifa drums reverberated against the walls of the barracks, between which we could see the silhouettes of residents who had become alarmed by the echoing beats. Most of them were immediately drawn back indoors: at midnight people should not be outside.

The performance that night constituted the final part of a protest that had started a year and a half before. The Westfries Museum in Hoorn had proclaimed 1987 to be J.P. Coen Year. The director at that time, Ruud Spruit, had invited Willy Nanlohy to exhibit his work in the basement of the museum as part of a wider exhibition about Coen. While installing his sculptures, Nanlohy discovered that Coen was being glorified in the other halls of the museum. This was the same J.P. Coen who, in 1621, had been responsible for the bloody enforcement of a VOC monopoly on Banda on trade in nutmeg, a spice which grew only on those islands. Nanlohy felt that he had been misused and, in protest, covered his sculptures with black mourning cloths. At the official opening of the exhibition, he left the chair next to him empty for the spirit of his grandfather, who had served in the Royal Dutch East Indies Army (KNIL). During the opening ceremony, Nanlohy, dressed as Alfoer, stood up and offered Prince Claus a black book about Moluccan history. Museum director Spruit was furious and ordered for the cloths over Willy's sculptures to be removed. In order to end his act of protest in a way that was satisfying to him, Willy Nanlohy decided to burn the cloths while seeking contact with his ancestors through the performance of a *tjakalele*. The most logical place for this was the Moluccan camp in Vught, where he himself had been born and where his grandparents had lived for many years.

While thinking about my assignment and this inaugural lecture, the memory of that Friday night kept returning to me. Willy's act of protest and the performance by night incorporated the three research areas of the assignment: Moluccans as ethnic soldiers, the relationship between Moluccans living in the Netherlands and the Moluccas, and developments in Moluccan identity and Moluccan institutions in the Netherlands, in comparative perspective. Allow me to take you into the circles that Willy danced at that time and to share with you these three domains and the research agenda that I have in mind.



Willy Nanlohy offers a black book to Prince Claus, Hoorn, 19 May 1987 (Rob C. Croes / Anefo)

Ethnic soldiers and arrival

The chair that Willy kept empty beside him during the opening ceremony was for his grandfather, who had come to the Netherlands as a KNIL soldier. The symbolic power of an empty chair has become stronger over the years. The number of men from that first generation who are still alive can now almost be counted on one hand. At the same time, they are fully present in the stories about and in the interpretation of Moluccan history. They are key figures in Moluccan migration: it was they who left the Moluccas and who, through a twist of fate, ended up in the Netherlands. Even though they are accompanied by their wives in the stories, the dominant story of Moluccan history in the Netherlands is that of the soldier who fought for the Netherlands, was transported here and then fired. This is, in a nutshell, one of the biggest issues in Moluccan-Dutch history. But it is not the only story that needs to be told and investigated. In addition to KNIL soldiers, others who came to the Netherlands included commandos, Moluccans who served in the navy, Moluccan police recruits and stowaways; after the transfer of New Guinea to Indonesia, a final group of Moluccans followed on in the 1960s.

In terms of religion and origin too, the group of 12,500 people, 3,500 soldiers and their families, was more diverse than the dominant story suggests. That story focuses on the protestant Moluccans of the Middle Moluccan islands. Of the Moluccans who came to the Netherlands, the majority was indeed Protestant, 4.5% were Roman Catholic and 2.5% Muslim. When it came to the soldiers, however, 24% came from the Southeast Moluccan islands, while 10% came from outside the Moluccas, from places including Flores, Manado

and Timor. A quarter of the spouses came from the Southeast Moluccas, and 27.5% had a non-Moluccan background.

In spite of the domination of the KNIL story, I will go back to that, because that is the reason for the arrival of Moluccans in the Netherlands in 1951. The special position of Moluccans in the KNIL, following on from Cynthia Enloe, can best be described by the term *ethnic soldiers*: soldiers who are recruited from specific ethnic minorities and considered 'a martial race', and become deployed outside their own territory. This was exactly what happened to the Moluccans in the KNIL; Richard Chauvel described that process as "the creation of a military 'caste'".

Moluccans were not exactly keen to be conscripted into the KNIL. Privileges, such as better salaries and better educational prospects, were intended to win them over. Initially, mainly Christian Moluccans were targeted, because they were supposed to be closer to the Dutch. At the end of the nineteenth century, the myth of the eternal loyalty of Moluccans to the Dutch royal family was also created. This was a myth people started to behave in accordance with, and this gave Christian Moluccans, in particular, the image of being on the side of the Dutch in the colony.



Soldiers in the barracks (Depot Battalion Infantry in Malang), 1949-1951. (MHM / coll. F. Tetelepta)

In the Dutch-Indonesian conflict that broke out after Indonesia declared independence on 17 August after the Second World War, Moluccan soldiers fought on both the Dutch and the Indonesian side. Chauvel speaks of 'a civil war' between Moluccans in Java, as even family members were in confrontation with each other. At the end of December 1949, the Netherlands withdrew with the transfer of sovereignty to a United States of Indonesia; this event was followed more or less directly by a process in which Indonesia returned to the

constitution and the unitary state as had been proclaimed in 1945. In response, on 25 April 1950, an independent Moluccan republic, the Republik Maluku Selatan or RMS, was proclaimed on the Moluccas. This proclamation complicated the demobilization of a final group of Moluccan KNIL soldiers to their islands of origin. As the Netherlands and Indonesia were not in favour of the RMS, which was supported by a large majority of Moluccan KNIL soldiers, and because there was no other place, these soldiers were temporarily taken to the Netherlands. Once they arrived in the Netherlands, they were fired. Their dismissal, experienced as being more of an insult than a thank you, continued to determine the relationship between Dutch society and the Moluccan community for a long time. It took until 1986 for the Dutch government 'buy off' the special responsibility it had towards these former employees through a joint declaration issued by the Dutch government and the largest Moluccan organization, the Badan Persatuan (United Organization).

When we talk about ethnic soldiers, it may create the impression that a specific population group fully supported the colonizer. This would obviously be a simplistic view. There were many Moluccans making other choices. One of them was A.J. Patty, who in the 1920s mobilized Moluccans for the Indonesian nationalist cause through his Sarekat Ambon. But between 1945 and 1950 too, many Moluccans chose to side with Indonesia. These Moluccans were members of the nationalist elite, and in the Moluccas, too, there was a strong pro-Indonesian Republic movement. A Pattimura battalion, consisting mainly or entirely of Moluccans, fought on the Indonesian side. Moreover, and notably, the bodyguards of Sukarno, the first Indonesian president, were mainly Moluccan soldiers.

As ethnic soldiers, Moluccans, albeit summarily, have been compared to the Gurkhas in the British army, and the Algerian Harkis in the French army. There are indeed comparisons to be made between KNIL Moluccans and Gurkhas and Harkis at different times in their 'career'. Moluccans and Gurkhas from Nepal share a history in which they were 'discovered' as martial races, after which they were deployed as ethnic soldiers outside of their own territory. Following decolonization, and when an end came to colonial armies, the stories of Gurkhas and Moluccans do, however, diverge. The Gurkha regiments of the British Indian Army were divided between India and the United Kingdom. Moluccans share a postcolonial migration history with the Harkis. Harkis did not come from a specific ethnic group, but were militias that were only set up during the Algerian independence struggle and were dissolved following decolonization. Groups of former militia members fled to France. There, just like the Moluccans, they ended up in isolation and faced socioeconomic disadvantages. Exploring the comparison between Moluccans, Gurkhas and Harkis and including other ethnic soldiers - such as the Hmong from former Indo-China - in greater depth is worthwhile. The Hmong were used as ethnic soldiers by both France and America in the 1960s and 1970s.

A broad spectrum of comparisons, in which other ethnic groups who served in the KNIL (such as Manadonese, who were in a position comparable to that of the Moluccans), and Moluccans who did not opt for the KNIL are included, in addition to the Moluccans, Gurkhas, Harkis and Hmong, will teach us a lot about the consequences of decolonization for specific populations from the former colonies, both in terms of their relationship with the former colonizer and their relationship with, or position in, their new state. In my opinion, systematic comparison with Moluccans who, at the time, did not opt for the colonizer's side has so far been insufficient.

This also applies to the attention paid to the aforementioned diversity within the Moluccan community and the fact that about one third of the wives of Moluccan soldiers were not from the Moluccas, but from other parts of Indonesia. For those women, the position and choices of their husbands had far-reaching consequences for their own family networks and position.

A comparative study of this kind must be part of our post-colonial debate. How relevant this is became clear last October, when the Inspector-General of the Armed Forces (IGK) announced that he wanted to pay tribute to a delegation of Moluccan ex-KNIL soldiers who were still alive. The announcement led to an interesting frame change: where the former KNIL soldiers had earlier been seen as victims of the Dutch government, because they had been used for the divide-and-rule politics in the colony, some action groups were now arguing that these men did not deserve tributes, but that they should instead be considered war criminals. This case says a lot about the way in which the current debate on decolonization is conducted, namely in black and white contradictions of right and wrong.

Transnational relations

By dressing as Alfoer in 1987/1988, and dancing the tjakalele, Willy Nanlohy connected his performance with its origin, with the Moluccas. The relationship between Moluccans living in the Netherlands and the Moluccas forms the second domain of my assignment.

For a long time, this relationship was of the utmost importance for the majority of Moluccans in the Netherlands: they did not just come from that place – it was also where their future lay. On arrival in the Netherlands, the expectation was that the next (and final) station would be the RMS. Elsewhere, I have described how the ideal of the RMS, and with it the character of the RMS movement in the Netherlands, changed from a supporting nationalism (aimed at supporting RMS guerrillas in the Moluccas), via an expatriate nationalism (aimed at realizing the RMS from the outside), towards a vicarious nationalism (aimed at promoting the right of expression and self-determination for people in the Moluccas).

The latter transformation was the result of a reorientation on the position of Moluccans in the Netherlands and their relationship with the Moluccas in the 1980s. I argued at the time that the last transformation turned Moluccans from exiles into migrants, and that they began to invest in their future in the Netherlands. What was crucial was that it turned out to be possible to combine a future in the Netherlands with maintaining a meaningful relationship with the Moluccas. Increasing visits to the Moluccas preceded this development. More and more Moluccans went to visit family and concluded that there were needs to be met: water wells had to be dug, bridges built or churches refurbished. Some of the young people, who had previously been politically active, began to work for small-scale aid projects for the Moluccas. It was also the beginning of a search for how the new relationship should be shaped, and how cultural differences could be resolved. Moluccans from the Netherlands discovered how strongly they have been moulded in and by the Netherlands. For many Moluccans, it was a dual confrontation: with the Moluccan

environment and with themselves. On the one hand, there was the recognition and the warm feeling that being with family brings; on the other hand, the feeling of missing the Western world and noticing that there were cultural differences.



Departure from Schiphol, around 1980 (O. Tatipikalawan / MHM / coll. IWM)

The idea of temporality that was central tenet from the beginning resulted in, among other things, village or island associations, the so-called *kumpulans*. These were instrumental in terms of, for example, being able to fulfil obligations relating to births, marriages and deaths, and they helped to shape the relationship with the Moluccans: in the 1950s and 1960s, for example, through the collection of church attributes, and in the 1970s and 1980s, through small-scale aid projects on behalf of the villages of origin.

Remarkably enough, family relationships via non-Moluccan mothers do fall outside the reach of relief projects. There are contacts between Dutch Moluccans and the family of their non-Moluccan mothers/grandmothers; these are, however, less institutionalized than contacts with the Moluccas. This can partly be explained by the village associations, and partly by the taboo surrounding the mentioning of non-Moluccan ancestor origins.

A pivotal point in the relationship with the Moluccas was the bloody conflict between Muslims and Christians that erupted in the Moluccas in 1999. Moluccans in the Netherlands were stunned by the conflict because it was thought that traditional social structures, such as the *pela* bond (connection between villages), would prevent such conflicts. It was a 'hard landing'. Many of the traditional structures that were kept alive in the Netherlands turned out to have lost significance in the Moluccas. This was not least because of the

administrative reforms at village level during the Order Baru regime of Suharto that had undermined traditional social structures.

After the conflict, the relationship between Moluccans in the Netherlands and the Moluccas entered a new phase. The relationship became more equal. Where Dutch Moluccans had previously predominated because of their money and knowledge, nowadays that is no longer the case. Joint projects or activities are now set up in relation to cultural heritage, discussions take place about this, and young people go to the Moluccas to find spiritual and musical inspiration. A good example of the latter is that young Moluccans visit the Moluccas to learn how to play the *tifa*. In a recent film, Jeftha Pattikawa showed how different young Moluccans see the *tifa* as part of their identity. On the one hand, there are those who stick to specific rhythms and strokes, while others consider it important that 'foreigners' find their way to Moluccan culture through the *tifa*.



Still from the film 'Tifa' (Jeftha Pattikawa)

The conflict on the Moluccas also had an effect on the position of Moluccans in the Netherlands. Moluccans experienced little understanding and compassion for their unease about the developments in the Moluccas: they had been in the Netherlands for several generations, why did they care about what happened there? This incomprehension was translated into a disappointment and partial aversion to Dutch society: why should they try to participate in a society that had abandoned them?

The conflict on the Moluccas therefore made itself felt in two ways: contact with the Moluccas was strengthened, and the distance to the Netherlands was increased. This opposes the direction in which it is generally assumed that transnational relations develop over time - namely that they become less strong. For example, Gert Oostindie wrote that the cultural gap with the Moluccas had increased because the Moluccas had become more integrated with Indonesia and Moluccans had become more Dutch. Dramatic events such as the conflict seem to work as a catalyst through which, despite a cultural gap, transnational relations can revive and, as in this case, can lead to a new (or renewed) source for cultural and spiritual deepening, which can play a role in identity formation.

In the years following the conflict, the relationship with the Moluccas for Moluccans in the Netherlands became even more relevant. During the conflict, Christian Moluccans had reacted to the arrival of Islamic militias from other parts of Indonesia by re-proclaiming the RMS. This led to the RMS once again becoming an issue in the Moluccas, and people who were involved in this movement, or who later flew RMS flags, were arrested, sentenced to long sentences and tortured in several cases. These prisoners also served to once again intensify involvement with the Moluccas. For Moluccans in the Netherlands, these prisoners are political prisoners, and proof that freedom of expression does not exist in Indonesia. Every year, rallies are held in the Netherlands to express solidarity with those political prisoners. In my opinion, these rallies express a broader connection with the Moluccas rather than simply a political one.

Moluccan neighbourhoods, institutions, monuments and identity

Lunetten, where Willy Nanlohy ended his performance in 1988, was symbolic in several ways. It was not only the place of residence in which he himself was born, but also the last Moluccan camp in the Netherlands.



Funeral of Rev. J. Uneputti, Camp Maashaven in Roermond, 1960 (MHM / coll.W.Nya)

After their arrival in 1951, Moluccans were housed in camps. It was there that the foundations for various Moluccan institutions were laid: the community's own church, with associated church choirs and church councils; a mosque, with a mosque board in the camp for Muslim Moluccans; *kumpulans*; sports clubs; and women's associations. Also important were the camp councils representing the Moluccan population in its relations with the government. Government agencies did not communicate with individual Moluccans. At camp level, communication was with camp councils, and at national level, with Moluccan interest groups. The levels were connected because the camp councils functioned as local representatives of the national interest groups. By only communicating with Moluccans as a collective, the government greatly stimulated organization among Moluccans.

As the 'temporary stay' lasted longer, life in the barracks became more and more untenable. Housing was often poor and far away from employment. To change this, special residential areas for Moluccans were built in a number of larger cities. Because of collective housing, and because the Moluccan institutions and representative councils continued to exist, the social structure of the community remained intact.

In 1970, when Moluccan youths invaded the residence of the Indonesian ambassador in Wassenaar, an event during which a policeman was killed, the Dutch government realized with shock that something was wrong in the relationship between Moluccans and Dutch society. In order to 'normalize' the relation between Moluccans and Dutch society, as it was called, subsidies were given to set up community centres in the Moluccan neighbourhoods. Initially, these community centres did not have the effect the government wanted. The radicalization process that had started in the mid 1960s, and of which Wassenaar was the herald of a new phase, was not stopped but instead came to a climax with five hostage-taking actions in 1975, 1977 and 1978.

The community centres did, however, form a new institution within the Moluccan wards, and these broke through the existing balance of power. This was due to subsidy conditions dictating that employees receive training from social academies. This encouraged Moluccan young people to go into further education, often in the form of second-chance education on what were called 'black learning routes'. Second-generation Moluccans who had received higher professional education got influence within the community through these centres. The orientation towards higher professional education programmes was also stimulated by the fact that, after the height of radicalization, politically engaged Moluccan youths became active in categorical employment and drug aid projects.

At the beginning of the 1980s, Moluccan youths started to leave the wards; to start a family, because of work, or to start on a course of education. Contact with the Dutch environment increased, and more Moluccans married non-Moluccans. The increase in contact with Dutch people stagnated at the beginning of this century as a result of the aforementioned disappointment, due to the lack of support and understanding during the conflict in the Moluccas. The increase in contact with the Dutch environment and the changing significance of the RMS ideal (which became less decisive in terms of the future) did not mean that Moluccans felt at home in the Netherlands. The Moluccan neighbourhoods therefore remained a focal point until well into the 1990s. It was here that they met up with old friends, kept up to date with the latest information about the community, and could continue to participate in Moluccan institutions.



Ward in Moordrecht, around 1980 (O. Tatipikalawan / MHM / coll. IWM)

However, the wards and the Moluccan institutions came under pressure. The joint statement issued by the Dutch government and the largest Moluccan organization, the Badan Persatuan, in 1986 represented, in some respects, a watershed. Before that time, Moluccans had had a special relationship with the Dutch government, which then disappeared. The explanation was the result of the Dutch government's wish to replace its categorical policy with a general minority policy on the one hand, and on the other hand, an awareness among Moluccan leaders that Moluccans were starting to become a small minority in the multicultural Netherlands, which posed a threat to the special position they held. The Dutch government, for its part, also had serious problems surrounding the housing of Moluccans. Many houses were poorly maintained; the government wanted to renovate them and transfer them to housing corporations. That would have resulted in large rent increases. Resistance to this led to violent confrontations between the police and Moluccans in Capelle aan den IJssel, who were trying to prevent evictions, on several occasions. Moluccan spokesmen always reminded the government that the Dutch government was responsible for the arrival of the Moluccan KNIL soldiers, and that it was a KNIL right to be taken 'home'. This situation served to increase the urgency for the government to enter into the conversation with the Moluccans.

The result of the talks was the joint declaration. The government provided funds for the renovation of houses in the Moluccan wards and for Moluccan churches, for the creation of 1,000 jobs for unemployed Moluccans, and for a Moluccan Historical Museum. All members of the first generation received a commemorative medal, designed by the Moluccan artist Pieter Noya, displaying the text 'in appreciation of your dedication', and an annual payment to the value of a return ticket to Ambon. In return, the Moluccan organizations would have to cooperate in solving the housing problem and they would no longer ask the government about KNIL rights.

With the ending of this special relationship with the national government, the fundamentals of the Moluccan institutions became weaker, also because an increasing proportion of Moluccans had started living outside of the Moluccan wards. Institutions such as Moluccan councils lost power; the role of, for example, the community centres became eroded, while other institutes, such as the *Inspraakorgaan Welzijn Molukkers*, were dissolved. *Kumpulans* continued to exist, but were not always decisive. The churches seemed to survive better, but they too experienced problems because they had, over the course of time, received fierce competition from other denominations and were reaching an increasingly smaller part of the Moluccan community in the neighbourhoods.

The Moluccan wards of today are no longer the wards of the 1980s. This does not alter the fact that there are still Moluccan wards where activities are organized, often around special events such as anniversaries and usually by some strongly committed individuals. This means, however, that continuity is not guaranteed. Some of the younger Moluccans seem to take a somewhat ambivalent position in relation to the wards. The wards have significance for a history that is specifically Moluccan and should therefore be cherished; at the same time, they do not necessarily want to live there anymore.

There is another ongoing development related to Moluccan identity. In the wards, and in locations where Moluccan camps used to be located, monuments are being erected to mark Moluccan history in the Netherlands, often on the occasion of the anniversary of a ward and accompanied by a booklet. There are striking similarities in the outward appearance of these monuments, namely nutmeg and cloves and the KNIL family. Nutmeg and cloves were unique to the Moluccas, and therefore refer to the uniqueness of the archipelago; at the same time, these spices also refer to the beginning of Dutch colonialism. The Moluccan KNIL family represented in the monuments is not only a tribute to the first generation but also serves as a reminder of the responsibility of the Dutch government towards the Moluccan community.

Some wards have even undergone a total makeover. In Wierden, a monument was erected during the 50-year jubilee and street names were changed. On a memorial, the names of the families who settled in Wierden are mentioned, as well as the names of the barracks in which they had lived. The streets were renamed. What once was the Jan Jansweg was renamed after three Moluccan heroes: Pattimura and Martha Christina Tiahahu, who opposed the Dutch at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and Soumokil, one of the initiators and the second president of the RMS.

The Moluccan districts have become *lieux de mémoire*, where Moluccan history is told.



Monument in the Moluccan ward in Wierden (Fridus Steijlen)

Decolonization

The research covers Moluccan migration, and therefore also the decolonization of Indonesia - a very current theme, which must also be mentioned here. The current discussions may be conducted in different terms, but are not new. Willy Nanlohy's protest fitted in with the discussions about racism, Black Pete and colonialism at the time.

The position of Moluccans in a number of these discussions was, and remains, complicated: their grandfathers were partly on the side of the colonizer. The second generation, which became active in the 1960s and 1970s, more or less escaped that paradox by pointing out, without much self-reflection, the double exploitation of their grandfathers: after the spice trade had collapsed, the Moluccas were forgotten, to be rediscovered in the nineteenth century as a supplier of KNIL soldiers. They, the Moluccan soldiers, were deployed as pawns in the divide-and-rule policy of the colonial government. And when they came to the Netherlands, they were put aside.

However, the KNIL soldiers were also 'willing' victims. Choices were made. The question is how deliberate those choices were, and whether it was about 'choosing a side'. Over recent years, I have interviewed some 20 Moluccan KNIL soldiers about their participation in the KNIL, most of whom entered service after the Second World War. Most of them told me that they enlisted because there were few economic prospects in their villages – so what they chose was social security in a region that had been under Dutch authority for some time. The

new KNIL recruits did not primarily make a choice against Indonesian nationalism; these were choices based on bringing home the bacon and escaping the constrictions of the village.

Research into the incongruence between 'the granddad who served in the KNIL', and thus was part of the colonial power, and a critical attitude towards colonialism can give us a better view of the complexity of dealing with a colonial past. We are used to speaking in terms of different perspectives. I am increasingly convinced that speaking about multiple 'group perspectives' is still too rigid: after all, it is also about individuals, who in principle all make their own decisions and each have their own perspective. It is a whole palette of perspectives.

The chair

What is the role of the special chair in this whole, and what is my research agenda? The chair is about the three domains outlined above: Moluccans as ethnic soldiers in the context of the migration history; the Moluccan institutions in the Netherlands in relation to Moluccan identity formation; and the transnational relationship of Dutch Moluccans with the Moluccas. These themes are, in my view, related to the 'Mobilities, Belonging and Beliefs' research programme at the department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, and to the programme at the Institute for Societal Resilience at the Faculty of Social Sciences, in which social resilience is the focus.

Before bringing together what I have outlined above, I would like to make a comment about the long series of studies within which I position the chair. Since the arrival of Moluccans in the Netherlands, regular research has been conducted into themes related to the Moluccan socio-economic situation and identity. Researchers can therefore historically interpret new developments on the basis of previously acquired scientific insights. No extensive study has been published since 2006. The Moluccan community now has five generations and, as may be seen from my lecture, interesting developments are still taking place. I would like to make a new contribution to this series of studies. However, I want to pay more attention to the diversity within the community than before, and to explicitly link Moluccan history and developments within the Moluccan community to current debates. I will do this by, on the one hand, drawing comparisons with other groups or processes, and on the other hand, by looking for common ground in the interpretation.

For the research domain relating to 'The history of Moluccans as ethnic soldiers', I am thinking of a systematic comparison with the aforementioned groups, such as the Gurkhas, Harkis and Hmong. I want to find out what the exact differences and similarities between these groups are when it comes to their position in colonial times, the period of decolonization and after that. For this, collaboration will be sought with researchers already studying these groups. I also want to look at the history and position of these ethnic soldiers within the context of the current debates on decolonization and post-colonialism. How are the people involved in these debates looking at, and talking about, these ethnic soldiers? I have already referred to a recent frame change. I want to place this part of the research agenda in comparative perspective too, by drawing comparisons with how, for example, the Gurkhas and Harkis are spoken of in, for example, Great Britain and France. This is in line with the appeal made by my colleague, Thijl Sunier, during the presentation of Gloria

Wekkers' 'White Innocence' on 21 December. He proposed making a European comparison of the effect of the 'cultural archive' in different European countries.

For the research on identity formation, I will concentrate on both the individual and institutional level. The research into Moluccan institutions must offer insight into what, after five generations, has become of the special accommodation of Moluccans in barracks and residential areas, and of the many institutions and organizations that have arisen through this accommodation. What is the state of affairs in the wards now, and in the churches and mosques? What are the factors that contribute to whether a ward is active or not, and are there institutions that serve the majority of the Moluccans living outside the ward? If so, what are they? This part of the research agenda, in particular, builds on previous studies. Research into identity formation at an individual level is ideal for addressing the diversity within the Moluccan community. I want to pay specific attention to age and gender, and to children from mixed marriages. As indicated, the proportion of mixed marriages among Moluccans is quite large, and this was already the case on arrival. However, little attention has been paid to this. What is the position of these young people, and do they have a different position within the Moluccan community? This part of the research agenda is particularly challenging, as this research will also have to focus on social media. For younger generations, social media forums are certainly where identities are defined. For this part of the research, I want to work with young Moluccans who are involved in projects related to identity formation, such as the aforementioned *tifa* project. It is my aim to encourage a number of Master's students to do research on this too.

As I have indicated in my speech, the Moluccas now form a (new) source of spiritual and musical inspiration for Moluccan youths. These transnational relations are therefore also included in the research into identity formation. The relevant questions are how the exchange of knowledge and information takes place, but also how this information is interpreted. Is what they learn in the Moluccas considered to be authentic Moluccan culture? In other words, is there a primordialization of Moluccan identity? Or does one realize that culture is dynamic and changes in time and place? Here, I want to look for a comparative perspective involving other ethnic groups in the Netherlands, but also involving groups of Moluccans living elsewhere - in America, but also in Indonesia. How do Moluccans from Jakarta or Medan see the Moluccas? Finally, in studying the transnational relationship, I also want to look explicitly at the relationship Moluccans in the Netherlands have with parts of Indonesia other than the Moluccas. A question here is to what extent the origins of the first generation of non-Moluccan mothers play a role. For this transnational part of the research agenda, I am seeking collaboration with universities and educational institutions in the Moluccas. Cooperation of this type is in line with Indonesia as the focus country of the VU Amsterdam. Contacts have already been made with, among others, the University of Pattimura, the Islamic University Institut Agama Islam Negara (IAIN) and the Christian University of Universitas Kristen Indonesia Maluku (UKIM) on Ambon. The highly appreciated presence of Professor Hermien Soselisa of Unpatti and Dr Chris Tamaela of the UKIM are the best proof that the collaboration has already begun.

The research agenda is ambitious for a limited appointment. I am confident that I can motivate other researchers to work on this agenda too. The chair is a joint project, like a *tjakalele* at full moon. Sometimes the *tjakalele* dancer is lit by the full moon; sometimes he disappears when a cloud moves in front of the moon. With the people around me, it is my job to understand what we see, and to interpret this in a comparative way. This is not

something I will be doing on my own; I will be working with my colleagues at the KITLV and the VU, and especially with the *tjakalele* dancer and the *tifa* players.



Performance of a *tjakalele* in the 'Ulli Ala' foundation, 1980s / 1990s Ridderkerk (O. Tatipikalawan / MHM / coll. IWM)

Word of thanks

At the end of this lecture, I would like to thank a number of people.

First of all, I would like to thank the Executive Board of the VU Amsterdam, as well as the board of the Faculty of Social Sciences, for the trust placed in me. I am grateful to the board of the Moluccan Historical Museum - Glenn Haulussy Foundation, Mahender Autar and Peter Satumalaij - for entrusting me with this special chair. Special thanks go to my employer, the KITLV-KNAW, which is making it possible for me to take this professorship. And I thank Ton Salman, who guided me into the safe haven of the Social and Cultural Anthropology department with a lot of energy. There I was very enthusiastically received, and immediately put to work by Marina de Regt. It was nice to work once again with my former colleagues Thijl Sunier, Lenie Brouwers and Freek Colombijn (whom we wish all the best, and we hope to have with us again soon), and to get started as the thesis supervisor for my PhD student, also an Indonesian colleague, Lita Masnun. I look forward to further cooperation with inspiring new colleagues.

I am grateful to my colleagues at the KITLV for the way in which they support my professorship, and for accepting that I no longer belong to certain matters. Ireen Hoogenboom and Yayah Siegers-Samaniri, your enthusiasm for my professorship does mean that I have to leave some jobs to you. I would like to mention the management team - Gert Oostindie, Henk Schulte Nordholt and Rosemarijn Höfte - in particular. They supported me on my path and made sure that I could take on the chair with the support of the KITLV. I thank my NIOD colleague Eveline Buchheim for her unwavering support, and Klarijn Anderson-Loven for her swift editing of this lecture.

I also thank my teachers here: Wim Wertheim, who showed me that a scientist can be engaged, and Frans Hüsken, Hans Vermeulen and Rinus Penninx, who taught me the tricks of the trade.

A non-Moluccan professor occupying a chair about Moluccans sounds like it is behind the times when we consider current discussions about diversity. However, I can assure you that I have had a thorough Moluccan education. David Berhitu was my first Moluccan teacher in 1976. He was followed by Elias Rinsampessy, Charlie Munster, Nora Titaley, Alfaris Haurissa and Augustien Haurissa-Mailuhu, and of course Richard Sahetapy, as always symbolically present at important moments. More came later. I cannot name them all, but make an exception for Tjo Hahury (*beta pun kakak*), and Joop Sahetapy, Abe and Ens Manuputty and Wim Manuhutu. And, of course, Willy Nanlohy, who took me along to his act of protest.

At the Moluccan Historisch Museum on the Kruisstraat, I enjoyed working intensively with Wim Manuhutu and Henk Smeets. Currently, I am enjoying working once again in the project group with Nanneke Wigard, Alies Boenders, Rocky Tuhuteru, Victor Joseph and Jeanny Vreeswijk-Manusiawa, and with the group of volunteers.

Finally, the home front, whose support should never be underestimated. My mother, Leny Steijlen-van Solt, I would like to thank for her unfailing trust. My children, Surya and Andaye, their partners, Patricia and Ivan, and grandchildren: Liv and Sef (who is too young to be here), and, of course, the expected granddaughter, whose name we do not yet know. Thank you very much for your support, interest and your sense of humour when things did not go as planned. And then Mariet, my beloved and my life companion. We got to know each other the moment I became involved in the Moluccan community, 41 years ago now. We have made the journey here together. You have supported me, encouraged me and, not unimportantly, been involved in this with me. Before anything like a special professorship came into view, you were already my special, very special life companion. My deepest gratitude for that.

I have spoken.

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