12 Shifting to the core of the ethno-cultural position

Moluccan camps and *wijken* revisited[1]

Fridus Steijlen

12.1 Introduction

As stated in the introduction of this book, the complex interrelation between the socio-economic and the ethno-cultural dimension of the position of minorities was central in Rinus Penninx's PhD thesis and for both the dynamics of on the one hand the assignment of these positions by society and on the other hand how minorities obtain positions themselves (1988: 58-64). One of the domains in minorities' socio-economic position identified by Penninx was housing. For Moluccans, this domain differed significantly from other minorities in the Netherlands because Moluccans were housed in camps and later in special wards. The government also played a role in the housing of other ethnic groups, like the Indo-Europeans, but the length of the interference and the implications cannot be compared. Penninx himself also wrote about the housing of Moluccans as extraordinary: 'The housing of Moluccans is a historical chapter on its own' (1988: 131).

The housing of Moluccans was not only special because of the central role of the Dutch government, but also because living in special camps and wards had a tremendous impact on the cohesion of the Moluccan community. An important role was played by such Moluccan institutions as the church, local councils and clubs that emerged immediately after their arrival in the Netherlands. The central role of the government in the housing of Moluccans ended in the 1980s. The Moluccan wards, however, remained. By the first decennium of this century, more than sixty years after the arrival of the Moluccans, these wards had become symbols of Moluccan history and identity. They became part of the core of their ethno-cultural position, even though the majority of the Moluccans now live outside these wards.

In this chapter I want to reflect on the history of this specific domain in Rinus Penninx's theory: the housing of Moluccans, and show how it shifted to the ethno-cultural position. This chapter is based on all my

research on the Moluccan community, starting from the early 1980s and on observations between formal research projects.

12.2 Migration

To understand the specific housing conditions of Moluccans, we have to understand their original relationship with the Dutch government and why they migrated to the Netherlands. Due to frictions in the decolonisation of Indonesia, some 12,500 Moluccans were transferred to the Netherlands in 1951 (Steijlen 1996a; Smeets & Steijlen 2006). This group consisted of 3,500 soldiers of the former colonial army, along with their families. The Moluccans came from the Moluccan Islands in the eastern part of the Indonesian archipelago. The unique spices on these islands – nutmeg, clove and pepper – were the primary reason for the Dutch to colonise the region in the sixteenth century. During Dutch colonial rule, the Moluccans, especially the Christians among them, had gained a privileged position and were recruited as elite troops in the colonial army. This privileged position led to ambivalence among Moluccan intellectuals vis-à-vis the newly independent Indonesia, which made them proclaim an independent South Moluccan Republic (Republik Maluku Selatan: RMS) in April 1950, a few months after the formal transfer of sovereignty.[2] At that time not all Moluccan military had been demobilised from the colonial army; outside the Moluccas, they were under the responsibility of Dutch authorities. The RMS movement in the Moluccas, with which the Moluccan soldiers sympathised, problematised the demobilisation and finally led to a stalemate, bringing the Moluccan military with their families to the Netherlands.

When they were transported to the Netherlands, their juridical position was complex. According to the decolonisation agreements, they were Indonesian citizens, but they considered themselves citizens of the RMS. The Dutch government was responsible for them as their employer (or rather their *former* employer, because the Moluccan military were dismissed from the army upon their arrival in the Netherlands).

12.3 Camps and institutions

In the Netherlands, the Moluccans were housed in special quarters. These quarters had been built as army barracks or as labourer's houses, but they also consisted of monasteries, estates and two former concen-

tration camps from World War II. Most of the quarters – or camps as they were called – were isolated from Dutch society. The reasons for housing Moluccans in these camps were twofold: first, there was a general housing shortage in the Netherlands and this was the only way to house 12,500 in a short period of time, and second, it was believed that the Moluccans would only stay temporarily in the Netherlands. This idea of temporality was shared by both the Dutch government and the Moluccans themselves.

In the camps, life had to be reorganised. Because they were discharged from the army, the military regimen as the organising principle had disappeared. In its place there was a camp regime with a Dutch staff (including a manager of the camp) and a camp council chosen by the inhabitants of the camp as their representatives. There were jobs for a small number of Moluccans to regulate daily life in the camps, including nurses, administrators and kitchen personnel (Wittermans 1991: chapter 2). All vital necessities were supplied by the Dutch authorities (food, electricity, coal, clothing). This was called the policy of full maintenance.

In the first years, several Moluccan institutions facilitating community building arose, both based on traditional patterns but also on new organising principles. One such new institution was the already mentioned camp council set up by the government. These councils were supposed to act as intermediates between the Moluccan inhabitants and the Dutch institutions and authorities. Although they were meant to be instruments for policy implementation – passing on information and regulations and mediating in conflicts – the camp councils functioned in effect as interest committees (Wittermans 1955). Because the camp councils were incorporated into Moluccan political and interest organisations that operated nationwide, the camp councils also functioned as the local representatives of these Moluccan organisations. This collective approach working with organisations as caretakers for individuals fit into the 'pillarised' Dutch society of the 1950s, which was compartmentalised along socio-political and religious lines.

Another important institution was the Moluccan church. Moluccan ministers who came with the military set up their own protestant churches. And although there were several schisms within the church, the Moluccan churches were very important for community building. Most of the church organisations supported the goals of the RMS. Local reverends fostered the political goals by organising special services for the RMS guerrillas that were active on the Moluccan Island of Seram until 1963. With the church organisation came a lot of other organisations supporting community building: church choirs, confirmation

classes, church councils, flute orchestras (the traditional accompaniment in church), but also women and youth groups. Especially the youth organisation of the church was an important supplier for new leaders in the 1960s and 1970s.

A third institution that had already emerged by the 1950s was the *kumpulan*, a village organisation. In these *kumpulan*, Moluccans from the same village of origin were united. The goal of the *kumpulan* was to unite people from one village in view of the expected return to the Moluccas. At the same time, the *kumpulan* could represent the village when needed, for example in wedding ceremonies. Beside the *kumpulan*, two other traditional relations contributed to community building among Moluccans in the Netherlands: family relations and so-called *pela* bonds. A *pela* bond is a linkage between two villages dictating unconditional support and a prohibition on marriages.

12.4 Archipelago of Moluccan camps

Most camps were situated away from towns and villages, creating physically and socially isolated Moluccan communities. Families were allocated at random to the camps. Depending on the ship, time of arrival, and availability of camps, the Moluccans were housed in various places all over the country. Family ties, the island of origin or religion (the vast majority were Protestant; 4.5 per cent were Catholic and 2.5 per cent Muslim) were not used as criteria for allocation. After conflicts arose in the camps, fuelled by differences in affiliation with the interest organisations, religion or area of origin, the Dutch authorities started to re-allocate Moluccan families, bringing together people from the same political organisation or islands of origin.

By the autumn of 1953, it looked as though the massive transfers had created peace and order in the camps. The commissioner for Moluccan welfare, the highest authority dealing with the Moluccans in the Netherlands, issued a letter suggesting that all special regulations be abandoned because the transfers were effective. The authorities had created an archipelago of Moluccan camps, all with their own political colour. This strengthened the position of the local councils as well as the political organisations of the Moluccans. The Dutch authorities had manoeuvred themselves into a position where they depended on the Moluccan institutions. This dependency was strengthened by the refusal of the authorities to deal with individual Moluccans; they only wanted to communicate with the representatives in the councils even for private individual matters.

In 1956 a short but intensive clash occurred between the Dutch authorities and the Moluccans. Because more and more Moluccans had found jobs and the full maintenance by the government became a problem, a new policy in 1956 called 'self-support' was issued. From that moment on, Moluccans had to find jobs, buy their own food, and cook for themselves. If they could not find work, they had to apply for social benefits. The Moluccans experienced this policy change as an attempt by the government to deny its responsibility to the Moluccans. According to them, the Dutch government was fully responsible for them as long as they were in the Netherlands. The highly political motivated and symbolic revolt against the new policy was very tense in some camps, but stopped after some weeks.

At the end of the 1950s, the Dutch government started to realise that the Moluccans were here to stay for longer, not necessarily permanently but at least for some more years to come. Because most of the camps in fact were not suitable as living quarters and because they were located far away from employment opportunities, the authorities decided to transfer the Moluccans to specially built districts in small towns called 'Moluccan ward', or *wijk* (plural: *wijken*) in Dutch. The Moluccans had to move from wooden dwellings (in the barracks) to stone (houses).

12.5 The *wijk*[3]

The committee Verweij-Jonker (1959), which advised on the transfer of the Moluccans to the *wijk,* hoped to break down the power of the Moluccan leaders by moving them to a *wijk* that was more open compared to the isolated camps. Especially in the early *wijk* period, this ambition was not reached. Recommendations on the size and the location of new *wijken* were not implemented fully, partly due to resistance by city officials. Therefore, not all *wijken* were built close to employment facilities and most of them were built at the border of villages, creating a new kind of spatial isolation.

In the *wijk*, the organisation of the community was a copy of the situation in the camps. A *wijk* council replaced the camp council, and the church kept its powerful position. At the end of the 1960s, new institutions developed in the *wijk* as a consequence of the emerging of competing political movements. After the defeat of the RMS guerrillas in the Moluccas in 1963 and the execution of the RMS president in Indonesia in 1966, a RMS government in exile was established in the Netherlands. A few years later, the RMS president in exile, J. Manusama, was challenged by I. Tamaela, a former colonel of the RMS army, who

established his own RMS government. This major political split created competition among their respective supporters in the Moluccan *wijk*. Both movements organised their own security groups in the *wijk*. Also, the minority of pro-Indonesian Moluccans grouped themselves into a new organisation, the API-Maluku. These political rivalries resulted in violent clashes within the Moluccan community, in which the police interfered only sparingly.

A real change in power relations at the *wijk* level came after the Dutch government started to fund so-called 'community building centres'. These centres, or *stichtingen* (foundations) as they were called by Moluccans, were established in almost every Moluccan *wijk* at the beginning of the 1970s. These *stichtingen* were foreign to the Moluccan community, because they were a combination of different types of Dutch welfare work for which there was no traditional Moluccan equivalent. Because the *stichtingen* were modelled after Dutch institutions and funded by the Dutch ministry of welfare, the government required that people working in the *stichting* meet specified educational qualifications. This opened the doors for second-generation Moluccans who had a higher education in the Netherlands. The *stichtingen* became hotspots for the second generation.

Other Moluccan social welfare organisations in addition to the *stichting* emerged at the end of the 1970s. By that time, social problems among Moluccans such as drug abuse and unemployment had become severe. These new Moluccan social welfare initiatives were initiated by the Moluccans themselves, because Dutch organisations seemed unable to reach the drug addicts or the unemployed (Steijlen 1984). And again, these new institutions were dominated by second-generation Moluccans. The social problems increased the isolation of the *wijken* and led to some extent to a process of ghettoisation of the *wijk*, without becoming real ghettos.

12.6 Closed community and changing identity

Living in special quarters with their own institutions had a huge influence on the internal orientation of Moluccans. Although there were some minorities in the Moluccan community and not everybody agreed on political issues, the Moluccan community had become a cohesive community and even more closed than it had been when the Moluccans first arrived in the Netherlands. The Moluccan institutions and the concentrated form of living in the *wijken*, which were considered Moluccan territory, were decisive factors in this. This strong cohe-

sive spirit among Moluccans was demonstrated when in the mid-1970s, Moluccan youngsters committed five terrorist acts, including hijacking trains and taking hostages in a primary school. The first train hijacking in particular received broad support from the Moluccan community (Steijlen 1996b).

Coincidentally, this height of political manifestation was also the start of a radical change in the Moluccans' position within Dutch society. Until the end of the 1970s, Moluccans considered themselves exiles in the Netherlands, waiting to return home to a free South Moluccan Republic. As political tensions grew and the radicalisation of the second generation led to terrorist actions, another current emerged: Moluccans started to question the idea of exporting a free Republic from the Netherlands to the Moluccan Islands. In the same period, Moluccans began visiting their homeland, something that had been taboo before that, and became involved in small development aid projects. Slowly the idea evolved that their future was not necessarily in the Moluccas, but that they could participate in the Moluccan community in Indonesia and at the same time live in the Netherlands. The Moluccans were transforming from exiles into migrants (Steijlen 2010).

Again, a new range of Moluccan institutions emerged. Moluccan journals that were not related to one particular political movement or organisation were published, and there were initiatives in the field of theatre and literature. In this process, Moluccans increasingly manifested themselves outside the *wijken* in the big cities (Steijlen 2010).

12.7 *Wijken* as centres

From the second half of the 1970s, no more *wijken* were built (except for one or two) because all the Moluccans from the camps were transferred to a *wijk*.[4] A limit to the amount of houses that were especially built for Moluccans was thus set. Young Moluccans who wanted to live on their own had no other choice than to leave the *wijk*. From the end of the 1970s, more and more Moluccans left the *wijk* because they wanted to marry, went to study in other cities or moved because of job opportunities.

Nevertheless, the *wijk* remained central and important for the Moluccan community. Most Moluccans who had left the *wijk* stayed connected to it because they were still members of the Moluccan church and their parents or grandparents lived there. The *wijk* also functioned as a communication 'tool': through their contacts in the *wijk*, Moluccans remained informed about developments in the community and

things that were important to them. The distributions of Moluccan magazines in the 1970s and 1980s illustrate this. Through colportage in the *wijk*, they could reach some 80 per cent of the Moluccans in the Netherlands. Announcements through *wijk* institutions were effective because the *wijk* was the place where Moluccans came together. It was their central meeting place: the *tempat bergaul*.

The *wijk*, even the smaller ones with just a couple of houses, was seen as Moluccan territory by Moluccans as well as by the Dutch authorities and people. Dutch officials were careful when entering these 'Moluccan territories'. When, for example, somebody had to be arrested and they expected resistance, the police would inform the *wijk* council beforehand. In some cases, when local tension was particularly high, Dutch police were reluctant to enter the *wijk*. This happened for example in the spring of 1982 in the *wijk* in Assen where youngsters even laid down a plank with nails on the street to prevent police cars from entering the *wijk*.[5]

In the same period, it came out that the construction of the houses in some of the *wijken* were very bad. In the first half of the 1980s, this led to confrontations between Moluccans and the police because Moluccans refused to pay the rent. In this conflict, the Moluccans confronted the Dutch government with its special responsibility towards Moluccans as former military of the colonial army and because of the role the Dutch government played in the transfer of the Moluccans to the Netherlands. The government was susceptible to this argument because the transfer of Moluccans and their discharge from the army were not an example of decent policy and treatment.

The government looked for an opportunity to end the status of Moluccans as a special minority. This moment came in 1986 when Moluccan leaders were willing to negotiate. They were prepared to give up the special position of the Moluccans in exchange for a package of regulations, including a token of appreciation for the first generation (a decoration and yearly bonus), a project to fight unemployment among Moluccan youngsters, a Moluccan museum and money to renovate the Moluccan *wijken*. For their part, the Moluccans would help to solve the housing issues and would close the so called 'KNIL chapter', as their claim on a special position as minority was called. The historical agreement, as it was called, was concluded at a ceremonial meeting in the government's room between the prime minister and the chairman of the largest Moluccan organisation.

12.8 Weakening institutions

In their negotiations leading up to the historical agreement, the Moluccans also anticipated processes that would inevitably lead to the ending of the special relation and the weakening of Moluccan institutions, in particular the growing pressure within Dutch politics and society to end special regulations for all ethnic groups in favour of general policies. Until the 1970s, the Moluccans had been the largest ethnic group in the Netherlands, but soon thereafter their position was overtaken by Surinamese, Turks and Moroccans. The Moluccan leaders realised that their claim on a special relationship would not stand for long. Besides, the number of first-generation Moluccans was decreasing and the community was confronted with processes of individualisation (see Bartels 1990).

These developments had an impact on the cohesion within the Moluccan community: it started to show cracks, because contact with the *wijken* decreased with the passing away of first-generation Moluccans who lived in the *wijk*, and because individual Moluccans gave less priority to contacts with the *wijk*. In addition, the institutions in the *wijk* started to lose their strength. Many *stichtingen* faced financial problems and were closed or forced to open their doors to the general public. The church remained important, although its influence on the local Moluccan population decreased as result of the individualisation process. At the same time, Dutch policy was changing: group-specific regulations were replaced by general regulations; reducing contacts of officials with Moluccan organisations.

Most importantly, the functionality of the *wijk* council came under pressure because of these local and national developments. The Moluccan interest organisations that had earlier organised and strengthened the local councils lost much of their power after the special relation between the Moluccan community and the Dutch government ended. The foundation of their power was gone. This also weakened the local councils and the internal structure of the organisations. In many places, second or even third councils were erected to represent the local Moluccan community. In other places, the *wijk* council became inactive – a sleeping tiger.

12.9 The *wijk* under discussion

Competition between *wijk* councils or inactive councils made it unclear for the non-Moluccans as to whom they had to deal with in the

local Moluccan communities. For example, it happened more than once that housing associations that owned houses in the *wijk* did not know whom to consult when a house in the *wijk* became available. They had to do so because one of the results of the historical agreement had been that Moluccans would maintain influence on the inhabitants of the Moluccan *wijk*. In some cases a conflict arose after new Dutch tenants were appointed. In 2004, for example, in the Moluccan *wijk* in Sittard, Moluccans protested with banners on their houses after an empty house was allotted to Dutch tenants. The housing organisation complained that there was no longer a Moluccan council anymore to be consulted, for the Moluccan council had ceased to exist two years earlier (*de Volkskrant* 5 March 2004).

For a brief moment, the issue of the Moluccan *wijk* came back to the fore in politics. In parliament, questions were asked about the Sittard case. Rita Verdonk, then minister for immigration and integration, responded that she was not happy with the situation. She felt that the Moluccan *wijk* was a concentration of problems and was negative for integration. She wanted to reduce the one-sided compositions of these *wijken (Staten Generaal* 2004). Later, while visiting the Moluccan *wijk* in Breda in 2005, Minister Verdonk stated that the *wijk* as a form of 'self-chosen isolation' was outdated and had to be ended. The town administration, however, told the minister that the issue was not her responsibility as minister of immigration and integration, pointing out the history that had led to this special agreement (Palet 2009; Van Heelsum 2007).

Although the cohesion in many *wijken* had reduced since the mid-1980s, the local Moluccan communities and *wijken* still could function as a monolith for local authorities. That was the case in Sittard in 2004 and, although there was no specific issue, again in 2011 in the town of Leerdam. Mayor Victor Molkenboer, having experienced problems coming into contact with the Moluccan community in his town, made excuses for the past. In his New Year's speech, he called upon the Dutch government to make excuses for the way it had treated the Moluccans in the past with their transfer to the Netherlands and their discharge from the army. According to the mayor, the Dutch government had never shown any doubts or regrets about this past. His call evoked a discussion among Moluccans. One group supported the call, while others pointed to the 1986 historical agreement as the first recognition of the support the Moluccans provided the Dutch during the colonial era and the Second World War and the way Moluccans had been received in the Netherlands. The mayor had apparently not been familiar with the historical agreement and explained that he was motivated by prob-

lems he had encountered in communicating with the local Moluccan community. One example of the issues he was confronted with were protests of Moluccans against new tenants in the *wijk* who were not selected by the Moluccans themselves (Van der Kaaij 2012). Cynically enough, it had been these same problems – no access to Moluccans and problems with housing – that had led to the historical agreement.

12.10 Physical place to experience the community

As we have seen, the *wijken* as successors of the camps had been changing since they were built in the 1960s. Their structures changed, their institutions weakened and, due to demographic developments, they lost their function as main living areas for Moluccans. This does not mean that the *wijk* already is history, the housing issues showed this clearly.

A growing number of Moluccans have ambivalent feelings about the *wijk*. The *wijk* is associated with lagging behind and social control and is supposed to be a restraint on socio-economic mobility. Young Moluccans (whether it be those with two Moluccan parents or those from a mixed marriage) say that they appreciate the *wijk*. While some of them wittingly live in the *wijk,* others do not want to live there. If they had to, they would prefer to live on the edge of the *wijk* and not in its centre, because that is where the social pressure is the greatest (see Titawano 2008; Ouweneel 2011).

The appreciation of the *wijk* points to the important symbolic meaning of these living quarters. This symbolism is apparent in many discussions and events. In a four-hour live radio programme broadcast from the Moluccan church Eben-Haëzer in the town of Zwolle in August 2012, the *wijk* was one point of discussion (radio programme NTR 2012). The Moluccan historian and cultural heritage expert, Wim Manuhutu, explained that many people who do not live in the *wijk* will visit the *wijk* especially at important moments, such as marriages and deaths. According to him, the *wijk* is a physical place for them to experience the Moluccan community. In the same radio programme, Dirceu Parinussa, a 29-year-old third-generation Moluccan who lived his whole life in the *wijk*, stated that the Moluccan community would lose their history if they were to give up the *wijk* as their living quarters. He did not mean to say that Moluccans who live outside the *wijk* are less Moluccan, but rather that the *wijk* is irrevocably a part of the Moluccan identity because the *wijk* is the result of the specific Moluccan migration history.

This symbolism of identity was emphasised in a very spectacular way during an event on 14 April 2012: the jubilee of the 'Peringatan Maluku Ride-out' (Remember the Moluccas Ride-out). Ride-outs, large groups of (Moluccan) motorcyclist touring, have already long been part of the entourage of Moluccan festivities, such as on the yearly commemoration of the RMS proclamation on 25 April. The 'Peringatan Maluku Ride-out' is a special Ride-out to call upon the people not to forget Moluccans who were imprisoned in Indonesia after they had publicly displayed the RMS flag. The 'Peringatan Maluku Ride-out' is organised around 12 April, the date that the second RMS president Soumokil was killed in Indonesia in 1966. To celebrate the fifth anniversary of 'Peringatan Maluku Ride-out', some 360 bikers drove from the *wijk* in Geleen to Vught where a group of Moluccans still live in the last (renovated) Moluccan camp Lunetten. On their way, they passed the *wijken* in Venlo, Venray, Gennep and Hatert. At the same time, a Walk-4Maluku was organised starting late at night in the *wijk* in Elst heading for Lunetten passing the *wijken* in Opheusden, Tiel and Den Bosch, a walk of some 80 kilometres. Besides the walkers and bikers, a group of cyclers came from the *wijk* in Breda to Lunetten.[6]

Of course, the bikers with their leather jackets full of Moluccan symbols and their roaring motorcycles were the most impressive part of the event. The symbolic meaning of the *wijk* was not only emphasised by visiting all the *wijken* on the route between Geleen and Vught, but also by the ceremonies that were held in each *wijk*. In each *wijk*, the bikers were welcomed by Moluccan dancers beating traditional Moluccan drums. Then, in the middle of the *wijk*, the RMS flag was hoisted while the RMS anthem *Hena Masa* was sung. After some thanks, the bikers left, waving them farewell with RMS flags. The *wijk* had a significant role in this event in the sense that Manuhutu explained in the radio programme: a physical place to experience the Moluccan community.

12.11 The *wijk* as cultural heritage

The symbolic meaning of the *wijk* and its predecessor the camp is also expressed in the growing number of monuments that are built in the *wijk* or close to a former camp. The first monument that was erected in 1997 is a boulder to commemorate the former location of a camp for the minority of Islamic Moluccans in Balk in the north of the Netherlands (the camp was closed in 1969). Seven cloves and a nutmeg on the boulder refer to the reason the Dutch embarked on their colonial adventure around 1600. Other monuments put less emphasis on the

colonial theme, preferring to highlight the Moluccan experience in the Netherlands.

Different perspectives and motivations have resulted in very different monuments. An interesting illustration is the creation of two monuments that were unveiled in September and October 2006 in the Moluccan *wijken* of Moordrecht and Vaassen, some 100 kilometres apart. Both represent a Moluccan family: a father, a mother and two children. The Moordrecht sculpture shows the family in winter dress, representing the arrival of the Moluccans in the bitter cold Dutch harbours in 1951. Their posture and faces show the hardship they had faced and their fears about life in the Netherlands. The sculpture in Vaassen presents an entirely different vision. The mother is again in traditional dress but the father wears a summer uniform. With his right hand he guides his wife to the future, to which he points with his other hand. The Vaassen family is clearly more prosperous. The initiative of the Vaassen monument was taken by the local Dutch authorities to help Moluccans overcome their traumatic experiences. The Vaassen monument was designed by a Dutch artist, while the Moordrecht monument was designed by a Moluccan artist and was an initiative of second-generation Moluccans as a tribute to their parents. Since then, more monuments have been erected to make sure that the history of the Moluccans in the Netherlands is not forgotten (Steijlen 2011).

Some people even argue that *wijken* themselves should become places of heritage. Based on research on remnants of Moluccan history in the northern provinces of the Netherlands, Laurieke Zijp and Peter Groote (2009) suggest choosing one *wijk* to be given the status of a protected monument. Their reasoning is that the *wijk* is the result of a unique policy of segregation in the northern provinces.

A last example of a politicised symbolic meaning of the *wijk* is a recent debate among some Moluccans on whether to plead for recognition as a national ethnic minority in the Netherlands. In essence, this plea is an attempt to revive the old 'special relation' between the Dutch and the Moluccans. It is interesting to read how the *wijk* plays a role in it. In 2004, the government formulated five criteria upon which to designate national ethnic minorities. According to these criteria, a national minority must have Dutch nationality, an identity (language, culture, history) of their own that they want to preserve, and they should have been living in the Netherlands in specific areas from a long time ago, where they still live. The only national minority that was recognised were the Frisians in the province of Friesland. Discussions about the Roma and Sinti did not lead to recognition of them as national minorities. In 2012, a group of Moluccans argued that the Moluccan commu-

nity met the criteria because in the colonial era they were part of the Netherlands Kingdom and since 1951 they have lived in the camps and *wijken* in the Netherlands. In their argument, the camps and *wijken* were presented as 'traditional areas of settlement' and thus situated at the core of Moluccan identity.

12.12 Concluding remarks

In 1988, when Rinus Penninx published his PhD thesis, the Moluccan *wijken* and camps were clearly part of their socio-economic position. Living in special, segregated camps was a determining factor for the development of the Moluccan community. The institutions in the living quarters facilitated the development of a cohesive community, perhaps not always voluntarily or in a friendly way for everybody due to the amount of social control. Interestingly enough, the transfer of Moluccans from the camps to the *wijken* did not change this. New institutions (*stichtingen)* were established but the segregation continued. And very important: the *wijken* were considered Moluccan territory. This indicates that the *wijk* also played a role in the ethnic-cultural position of the Moluccans: it was the place where they could celebrate their identity.

In the course of the last decennia, more and more Moluccans left the *wijk* to live among other people in the Netherlands. This means that the importance of the *wijken* as part of the housing component of the socio-economic position of Moluccans became less strong. Maybe we can even say that the *wijk* is no longer of any importance to their socio-economic position. This, however, does not mean that the *wijk* is history. On the contrary, in more than one way the *wijken,* and to some extent the old camps, were given new meaning. They became part of the core of the ethno-cultural position. The monuments and how the *wijk* has been presented in discussions since the beginning of this millennium show how strong the *wijk* has become a symbol of Moluccan identity. It represents the history of the Moluccans in the Netherlands, the place to experience the Moluccan community. It is probably not important how many Moluccans live in a *wijk*, as long as there is a place where Moluccan history can be felt and people can identify themselves with that history.

Erecting monuments at locations where concentrations of Moluccans live or have been living also make these locations part of the Dutch commemoration landscape. It is a specific dimension of integration: the *wijk* as an important ingredient of Moluccan identity anchored in the Netherlands.

Notes

1 I would like to thank Wim Manuhutu for comments on an earlier version of this paper.

2 On 17 August 1945, two days after the Japanese capitulation, Indonesian Republicans declared Indonesia independent. The Dutch government refused to accept Indonesian independence and tried to re-establish its colonial power with military force. Many Christian Moluccans supported this attempt. Under international pressure the Netherlands was forced to accept Indonesia's independence and hand over sovereignty to Indonesia in 1949. Soon after, Indonesia returned to its declaration of 1945 as the founding moment.

3 Because the word *wijk* has specific notions for Moluccans and refers more to their living area – irrespective of the number of houses or streets, – than to a regular district, I prefer to use the term *wijk* (or plural *wijken*) when I refer to the concentrated living area for Moluccans after the camp period.

4 There is one important exception: Lunetten in Vught. There, the inhabitants continued their resistance to leaving the camp. Finally in 1993 the last group was housed in rebuilt houses on the location of the old camp (Smeets & Steijlen 2006: 312-314).

5 In 1982, tension between the Moluccans and the authorities in Assen reached a peak. There were disputes about a youth centre, and it was more over the five-year anniversary of the violent ending of the train hijacking in which six Moluccan hijackers were killed (along with two hostages). A police car was shot at nearby the Moluccan *wijk*. See Steungroep 1982.

6 There are some YouTube clips available of this Ride-out. Start in Geleen (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h3kknvcBQzw) or visit Venray (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KeL_OBQ23B8).

References

Bartels, D. (1990), *Ambon is op Schiphol. Socialisatie, identiteitsontwikkeling en emancipatie bij Molukkers in Nederland*. Leiden: COMTT.

Heelsum, A. van (2007), *Case study on housing: Breda, Netherlands*. Dublin: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.

Kaaij, M. van der (2012), 'Een weggeduwde geschiedenis'. *Trouw, de Verdieping* 3 July 2012.

Ouweneel, M. (2011), *Het belang van de Molukse wijk in Nederland*. Utrecht: Master's thesis, University of Utrecht.

Palet (2009), *De vensters open. Verslag Wijkendag Molukkers in Noord-Brabant*. Eindhoven: Palet.

Penninx, R. (1988), *Minderheidsvorming en emancipatie. Balans van kennisverwerving ten aanzien van immigranten en woonwagenbewoners*. Alphen a/d Rijn: Samsom.

Radio programme NTR (2012), 'Dichtbij de Molukse gemeenschap in Zwolle' (Closer to the Moluccan community in Zwolle), NTR 7 August 2012.

Smeets, H. & F. Steijlen (2006), *In Nederland gebleven, de geschiedenis van Molukkers 1951-2006*. Amsterdam: Bert Bakker.

Staten Generaal (2004), *Handelingen Tweede Kamer 2003-2004, nr 1407, Vragen van de leden Varela en Nawijn (beiden LPF) aan de minister voor Vreemdelingenzaken en Integratie over een Molukse wijk in Sittard welke mogelijk een Nederlands gezin weigert*. Den Haag: Staatsuitgeverij.

Steijlen, F. (1996a), *RMS van Ideaal tot Symbool; Moluks nationalisme in Nederland 1951-1994*. Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis.

Steijlen, F. (1996b), 'Hostage-taking actions by Moluccans in the Netherlands', *Ethnos-Nation* 4: 97-111.

Steijlen, F. (1984), *Druggebruik onder en (drug)hulpverlening aan Molukse jongeren*. Wijchen: Uitgeverij Pattimura.

Steijlen, F. (2010), 'Moluccans in the Netherlands: from exile to migrant', *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs* 44 (1): 143-62.

Steijlen, F. (2011), 'Moluccan Monuments', *Inside Indonesia Weekly Articles* (103) January-March 2011.

Steungroep 10 van Assen vrij (1982), *Dossier Assen*, Groningen: NP.

Titawano, T. (2008), *Tussen traditie en integratie: over culturele- en sociaaleconomische ambities van Molukkers in Nederland*. Amsterdam: Master's thesis, University of Amsterdam.

Verwey-Jonker, H. (commissie), *Ambonezen in Nederland*. Den Haag: Staatsuitgeverij.

Wittermans, T. (1955), 'Het begrip communicatie-basis bij de analyse van communicatieproblemen', *Mens en Maatschappij* 30 (6): 372-389.

Wittermans, T. (1991), *Social organization among Ambonese refugees in Holland*. Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis.

Zijp, L. & P. Groote (2009), 'Moluks erfgoed in het Noorden', *Noorderbreedte* 33 (1): 28-31.