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Latu Mae Rissa: Leader Come to War!  
An Autoethnography of Colonialization and Post-colonization.

Leah Leanah Latumaerissa  
Undergraduate Honors Thesis  
Dr. Vincent Lyon-Callo  
Dr. Gary Marquardt  
May 24, 2024

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## Glossary

Moluccan Term	Definition
Adat	Combination of social norms, social rules and traditional customs.
Ale rasa beta rasa	Moluccan saying: 'What you feel, I feel too'.
Alifuru	Moluccan descendants of Nunusaku
Ambonezen	Residents of island Ambon
APRIS	Angkatan Perang Republic Indonesia Serikat, the armed forces of the federal Indonesian republic.
APRMS	Angkatan Perang Republic Maluku Selatan, the armed forces of the Republic of the South Moluccas.
Bahasa Tanah	Language of the indigenous people of the Moluccas
Baileo	Traditional building in Moluccan villages used for village gatherings and cultural practices.
Bangsa	Our own people
Baris	Marching
Ibu Nusa Ina	Mother of the people
Indisch	Descendants of Dutch men who married Indonesian women
Kain perang	A red cloth that represents courage and bravery
Kampong	Village
Kapitan	Title of the head of a region
Katong satu	Moluccan saying: "We are one"
Kebaya	Traditional upper garment
KNIL	Abbreviation for the Dutch Royal Colonial Army
Kopra	Dried flesh of the coconut
Lokolo	P. Lokolo, Minister of Supply in 1st RMS cabinet on Ambon; then vice-president in the 1st Manusama cabinet
Manusama	Ir. J.A. Manusama, Minister of Education in first RMS administration on Ambon, Third President of the Republic of the South of Moluccas in Exile.
Medja putih	Moluccan custom of receiving guests
Melaju	Austronesian language
Mobiele Eenheid	The Mobile Unit (ME) is a unit of the Dutch police that aims to prevent and combat disruptions of public order.
Nonja Soumokil	The wife of Dr. Mr. Chr. R.S. Soumokil
Nunusaku	Place of birth of the Moluccan people located on Seram.
Nusa ina	Nusa Ina was the name of the island as given by the original inhabitants from the island of Seram.
Nyong Paul	Young Paul
Ojang	Great grandparents
Oma	A grandmother by family or a female individual from two

	generations ago.
Opa	A grandfather by family or a male individual from two generations ago.
Oom	An uncle by family or a male individual from the previous generation.
Parang	Moluccan machete
Pattimura	Moluccan war hero, Thomas Matulesy, who fought against the Dutch and was executed in 1817.
Pela	Alliances between villages and islands bound by adat
Perjuangan RMS	Struggle for independence of the RMS
Piring Natzar	An offering plate in the master bedroom for prayer
RMS	Republik Maluku Selatan or Republic of the South Moluccas was proclaimed on the 25th of April in 1950
Radja	King
Rumah Tua	Ancestral family home
Sagu lempeng	Small hard long-keeping loaves made of the starch from the sago palm.
Salawaku	Warrior shield
Sarong	Traditional garment consisting of a long piece of cloth worn wrapped around the body and tucked at the waist
Sateh	Pieces of roasted meat on a thin wooden skewer
Semangat	Awesome
Sidi	Confession of faith
Soumokil	Dr. Mr. Chr. R.S. Soumokil, former Attorney General of the East Indonesian Federation, Second President of the Republic of the South Moluccas, executed in 1966 by Indonesia.
Tamaela	I.J. Tamaela, General of the Moluccan armed forces and acting president RMS.
Tanah Air	Home land
Tante	An aunt by family or a female individual from the previous generation.
Tjakalele	War dance that was performed in preparation for the battle when going to war.
Verenigd Oostindische Compagnie	Dutch monopoly known as The United East India Company.

## Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my family, your stories are the living testimony of Moluccan resilience and strength. This work remembers the lives of our first generation, ojang Opas en ojang Coos, and their story of perseverance in a life of exile. Your sacrifices will not be forgotten.

I want to thank my grandfather, opa Hanok, for entrusting me with his life story. You have shown me the power of vulnerability. I also want to thank my grandmother, oma Juul, for her contribution. Thank you for entrusting me with our family's legacy.

I also dedicate this work to my parents, their love and support forms the foundation of my journey. Thank you for believing in me and teaching me not to give up in the face of adversity. *Apa datang dari muka, djangan undure!* [Whatever comes ahead, do not give up!]

A big thank you to the members of my family who have worked with me to create this thesis. My thesis would not be complete without your meaningful stories, feelings, and thoughts.

I also want to thank my dear friends, Chloe Wieber, Tesha Nowak, and Mason DeRaad for standing up against injustice. Your dedication to contributing to a more just future is inspiring. With your help, we succeeded in the inclusion of the South Moluccan flag and opened doors for the representation and recognition of indigenous and underrepresented students on our campus.

Finally, thank you to my mentor Dr. Lyon-Callo for showing me the ways in which Cultural Anthropology is able to amplify the indigenous narrative. Thank you to Dr. Marquardt for your historical insight and input.

*Mena Muria!* [One for all and all for one!]

## **Introduction**

The Moluccan community residing in the Netherlands has a rich and complex history intertwined with Dutch colonialism and its ongoing aftermath. This thesis employs an autoethnographic method to not only understand the formation of Moluccan identity and history of resilience throughout forced displacement and historical challenges but also to contribute to the preservation of Moluccan legacy. By exploring personal narratives, my family history, and the tales of our ancestors, this thesis serves as an archive and testament of the Moluccan people in the Netherlands to preserve our cultural heritage. This thesis seeks to showcase that the Moluccan community is not a relic of the past but a lively presence and offers a Moluccan perspective on Dutch colonialism, its effects, and the current post-colonial state of the Netherlands. In addition, this study will be situated within Anthropological literature and theories regarding postcolonialism and displacement to provide an insight into the formations of identity and culture through historical challenges on a broader scale.

## **Methodology**

To analyze the influence of Dutch colonialism and postcolonialism on the Moluccan community, past-, and future generations, this thesis utilizes an autoethnographic and historical ethnographic approach. These ethnographic approaches allow for the reflection of my family's history in the context of the Moluccan culture and history, and its interrelation with colonization and its aftermath.

My family was one of the estimated three thousand Moluccan families who were forcibly displaced in the Netherlands as political exiles as a result of Dutch decolonization politics in 1951. They experienced the start of Moluccan history in the Netherlands until the present firsthand. Through the exploration of the oral history, personal experiences, and perspectives of



members of my family this research aims to not only provide Moluccan insights into the intertwining history of the Dutch and Moluccans but also as a means to record, amplify, and preserve our narrative in the historiography of Dutch colonialism and postcolonialism. Through oral sources, we gain insight into the memories, emotions, actions, and lives of Moluccan individuals which contributes to a deeper understanding of the Moluccan community in the Netherlands. The stories of the Moluccan community and my family further provide insight into the ongoing struggles of citizenship, belonging, and deeply ingrained racism that stems from our colonial past. These issues are particularly relevant in the current political climate of the Netherlands and the rise of right-wing nationalist populism in the country.

In this study, an autoethnographic approach is employed as it enables a reflection of my personal experiences as a member of the fourth-generation Moluccan from the Netherlands and my journey in advocating for the preservation of Moluccan cultural heritage in the United States. In addition to the stories of my ancestors and family, my personal experiences will serve as an additional primary source to explore the connection between our Moluccan cultural meanings, history, and the formation of our contemporary post-colonial Moluccan identity. Moreover, my cultural Moluccan background and familial relationships with the participants in this study allow for a genuine and authentic depiction of the Moluccan community within the Netherlands that captures the essence of our Moluccan story, struggles, and character.

This thesis further employs historical ethnography, which combines historical research with ethnographic methods, allowing for the examination of archival materials on Dutch colonialism, post-colonialism, and the Moluccan community in the Netherlands to understand the past, and its relationship to the present. Historical archive records, literary sources, family photos, family artifacts, and an unpublished biography of my great-grandfather, Ekleopas

Latumaerissa, written by his son Paul Latumaerissa, serve as primary and secondary sources that translate into the Moluccan experience.

Oral histories are collected through audio-recorded interviews with family members from our second, third, and fourth generations. Interview questions examine their past, and present perspectives on our Moluccan history and current post-colonial society. The participant's memories serve as an important historical source and contribute to the understanding of the intangible Moluccan heritage. These conversations are transcribed and discussed in the following chapters dedicated to each participant.

### **Theoretical Framework**

In addition, this research aims to contribute to the broader literature and theories regarding displaced communities, indigenous communities, and colonized cultural groups affected by colonialization and post-colonization.

Postcolonialism is defined by Robert J.C. Young (2003) as a critical approach that is focused on a changing world that has been changed by struggle.<sup>1</sup> Young (2003) described that postcolonialism is a collection of knowledge from the perspective of the marginalized. Postcolonialism urges individuals from within and outside of the academic sphere to take perspectives and knowledge from non-Western communities more seriously in order to view the world through a decolonized lens.<sup>2</sup> Further, Young (2003) described the postcolonial effect of displacement on identity as followed: "You encounter a new world, a new culture to which you have to adapt while trying to preserve your own recognizable forms of identity. Putting two together is an experience of pain."<sup>3</sup> In this example, Young (2003) analyzed the experienced pain

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<sup>1</sup> Robert J.C. Young, *Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press Inc.), 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 20

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 12

from the displacement of colonized communities and the process of adjustment in a postcolonial society. This indicates that postcolonialism is not only a political effect of decolonization but also affects the social, cultural, and psychological aspects of a colonized community in a post-colonial society.

Lila Abu-Lughod (2001) has contributed to the dialogue on the complexities of colonialism and the challenges of decolonizing anthropology through her research by critiquing the concept of Orientalism by Edward Said (1978). Abu-Lughod (2001) argues that Said's notions of the 'East' and the 'the other' not only exoticized and oversimplified diverse communities and cultures from the Middle East but also created inaccurate and harmful stereotypes.<sup>4</sup> Abu-Lughod (2001) also addressed the power dynamic constructed through colonial theories as Orientalism enables Western authority and constructs meaning to the 'other'.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, Faye V. Harrison (1997) addresses this need for equity in the field of Anthropology and further emphasizes the importance of collaboration in ethnographic research when working with colonized and oppressed communities. Harrison (1997) critiques anthropological methodologies that are based on colonial frameworks as they frame the colonized as 'the other', thus creating a gap between cultural groups that disregards our shared humanity. Harrison (1997) notes that a respectful relationship between the anthropologist and the studied community contributes to the decolonization of the field of Anthropology and dismantles the preexisting power dynamic between the two groups.<sup>6</sup>

In 2014, Glen Sean Coulthard analyzed the experiences of the indigenous communities in Canada. Coulthard (2014) explored the relationship between indigenous politics, identity, the

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<sup>4</sup> Lila Abu-Lughod, "Review: "Orientalism" and Middle East Feminist Studies", *Feminist Studies* 27, no. 1 (Spring, 2001): 103.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>6</sup> Faye V. Harrison, *Decolonizing Anthropology Moving Further toward an Anthropology for Liberation* (Arlington: American Anthropological Association, 1997), 5-9.

struggle for self-determination, and the politics of recognition that are influenced by colonialism. Moreover, Coulthard (2014) advocates for the recognition of the colonized for their active roles in shaping indigenous narratives and histories. Coulthard (2014) states that indigenous cultural self-empowerment blossomed through the resurgence of indigenous cultural traditions and social relations.<sup>7</sup> It is essential for individuals from colonized communities to enter academic disciplines like Anthropology. Colonized scholars form a significant position in the process of gaining a deeper understanding of the heart and spirit of indigenous communities. It allows us to understand and appreciate the significance of indigenous empowerment and resurgence. Moreover, Coulthard (2014) builds upon the works of anti-colonial theorist and psychiatrist Frantz Fanon (20 July 1925 - 6 December 1961), including *The Wretched Earth* published in 1961 and *Black Skin, White Mask* published in 1952.<sup>8</sup> Fanon critiques the violent nature of colonialism to establish dominance and explores the psychological effects of colonialism in identity formation and the perception of the self.<sup>9</sup> Coulthard (2014) draws from Fanon's analysis of the psychology of colonization to understand the indigenous experience in the context of settler colonialism marked by cultural dislocation and oppression.

Luis Urrieta (2019) discusses the complexities of indigenous identity and the influence of intergenerational struggles and memories within indigenous communities. Urrieta (2019) notes that scholars refer to indigenous people as the survivors of the 'nexus of bio-psycho-social-cultural-spiritual intergenerational trauma' brought forth by colonialism. Effects from colonialism affect the individual from an interpersonal level to large macro scales of geo-regional displacement. Urrieta (2019) describes that within academia, when studying

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<sup>7</sup> Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 185.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 27

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 46

indigenous peoples as the Other, the studies are devoid of not only human bodies, but also human emotion, human life and the human experience. Urrieta (2019) stretches the importance of decolonization: “Decolonization is painful, but it’s a necessary and enduring process toward healing that we must continue to fight for, not only for ourselves, but for future generations. Indigenous identities continue to cry, but they also laugh, they make love, they fight, they hope, they endure, they procreate, they live—we live. Our ancestors live in us, and we will live in our children”.<sup>10</sup> By decolonizing anthropology and incorporating the genuine indigenous experience, we contribute to a more just and humane future.

Paul Whitnui (2014) defines indigenous autoethnography as “...a journey of (re) connecting with specific cultural sites, spaces, and struggles that relate to our fluid past, present, and hopes for the future.” In addition, Whitnui (2014) notes that indigenous autoethnography is marked by the reclamation of the indigenous voice, visibility and vision. Whitnui (2014) further remarks that this is only attainable through learning about the self and their relation with the people and environment.<sup>11</sup>

James Rhoads (1979) discusses the importance of family history within the social sciences as it provides an insight in the understanding of the adjustment of immigrants within a country. Rhoads (1979) notes that the history of a family and community allows for a truer depiction of the nation’s past and has the potential to provide insight into the future. Further, learning about one’s family history is learning about oneself.<sup>12</sup>

Ruth Behar (1996) stresses the importance of emotional ethnography, an ethnographic approach that allows for an empathetic relationship between the researcher and the researched

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<sup>10</sup> Luis Urrieta, "Indigenous Reflections on Identity, Trauma, and Healing: Navigating Belonging and Power" *Genealogy* 3, no. 2: 26 (May 25, 2019): 1, 10-11. <https://doi.org/10.3390/genealogy3020026>

<sup>11</sup> Paul Whitnui, “Indigenous Autoethnography: Exploring, Engaging, and Experiencing “Self” as a Native Method of Inquiry,” *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 43, no. 4 (2014): 481.

<sup>12</sup> James Rhoades, “The Importance of Family History to Our Society,” *The Public Historian* 1, no. 3 (Spring 1997): 8, 9, 16.

through the recognition of the complex emotional dimension of the human experience and ethnographic fieldwork. Behar (1996) argues that a vulnerable observer who is able to write with a broken heart is able to uncover the depths of our shared humanity and mortality, despite our cultural differences.<sup>13</sup> In the Moluccan case, the understanding of the emotional experience is essential in order to fully grasp our story and Moluccan identity which has continuously been shaped through centuries of colonial oppression, decolonization, contemporary postcolonial issues, and most importantly the different forms of Moluccan resilience and resistance.

Marianne Hirsch (2008) examined the concept of post-memory in the context of the Holocaust. Hirsch (2008) describes post-memory as the transgenerational transmission of trauma between the first and second generation. The second generation experiences the emotional aftermath of traumatic experiences that have taken place before their birth. Hirsch (2008) remarks that the transmission of these experiences occurred so deeply that they became part of the recipient's memory.<sup>14</sup> In addition, Mohatt et al. (2014) state that the study of the experiences of historical trauma within a community are needed in order to address intergenerational trauma and enhance the community health.<sup>15</sup>

### **The Alifuru & Origin of Latumaerissa**

In Moluccan folklore, *Nunusaku* refers to the birthplace on the island of Seram of the Moluccan people. Nunusaku has been speculated to be a mountain on which a tree of life birthed our ancestors. Through the legend of Patasiwa and Patalima, it is told that three Moluccan ancestors, Ulisiwa, and Ulilima en Uliassa, survived a great flood by climbing a bayan tree. After

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<sup>13</sup> Ruth Behar, *The Vulnerable Observer: Anthropology That Breaks Your Heart* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), 190.

<sup>14</sup> Marianne Hirsch, "The Generation of Postmemory," *Poetics Today* 29, no. 1 (March 1, 2008): 103, <https://doi.org/10.1215/03335372-2007-019>.

<sup>15</sup> Nathaniel V. Mohatt et al., "Historical Trauma as Public Narrative: A Conceptual Review of How History Impacts Present-day Health," *Social Science & Medicine* 106 (April 1, 2014): 13. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2014.01.043>.

the flood, they spread across the Moluccan islands in all directions of the tree branches. Our Moluccan ancestry is traced back to these ancestors. The Moluccan people are historically known as *Alifuru*, strong and fierce warriors. Before colonization, the Alifuru were inherently animistic; our ancestors worshiped spirits of the natural realm and drew strength and protection from our ancestors and the deceased. The word Alifuru translates to the ‘first human’. To this day, there are villages on the island of Seram, who preserve and pass on the Alifuru culture and ancestral way of life. For instance, the Nuaulu people, who are now located in Russunsa preserve the ancestral language, traditional clothing, customs and traditional housing. The tribe moved from Sepa Village to Russunsa to practice the ancestral *adat* ways and animistic religion as their previous location was a predominantly Muslim population.<sup>16</sup>

There are four genealogy lines of Latumaerissa, they are traced back from the islands of Paperu, Ullath, Itawaka, and Larike. To learn more about the origin of our ancestors, I visited our elder, Oties Latumaerissa who is a descendant of the Itawaka line. According to opa Oties, our earliest ancestors originate from Seram, specifically of the Nuaulu people. From Seram our ancestors spread to Paperu, Saparua, and later arrived in Ullath, Itawaka and Larike. To understand the meaning of the last name Latumaerissa, the name is broken down into three words, ‘latu’ (leader) ‘mae’ (come) ‘rissa’ (war). Opa Oties explained that ‘latu’ refers to ‘ratu’ which are both terms used to describe *radja* which translates to the leader, king or chief of a community. Another way of referring to Latumaerissa is Upu-ratu-mara-hissa.

Latumaerissa has an interesting origin as the name had been bestowed by the people of Paperu onto one of our ancestors tracing back to the era of resistance led by Moluccan warrior Pattimura against Dutch colonial troops in the early 19th century. Our ancestor in Paperu who

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<sup>16</sup> Stephanie Brookes, “Seram Island - Meeting the Nuaulu Tribe,” n.d., <https://travelwriter.ws/seram-island-meeting-the-nuaulu-tribe/>

was given the last name Latumaerissa, became the Radja of Paperu. The background of this ancestor is not certain. Some claim that he arrived at the shoreline of Paperu from Seram, while others claim that our ancestor came from Ullath and was married with the daughter of the Radja from Ullath. After arrival in Paperu, he was bestowed the last name Latumaerissa, given the rank of a king, and the locals asked him to join them in warfare.

Opa Oties remembered a story about Radja Latumaerissa that had been passed down in our family. Our ancestor lived on a ranch and cared for local animal life. Radja Latumaerissa was framed by one of the villagers as someone who had stolen cows that belonged to the Dutch in the area and placed them in the barn of our ancestor. Radja Latumaerissa was captured by the Dutch and punished for a crime he did not commit. At Fort Duurstede, a Dutch colonial fort in Saparua, our ancestor was stripped of his dignity as he was forced to undress and bound to a plank in the middle of the field at the fort. He was beaten with a long and thin rattan whip, covered in tar and sand. His torture continued day in and out for months on end. When he was released, he returned to our village Paperu. He instructed the *Kapitan*, the right hand of the Radja, to gather the villagers at his home. Radja Latumaerissa confronted the traitor with his parang and called his family to leave the village. The family Latumaerissa spread between Ullath, Itawaka and some stayed behind in Paperu. Those who stayed in Paperu were forced to change their last name and eventually were able to re-adopt the name Latumaerissa. To this day, Latumaerissa is present in the villages of Paperu, Ullath, Itawaka and Larike. In Paperu, Saparua, our last name is carved into the foundation of the historic community building, *baileo*, as it is customary for each family to leave a mark of their legacy.











## Dutch Colonialism in the Moluccas

The Netherlands colonized the Moluccan Islands and the Indonesian archipelago for over three hundred and fifty years. The Moluccan islands are comprised of an estimated 999 islands, over an approximate surface of 74.505 square kilometers. The Indonesian islands are between 17.000 and 18.000 islands, covering approximately 1.830.064 square kilometers.<sup>17</sup> The seventeenth century saw the world's first megacorporation known as *Verenigd Oostindische Compagnie (VOC)*, The United East India Company, which lasted from 1602-1800. The VOC had an enormous capital, tremendous resources, and power including its very own army, military equipment, war fleet, and currency. The VOC ships sailed all over the world to trade in not only spices but also textiles and curiosa artifacts.<sup>18</sup>

In 1602 the VOC forcefully and violently took control of the indigenous spice trade and production in the Moluccan islands. In 1620, the Dutch slaughtered the indigenous people of the Moluccan Banda Islands to gain control of the islands and their local resources and nutmeg trade and production. Moluccan survivors were forced to work on the now Dutch-owned nutmeg groves/plantations or were sold as slaves. The VOC managed to control the islands for 200 years, but from 1800 it went downhill: the costs of the many garrisons that had to be manned and the strong war fleet that needed to defend the VOC trading area were enormous. On top of that, the Netherlands was engaged in several different wars which made trade less of a priority. The United East India Company went bankrupt in 1798 and they abandoned their trade posts and settlements. The Dutch government established military outposts in the archipelago to maintain their control over the area. This Dutch Army developed between 1820 and 1830 into the KNIL,

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<sup>17</sup> “Een blik op de kaart van Indonesië,” [“A look on the map of Indonesia,”] Zuidoost-Azie Magazine, accessed November 25, 2023, <https://www.zuidoostaziemagazine.com/kaart-van-indonesie/>.

<sup>18</sup> Jan J.B. Kuipers, “Het ‘grote verhaal’ van de VOC,” [“The ‘big story’ of the VOC,”] Historiek, August 12, 2022, <https://historiek.net/het-grote-verhaal-van-de-voc/44345/>.

the *Koninklijk Nederlandsch Indisch Leger*, translated to the Royal Dutch India Army. The KNIL was an independently functioning force, separate from the Dutch government. My great-grandfather, Ekleopas Latumaerissa, was one of the many indigenous Moluccan soldiers who served the Dutch colonial army (KNIL). In the KNIL, he received the rank of a corporal.<sup>19</sup>

### **Republik Maluku Selatan**

In 1949, Indonesia was known as the United States of Indonesia, or the Federal Republic of Indonesia. Within the United States of Indonesia, the South Moluccan islands were defined as an autonomous region under the State of the Great East.<sup>20</sup> In 1950, President Sukarno intended to transform the United States of Indonesia into a unitary state.<sup>21</sup> This led to the declaration of the Republic of the South Moluccas (RMS) in 1950. The independence caused increased tensions and led to a war between the Indonesian Federation and the South Moluccan Republic as Indonesian troops invaded South Moluccan territory. The South Moluccas have since then been an occupied territory.

After the fall of the Dutch Indies in 1949, the services of the Moluccan KNIL soldiers were no longer required in the former colony. Due to the occupation of the Moluccas and the RMS struggle for independence, it became difficult for Moluccan KNIL soldiers to return to the South Moluccan islands or to guarantee the safety of their families. At this time, most of the Moluccan KNIL soldiers were located in Java, within the United States of Indonesia, and wished to be demobilized in the Moluccan island of Ambon, to join the RMS troops led by

South-Moluccan President Soumokil to aid the RMS independence and combat Indonesian

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<sup>19</sup> “De aankomst: Molukkers naar Nederland, Achternaam: Latumaerisa,” [“The arrival: Moluccans to the Netherlands, Last name: Latumaerisa,”] Nationaal Archief, accessed November 25, 2023, <https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/index/nt00336/311867c8-e091-11e5-a914-00505693001d>.

<sup>20</sup> Ide Anak Agung Gde Agung, *From the Formation of the State of East Indonesia Towards the Establishment of the United States of Indonesia* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 1996), 101-102.

<sup>21</sup> “South Moluccan,” Unrepresented Nations & Peoples Organizations, March 25, 2008, <https://unpo.org/members/7907>.

occupation.<sup>22</sup> Initially, the Moluccan KNIL were offered three choices from the Dutch government: they could return to the Moluccas with severance payment, they could transfer to the Indonesian military, *Angkatan Perang Republik Indonesia Serikat* (APRIS), or they could choose to stay in the Netherlands temporary for six months until it would be safe to return to an independent Moluccan nation.<sup>23</sup> However, the option to return to Maluku had been vetoed by the Indonesian government to avoid the expansion of well-trained Moluccan soldiers in the guerilla troops of the RMS.<sup>24</sup> Further, the option for joining the APRIS was for most Moluccans a shock, as Indonesian rebels were their enemy in the Dutch colonial era, and with the proclamation of an independent South Moluccan Republic, the Indonesian troops functioned as their opponent. In addition, a Dutch judge concluded that the Dutch government would not be able to demobilize Moluccan KNIL soldiers in Indonesian territory against their will.<sup>25</sup> The RMS delegation advised the Moluccan KNIL soldiers to choose for a temporary stay in the Netherlands, which then the majority of Moluccan KNIL soldiers did.<sup>26</sup> An estimated 500 individuals stayed in the Indonesian Republic.<sup>27</sup> On June 26th 1950, the KNIL was officially dissolved. The Moluccan KNIL that were not demobilized during this time, around 4,000 Moluccan men, were transferred

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<sup>22</sup> “Molukse soldaten in het Koninklijk Nederlands-Indisch Leger (KNIL),” [“Moluccan soldiers in the Royal Dutch-India Army (KNIL),”] Vijf Eeuwen Migratie, accessed on November 25, 2023, <https://vijfeeuwenmigratie.nl/migratiebeweging/molukse-soldaten-het-koninklijk-nederlands-indische-leger-knil>.

<sup>23</sup> Daniel van Wijk, “Vergeet hen niet - Zij die hun leven gaven voor Nederland (Mini-Docu: Molukse KNIL Militairen),” [Don’t forget them – They gave their lives for the Netherlands (Mini-Docu: Moluccan KNIL Soldiers),”] February 16, 2020, educational video, 2:13-2:28, <https://youtu.be/YQMLvYMNNyw?si=leQORh4QrbCSJ0Kq&t=133>.

<sup>24</sup> Fridus Steijlen, “‘Het voelde alsof zij, mannen die voor Nederland hadden gevochten, als vuilnis aan de kant werden gezet’,” [“‘It felt as if they, men who fought for the Netherlands, were put aside like trash’,”] Geschiedenis Magazine, October 9, 2021, <https://geschiedenismagazine.nl/het-voelde-alsof-zij-mannen-die-voor-nederland-hadden-gevochten-als-vuilnis-aan-de-kant-werden-gezet>.

<sup>25</sup> “Een stukje geschiedenis vanaf 1949,” [“A piece of history starting 1949,”] De Reizende Tentoonstelling In Twee Werelden, accessed on November 26, 2023, <https://reizendetentoonstelling.nl/geschiedenis/#:~:text=Meta%20Wiechertjes-,Chris%20Soumokil,aantal%20maanden%20mee%20naar%20Nederland>.

<sup>26</sup> Vijf Eeuwen Migratie, “Molukse soldaten. [“Moluccan soldiers.”]

<sup>27</sup> Bert Janssen, “Molukkers willen aandacht voor hun ‘vergeten kinderen’,” [“Moluccans request attention for their ‘forgotten children’,”] Brabants Dagblad, February 4, 2019, <https://www.bd.nl/vught/molukkers-willen-aandacht-voor-hun-vergeten-kinderen~aac14fbc/>.

to the Koninklijke Landmacht (Dutch Royal Army).<sup>28</sup> Further, Van Amersfoort (2004) notes that the decision to transfer the Moluccan men to the Dutch Royal Army had been a decision influenced by the international pressure for decolonization.<sup>29</sup>

### **Arrival of Moluccan KNIL and families in the Netherlands**

In 1951, the first boat *Kota Inten* with Moluccan KNIL soldiers and their families arrived in the Netherlands. Eleven boats brought 13.000 Moluccans exiles to the Netherlands. It is estimated that around 12.500 of the Moluccans were Moluccan KNIL soldiers and their families.<sup>30</sup> Upon arrival, the Moluccan soldiers were unrightfully discharged without notice and stripped of their military status.<sup>31</sup> Our people were transported to segregated camps, including former Jewish concentration camps Westerbork and Vught, and housed in barracks of inhumane conditions<sup>32</sup>. These concentration camps were renamed by the Moluccan communities to Schattenberg and Lunette.<sup>33</sup> The living conditions of the barracks in the camps were distressing. The woodstoves were too small to heat the barracks properly in the harsh Dutch winters. On top of that, the Moluccan families were not accustomed to the winter climate, nor previously experienced snow and ice due to the tropical climate in the Pacific. Moreover, the barracks were humid due to improper heating and isolation which caused mold infestations. Due to these circumstances, Moluccans suffered from tuberculosis and there was a high infant mortality rate

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<sup>28</sup> Moluks Museum, “Delegatie Aponno, de eerste stappen naar een overkomst,” [“Delegation Aponno, the first steps to an agreement”] December 3, 2020. <https://museum-maluku.nl/delegatie-aponno/>

<sup>29</sup> Hans van Amersfoort, “The waxing and waning of a diaspora: Moluccans in the Netherlands, 1950–2002,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 30, no. 1 (2004): 154.

<sup>30</sup> “Molukkers naar Nederland, 1951,” [“Moluccans to the Netherlands, 1951,”] Nationaal Archief, accessed on November 18, 2023, <https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/zoekhulpen/molukkers-naar-nederland-1951#collapse-145979>.

<sup>31</sup> Due to the absorption of the Moluccan soldiers in the Dutch Royal Army after the dissolvment of the KNIL, the expectation was set for the continuation of a military career in the Netherlands.

<sup>32</sup> “Herinneringscentra vertellen verhaal Molukkers,” [“Remembrance centers tell the story of Moluccans,”] *Historiek*, June 16, 2012, <https://historiek.net/herinneringscentra-vertellen-verhaal-molukkers/16677/>.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

within the camps. The hygiene conditions of the camps were poor as they were infested with cockroaches, mice, rats, and lice. In addition, one barrack functioned as the bathhouse for the entire camp.<sup>34</sup> For example, in Camp Lage Mierde eighteen families resided and consisted of one hundred thirty individuals<sup>35</sup>. The barracks did not have a kitchen, there was a main building where the central kitchen resided.<sup>36</sup> In addition, one of the barracks would function as a school for the Moluccan children, and a Dutch teacher would visit the camp to teach an Indonesian program. This was because the Dutch government calculated a temporary stay of the Moluccans in the Netherlands and wanted to prepare the Moluccan children for the continuation of their studies in the East. However, after a year since their arrival in 1951, it was decided that the Moluccan children should follow the Dutch education curriculum. The education level of Moluccan children was lower than that of Dutch children due to their disadvantaged position.<sup>37</sup> The Moluccans were not permitted to work in Dutch society at this time.

Moluccan camps, for example, Schattenberg<sup>38</sup> and Westkapelle, were surrounded by barbed wire fences as well as a bright light installation that would light up the camp at nighttime to prevent Moluccans from exiting the camps.<sup>39</sup> Curfews were not uncommon in the Moluccan

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<sup>34</sup> “Molukse kindergraven verhalen over de leefomstandigheden in kamp Vossenbosch,” [“Moluccan infant graves stories about the living conditions in camp Vossenbosch,”] RTV Oost, February 16, 2020, <https://www.rtvooost.nl/nieuws/326471/molukse-kindergraven-verhalen-over-de-leefomstandigheden-in-kamp-vossenbosch>.

<sup>35</sup> “46 Molukkenkamp Huisvesting in barakken,” [“45 Moluccan camps Housing in barracks,”] Canon van Nederland, accessed on November 26, 2023, <https://www.canonvannederland.nl/nl/page/258782/46-molukkenkamp>.

<sup>36</sup> RTV Oost, “Molukse kindergraven verhalen over de leefomstandigheden in kamp Vossenbosch” [“Moluccan infant graves stories about the living conditions in camp Vossenbosch”].

<sup>37</sup> Marieke Ouweeneel, “Het belang van de Molukse wijk in Nederland” [“The importance of the Moluccan neighborhood in the Netherlands”] (Masters diss., Utrecht University, 2011), 24.

<sup>38</sup> “Van top tot teen Molukker; vijf generaties aan het woord,” [“From head to toe Moluccan; five generations speak,”] RTV Drenthe, October 2, 2022, <https://www.rtvdrenthe.nl/nieuws/14995175/van-top-tot-teen-molukker-vijf-generaties-aan-het-woord>.

<sup>39</sup> “Molukkerskamp Westkapelle,” [“Moluccancamp Westkapelle,”] Zeeuwse Anker, accessed November 26, 2023, <https://www.zeeuwseankers.nl/verhaal/molukkerskamp-westkapelle>.



camps, and residents had to ask permission to exit the camp, detailing the reason why they were to leave the camp, and when they would return, to the mayor of the camp's district.<sup>40</sup>

Eight years after living in former concentration camps and barracks, in 1959, the first segregated neighborhood in Appingedam was built for the Moluccan people.<sup>41</sup> In total seventy-one Moluccan segregated neighborhoods had been built on the edges of Dutch towns by the Dutch government. With the emergence of the Moluccan neighborhoods, Moluccans were able to participate in Dutch society. For example, Moluccan ex-KNIL were allowed to work and Moluccan children were able to participate in local Dutch schools.<sup>42</sup> However, due to the poor education circumstances in the Moluccan camps, the Moluccan children were at a disadvantage and were at a lower education level than Dutch children of the same age.<sup>43</sup> Presently, there are forty-five segregated Moluccan neighborhoods in the Netherlands.<sup>44</sup>

### **RMS Government in Exile**

The transition from the camps to neighborhoods occurred as the RMS lost the guerilla war in Seram against the Indonesian troops. Moluccan President Soumokil, who led our war for freedom from occupation, had been imprisoned by the Indonesian military on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1963, and was executed on April 12<sup>th</sup>, 1966.<sup>45</sup> Dr. Soumokil was taken from Salemba Prison and transferred to the Moluccan island of Obi in 1966. Moluccan Pastor Souisa accompanied

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<sup>40</sup> "Het Spoor Terug Isteri Maluku 3: Moluks drama te Westkapelle," ["The track back Isteri Maluku 3: Moluccan drama in Westkapelle,"] VPRO, October 23, 1990, [https://www.vpro.nl/speel~POMS\\_VPRO\\_406762~istori-maluku-3-moluks-drama-te-westkapelle-het-spoor-terug~.html](https://www.vpro.nl/speel~POMS_VPRO_406762~istori-maluku-3-moluks-drama-te-westkapelle-het-spoor-terug~.html).

<sup>41</sup> Karin Sitalsing, "De eerste Molukse wijk viert jubileum met een droef randje," ["The first Moluccan neighborhood celebrates anniversary with a sad edge,"] Trouw, July 20, 2019, <https://www.trouw.nl/binnenland/de-eerste-molukse-wijk-viert-jubileum-met-een-droef-randje~bbbd5d92/>.

<sup>42</sup> Ouweneel, "Het belang," ["The importance,"] 26.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>44</sup> "Molukkers beschermen eigen wijk, niet-Molukkers niet welkom," ["Moluccans protect their own neighborhood, non-Moluccans are not welcome,"] NOS, July 3, 2017, <https://nos.nl/nieuwsuur/artikel/2181241-molukkers-beschermen-eigen-wijk-niet-molukkers-niet-welkom>.

<sup>45</sup> Henk Smeets, *Molukkers in Nederland* [Moluccans in the Netherlands] (Utrecht: Moluks Historisch Museum, 1992), 45-46.

President Soumokil and prayed with him before his execution. President Soumokil was allowed to write a letter to his wife Josina, known among the Moluccan people as *Nyonya*, or *Ibu Nusa Ina* [mother of our home island], and their son Thommy Soumokil. Then, President Soumokil requested for his hands not to be bound to the cross on which he was to be bound and requested not to be blindfolded and for himself to give the order to shoot. The executive officer denied his request to not be blindfolded and covered his eyes with black cloth. President Soumokil gave the order to shoot, and his body collapsed. A military doctor determined that he was not yet dead, and an executioner took the final shot from close range aimed at his head.<sup>46</sup> With the loss of our RMS President Soumokil in 1966, the fight for a South Moluccan Republic, international recognition and eventual independence continued outside of the Moluccas. The RMS continued in the Netherlands as a government in exile, and Ir. J. Manusama<sup>47</sup> and General Tamaela<sup>48</sup> followed in Soumokil's footsteps. Between these leaders, there was a dispute about the foreign policy of the RMS. This caused a rift between the leaders and a division in the RMS politics in the Netherlands. Due to General Tamaela's policy, the RMS established a South Moluccan Embassy in the West African country, Benin, in 1977.<sup>49</sup>

### **Stateless**

On September 9<sup>th</sup>, 1976, the Dutch government issued a pink document<sup>50</sup> for the Moluccans who were stateless. Through the document, they were legally treated as Dutch

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<sup>46</sup> Harold L. B. Lovestrand, *The President Has Been Executed* (Maitland: Xulon Press, 2018), 308-311.

<sup>47</sup> Smeets, *Molukkers in Nederland* [Moluccans in the Netherlands], 47.

<sup>48</sup> Gerhard Knot, Henk C. Weltje and Aad Kamsteeg, *Wat Moeten Ze Hier? Zuidmolukkers Op Weg Naar Vrijheid* [What Are They Doing Here? South Moluccans On The Way To Freedom] (Groningen: Uitgeverij De Vuurbaak, 1975), 47.

<sup>49</sup> AIVD, *51 APRMS Relaties met Benin, 1977-1980, 20 pagina's* [51 APRMS Relations with Benin, 20 pages] (The Hague: AIVD, 1977-1980), 7.

<sup>50</sup> Pink document, also known as the 'pink passport' among the Moluccan community or an 'alien passport' in the Netherlands.

citizens.<sup>51</sup> European and *Indische* Dutch who arrived in the Netherlands in the period of decolonization of the former colony in 1951, kept their Dutch nationality under the *Nationaliteitswet Nederlander*. Those who did not fall under this law, natives of the former colony, were assigned Indonesian nationality. In 1958, a great number of Moluccans became stateless after giving up the Indonesian nationality. In the 1980's and 1990's, some first-generation or second-generation Moluccans in the Netherlands requested Dutch nationality.<sup>52</sup>

### **Overview of Moluccan Generations in the Netherlands**

In the following section, I provide a general description of each Moluccan generation in the Netherlands to understand their position within the past and current Dutch post-colonial society, as well as the effects of Dutch colonialism, post-colonialism and the manifestation of intergenerational trauma within each generation.

#### **First Generation Moluccans in the Netherlands**

A Moluccan elder, and former KNIL soldier, said in an interview on Dutch television in 1994, "I feel completely empty because I have been in the Netherlands for forty-three years as a political prisoner."<sup>53</sup> Our first generation fought for the Dutch during the colonial era of the Dutch Indies and were discarded when no longer needed by the Dutch government. The early period in the Netherlands could be marked as an era of utter despair and passed down the

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<sup>51</sup> "Wet betreffende de positie van Molukkers," ["Law concerning the position of Moluccans,"] IND, last modified October 26, 2023, <https://ind.nl/nl/wet-betreffende-de-positie-van-molukkers>.

<sup>52</sup> Gijs Beets, Evelien Walhout en Santo Koesoebjono. "Demografische ontwikkeling van de Molukse bevolkingsgroep in Nederland." ["Demographic developments of the Moluccan population group in the Netherlands."] *Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek*, Mndstat bevolking (2002/6):13-14.

<sup>53</sup> "De tijd staat stil 7 juni 1994," ["The time stands still 7 June 1994,"], originally aired on television in 1994, YouTube recording, posted by Johannis Ririhena, June 29, 2013, 8:23-8:27, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nHXPDXAm-fM&list=PLU0dj2q0yMxOeSnYcc9Po5JFRx3gxLDvL&index=37&t=1652s>.

generations as conditions did not seem to improve over time. The first-generation Moluccans were unable to provide for their families in the barracks as they were not permitted to work, and only received three Dutch *gulden* a week from the Dutch government.<sup>54</sup> Not being permitted to work evoked feelings of frustration and powerlessness. They joined the armed forces at a very young age, because of this they most likely had a lack of formal work experience. Until 1956 the Moluccans were provided with food provisions in the central kitchens of the barracks.<sup>55</sup> In 1956, the *Commissariaat Ambonezenzorg* [Commissioner's office for Ambonese care] initiated the Moluccan *Zelfzorgregeling* [Self-care arrangement]. The Dutch government and Dutch society referred to the Moluccans as '*Ambonezen*' which was a reference to the residents of the capital island Ambon of the Moluccas, even though the former Moluccan KNIL came from all over Maluku. The initiation of this initiative caused heavy demonstrations among the Moluccans as they viewed the new policy as a way for the Dutch government to undermine their responsibility for the exiled Moluccan ex-KNIL soldiers.<sup>56</sup> The first generation engaged in peaceful demonstrations and petitions in the 1960s to bring attention to the Moluccan cause<sup>57</sup>. A return to the Moluccas seemed uncertain and feelings of betrayal arose as the Netherlands did not seem to care about the wellbeing of Moluccans who had been loyal to the Dutch Kingdom and were tucked away in camps of inhuman circumstances, where it seemed as if the Dutch government was waiting for them to be forgotten. Our first generation was cut off from Dutch society,

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<sup>54</sup> Nationaal Archief, "1951: Eerste Molukkers." ["1951: First Moluccans."]

<sup>55</sup> Charlotte Laarman, "Oude onbekenden : het politieke en publieke debat over postkoloniale migranten, 1945-2005" ["Old strangers : the political and public debate about postcolonial migrants, 1945-2005"] (PhD diss., Leiden University, 2013), 112.

<sup>56</sup> Fridus Steijlen, "Molukkers in Nederland, een sociale geschiedenis van uitersten," ["Moluccans in the Netherlands, a social history of the extreme,"] *Historisch Tijdschrift Groniek*, no. 208/209 (2015): 225.

<sup>57</sup> Eric Selekty and Maurice Selekty, "Met een roze vreemdelingen- paspoort werden Molukkers in Nederland staatloze burgers," ["With a pink strangers passport Moluccans became stateless citizens in the Netherlands,"] *Volkskrant*, May 2, 2023, <https://www.volkskrant.nl/kijkverder/2022/ons-koloniale-verleden/burgerschap-statenloosheid~v546160/?referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F>.

trapped in limbo with an uncertain future, they were betrayed by the Dutch government and their loyalty to the Dutch Kingdom had brought them into a miserable situation.

During my field trip over the winter break of 2023, I visited the graves of our deceased family members to pay my respects. My great-grandparents are buried in the cemetery near the Moluccan neighborhood in Wormerveer, along with all the other first generation KNIL of our neighborhood. The writing on the headstone of my great-grandparents read: *Oom K.N.I.L. die terugkeerden, worden begraven onder een palmboom zij die bleven, wachten op een vrij Molukken, worden begraven onder een appelboom.* [Oom K.N.I.L. who returned are buried underneath a palm tree, those who stayed and awaited a free Maluku are buried underneath an apple tree.] Our first generation awaited the fulfillment of a promise, returning to a free republic. They were treated as political prisoners until their deaths. The RMS lost the guerilla war due to the overwhelming Indonesian military invasion and occupation of the South Moluccas. In addition, in the experience of the Moluccans, the Netherlands did not fulfill their promise of negotiation with Indonesia for a free Republik Maluku Selatan.

The displacement of the Moluccan people as a result of Dutch colonialism has caused deep wounds within the Moluccan community and my family. In the present, five generations later, the effects of colonialism, decolonization, the broken promise of the Netherlands, and the treatment of the Moluccan people are still heavily felt by our generations. The historical oppression and segregation of the Moluccan community, our struggle for recognition, and equal rights, and the exclusion of our people within Dutch history and educational curricula have resulted in intergenerational trauma. In addition, the majority of local Dutch municipalities refuse to pay respects to the graves of our first generation, also considering the graves from neighborhoods that are no longer established. Assigning military grave rights to the graves of the

former KNIL soldiers would signify a recognition of the suffering, rehabilitation and tribute of our first generation. These military grave rights entail the enforcement of the municipality for the maintenance of preservation of the graves, as is the case with the military graves of Dutch soldiers.<sup>58</sup> As of May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, thirty-five municipalities have awarded the military grave status for the first-generation Moluccans within their districts.<sup>59</sup> Two years ago, in 2021 and during the summer of 2022, the local government overseeing the town of Wormerveer denied our community's request to recognize the Moluccan KNIL graves. This request was made by members of the third and fourth generation of our neighborhood in Wormerveer, to ensure the preservation and maintenance of the graves of our first-generation ancestors, including my great-grandparents as my family is from this neighborhood.

### **Second Generation Moluccans in the Netherlands**

Our second generation consists of Moluccans who were born in the Moluccas, born in Indonesia within the former Dutch-India colony, born on the boat during the journey to the Netherlands or born in the Netherlands shortly after arrival in 1951. These youths did not directly experience Dutch colonialism, but they directly observed the effects of Dutch de-colonization and post-colonialism. They witnessed how their parents and elders were treated by the Dutch government and how our people were forced to live on the outskirts of Dutch society. Second-generation Moluccans felt the pain and despair of their elders. The emotional downward spiral among the first and second generation was caused by the circumstances in which the Moluccan people resided in the Netherlands and the treatment that they received from the Dutch

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<sup>58</sup> Id 546. Municipality Zwolle, *Eerherstel en erkenning leed Molukse KNIL-militairen Zwolle [Rehabilitation and recognition of the suffering of Moluccan KNIL-soldiers Zwolle]*, Peter Snijders. Zwolle: Afdeling Communicatie, 2022. <https://zwolle.bestuurlijkeinformatie.nl/Document/View/d3bcb7e3-abb8-43c2-bfe5-8444bfebf796>

<sup>59</sup> “Welke gemeenten hebben de graven van de 1e generatie Molukkers een bijzondere status gegeven?” [“Which municipalities have awarded special status for the graves of the 1st generation Moluccans?”] Moza, June 26, 2023, <https://www.moza.nu/lezen/welke-gemeenten-hebben-de-graven-van-de-1e-generatie-molukkers-een-bijzondere-stat-us-gegeven>.

government and Dutch society resulted in depression and loss of spirit. For many Moluccan youths in the 1970's, drugs, and alcohol addictions served as a way to cope with the Moluccan reality. In this period, the MSK, *Moluks Scholings Kollektief*, a Moluccan initiative, established in the Moluccan neighborhood of Assen to help Moluccan youths get clean from their drug addictions through a method of abrupt withdrawal. Moluccan neighborhoods in the country soon adopted this initiative to help their Moluccan youths.<sup>60</sup>

The Moluccan youth from the 1970s fought fiercely for the freedom of the Republic of the South Moluccas even though they had spent the majority of their lives in the Netherlands. The first generation held onto their hope of returning to a free and independent South Moluccan nation, because of this, the second generation was involved within the RMS struggle for independence and international recognition. In the Netherlands, during the 1950's and 1960's, the first and second generation Moluccans initiated non-violent protest marches and petitions regarding their situation in the Netherlands and for the promise of a free republic to be fulfilled by the Dutch government. Meanwhile the Moluccans in Maluku engaged in guerilla war against invading Indonesian troops to maintain the existence of the South Moluccan Republic that was proclaimed on the 25th of April 1950. The RMS lost territory on Ambon and fought in the jungle of Seram until 1963 when President Soumokil was captured. The government of the South Moluccan Republic then went into exile in the Netherlands under the administration of President Ir. Manusama.

In 1970's, Moluccans youths took a more violent approach of resistance. One of the reasons for the radical position of these youths was that they had never been accepted into Dutch society. Despite the fact that some of these youths were born in the Netherlands, went to school

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<sup>60</sup> "De Molukse verslavingszorg (1)," ["The Moluccan addiction care (1),"] Noorderzucht, July 23, 2013, <https://www.noorderzucht.nl/de-molukse-verslavingszorg-1/>.

and worked in the Netherlands, they were not welcome in Dutch society. Since the arrival of our first and second generation in 1951, the Moluccans had been the ‘other’ in Dutch society; they were unwanted. Secondly, discrimination and hatred that these youths and their parents received on the basis of their skin color and culture served as a factor for the youth’s radical RMS approach.<sup>61</sup> Thirdly, the 1970s marked worldwide as an era of resistance from marginalized and oppressed youths. For instance, in the United States, the Black Power<sup>62</sup> and Red Power movements gained traction through radical pride and tactics, urging for self-determination and sovereignty. The Moluccan youths were inspired by not only the movements occurring in the United States, but also the movements of resistance worldwide.<sup>63</sup> A crucial fourth factor that translates into the Moluccan identity and ‘radical’ approach of the youths from the second generation in the era of resistance is the emotional experiences of the generation. The hardships and inner emotional states of our first generation and those who came before as a result of Dutch colonialism and post-colonialism translated into the second-generation emotional well-being. Moluccan youths sought justice in a deeply rooted colonial system that was designed to break us down, stripping our indigeneity and suppressing our cultural identity as we were displaced from our ancestral lands and forced to assimilate. Centuries of colonial oppression of the Moluccan people caused intergenerational trauma that affected our inner being. In the case of the Moluccan youths in the 70s, the injustice that affected our families formed a powerful sense of solidarity and created a collective resilience that sought to bring our community justice so that our people could break through the cycle of intergenerational trauma and liberate our future generations from the destruction caused by colonial oppression. So that we could be free.

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<sup>61</sup> Knot, Weltje and Kamsteeg, *Wat Moeten Ze Hier?* [What Are They Doing Here?], 47-48.

<sup>62</sup> Dieter Bartels, “Can the Train Ever Be Stopped Again? Developments in the Moluccan Community in the Netherlands before and after the Hijackings,” *Indonesia*, no. 41, (April 1986): 33.

<sup>63</sup> Elias Rinsampessy, *Saudara Bersaudara: Molukse identiteit in processen van cultuurverandering* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1992), 263



From 1970 to 1978, Moluccan youths revolted which resulted in violent actions to raise awareness to the Moluccan cause and the Republic of the South Moluccas. On the 31<sup>st</sup> of August, in 1970, the residence of the Indonesian Ambassador was occupied by thirty-five Moluccan youths and ended the next day as the Dutch government promised to have conversations with Moluccan leaders about the Moluccan state. One police officer lost his life during this event.<sup>64</sup> The occupation of the residence of the Indonesian Ambassador was the reaction to the scheduled state visit of Indonesian President Suharto in 1970. President Suharto initiated the execution of South-Moluccan President Soumokil in 1966. For the Moluccan community in the Netherlands, the state visit of President Suharto was perceived as an insult.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 1975, a week after Dutch queen Juliana made a statement in response to the independence of Suriname, a now former Dutch colony in South America. The queen claimed that all people have a right to their independence.<sup>65</sup> This was a painful statement for the Moluccan community as they had been living in exile for over 20 years awaiting the independence of their ancestral land. After the Queen's proclamation, seven Moluccan youths boarded train no. 378 from Zwolle at station Assen and hijacked the train near the town of Wijster. The hijacking lasted twelve days and totaled three deaths: machinist Braam, passengers Leo Bulter and Bert Bierling. On December 19<sup>th</sup>, 1975, Moluccan youths occupied the Indonesian consulate in Amsterdam, one death resulted in the occupation.<sup>66</sup> On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May 1977, Moluccan youths hijacked a second train in the town De Punt which lasted until the 11<sup>th</sup> of

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<sup>64</sup> "Actie Wassenaar 1970 – Een Wake Up Call," ["Action Wassenaar 1970 – A Wake Up Call,"] Museum Maluku, August 27, 2020, <https://museum-maluku.nl/actie-wassenaar-1970-een-wake-up-call/>.

<sup>65</sup> "Verslag – Gebeurtenissen rond de treinkaping te Beilen en de overval op het Indonesische consulaat-generaal te Amsterdam," [Report – Events surrounding the train hijacking in Beilen and the raid on the Indonesian consulate-general Amsterdam,] Parlementaire Monitor, January 15, 1976, [https://www.parlementairemonitor.nl/9353000/1/j4nvgs5kkg27kof\\_j9vvij5epmj1ey0/vk11be240azr/f=/kst13756n2k2](https://www.parlementairemonitor.nl/9353000/1/j4nvgs5kkg27kof_j9vvij5epmj1ey0/vk11be240azr/f=/kst13756n2k2).

<sup>66</sup> "Molukse treinkaping bij Wijster," ["Moluccan train hijacking by Wijster,"] IsGeschiedenis, accessed on November 26, 2023, <https://isgeschiedenis.nl/nieuws/molukse-treinkaping-bij-wijster>.

June 1977. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of June, the Moluccan youths released two pregnant women.<sup>67</sup> Two passengers were executed and six of the Moluccan youths were killed by the Dutch armed forces. At the same time of the action at De Punt, Moluccan youths occupied an elementary school in Bovensmilde from the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May to June 11<sup>th</sup>, 1977, and held a hundred-five students and five teachers hostage. There were no casualties.<sup>68</sup> The occupation of the school in Bovensmilde shook the Moluccan community and caused mixed feelings; children should not be brought into the urge for attention to the Moluccan case.<sup>69</sup> Lastly, from the 13<sup>th</sup> of March to the 14<sup>th</sup> of March 1978, Moluccan youth occupied the Dutch provincial house in Assen. This action was short-lived as Dutch marines rushed into the building. Hostage Ko de Groot was shot dead, as was one Moluccan youth.<sup>70</sup>

The ideal of an independent Republic of the South Moluccas is still present under most Moluccans in the Netherlands but over time, and through our generations, the RMS has grown into a symbol of identity, culture, and heritage.<sup>71</sup> In addition, the blue, white, green, and red flag of the RMS serves as a representation of the right of self-determination for the Moluccans in Maluku. The blue of the flag symbolizes the sea and loyalty to our fatherland, white symbolizes the color of the Moluccan beaches and the peace that is sought in the pure fight for justice, green symbolizes the color of the natural riches and landscape that provides for the Moluccan people,

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<sup>67</sup> “Hoe Nederland wekenlang zijn adem inhield bij treinkaping De Punt,” [“How the Netherlands hold their breath for weeks with the train hijacking at De Punt,”] NOS, last modified on May 29, 2017, <https://nos.nl/artikel/2175675-hoe-nederland-wekenlang-zijn-adem-inhield-bij-treinkaping-de-punt>.

<sup>68</sup> “De treinkaping bij De Punt (23 mei - 11 juni 1977),” [“The trainhijacking at De Punt (23 May – 11 June 1977),”] Historiek, last modified on November 27, 2023, <https://historiek.net/treinkaping-bij-de-punt-1977/79267/>.

<sup>69</sup> Vera Mulder, “Nederland haalde 66 jaar geleden duizenden Molukkers naar Nederland. Die geschiedenis doet nog steeds pijn,” [“The Netherlands brought 66 years ago thousands of Moluccans to the Netherlands. That history still hurts,”] *De Correspondent*, April 24, 2017, <https://decorrespondent.nl/6595/nederland-haalde-66-jaar-geleden-duizenden-molukkers-naar-nederland-die-geschiedenis-doet-nog-steeds-pijn/d464f8b5-2335-04fe-3c36-f9ff7ea4545d>.

<sup>70</sup> Peter Bootsma. *De Molukse Acties* [The Moluccan Actions] (Amsterdam: Boom, 2015), 333.

<sup>71</sup> “De Acties In De Jaren Zeventig,” [“The Actions In The Seventies,”] De Reizende Tentoonstelling In Twee Werelden, accessed on November 26, 2023, <https://reizendetentoonstelling.nl/geschiedenis/molukse-acties/>.

red symbolizes our ancient ancestors, and the bloodshed of the Moluccan people who defended our ancestral lands.<sup>72</sup>

As the temporary stay of the promised six months was broken by the Dutch government, the stay of the Moluccan people was prolonged. Where the first generation was guided by their hope for a return to an independent Moluccan state, the second generation was overtime slowly preparing for a stay in the Netherlands.<sup>73</sup> In regards to the position of the second generation within the Netherlands, my father remarked: “The second generation was a generation that was stuck in between two worlds”.

### **Third Generation Moluccans in the Netherlands**

Among some of the first and second generation a culture of silence<sup>74</sup> had developed due to their unprocessed traumas in response to the Dutch colonial and postcolonial conduct in their journey over to the Netherlands and their stay in the Moluccan camps and segregated neighborhoods. For some of the third generational members, this caused a gap in the knowledge of the stories of their family regarding their lives before the arrival in the Netherlands and during the early days of Moluccan camp life. Despite not knowing the complete stories, they felt the pain and frustrations from their parents, uncles, aunts and grandparents. The second and third generation wrestled with substance abuse as a coping mechanism from the plague of intergenerational trauma within their families.

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<sup>72</sup> Knot, Weltje and Kamsteeg, *Wat Moeten Ze Hier?* [What Are They Doing Here?], 84-85.

<sup>73</sup> Ingrid Bremmers, “De Kunst van het Thuishoren: Een derde-culturele ruimte gevoel van thuisbehoren onder tweede generatie Molukkers in Nederland” [“The Art of Belonging: A third-cultural space sense of belonging among second generation Moluccans in the Netherlands”] (BA Thesis, Utrecht University, 2018), 12.

<sup>74</sup> Vera Mulder, “Nederland haalde 66 jaar geleden duizenden Molukkers naar Nederland. Die geschiedenis doet nog steeds pijn” [“The Netherlands brought thousands of Moluccans to the Netherlands 66 years ago. That history still hurts”], *De Correspondent*, 24 April 2017, <https://decorrespondent.nl/6595/nederland-haalde-66-jaar-geleden-duizenden-molukkers-naar-nederland-die-geschiedenis-doet-nog-steeds-pijn/d464f8b5-2335-04fe-3c36-f9ff7ea4545d>

According to the Moluccan Historic Museum, the education position of the Moluccans within the Netherlands has been a concern in many socioeconomic examinations. A report of the Dutch *Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek* [Central Bureau for the Statistics or CBS] from 2001 noted that there had not been a progress in the statistics as they had initially predicted for the younger generations.<sup>75</sup> A CBS report from 2020 notes that in 1993, the percentage of Moluccan youths who dropped out of high school were significantly higher than those of Dutch youths at the time, specifically under Moluccan boys.<sup>76</sup> It is interesting to note that between the period of 2013 and 2018, there was an increased rate of school dropouts. Moluccan youths who remained within school, achieved a lower education level than members of Dutch society and were less likely to receive starting qualifications to increase their chances within the job market. However, the Moluccan Historic Museum notes that the CBS does not report the root causes of these declining statistic nor address the fact that in the past, Moluccan students were often referred by Dutch authorities to ‘lower vocational’ educational institutions: boys were referred to the ‘lower technical school’ and girls to the domestic school.<sup>77</sup> Moreover, the CBS report from 2020 notes that Moluccan youths of the 1990s were statistically more in conflict with the police and law than Dutch peers. The report of 2020 further indicates that this is still a current fact among the youths of the present. Moluccans within all age groups are more likely to be suspected of crime than their Dutch peers, especially in the period from 2014 to 2018.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Moluks Historisch Museum, “CBS-Rapport Over Molukkers in Nederland. Wat Zeggen De Cijfers?,” Moluks Historisch Museum, March 19, 2021, <https://museum-maluku.nl/cbs-rapport-over-molukkers-in-nederland-wat-zeggen-de-cijfers/>.

<sup>76</sup> Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek [Central Bureau for the Statistics]. *Molukkers in Nederland: De sociaaleconomische positie van Molukse migranten, hun kinderen en kleinkinderen*. [Moluccans in the Netherlands: The socioeconomic position of the Moluccan migrants, their children and grandchildren]. Den Haag: Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2020.

<sup>77</sup> Moluks Historisch Museum, “CBS-Rapport Over Molukkers in Nederland. Wat Zeggen De Cijfers?”

<sup>78</sup> Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek [Central Bureau for the Statistics]. *Molukkers in Nederland: De sociaaleconomische positie van Molukse migranten, hun kinderen en kleinkinderen*. [Moluccans in the Netherlands: The socioeconomic position of the Moluccan migrants, their children and grandchildren].

In comparison to the second generation who were raised within the Moluccan community in the camps, not all members of the third generation grew up within a Moluccan neighborhood due to some members of the second generation Moluccans forming interracial marriages later in life. This caused the formation of Moluccan multicultural households, who were more adjusted to Dutch society. The increase of Dutch oriented upbringing within some of these households served as one of the factors that fostered the decline of the ability to speak the Moluccan language among the younger generations. Nonetheless, the majority of the members of the third generation were brought up in a Moluccan neighborhood, and spoke the Moluccan language as their primary language within their household.

As the third generation became more in contact with the different cultural groups within the Netherlands, some members of the third generation formed interracial marriages and households themselves. Yet it is important to note that this is not a given, there are also still third generation households consisting of full Moluccan individuals.

Hannah Tomasowa (2019) notes in her research on the integration of the Moluccan generations: the longer the Moluccan family lives in the Netherlands, the stronger the integration in Dutch society. The younger the generations, the more they are integrated. The second generation is viewed as an adjusted generation rather than an integrated generation due to their experiences in both cultural worlds.<sup>79</sup>

#### **Fourth Generation Moluccans in the Netherlands**

As noted above, the longer the Moluccan family lives in the Netherlands, the stronger the integration in Dutch society. The younger the generations, the more they are integrated.<sup>80</sup> This

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<sup>79</sup> Hannah Tomasowa, "Molukkers in Nederland: De intergenerationele overdracht van de Molukse identiteit in Nederland," ["Moluccans in the Netherlands: An intergenerational transmission of the Moluccan identity in the Netherlands,"] (MA Thesis, Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam: 2019).

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

statement is very true for the fourth generation. Despite the statistics mentioned on in the previous chapter, Hannah Tomaso (2019) found that fourth generation participants in her research viewed themselves as a well integrated generation with opportunities of education and career<sup>81</sup>.

Moluccan youths are perceived as a generation that is marked by individual differences and cultural diversity of at least two different cultural roots. Within this generation, it is no longer uncommon for its members to have a half or quarter Moluccan descent and have an upbringing outside of the Moluccan neighborhood. The fourth generation is open to discover and learn more about who they are and where their family came from. The majority of the fourth generation is represented by 27.000 individuals who are younger than the age of 30. They are the descendants of grandparents who came to the Netherlands in the period between 1951-1962 as young children. More than 43% of the current fourth generation members are minors. A small portion of the fourth generation are 40 years or older. The fourth generation is further perceived as the generation that contains the largest age gap between its members.<sup>82</sup>

“Our Motto is: dwell on the past and look ahead to the future. You have to be able to look ahead. The fourth generation is the future”, this statement was shared by oom Andrew Roos, a representative of the *Stichting Landelijk Moluks Monument* [National Moluccan Monument

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<sup>81</sup> Hannah Tomasowa, “Molukkers in Nederland: De intergenerationele overdracht van de Molukse identiteit in Nederland,” [“Moluccans in the Netherlands: An intergenerational transmission of the Moluccan identity in the Netherlands,”] (MA Thesis, Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam: 2019).

<sup>82</sup> Moza, “Wat Is De Gemiddelde Leeftijd Van Molukkers in Nederland?” [What Is The Average Age Of Moluccans in The Netherlands?] July 15, 2023, <https://www.moza.nu/kennisbank/wat-is-de-gemiddelde-leeftijd-van-molukkers-in-nederland>.

Foundation].<sup>83</sup> Our Moluccan story and the histories of our families are continued by the fourth generation and soon the fifth generation Moluccans in the Netherlands.

### **Family History & Colonial Legacies**

As we navigated the history of the Moluccan community in the Netherlands, we will now embark on a journey through my family's past as we delve into the personal stories of our four different generations. The exploration of the history of my family seeks to further examine the impacts of Dutch colonization and its aftermath, forming a narrative that intertwines with the broader historical context of the Moluccan people in the Netherlands. The analysis of my family history is of importance to understand the Moluccan community in the Netherlands and the effects of Dutch colonialism and post-colonialism as it reflects how these factors have personally influenced the lives of my ancestors and family, thus creating an authentic representation of the Moluccan story and pain. The Latumaerissa branch of our family consists of our first generation, my great grandparents who were forced to relocate to the Netherlands, our second generation, their children, our third generation, my father, his two siblings, and seven cousins, the fourth generation, myself and my twelve cousins.

### **First Generation Latumaerissa**

#### **Ekleopas Latumaerissa**

My great-grandfather, Ekleopas Latumaerissa and my great-grandmother, Costantina Latumaerissa belong to the first-generation Moluccans of our family and arrived in the

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<sup>83</sup> Open Rotterdam, "Andrew Roos over het herdenkingsmonument voor Nederlandse Molukkers: 'Iedere Molukker moet zich erin kunnen vinden'" ["Andrew Rose about the commemoration monument for Dutch Moluccans: 'Every Moluccan has to be able to find themselves in this'"]. March 29, 2022. <https://openrotterdam.nl/andrew-roos-over-het-herdenkingsmonument-voor-nederlandse-molukkers-iedere-molukker-moet-zich-erin-kunnen-vinden/>

Netherlands in 1951. Ekleopas Latumaerissa, also known as opa Opas, was born on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1919, in the village of Ullath on the Moluccan island of Saparua. In the late years of my great-grandfather's life, my opa Paul, a son of my great-grandfather, documented the story of his life, and his time in the Dutch colonial army.

Ullath flourished because of the earnings received by the retired Moluccan KNIL soldiers and the fruitful harvests of small plantations. My great-grandfather was seventeen years old when he signed up for the KNIL in 1936<sup>84</sup>. Due to him being underage, his request to join the Dutch colonial army had been denied. In 1938 my great-grandfather married Costantina Patty. In the same year, at nineteen years of age, he was officially accepted into the KNIL<sup>85</sup> and received his service number 191503003.<sup>86</sup> On the 21st of August 1938, a boat from Ambon came to the Moluccan Island of Saparua to pick up the new KNIL recruits, along with their wives and children. Before my great-grandfather's deployment, he had received valuable advice from his oom *Jozias*, who was a retired KNIL soldier. Oom Jozias advised him to not look back after he said his goodbyes, or he would never return home. If family members or acquaintances arrived at his military post, he had to welcome them with a *medja putih*, a set table with food, and a white tablecloth. This custom reinforced the solidarity and mutual support between the Moluccan peoples in the KNIL. In addition, it was advised to bring his *piring natzar*, an offering dish with coins representing your loved ones. And lastly, if you are being held captive by the enemy, sing Moluccan songs and remember the good days<sup>87</sup>. This last rule particularly stayed with my great-grandfather most during his KNIL career.

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<sup>84</sup> Paul Latumaerissa. “‘Leve de Koningin’ Opdragen aan onze vader en zijn wapenbroeders” [‘Long live the Queen’ A dedication to our father and his brother in arms] (unpublished manuscript, (typescript, August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010), 13.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 16

<sup>86</sup> Nationaal Archief, “Achternaam: Latumaerisa.” [“Last name: Latumaerisa.”]

<sup>87</sup> Latumaerissa, “‘Opdragen aan onze vader,” [“Dedication to our father,”] 16.



My great-grandfather was sent to Camp Gombong in Central Java to begin his military training. His nephew Petu Latumaerissa was stationed there and received him with the custom of medja putih. In Gombong the first son of my great-grandfather was born, and he was named after my great-great-grandfather Jozef<sup>88</sup>.

In 1939, my great-grandfather's journal entry discussed one of his first patrols. He wrote that during one of his patrols in the jungle, his squad was led by a new and inexperienced Dutch lieutenant. They ended up getting lost for days, low on provisions, and close to the territory of rebels. A Moluccan soldier in their squad had reassured my great-grandfather that they would be unharmed as they saw two white doves fly ahead of them and whispered "Tete Jonker and his wife are flying ahead of us." Capitan Jonker was an Alifuru war chief in the VOC era and appeared on the battlefield in the form of a white dove, along with his wife in the form of a dove, to protect the Moluccan warriors<sup>89</sup>.

During the Second World War, my great-grandfather and his family were transferred in May 1940 to Pamatang-Siantar in the military post of Lawe Sigalagala, in North Sumatra. There they stayed for over six months with his fellow KNIL soldiers to guard a camp of German civilians who were imprisoned due to the Second World War<sup>90</sup>. In 1942, this camp became a Japanese prison for the wives and children of Moluccan KNIL soldiers. My great-grandfather's nephew Petu Latumaerissa passed away in this camp due to starvation and lack of medicine<sup>91</sup>.

In 1941, my great-grandfather was stationed in Ulele, Sumatra. During one of his patrols on the beaches of the area, he noticed two Japanese aircraft headed toward their military base. He called it in over the radio, but his sightings were disregarded as the Japanese were supposed to be

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 22

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 35

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 4

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 42-43

far from the region they were in now and suggested that he had seen big birds instead. However, soon after, the camp was bombed by the Japanese aircraft. My great-grandmother, their eldest son, and a newborn baby, my grandfather, had to escape the base. A couple of days later, a new Japanese aircraft returned while my great-grandfather was patrolling on the beach and the aircraft had fired on him and his fellow soldiers. However, they came out alive except for damages to their eardrums due to the close-range bombings<sup>92</sup>.

My great-grandfather wrote that Moluccan soldiers in the KNIL would often wear a *kain berang*, a red cloth tied around their neck or bound to their heads<sup>93</sup>. This is a practice that is still done today. In 1942, in preparation for the confrontation with Japanese land forces, a Moluccan soldier came to the military base to hand out these red headbands and two secret artifacts to boost the morale of the indigenous soldiers<sup>94</sup>. When evacuating the indigenous and Dutch women and children, my great-grandfather had passed a hospital for wounded indigenous and Dutch KNIL soldiers. The hospital staff asked them when their transportation would arrive but the officers in charge ordered them to wait for evacuation. Afterwards, my great-grandfather learned that evacuation had never arrived, and the Japanese had taken over the hospital. Wounded indigenous and Dutch soldiers were locked in crates and thrown in the ocean alive<sup>95</sup>. Eventually, the confrontation with the Japanese had been lost and my great-grandfather was imprisoned and taken to the military base Post Sigli and later to Post Kraton, Sumatra. He had been ordered to perform labor for the Japanese in these posts<sup>96</sup>. In May 1942 all the KNIL prisoners in the posts were transported by train to the prisoner's camp Glugur Hong in Medan, Sumatra. Indigenous soldiers who tried to flee were decapitated, including a friend of my great-grandfather. An

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 45/47

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 49

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 57-58

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 68-69

acquaintance of my great-grandfather was enraged, with a hidden gun he shot a Japanese soldier who was involved in the executions, and they ran away to their safety in one of the train wagons. Once to safety, they sat on the floor and grieved their friend's death and processed their trauma through Moluccan songs and stories of the past<sup>97</sup>.

In prison camp Glugur Hong, my great-grandfather was forced to work on the expansion of a nearby airport site. A month later, he and about twenty other KNIL soldiers had attempted to escape the camp during the night. Only a few made it out, including my great-grandfather. He spent all night fleeing for his life, and the next day he was fortunate enough to have met a man who helped him reunite with his family<sup>98</sup>.

Soon after my great-grandparents were able to reunite, he was caught by the Japanese forces and tortured on the suspicion of being a Moluccan KNIL soldier for the Dutch, along with other Moluccan soldiers that he had known. However, my great-grandfather got away alive claiming he was not a Moluccan individual but of Javanese descent. My great-grandfather had seen his friends being tortured and killed, this took a great toll on his mental and physical state<sup>99</sup>. After this instance, his family relocated for their safety but soon had to relocate again as the Americans were bombing the area to fight the Japanese<sup>100</sup>. These times were very difficult for my family as the Dutch did not aid the KNIL soldiers, including the Moluccan KNIL soldiers like my great-grandfather as they were prosecuted. My family suffered from extreme poverty, famine, and disease. My great-grandfather was taken captive by the Japanese for questioning once again, with his life on the line. In his journal, he wrote that this trauma made him very ill<sup>101</sup>.

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 70-71

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 71

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 82

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 90

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 92

My great-grandparents and their children boarded the Fairsea vessel and arrived in the Netherlands on the quay of the Rotterdam harbor on the 5th of June in 1951.<sup>102</sup> The family was relocated to Camp Muiderberg.<sup>103</sup> Eventually, the family transferred to Camp Schaffelaar and then to Camp The Biezen. The household arrived in Camp The Biezen after 1957, and lived in barrack 19, room number 196.<sup>104</sup> In 1962 my great-grandparents and their children were relocated to the Moluccan neighborhood in Wormerveer.

The neighborhoods were initially under the management of the Dutch government, and eventually transferred over to the municipalities. When the neighborhoods were under the control of the Dutch government, the Moluccans did not pay rent for their residence. However, when the neighborhoods were under the municipalities, a monthly low rent fee was expected, and it was granted that the amount would not increase over time.<sup>105</sup> Then, the neighborhoods were transferred to external housing associations, and expected rent amounts matched the housing market. The majority of the Moluccans refused to pay the housing associations, including the household of my great-grandfather. This caused a great amount of overdue rent and resulted in the eviction of my great-grandfather and other family members from their home in the neighborhood Wormerveer. They relocated to a nearby city Zaandam, into an apartment where my great-grandfather spent the rest of his life, up until his deathbed in 2008, far away from our community and the neighborhood that held our family history. More importantly, the ‘temporary’ six-month stay in the Netherlands became a period of fifty-seven years in his life, away from our *Nusa Ina*, our ancestral mother island.

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<sup>102</sup> Nationaal Archief, “Achternaam: Latumaerisa.” [“Last name: Latumaerisa.”]

<sup>103</sup> Latumaerissa, ““Opdragen aan onze vader,” [“Dedication to our father,”] 204.

<sup>104</sup> Gerjan Crebolder, *‘De Biezen’...sama sama rasa! 55 jaar Molukkers in Barneveld* [“The Biezen’...we feel the same! 55 years Moluccans in Barneveld] (Barneveld: Koninklijke BDU Uitgeverij B.V., 2006), 172-274.

<sup>105</sup> Bert van Vijfeijken, “De Molukse wijk als houvast,” [“The Moluccan neighborhood as support,”] KNAG, November 19, 2021, <https://geografie.nl/artikel/de-molukse-wijk-als-houvast>.

### **Costantina Latumaerissa**

Costantina Latumaerissa [*ojang* or *oma* Coos] was born on the 5th of June in 1920 in Ullath and passed away on the 3rd of September 2001. Our great-grandmother was known in the Moluccan neighborhood for her beautiful traditional Moluccan garments, such as the *sarong* and *kebaya*. My father remembered her working on her sewing machine and the heaps of clothing piles that surrounded the machine. Tante Silvia remembered that people would visit her grandmother to have their clothes made and fitted. Our great-grandfather traded the garments of our great-grandmother across the country.

Tante Silvia looks back at her grandmother as someone who cared deeply for the family “Oma was oma, she cooked and cared for everyone who lived at home with us.” Oom Menucha remarked, “She was known for making Moluccan traditional clothes. She passed down her knowledge, not to one of her children, but to oom Pical from the neighborhood. She was one of the few to make traditional clothes.”

Oma Nelly remarked that it was the mothers of the KNIL families that had the biggest task in the household as they had the task of ensuring the survival of their family, ensuring that their children would stay alive. Further, oma Nelly shared that she had lost her brother, Benjamin, that she had never met. Not a lot is known about this sibling, she noted that ojang was not able to talk about their loss.

## **Second Generation Latumaerissa**

### **Hanok Latumaerissa**

Hanok Latumaerissa, my grandfather, the second oldest child of the Latumaerissa household was born July 29<sup>th</sup>, 1941, in Kota Radja, Aceh, Sumatra. My grandfather has inherited the name Hanok of our ancestor Tata Hanok from Ullath.

### **The Lost Generation**

My grandfather is one of the estimated three hundred children to be left behind in the former Dutch colony when Moluccan families were exiled to the Netherlands.<sup>106</sup> The oral history in our community describes that a Dutch policy only allowed a certain number of Moluccan children per family to be brought aboard the boats. However, Dutch historians claim that there was not a policy that would separate families.<sup>107</sup>

Regarding the separation with his household, my grandfather recalled boarding a boat with his family. The Tasman vessel took them to Java. From Java, the Fairsea vessel departed to the Netherlands for a ‘temporary stay’. My grandfather remembered being grabbed by his hand and dragged off the boat by an aunt. At the shoreline, he watched his family drift away. He continued to wave them good-bye until he lost sight of them. My grandfather stayed behind with Martina Supusepa-Latumaerissa, an aunt of my great-grandfather. My grandfather was replaced with the cousin, Dede Patty, of my great-grandmother, who had fled Makassar, Sulawesi to Semarang, Java, and joined as a political stowaway on the Fairsea.<sup>108</sup> The cousin later lived in the Moluccan neighborhood of Huizen in the Netherlands. My grandfather believes that the

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<sup>106</sup> “‘Vergeten kinderen’ KNIL-militairen zoeken erkenning,” [“‘Forgotten children’ KNIL-soldiers seek recognition,”] NOS, May 3, 2018, <https://nos.nl/artikel/2230113-vergeten-kinderen-knil-militairen-zoeken-erkenning>.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Latumaerissa, “‘Opdragen aan onze vader,” [“Dedication to our father,”] 202.

separation with his family is an Ambonese tradition. According to him, the tradition is that when a child's face looks too much like his father's, he has to live his life away from his family and start a life with new people. When I first learned about this story, I was a high school student questioning my grandfather about his life for a family tree assignment. This life-changing event that separated him from his family for most of his life and had left a scar within his soul that would haunt him for the rest of his life. This event displaced my grandfather from his family for a great part of his life.

In the summer of 2023, I was surprised to learn from a Moluccan elder who runs our community building that for a long time it was thought that my grandfather was missing in the Dutch Indies as the elder claimed that my grandfather was reported missing by our family during the journey over to the Netherlands. Through an interview with my grandfather's siblings, I learned that the subject of my grandfather's separation with the family is an emotional topic that brings forth feelings of regret, estrangement and heartache.

### **Life in Indonesia**

In the next chapter of his life, my grandfather lived with his foster mother and foster father of the family Supusepa-Latumaerissa, who served as a former KNIL soldier, as well as with his foster brother Efraim Patty, and a foster sister in the city of Medan in Indonesia. My grandfather's foster parents were not able to have children of their own, within our family it is thought that this served as the main motive for the separation of my grandfather and the nuclear family. In an interview with the siblings of my grandfather, I came to understand that my grandfather was supposed to stay with the foster mother for six months, the duration of the promised temporary stay in the Netherlands, until the family would be able to reunite again and live in the Moluccas. Further, it was remarked that the eldest child of the family was supposed to

be the one to be left behind with the foster mother, however, due to his declining health this did not go through, and it went on to the second eldest, my grandfather. My grandfather described his life in Indonesia as though. He attended school as a full-time student, and when he returned home, he was tasked to take care of the house and the children of his foster brother. My grandmother remarked that he worked day and night for his foster mother and performed unpaid labor. However, my grandfather was grateful that she had taken him in her home, paid for his education and provided him with meals.

In Medan, he met my grandmother Juliana Tallane. My grandmother's parents were family friends with my grandfather's stepmother. My great-grandparents Tallane fled Siantar, Sumatra, with their children due to warfare and insecurity in the area. My grandmother was taken in by my grandfather's foster mother in 1960. In 1962, my grandparents got married. During the Moluccan tradition of *sidi* around the age of 18, my grandfather learned that his last name was not that of his foster mother, but Latumaerissa. Until this point, he had used the last name Supusepa. My grandmother did not know that my grandfather was Latumaerissa until their wedding. In his early twenties, my grandfather went to the Moluccan islands and visited our ancestral village in Saparua to come in touch with his roots and cultural heritage.

### **Search for Family in Exile and Reunion**

In 1965, a couple years after my grandfather had finished his education, he went to Jakarta in an attempt to locate his father in the Netherlands. My grandfather indicated that there was no contact between the Netherlands and Indonesia. With this, he meant contact between our family in the Netherlands and himself. In Jakarta, my grandfather ran into a family member who pointed him in the direction of a hotel. At the hotel, he found an open flight ticket that his parents had arranged for him and had been waiting in the hotel for him since 1962. My grandfather



explained that people were searching for him in Jakarta, but since he was in Medan, he did not receive the ticket until years later. My grandfather came to the Netherlands in 1969 with the assistance of the RMS. It was very difficult for the children who were left behind to be reunited with their families in the Netherlands due to the bureaucracy in Indonesia and in the Netherlands.<sup>109</sup> The RMS helped my grandfather with a passport and gave him a letter to deliver to the RMS government in exile in the Netherlands.

When he was finally able to rejoin his family in the Netherlands, so much time had passed that they did not recognize him. He knocked on the front door of my great-grandparents' house in the Moluccan neighborhood in Wormerveer and was received in a cold manner by his parents and siblings. My grandfather noted that the reunion was a strange experience for him: "There was no connection when I was in Indonesia." Before his family went to the Netherlands, he was the second eldest son of the children. In the Netherlands, my *opa* Joost and *oma* Nelly were born in 1954 and 1956. Until my grandfather's arrival in the Netherlands, he had never met them. In the Netherlands, my grandfather worked to be able to afford the flight tickets for my grandmother and their daughters, with the assistance of the RMS, they were able to arrive in February of 1972. My grandfather secured a home in the Moluccan neighborhood in Wormerveer.

### **Moluccan Military Commando APRMS**

RMS General Tamaela established an army, a commando unit, under the APRMS, *Angkatan Parang Republic Maluku Selatan*, in the Netherlands. The commando units of the APRMS emerged from the guerilla army of President Soumokil during our fight for freedom. Each Moluccan neighborhood in the Netherlands contained an APRMS military post. The battalions in the north of the Netherlands were named Nunusaku and the battalions in the south

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<sup>109</sup> NOS, "'Vergeten kinderen'." ["'Forgotten children'."]

were referred to as Nusa Ina. My grandfather joined the APRMS in our Moluccan neighborhood, and he became the lieutenant of the battalion Nunusaku Wormerveer, he was one of the few who was trained to be a paratrooper. In 1973, my grandfather broke his leg during his third parachute jump in Texel and ended up in the hospital. This caused him to be unable to work for several months. My grandfather's household was able to receive governmental financial support and my grandmother worked in the local factory to further support the family. During this period, my grandfather felt little solidarity from his comrades, as no one visited him during his hospitalization and revalidation period. This was a turning point for my grandfather and his involvement with the RMS declined as time progressed. My grandfather got involved with local churches and grew into a devout pastor. The APRMS unit in which my grandfather was involved dissolved after the passing of General Tamaela on the 27th of November in 1978<sup>110</sup>. However, the former APRMS soldiers in Wormerveer formed a neighborhood military group in khaki uniforms. Their task is to raise the South Moluccan flag on the annual RMS days, such as the Moluccan Heroes Day of the RMS, as well as the RMS Independence Day on the 25th of April.

To this day, my grandparents still live in the Moluccan neighborhood in Wormerveer. Because of the effects of Dutch colonialism and post-colonialism, my grandfather has suffered from traumatic episodes for most of his life, and now that he is developing dementia it only worsens. My grandfather still believes in an independent Maluku. He hopes that one day he will be able to witness the liberation of the Republic of the South Moluccas, where the Moluccan flag is hoisted on Moluccan soil.

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<sup>110</sup> AIVD, *51 APRMS Relaties met Benin, 1977-1980, 20 pagina's* [51 APRMS Relations with Benin, 20 pages] (The Hague: AIVD, 1977-1980), 16.

### **Paul Latumaerissa**

Paul Latumaerissa was born on the 15th of May 1943 in Kwala Bindjai, Sumatra. Opa Paul is the author of the unpublished manuscript detailing my great grandfather's life.

Opa Paul noted that when a Moluccan name starts with 'Latu', it is an indication that the individual is a descendant of a radja king, opa Paul joked "I am a descendant of a radja, so you can call me a prince." Opa Paul stated that he is proud to be a descendant of our ancestor who was the first Radja of Paperu. Opa Paul recalled the story that was passed down to him regarding this ancestor "He was assigned to travel to Paperu. Before his arrival, the radja in the village was of Lawalata. However, that radja left so the local population sought a new leader." Opa Paul added "The last Radja Latumaerissa was captured due to his ties with the RMS. Everything was taken away, his land, house and belongings." Regarding the RMS, Opa Paul mentioned that he went with his parents to the RMS demonstration in The Hague numerous times "Every time when there was a demonstration in The Hague, usually on the 25th of April, they would take me along."

When the family first arrived in the Netherlands they first lived in Muiderberg for approximately two years. Muiderberg was a military camp, an old military camp that was no longer used. Then they went to camp Schaffelaar which is in Barneveld. Schaffelaar was an internment camp for the Jewish during World War 2, they lived there for four to five years. From camp Schaffelaar they moved to camp the Biezen, this was also under Barneveld, opa Paul noted "We lived here for about five years. In 1962 we moved to the neighborhood in Wormerveer and from there my siblings spread out in the country." According to opa Paul was the policy of the Dutch government in the 1960's that led to the transition from Moluccan camps to the neighborhoods: "In the 1960s the Dutch government wanted to get rid of the old camps and the

internment camps. These camps had a bad reputation and they were ashamed of it. The demolishing of most of the Moluccan camps took place to erase any memories left of the persecution of the Jews.” Opa Paul described that for his parents, the transition between the Moluccan camps and the neighborhood in Wormerveer was nothing out of the ordinary for them due to their lived experiences in the military camps in the former Dutch colony “They were used to moving around, then they lived in large barracks, smaller barracks, that one time in a bigger camp, another time in a smaller camp. The KNIL always moved around.” To make ends meet, opa Paul and his father traded various goods from boats that arrived from Indonesia, including his mother’s handmade Moluccan garments, “My father bought and sold goods to Moluccans across the entire country. Yes, really, across the entirety of the Netherlands.”

Opa Paul remembered the moment when my grandfather was taken away from the family before their journey to the Netherlands, “The steamboat had already blown its horn three times. The ladder had to be raised in order to depart. At this moment, my mother was still negotiating with my tante Mama Nene. She was married but did not have any children.” Opa Paul added, “My mother did not eat for three days on the boat because she had to leave behind her child.” He remembered the reunion of my grandfather with the family “My father and mother arranged through Lokolo that these children could come to the Netherlands. They did not specify that my brother was married because you were not allowed to come to the Netherlands if you had a spouse. Then Hanok came and knocked on our front door.” Opa Paul paused, “My mother answered the door and said ‘Young man, who are you looking for?’ Then your grandfather said ‘Mother, I am Hanok.’ These memories were difficult for opa Paul to address “A mother who does not recognize her son anymore...It is emotional because I experienced their pain.”

In regards to the first wave of Moluccans who returned to the Moluccan islands after their stay in the Netherlands, opa Paul noted “These people were against the Netherlands because the promise of a six month stay had not been realized. They went to the Indonesian embassy to finalize their return. Once in Indonesia, they lived in horrible conditions as during that time, any Moluccan was perceived as an RMS allied.”

Opa Paul shared that most Moluccans possessed a pink passport. Eventually the pink document changed to a document that looks exactly like a Dutch passport, the only difference being the imprint on the inside of the passport that states ‘to be treated as a Dutch citizen, but is not a Dutch citizen’. Opa Paul noted “For 70 years, I have been illegal here in the Netherlands.” Opa Paul has never been able to visit the Moluccan islands with his pink document. He shared: “It is a trauma for me. I witnessed the war and developed a war trauma; I will never go there. Your grandfather [Hanok] has it too, but he has visited the island nonetheless.”

In regard to the pain of the Moluccans, opa Paul remarked: “For the first generation it was very traumatic, they promised us that we could return and now we live in the Netherlands for 73 years. The first generation went into their graves full of hate, hate for the Dutch government and the Dutch society...It is not a pain, it is a hate...”

Throughout his life, Opa Paul has made great contributions to the Moluccan community in Wormerveer. Opa Paul advocated for the improvement of the community. When I visited opa Paul in the summer of 2023, he gave me a great number of documents that he had written over the years containing correspondence regarding the Moluccan community in Wormerveer addressed to the local municipality and government officials. Projects that opa Paul advocated for the recognition of the first-generation, as well as opportunities for the second and third generation youths in the neighborhood. Opa Paul shares that his legacy for the next generations

are these written documents. Opa Paul remarks “It is important that you do not stop. The mayor created unrest by stating that it is not going well with the Moluccans. If such a statement is made then you need to immediately address the situation and explain who we are and share the truth regarding our community.”

### **Josias Latumaerissa**

Josias (Sias or Sjors) Latumaerissa was born on the 3rd of September in 1945, in Tandjung Pura. “I was born after the war. I did not know my brother Jozef or your grandfather [Hanok], the only one I knew was my brother Paul. For me, opa Paul was ‘*nyong Paul*’, which is of course the name of ‘young Paul’ when translated. For me it was a reality. He raised me, we were stationed behind the defense line and my mother needed to search for food. I was not allowed to cry because we were in the enemy line. This meant that if I cried, I can still remember, opa Paul had to place his hand in front of my mouth because I was not allowed to cry. Otherwise we would be betrayed and I had to experience that. It was a painful situation that is why recently I asked your grandfather and opa Paul ‘Do you know the song: *Anjing ku kawan ku* [My dog, my friend]? I only need to listen to the first two sentences, and when the second sentence is finished, I sleep. Then I don’t cry anymore.”

Opa Sias recalled an interesting encounter before the departure to the Netherlands “Shortly before our departure from Semarang, we encountered a magician and a snake dancer surrounded by soldiers...The magician performed a trick where he pulled flags from a case. The commander yelled “in formation!” and then the magician pulled the flag of the RMS. The first time I saw the flag of the RMS was not in the Netherlands but in Semarang...the RMS soldiers held onto the flag and an officer arrived with a banner of the APRMS.” Opa Sias remarked that the banner was symbolic of the arrival of the Moluccans in the Netherlands “This represents the

foundation for what we came to the Netherlands for. We did not arrive as refugees, we arrived as an army. All the military officials who came to the Netherlands at the time are APRMS'ers, soldiers of the APRMS." In addition to the memory of their departure and the sighting of the RMS flag, opa Sias noted "All mothers and soldiers stood there with tears in their eyes and hugged each other. It was an unforgettable occasion in my life that I was able to witness".

Once the family arrived in the Netherlands, Opa Sias explained that when they lived in the Moluccan camps of Muiderberg, Schaffelaar and the Biezen. In these camps, the family had access to a soup kitchen. "Eventually the soup kitchen was shut down due to the federal self-care arrangement." Opa Sias explained that when they lived in Muiderberg, their father was working in an orchard located in Tiel where he harvested cherries, apples and pears to provide for their family, "During this time we did not have an easy life, neither did our parents."

In the point of view of opa Sias, the transition to Moluccan neighborhoods provided an opportunity to get involved in Dutch society, "The difference between the camp and the neighborhood is that you are free to do what you want...you are trying your best to build a better future." Opa Sias shared how he was not really connected to the neighborhood in Wormerveer, "I had very little to do with the neighborhood. During Protestant catechism, you are required to spend time with your peers but in general I was outside of the neighborhood. Outside of the neighborhood I had Dutch friends. I was the first to leave our home, after our brother Jozef got married I moved to Amsterdam." Opa Sias indicated that, in the past, he did not feel like the Moluccans were welcomed in Wormerveer by the Dutch locals, "The Dutch thought 'what are they doing here?'"

In regards to the separation of his brother Hanok, opa Sias noted, "This did not only happen to your grandfather [Hanok], there were more Moluccan children who were left behind."

“It is a painful story but that’s just how it is.” Opa Sias described the gap between the family and his brother, “I did not know that he was married or that he had children. We did not know that but that does not matter, he is our brother. We had very little contact with him. Of course because he did not arrive in the Netherlands until the 1970’s.”

The RMS was not something that was forced upon opa Sias and his siblings, “It is very simple, we need to become independent. At home the RMS was not imposed on us, nor did I impose the RMS on my children, Marcel, Joyce and Silvia. They need to do it themselves. I was surprised to see a video of Marcel at a demonstration with oma Nel after his passing. I did not really know that your grandfather was an RMS’er either.” Opa Sias shared about the interest of his granddaughter in her Moluccan heritage and the RMS: “Lesley did not learn the language and I never pressured her to get involved with the RMS. She wanted to learn more about the RMS so I took her to the RMS Independence Day convention. There were a lot of light skinned Moluccans present and I said ‘See Les, they are all a bit white’. Those children, especially the so-called ‘half bloods’ are even more fanatical than the full blooded Moluccans. It is not imposed on them, they become self-aware of who we are, their rights and what we fight for.”

Opa Sias discussed the Moluccan tradition of the piring natzar, the Moluccan prayer dish “When Marcel passed, I was downstairs with Marcel’s body. Silvia, Joyce and Lesley came running in and the first thing they did was take care of the prayer dish. All three of them, I never taught them that they needed to do that.”

Opa Sias indicated that he initially had a pink passport but chose to get a Dutch passport. He mentioned that this is crucial for the traveling required for his organization Recht op Vrijheid, “It would be difficult to enter another country with a pink passport.” Opa Sias, and his partner, oma Christine Sohilit (26 September 1951 - 2 May 2020) established the organization Recht op



Vrijheid (‘Right of Freedom’). Opa Sias and oma Christine advocated in 2018 and 2019 at the United Nations in New York City for the freedom of the Moluccan islands and violations of indigenous rights. Further, Nonja Soumokil, the wife of our assassinated South-Moluccan President Christ Soumokil, and Hendry Apituley, a representative from Maluku, joined their efforts. At the United Nations, Opa Sias wore the official KNIL uniform of his father to remember his story and those of the first-generation Moluccans in the Netherlands. My grandfather had stored the uniform and held onto it after the passing of my great-grandfather.

### **Silfina Latumaerissa**

Silfina (Nel or Nelly) Latumaerissa was born on the 9th of February 1956 in Barneveld near camp The Biezen. Oma Nelly is the youngest child of the nuclear family.

Oma Nelly takes pride in Moluccan heritage and our last name, “Being Moluccan means that I know where I am from and where my ancestors are from. Because of the marking of our last name in the foundation of the baileo, our communal building, I can point out with pride where I am from. The marking functions as a family tree.” Regarding our first ancestor who served as a radja, she noted, “The people gathered in the baileo to find their new leader, a cat jumped onto the table and said ‘Latumaerissa Latumaerissa’. Following this event, our ancestor was proclaimed as Latumaerissa. The people spoke ‘leader, let us engage in battle against the Dutch!’”

Oma Nelly shared that the smell of roses reminds her of her early childhood in the camps “If I am in a garden center and I smell roses, I am instantly reminded of The Biezen. For me there are no awful memories, perhaps only the large Zeppelin that flew over the camp.” The transition from the Moluccan camps to the neighborhood in Wormerveer left an impression “I had never seen stairs before. The stairs led to the bedrooms upstairs. I was not used to this type

of housing.” Oma Nelly indicated that for her parents the transition to the neighborhood was a means of necessity, “For them it was survival, they had to take care of their children.”

Oma Nelly remarked on the separation of my grandfather from their family, “Life there, not only because of the war but also because of other circumstances caused a lot of families to break apart. One brother or son is there and the other son...they did take him with them. That is war.” Oma Nelly recognizes the pain that the situation caused among their family, “The aunt said ‘No, Hanok is mine, you cannot take him with you’. But your grandfather [Hanok] keeps saying ‘you should have taken me with you’. It was painful for our mother because she had to leave behind her child.”

Since 1979, oma Nelly has dedicated her time and efforts to support our people in Maluku. She has organized several fundraisers and gathered supplies to donate to the inhabitants of our ancestral village and other villages across the Moluccan island, “I passed out notebooks, bought a pig to feed the village *sateh*. Currently I am collecting red handkerchiefs. I am not sure if this is the case in all Moluccan villages, but in our village, you are not allowed to participate in the adat if you do not possess a red handkerchief. I have collected more than eight thousand handkerchiefs so far and donated them in Maluku. I think I have inherited my passion for charity from my mother. Each month she would always put together a package for our family in Maluku.”

From all the travel destinations in the world, oma Nelly finds herself pulled to the Moluccas, “I have visited Maluku more than fifty times. The first time I went, I was immediately sold. I quit school in order to be able to work to travel to Maluku...Once I was at a travel agency because I wanted to go to Spain but I ended up with a retour ticket to the Moluccas. Maluku is a part of me.”

### **Third Generation Latumaerissa**

#### **Henk Latumaerissa**

My father was born on the 9th of December in 1972 in Wormerveer, and is the youngest child among three. My father grew up in the Moluccan neighborhood in Wormerveer. Among the locals of the neighborhood my father is known as ‘Henkie *Baris*’, *baris* translates to marching. He was given the nickname because as a young child he would salute and march into place whenever the local APRMS unit would march by in the neighborhood.

He experienced three different cultures during his youth. The Moluccan culture in his upbringing was fostered by his parents and by the elders of the local community. Indonesian culture was also a part of the household as his parents were raised in North Sumatra for a significant part of their lives. During my father’s upbringing, my grandparents and his sisters often went to Indonesia to visit my great-grandparents, the parents of my grandmother. Her father was a Moluccan KNIL soldier who chose to stay behind in Indonesia in 1951, never being able to return to a free South-Moluccas. Further, my father noted that Dutch culture was present in his upbringing, as he walked among Dutch society, received Dutch education and made Dutch and multicultural friends outside of the neighborhood.

In the interview, my father noted that the location of their family home played a significant role in his participation in Dutch society. The home of my grandparents is to this day, located on the outer edge of the Moluccan neighborhood across from Dutch homes. In the experience of my father, the location made it easier to establish relationships outside of the neighborhood during the period leading up to his adulthood as he felt free to exit the neighborhood at any given time. My dad shared that his experience as a Moluccan youth who ventured outside of the neighborhood during most of his time was not one that he shared with

many of his peers. He indicated that compared to his location, it was more difficult for Moluccan youth who lived in the middle of the neighborhood to leave. As a teenager, my father often found himself hanging out with peers around the same age from diverse cultural backgrounds throughout different cities in the Netherlands. Nonetheless, he indicated that his full Moluccan heritage functioned as an automatic given in terms of his relationship with fellow Moluccan youth. In his younger years, my father was active in the local and national hip-hop scene which contributed to his experience and network outside of the neighborhood as he performed in various parts of the Netherlands. My father remembered the time in which he collaborated with the neighborhood community committee to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the Moluccan neighborhood Wormerveer. At the celebration he performed with his hip-hop group.

My father experienced a difference in between the Moluccan community and other non-dominant cultural groups within the Netherlands. He noted how his friends from, for example, Moroccan or Suriname communities appeared to display a steadier growth within the Dutch social ladder than members from our own community. He noticed this in the factors such as educational background and position of employment. My father believes that one of the causes of the difference was the Moluccan thought that their stay in the Netherlands would be temporary. When my father was a teenager, this thought was still firmly believed by Moluccans of the first and second generation, as the return to a free Maluku was propagated by Moluccan leaders of the time. In addition, it is thought that the pain of the Moluccan, the scars left by colonialism and postcolonialism contributed to the widening gap with Dutch society as it bled through the Moluccan generations. My father added that the constant humiliation of the Moluccan generations by the Dutch government and the experienced racial discrimination from Dutch society, added to the isolation of Moluccans. Depression, trauma and heavyhearted

emotions were present in many Moluccan households. In my father's experience during his upbringing, he felt like it did not matter what his strengths or skills were, because of his Moluccan identity, Dutch society automatically put a metaphorical red line through his name. The coping of intergenerational trauma among the Moluccan people manifested in addiction. Substance-, alcohol abuse, gambling addiction and violence were unhealthy coping mechanisms within the community throughout the various generations. My father was one of the many Moluccan youths who struggled with substance abuse and involvement with groups engaging in violent delinquency. My father was able to recover from the substance abuse and violence through the church in his early adulthood.

In 2014, my parents, grandparents and I visited the Moluccan islands. Minutes upon arrival at the airport in the Moluccan capital of Ambon, we were halted by the Indonesian Intelligence Agency. My father was taken away and questioned, they confirmed his identity based on the passengers list of the flight. He was asked questions ranging from 'What is your purpose here?', 'Which islands and places will you be visiting?', 'Who are you meeting?', 'How long are you staying?' and so forth. For my father, this experience served as a living testimony to the oppression of the Moluccan people in Maluku. To this day, it is unknown why my father was flagged down by the Indonesian Intelligence Agency, no other family members have experienced this when visiting the islands. This experience made him more aware about the necessity for an independent South Moluccan Republic.

Around 2000 my father moved out of the neighborhood to the nearby town Zaandam. My father has an educational background in Pharmacy and Human Resource Management. Since 2023, my father has been working as a Consultant in Human Resources (Absence Management).

### **Winda Latumaerissa**

Winda Latumaerissa was born on the 8th of December, 1967, in Medan. Winda is the sibling of my father and the second-oldest child of my grandparents.

Tante Winda arrived in the Netherlands in 1972? at the age of 4, with my grandmother and her sister. From her early days in the Netherlands she remembered the period preschool “Oma told us that we learned Dutch very fast and the Indonesian language became less.” Tante Winda shared that up until this period she enjoyed her time in the neighborhood. She experienced bullying as some viewed their household as Indonesian rather than Moluccan “Opa came much later than the other family members to the neighborhood. He came with a Moluccan woman [oma], but because she was born in Sumatra, Indonesia, and had a lighter skin tone, some people thought that she was Javanees and thus an Indonesian.” Tante Winda did note that there were people from the community that knew my oma’s parents from Sumatra, also former KNIL soldiers “They treated her normally.”

Tante Winda felt the hate against Indonesia during her upbringing in the neighborhood: “They did not view us as Moluccan, even though we are, full-blood Moluccan but from Indonesia.” During this period, Winda associated more with Dutch people. Initially, Winda indicated that she did not feel Moluccan, however, she shared “When I see the behavior and attitude of other Moluccans, such as their way of talking and moving, then I think to myself ‘oh that’s actually how I am too’ and then I realize that I am Moluccan, but I don’t feel Moluccan.” In addition, Tante Winda noted that she feels Dutch because she has lived in the Netherlands for so long. She stated that she does not feel connected with Moluccan traditions such as *pela* “Absolutely not, every Sunday [during childhood] there were fights, the *pela*’s fought us too.”

From Winda's perspective, the 'pain of the Moluccan' is something that affected the first generation mainly. She noted that the trauma of her grandparents was noticeable. During New Years Eve, my great-grandfather would share stories about the Dutch when he was young. The memories of these stories were triggered by the bangs of fireworks and alcohol. Winda said "It was very sad to witness because when he was sharing about these experiences, he would sometimes cry, that's when we knew that he had a very hard time." Further, Winda noted that these stories would only be shared during New Years "For the rest of the year he would remark 'that was in the past' or 'that is normal during war' because he did not want to talk about it." In addition, Winda shared "We did not have a great bond with our grandparents to talk with each other like that, it was not like how you [Samantha, my cousin, and I] talk with your grandparents." Winda added "The relationship between my grandparents and father was not good, their son, opa Hanok, was 27 when he arrived in the Netherlands. They had not seen him for 20 years, they did not really know him." She indicated that their connection influenced the relationship with her grandparents.

Further in regard to the pain of the Moluccans, tante Winda initially remarked "That is only for my grandfather because they needed to leave their country." When I asked if she recognized this among her father she replied "yes." In terms of other family members, tante Winda stated "Yes, my uncles because they are silent. Oom Paul for example, he is still stateless. Especially the older brothers like the father of oom Robert, and opa Sias and opa Paul. I could tell that they were struggling with it. But the other? No, I don't think so because they were too young. However, tante Nelly maybe, because she saw her parent's of course, how her parents were struggling and that they were still fighting for it." Tante Winda indicated that she does not

experience the pain of the Moluccan herself and does not think that she has a trauma left from her experiences in the neighborhood during her childhood.

Regarding the stories of our family, tante Winda indicated that overall she did not hear a lot of them, but the stories that she did get passed down were from her parents relating to her father's situation before the reunion with his family and stories about the grandparents from her mother. About her father she remarked, "He had a very hard life in Indonesia. His parents who were in the Netherlands did send money but his foster mother also had funds available as her husband was a KNIL colonel with a high position. My father had a strict upbringing and he had to care for his foster brother's children, clean and tidy the house and he was not allowed to leave the house until he completed his tasks- he was kind of a manly Cinderella." Winda further adds "He did not have a good childhood there and later, he didn't have a good relation with his parents in the Netherlands. He did tell me a lot about that and he always had to cry when mentioning it. He told us about his difficult life in Indonesia and how lucky we were that we lived in the Netherlands because we are able to get a good education here."

The eviction of my great-grandfather is something that shocked our family, including my tante Winda "He was the only one to be evicted, the only former KNIL soldier left alive, our first generation and he laid in a sick bed" she added "I thought it was so terrible... I remember that the *ME* was there. Whenever something happens in the neighborhood, then it is not just the police present but also the Mobiele Eenheid<sup>111</sup>. I think they are afraid of the Moluccans because they know how crazy Moluccans can get."

Tante Winda noted that she does not view the home of our grandparents in the neighborhood as our *rumah tua*. However, she did remark that she thought about returning to the

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<sup>111</sup> Mobiele Eenheid uitleggen!



neighborhood one day, because her parents live there. Yet, at this moment in time, she does not see herself living in the neighborhood: “For me it is not necessary, I am not RMS-minded.”

In regard to the RMS movement tante Winda remarked that it does not signify anything to her personally “The RMS had done nothing for me and will do nothing for me.” In addition she noted “That it means something for my grandfather and grandmother, ok. Maybe also for my ooms because they lived through it, but for my generation not because we are able to choose. If you want to go there then you do it, if not then not.”

In terms of passing down Moluccan history and the Moluccan story, tante Winda stated “It is still a part of history even if I don’t feel Moluccan, I still am.” However, tante Winda indicated that she feels more Indonesian than Moluccan.

### **Robert Latumaerissa**

Robert Latumaerissa was born on the 12th of June, 1966, in Zaandam. Oom Robert is the son of Jozef Latumaerissa (28 April 1939 - 24 December 2019), the brother of my grandfather, and Marian Vermeulen, his Dutch mother.

The interview with oom Robert took place with my cousins, Milly and Neal Latumaerissa, as well as his wife Wendy Latumaerissa in their home. Oom Robert indicated at the beginning of the interview that his Moluccan heritage is a difficult subject for him to discuss. The interview was difficult and evoked strong emotions among the family. The displayed emotions and silences during the interview provide an example of the intergenerational Moluccan pain.

Oom Robert shared that his Moluccan heritage is something that is deep from within. Oom Robert was raised outside of the Moluccan neighborhood with a Dutch upbringing. He noted that this is the same for his children. Oom Robert lived for a short time in the

neighborhood at his grandparents house after his birth. Then his parents moved to Krommenie, even though he did not live in the neighborhood, he did frequently visit his grandparents and cousins in the neighborhood. Oom Robert has beautiful memories of his grandparents, he related his experiences to feeling of coziness and sharing meals at the home of his grandparents. In addition, he shared that he valued the relationships with his cousins and at the times he spent at the home of my grandparents “I always liked the time at their home, to sit there on the couch. I know that if I were to step inside again, I would just sit there again like old times.”

Oom Robert indicated that during his upbringing, his father had not passed down his knowledge of Moluccan culture or stories of our family. Because of lack of cultural transmission, oom Robert was not able to pass these aspects down to his children, Milly and Neal. In regards to the RMS, oom Robert notes that this was something he did not discuss with his children “I think that it [the RMS] is something that would be more talked about, if you live in the neighborhood, then you are raised with it [the RMS].”

In his grandparents home, *Melaju* was the main language: “At our home we did not speak Melaju because I have a Dutch mother, we always spoke Dutch. I tried to learn the language, very briefly, but I never continued it.” Oom Robert identified his lack of the Moluccan language, his ‘half Moluccan heritage’ and his housing outside of the neighborhood as factors that, in his experience, complicated his connection with other Moluccans of his generation and his feeling of belonging in the neighborhood.

In 1988, oom Robert visited the Moluccan islands for the first time with some of my father’s cousins. In 2019, opa Jozef, the father of oom Robert passed away unexpectedly during his visit in the Moluccan islands. In 2023, oom Robert returned to the Moluccan islands and visited his father’s grave in our ancestral village with my cousin Neal. Oom Robert remarked “I

remember when I came home after the visit and I said to you [my father], it has only become more beautiful there.”

### **Silvia Latumaerissa**

Silvia Latumaerissa was born on May 3rd, 1970, in Wormerveer. Tante Silvia is the daughter of opa Sias Latumaerissa and Karla Kwakman, who has a Dutch heritage. She is the sibling of Marcel and Joyce Latumaerissa, and the youngest of the three.

Tante Silvia notes that her Moluccan heritage is a part of her identity and upbringing “To be Moluccan is who I am. I have been raised in the Moluccan community in Wormerveer.” Tante Silvia further adds “I am born in the Netherlands with a Dutch mother. We were raised Dutch in addition to our Moluccan upbringing. However I feel Moluccan at heart, when people ask ‘where do you come from?’ I answer with pride ‘my grandma, grandpa and father are from the Moluccas.’”

Around the age of 3 or 4 years old, tante Silvia moved with her household to Groningen. From there, around the age of 6 years old, she moved in with her siblings at the home of their grandparents in the Moluccan neighborhood in Wormerveer due to the separation of their parents. Tante Silvia looks back fondly at her time in the neighborhood and with her grandparents. Tante Silvia adds, “We were raised for a long period without our parents. Grandpa and grandma, tante Nel, oom Paul and oom Joost, that was our household. I experienced this as a warm and safe time.” Tante Silvia described the home of our great-grandparents as a home base “Everyone came over to our grandfather and grandmother, especially the grandchildren.” Further tante Silvia remarked “I had a lovely time living in the community and of course your grandpa and grandma [opa Hanok and oma Juul] also lived in the neighborhood, we always enjoyed being there.” The bond between the cousins was described as a strong connection “The bond

with your father, your aunts Coos and Winda, they were with the three of them and we were with the three of us, and Robert... Robert was a lot at our grandparents, I think we have a strong bond as well. Especially because our bond was already good when we were younger, if we don't see each other for 15 or 20 years- when we do see each other it is immediately good."

Regarding the neighborhood community tante Silvia adds "When we were young and in school, the neighborhood organized activities for youths on Wednesdays. If you wanted to, you were able to go to the neighborhood church and Sunday School." Celebrations in the neighborhood required a community effort, this was one of the most beautiful aspects of Moluccan tradition according to tante Silvia "It was always fun, if there were weddings, sidi or baptism then the neighborhood would come together and they would cook at the family who was celebrating. We would go in the outdoor tent and we could get tasty food and cookies."

Tante Silvia notes that her grandparents did not teach her and her siblings the Moluccan language "Opa and oma never spoke Melaju to us... Sometimes I got angry because I was wondering 'why are we the only ones who do not speak Melaju?'. Opa was of the opinion that since we were in the Netherlands, we should speak Dutch."

In terms of family stories of the Moluccan camp life, tante Silvia remarked that she knows more of this period because of the documentaries covering the arrival of the Moluccans rather than from conversations with family members." She added that seeing the historic images and footage of this period among the Moluccan community through the documentaries brought an emotional charge and caused her to see the 'pain of the Moluccans'. Tante Silvia added "They went with their four children to the Netherlands, leaving one behind, arriving in a country that is unknown and everything that you fought for had been for nothing, you did it for another with false promises." Tante Silvia recalled the time that she went with oma Nelly, Joyce and Marcel to

Den Hague to join an RMS demonstration: “We joined the demonstration, for our opa and oma really, to demonstrate for what they fought and how they suffered. To demonstrate against the false promises made by the Dutch government. How beautiful would it be if the Moluccas were still able to become independent from Indonesia? Then they [our first generation] would not have fought for nothing.” In 1988, tante Silvia visited the Moluccan islands “When I arrived in Maluku, or even when I landed in Indonesia, for me, it felt like coming home... We visited Ullath and Saparua, I felt at home there.” She explained that the instant connection was linked to the origin of our family that is tied to the islands.

In regards to the ‘pain of the Moluccans’, tante Silvia described “The pain of the Moluccans is that they fought, not for the Dutch but for themselves as they were promised: if you fight for us then we will ensure the independence of the Moluccas from Indonesia’. If you have been promised something, then you fight for it. They had to let go of everything and their families had to come with them to the Netherlands. They couldn’t return because they could most likely be killed, so they chose to temporarily stay in the Netherlands until they were able to return to a free Maluku.” To this, tante Silvia added “My opa is a fighter, he always believed that they would return to an independent Maluku.” Tante Silvia indicated that if she needed to fight for the independence, even though she does not think that will happen, without a doubt, she would fight in honor of her grandparents.

At the end of the interview, tante Silvia shared “I have very lovely memories of opa and oma. I still miss them to this day, not only my grandparents but everything: I have great memories of Wormerveer.” In the present, tante Silvia lives and works in Amsterdam, “I am no longer connected to the neighborhood since the passing of grandpa and grandma.” For over

twenty years, tante Silva has been employed in the office of notary. Since 2017, she has served as a notary officer specialized in real estate in Amsterdam.

### **Menucha Latumaerissa**

Menucha Latumaerissa was born on the 15th of April, 1980, in Wormerveer. Oom Menucha is the son of Johosua (Joost) Latumaerissa (24 April 1954 - 30 October 2016) and Yke Latumaerissa - Patty. Johosua is the youngest brother of my grandfather. Oom Menucha was raised in the Moluccan neighborhood Wormerveer and the neighborhood Vaassen, where his mother is from.

Oom Menucha remarked, “To me, being Moluccan is my identity; who I am, and where I am from.” In addition, he noted, “I am very Moluccan, look around in my living room, there are only Moluccan objects.” The interview with my oom took place in his living room where he had a display of his Moluccan artifacts collection and stacks of contemporary and antique literature relating to the Moluccas. He explained that these collections are the result of the search for his cultural heritage “I find the Moluccan culture beautiful. The cultural and art objects are a part of my culture. My books and newspaper cut-outs belong to a history that translates who I am and where I am from, the Moluccan history is not told in Dutch schoolbooks.” In addition, oom Menucha notes “We are the black chapters of Dutch history. These books contain the stories of how the Dutch mistreated our people during the colonial era.”

The first time oom Menucha visited Maluku was in 1988, “I was around the age of 7 or 8 at the time, I don’t remember much of the first visit. From Maluku we made a roundtrip to Java with family members of my mother’s side and my father.” In total, he has visited our ancestral islands approximately 6 times.

Regarding the passing down of Moluccan culture, oom Menucha noted, “If you live in the Moluccan neighborhood, then you grow into it. If you interact with Moluccans you will hear stories from everyone about anything; faith, Moluccans themselves, and politics. This is the case in every neighborhood.” Oom Menucha’s children live outside of the Moluccan neighborhood, “My children are Moluccan and South Korean, their mother was not raised with the South Korean culture. The Moluccan culture, values, and norms are passed down to them. I think it is important that they know which village we are from.”

Oom Menucha indicated that his personal interest in Moluccan culture and the RMS occurred in the 1990s when he was around the age of 15 “The RMS was a big thing for us. We were very involved, we went to every demonstration, Moluccan party, or anything that was hosted by the RMS. My parents never really discuss the RMS. I did my own research about it. In the past, there were two political parties, the Tamaela group, and the Badan Persatuan group. My parents were supporters of General Tamaela. That group disbanded in the 1970s.” In regards to Moluccan cultural practices oom Menucha remarks “We grew up with the Bible, our household did not really practice the Moluccan adat. We did greet our *pela* aunties and uncles but other than that we were not involved with adat practices.” Moreover, oom Menucha noted “In the 1990s I saw the *tjakalele* for the first time. The *tjakalele* is also adat. It is not just a warrior dance performance, they speak in *Bahasa Tanah*, our language, the language of the Alifuru. They call to something and request something from our ancestors before the dance is performed. It is an expression of the Moluccan culture and adat. Every village has its own *tjakalele*. It was impressive to witness, it gives you power and you feel *semangat*.”

Oom Menucha described the bond with the family Latumaerissa during his childhood as distant “We didn’t grow up with them, with the family Latumaerissa...my father and mother did

not really interact with my ooms and tantes.” Oom Menucha’s father did not share any stories about his life in the Moluccan camp growing up “My father was very young in Camp the Biezen. Once I went with him to a reunion of the former residents of Camp the Biezen in Barneveld. There he did share some stories about the families that he hung out with as a child.” During oom Menucha’s upbringing, his household spoke a mix of Dutch and Melaju Ambon (or Melaju Maluku).

In regards to the neighborhood and its historical significance, oom Menucha notes “The neighborhood is our cultural heritage, it is a piece of us. It is the living proof of our history in the Netherlands. We are the only non-dominant cultural group in the Netherlands to have a segregated neighborhood.” Oom Menucha adds “Moluccans have a parental house. We were not the first occupants of the house where my mother lives, nonetheless, I view the home as our parental house...Many say that our *rumah tua*, parental home, is in Maluku. Since we lived in the Netherlands from generation to generation, my grandparents lived here, your grandparents live here in the neighborhood, that is your parental home.”

In regard to neighborhood involvement, oom Menucha mentioned, “My parents did not go to the parties hosted in the community building. My mother was active in the choir of the church. My father was a soccer player at the Moluccan soccer club, first at Nusa Ina and then he became a coach at Kondo Budjang. As a young child, I went to the soccer matches of the Moluccan teams but there were also lots of fights at the club, the Moluccan temperament.”

Oom Menucha related his experiences of his upbringing in the neighborhood of Wormerveer to the community “We [my friends and I] celebrated birthdays, every Sunday we went to the Moluccan church and the Sunday school, parties in the community building, sidi, catechism.” He explained that whenever something happened in the community, such as a death,



sidi, or baptism, residents came together to facilitate the celebrations. Oom Menucha noted, “It gave a sense of togetherness and created an environment where everyone knew each other.” In Wormerveer and Vaassen, oom Menucha mostly hung out with Moluccans. In 1999, oom Menucha went to school in the city of Utrecht, where he met Moluccan peers from other neighborhoods in the country. However, in 2005, oom Menucha moved out of the neighborhood to live with his former partner in Assendelft “When I moved to Assendelft, I was in a Dutch environment with Dutch neighbors, that took some getting used to...I was going out of my comfort zone in the neighborhood I felt safe.”

However, oom Menucha shared an experience from the neighborhood that changed his perception of the neighborhood, “On the 20th of September 2007, I remember it very well because this was the day that my eldest child was born, I was taking our dog to my mother because Tamara had to go into labor. On the way to my mother’s house, I saw a lot of police, they were at my grandfather’s house, I saw him get evicted. Normally I would have spoken up because I am a fighter but because of the circumstances I couldn’t.” Oom Menucha indicated that this event caused him to experience mixed feelings “I thought it was very bad. [He was] a first-generation, a KNIL soldier, who took care of our neighborhood. There was no respect. It had been done by the Dutch but actually more because of the Moluccans from the neighborhood of Wormerveer itself. They ensured that he got evicted.” In addition, oom Menucha noted that my great-grandfather’s household was the only one to get evicted: “At the time I thought, in Wormerveer they say ‘*katong satu*’, ‘we are one’, but at that time I thought, no we are not.” Oom Menucha indicated that the home of his parents was next, but they ended up not being evicted from the neighborhood.

Oom Menucha shared that his own friends turned against him and his family during the eviction of his grandfather. Oom Menucha's father, opa Joost, was defending oom Menucha's grandfather during the eviction which resulted in a fight, oom Menucha's friends physically assaulted his father, "Especially with the home eviction, I felt a lot of pain from my father. I saw a lot of emotion and disappointment, having to fight for something yet again, to fight for something that was promised to us. Time after time we are betrayed, by the Dutch but also by our own people, our *bangsa*."

Oom Menucha defines the shared pain of the Moluccans as something that connects us with our elders "The pain of the Moluccan is the disappointment that we experience time and time again because of the treason of the Dutch. With the train hijackings and now with the grave rights. It appears that we are not taken seriously. I witnessed the first-generation, the grandfathers and grandmothers, you could see their pain when these disappointments were discussed, and we feel it with them."

"In the past, I was fanatical regarding the RMS, demonstrations, and graffiti. However, now I think differently about it, a different path must be taken." When I asked why oom Menucha thinks this, he replied "Because we have been demonstrating since 1951, at the House of Representatives in The Hague and at the embassy of Indonesia. We are now four generations later and we haven't come any further. Train hijackings, riots, demonstrations, and hunger strikes led to nothing. The Netherlands shall never do anything for us."

Oom Menucha notes "Until this day, I need to explain who I am, where I am from, or I need to engage in a discussion about Moluccans, the RMS, and the train hijackings." Yet, oom Menucha does not think that he is treated differently due to his Moluccan heritage "We are seen as fighters, our ancestors were skilled fighters. We fight for our people, and we are not afraid."

Further oom Menucha adds, “As long as we live, our Moluccan being lives. From outside they try to destroy the Moluccans. On the Moluccas, our land is taken through Javanisation. In the Netherlands, we are destroyed by the silencing of our history. We are a part of Dutch history but that is something they don’t discuss.”

Oom Menucha has been in the tourism industry since the 1990s “During this time I was a radical Moluccan wearing a bomber jacket, long hair, and sunglasses. I did not really fit in the tourism scene where you had to be dressed properly. Nonetheless, I received my diploma.” Since 2007, oom Menucha has been working at Schiphol Airport. He started as a ground steward and works in the present as a customs officer.

#### **Fourth Generation Latumaerissa**

##### **Dean Berg**

Dean Berg was born on the 21st of September 1992, in Delft. Dean is the son of Winda Berg-Latumaerissa and Roy Berg and brother to Samantha Berg. Dean’s mother is the daughter of my grandparents and my father's sister. Dean’s father is of Indische heritage.

Dean grew up in the Zaanstreek, the district that occupies both banks of the Zaan River north of Amsterdam. Around the age of 14/15 years old, Dean moved into our grandparents' home with his parents and sister in the Moluccan neighborhood in Wormerveer. Dean indicated that during this time he felt connected to his Moluccan background as he established relations with fellow Moluccan teenagers and participated in the neighborhood celebrations. The attributes of the neighborhood that he correlates are the atmosphere created by strong familial connections between different Moluccan families in the neighborhood, music and food. In addition, Dean recalls stories from his time in the neighborhood relating to Moluccan superstition and the

mystical. For example, numerous sightings of ghost stories would be shared among the Moluccan teenagers, as well as superstitions of bad luck or magical practices originating from the Moluccan islands. Dean relates a respectful and proper manner to Moluccan values that he picked up on during his childhood and his time in the neighborhood. Dean further indicated that he is not able to speak the language or cook the food, he recognized that his talent lies in music. Dean equates his musical talent as a Moluccan attribute “My musical side is something of the Moluccan culture that I have picked up from oom Henk. He plays guitar and taught me how to play my first drumbeat.”

However, Dean indicated that after moving out of the neighborhood, his connection with the neighborhood became less and less over time while his connection with our grandparents’ home remained the same. Outside of his experience living in the Moluccan neighborhood, Dean shares that in his household, he was not raised with a specific Moluccan upbringing or the Moluccan language. He notes that this also relates to his bi-racial Moluccan and Indisch heritage. Dean indicated that he lives between those two cultural worlds in a third cultural realm: a Dutch multicultural society. Dean is currently a resident of Rotterdam and remarks that the diverse population of the city signifies his connection and relationships with people from various backgrounds and nationalities which allows him to learn from a multitude of cultural groups.

Dean remarks that the Moluccan people have been damaged by the colonial past and that its harm festers from generation to generation “Our first generation became embittered due to the pain and traumas they faced.” Dean added that their pain was not something that was openly discussed, nor did they receive the proper assistance to be able to heal. However, Dean remarks that while he has observed and felt the pain of our grandparents, he personally does not carry the pain with him in the present. Dean views intergenerational trauma and pain among the

Moluccans as a factor that strengthens members of our generation to build a better future. Dean notes individuals of our fourth generation who have utilized their strengths and abilities for their self-development and development of their career path. For example, he noted individuals who have opened a Moluccan toko shop, pursued music as DJs, grew into the film industry, or started their own fashion label.

In 2020, Dean went to a RMS demonstration in Rotterdam with his wife and her oom. It was a national demonstration in action for the recognition of the then-recent Moluccans in the islands who were imprisoned for carrying the flag. It was Dean's first experience with a Moluccan demonstration "I thought it was awesome- they were fighters for showing solidarity amidst COVID-19." However, Dean indicated that he does not feel a personal connection to the RMS movement "I have never really been involved with it [the RMS demonstrations] that is why I do not have a connection with it nor the flag."

### **Samantha Berg**

Samantha Berg was born on the 7th of February 2001 in Zaandam. She is the daughter of my tante Winda Berg-Latumaerissa and oom Roy Berg. Samantha is the sibling of Dean Berg.

In 2005, Samantha spent two years living in the Moluccan neighborhood Wormerveer with our grandparents before moving to their new family home in Assendelft. Samantha noted in our interview that she looks back fondly at her time living in the neighborhood. She views the home of our grandparents and the neighborhood as a second home; a place that connects her with our family and heritage. Our grandparent's home and the neighborhood give Samantha a sense of familiarity. During her childhood, she spent time with Moluccan peers and frequently visited their homes in the neighborhood "You are family, even if you are not family by blood. You are a

part of it because you are Moluccan.” In her experience, Moluccans have an instant unspoken connection with one another, whether they personally know each other or not.

Furthermore, Samantha noted that besides the time that she lived with our grandparents and her frequent visits to their home, she had mostly been raised in Dutch towns, “Dutch has always been my primary language, and I mostly had Dutch friends growing up”. In Samantha’s experience, her inability to speak the Moluccan language poses a gap between the family members and peers who are able to converse in Melaju Ambon, “Sometimes I am reminded by people that I am Moluccan because of the way I speak or act, but I don’t always feel like that. Maybe if I spoke the language, it would feel different.” Nevertheless, Samantha identifies her Moluccan heritage as a part of her personality, character, and physical appearance.

Further, Samantha notes that one of the Moluccan cultural elements that is meaningful to her is music. Samantha indicates that although she does not understand the Moluccan lyrics, she values Moluccan song and the intimate moments that it creates among our family. Moreover, Samantha indicated that she learned Moluccan values from our grandparents. She grew up with stories about our grandparents’ life in Indonesia and their early years in the neighborhood during her childhood, including her mother’s experience in the neighborhood. Samantha noted that in her point of view, Dutch descendants are not aware of the story of the Moluccan people or in the Netherlands. This became evident through discussions with her friends and colleagues on her cultural background. Moluccans are often mistakenly identified as a cultural group that migrated to the Netherlands during the influx of migrant laborers needed to rebuild the country after the Second World War. Samantha described this ignorance as a painful experience. “When I hear stories from opa or from you about our past- knowing that they [the Dutch] don’t know a lot about it is painful because then it appears as if it never happened or as if colonialism never left

an impact among our people.” She recalled the first and only time our grandfather was talking about his memories of the boat “It was the first time that I saw opa cry, it was painful- that’s when you realize how deep the hurt from his past is.” Samantha indicates that these stories of Moluccan trauma within our family, especially our grandfather’s story, affect her. In relation to the arrival of our first-generation and the broken promise of a return to a free republic, she added “Sometimes I try to imagine how they must have felt, but I can’t imagine what life must have been like.”

In the present, although Samantha does not live in the neighborhood anymore, she cherishes the memories of the neighborhood and those of our grandparent’s home as they are a part of our family’s story. The preservation of the Moluccan neighborhood is of importance to Samantha, it is a living piece of Moluccan history that should not be forgotten.

Currently, Samantha lives in Zaandam with her parents and is finishing her Bachelor in Commercial Economy studies with a specialization in Creative Marketing and Sales.

### **Milly & Neal Latumaerissa**

Milly Latumaerissa was born on the 26th of March 2001, in Krommenie. Neal Latumaerissa was born on the second of May 2003, also in Krommenie. They are the children of Wendy Latumaerissa-Van Egmond, and my father’s cousin, oom Robert Latumaerissa.

Milly and Neal have a bi-racial background as they inherited their Moluccan heritage from their father and Dutch roots from their mother. The siblings grew up in Castricum, outside of the Moluccan neighborhood in Wormerveer.

Both of the siblings indicated that they feel more connected to their Dutch- than Moluccan heritage. Milly noted that their household watches any Dutch TV show or documentary that broadcasts content relating to the Moluccan story and history. She is very

interested in the content showcased in the media and it serves as an opportunity for her to connect with our Moluccan roots “You know that it [Moluccan heritage] is in your blood when we watch a documentary about Maluku, it creates a warm feeling from within.”

Milly remembers our great-grandfather during his last years in Zaandam. Her description of our great-grandfather in his sick bed brought a lot of emotions. Even though we have not known our great-grandfather closely due to our young age, it left an impression and pain that was not understood until much later in our lives when we were old enough to understand his story. Neal was too young to remember our great-grandfather at this time.

From memory, their visits and experiences in the Moluccan neighborhood are mostly correlated to emotionally heavy circumstances such as the funerals of our Moluccan family members. Initially, other than the somber memories they could not remember an additional experience in the neighborhood or with community members. However, later in the interview, it came to light that Neal participated in a couple of soccer games organized by the local Moluccan youth indoor soccer team FC Kakatua Wormerveer.

Neal went along with his father on their visit to the Moluccan islands and our ancestral village in 2023. Before he visited Maluku, he did not have a clear expectation of what the islands would look like. He enjoyed his stay and appreciated the natural beauty of the islands although it was far different from what he was used to. A sight that he felt drawn to during his stay was the interesting sight of Fort Duurstede, a former Dutch colonial fort. Milly was not able to join them due to the emotional charge behind the visit as her grandfather had recently been buried in our ancestral village. In the future, they hope to return to the Moluccan islands.

At this point in time, they do not see themselves living in a Moluccan neighborhood in the future. However, regarding the preservation of the Moluccan neighborhood, Milly remarks “I



think it is important because it [the neighborhood] is a piece of history and provides safety for the community.” Milly appreciates the community aspect of the neighborhood in Wormerveer, “Everyone is able to live with one another and can knock at each other's door at any given time, food, celebrating New Year's Eve together, and the Moluccan church- it is its own small village and I think that is beautiful.” Neal adds “It is a true community and something that cannot be taken away.”

### **Lesley Rietveld**

Lesley Rietveld was born on the 5th of August 1997 in Zaandam. She is the daughter of my father’s cousin Joyce Latumaerissa and Paul Rietveld, who is of Dutch descent. Lesley is the granddaughter of opa Sias. Lesley has been involved with the organization Recht op Vrijheid [Right of Freedom] of her grandfather after the passing of her oma to support their cause.

Lesley grew up in Wormer, close by the Moluccan neighborhood in Wormerveer. Yet, she found herself often in the Moluccan neighborhood to visit her great-grandparents. Lesley noted that as a young child, she did not consciously realize that she was visiting a Moluccan neighborhood. In her experience, it was the home of her mother’s grandparents where she would meet her great grandparents and the siblings of her grandfather. Lesley memories of our great-grandfather including walking with our great-grandfather as he was in a wheelchair, his time in his sickbed and how he beamed of happiness when her mother would visit. Further, Lesley remembered his funeral and the pillow that displayed all of his military medals. While describing her memories, Lesley noted that she always felt very proud of our great-grandfather.

Lesley shared that her grandfather has shared stories with her about his experiences as a child and adult, in addition to his knowledge of Moluccan legends and family history. However, Lesley said “He [opa Sias] did not share a lot about his father. This is something that oma Nel

does share a lot about!” In addition, she remarked that the Fairsea boat journey to the Netherlands in 1951 had also been a topic that had not been discussed before by her grandfather.

In addition to the stories of her grandfather, Lesley adds that she learned from her mother that she spent a lot of time with her grandparents in the neighborhood. Further, Lesley mentions that recently, her mother and tante Silvia more frequently discuss the upbringing with their cousins. In regard to the knowledge passed down from the neighborhood, Lesley remarks that she had received a lot about faith: “For me, faith is very connected to the Moluccan culture in the Netherlands because for the most part, I received the aspect of faith in the Moluccan neighborhood. However, faith is not something that I have personally been occupied with.”

Lesley defines Moluccanness by having Moluccan blood. In relation to her Moluccan identity, she notes “Sometimes I feel Moluccan, sometimes I do not. If I speak to others and use ‘we’ when referring to the Moluccan people, I sometimes feel like an imposter because of my  $\frac{1}{4}$  Moluccan heritage and have not been occupied with the culture as a child.” However, Lesley notes “Nonetheless, I feel attracted to topics regarding the Moluccan people, and I do not identify myself as 100% Dutch”. In addition, Lesley shares “Sometimes I am annoyed when people think I am Indonesian... Sometimes I am angry, and I want to shout from the rooftops on what the Moluccan experiences were of the past”.

Regarding the pain of the Moluccans, Lesley remarked “I think the pain of the Moluccan is the unfairness in the treatment of our older generations. It seems very painful to be treated with humiliation and when they speak out, they are shoved aside as angry and bothersome people”. Moreover, Lesley noted that she recognized the pain of the Moluccan in the experiences of her grandfather, and his passion for the RMS. Lesley also recognizes this in our great-grandfather: “The pride I recognize in our great-grandfather. I can imagine how his pride had to be combined

with pain considering how the KNIL were treated in the past.” Further, Lesley notes “Sometimes indirectly, I am very angry that the world closes their eyes. The Dutch media and politics only seem to focus on what the Moluccan do ‘wrong’.”

### **Leah Latumaerissa**

The final narrative in this thesis is that of my own. There have been significant events in my life that have shaped my understanding of my cultural heritage and identity. I was born on March 11th, 2001, in Amsterdam. My mother is of Dutch and my father is Moluccan. I have been raised with a Dutch upbringing in Zaandam, outside of the Moluccan neighborhood Wormerveer. However, during my childhood, I visited my grandparent’s home in the neighborhood regularly. My experiences of the Moluccan neighborhood are linked to these visits, family gatherings, and from my earliest memories: playing in the neighborhood alleyways to the walks we would take around the block with my grandmother and cousin Samantha on sunny days. I have not been raised with the Moluccan or Indonesian language. I grew up listening with my cousins to the conversations between my grandparents, father and aunts in Melaju, but it never stuck with us. During my upbringing I felt Dutch, but I never felt like I truly belonged due to my non-Dutch or non-white appearance and last name. Around the age of 18, I began my search for cultural identity and cultural heritage.

### **Racial Discrimination in Dutch Academia**

Over the summer of 2023, I participated in a virtual and international conference hosted by the Molukse Vrouwenraad [Moluccan Women's Council]. One of the discussion topics was focused on education, specifically the education of young Moluccans. Through the discussion, it came to light that several Moluccan women shared the same experience; as young students, their academic capabilities were undermined or discredited. They were enrolled in academic levels

lower than their ability and had to work their way up the academic system to arrive at their true academic level. I was shocked when I learned about their experiences because I had faced the same situation throughout my secondary education. In the Dutch education system, your academic level is determined in the school year before you enter high school. At the time, I went to a small Christian middle school of which the majority of students and academic staff were white. At a parent-teacher meeting, my parents were informed by my teacher that I was “academically incapable and trade school material.” This teacher was in charge of my academic evaluation and determined the academic level for my high school pathway. After four years of Dutch high school, I managed to achieve a high school diploma in my true academic level, despite the doubts of numerous teachers as it was not ‘normal’ for students to change their academic levels multiple times during the school years as that meant different curricula as well.

According to the Dutch *Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek* [Central Bureau for the Statistics] (2020), individuals with a Moluccan heritage have a less favorable educational position than those with a Dutch heritage. The organization further notes that Moluccans on average have a lower education level than their Dutch peers.<sup>112</sup> From my personal experience, I am able to understand how these racially biased convictions of ‘academic capability’ could serve as a de-motivating factor for young Moluccan students who let their personal and academic worth be determined by flawed educational systems infected with colonial bias and prejudice.

In 2019, I enrolled in Cultural Heritage and Museum Studies at an academy in Amsterdam as I had always been fascinated by the arts and humanities. Our curriculum was mostly focused on Dutch and European cultural heritage. However, from the countless ancient

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<sup>112</sup> Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek [Central Bureau for the Statistics]. *Molukkers in Nederland: De sociaaleconomische positie van Molukse migranten, hun kinderen en kleinkinderen*. [Moluccans in the Netherlands: The socioeconomic position of the Moluccan migrants, their children and grandchildren]. Den Haag: Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2020.

and modern history courses that we took, we never seemed to touch on the subject of colonialism, in particular, Dutch colonialism. I will never forget the class period in which one of my professors, or ‘cultural heritage experts’ felt the need to describe how indigenous cultural artifacts, such as ancestral statues, would never equate to the beauty and purity of classic European masterpieces. On a class visit to the Tropenmuseum [Museum of the Tropics], I found a glass case display with authentic Moluccan ancestral statues, imprisoned in the dark, waiting to be looked down upon by future cultural heritage experts. For one of the courses, our project group was partnering with a cultural institution in the city of Culemborg. Our assignment was to create a consultation rapport for the institution and included a survey of the social environment of the city. The survey included data on local cultural groups, including a percentage of Moluccans as there is a Moluccan neighborhood in Culemborg. During a review session with one of our professors, she scoffed upon reading our cultural survey and disapprovingly muttered ‘Those Moluccans are troubled youth and a local problem’. For another course, I wrote about Dutch decolonization and the arrival of the first-generation Moluccans in the Netherlands. I was downgraded on this assignment as this topic was not labeled as part of ‘Dutch Cultural Heritage’. These examples are only a fraction of my experiences but signify the silencing of the Dutch colonial past and the Moluccan story in Dutch society. The academy did not have a place for students that did not fit the traditional European blueprint.

### **Finding Empowerment Through Education**

The following year, 2020, I decided to transfer to Western Michigan University in the United States. At Western Michigan University, I found my place in the field of Anthropology as the field allowed for the inclusion of cultural perspectives beyond the European and colonial narrative. My studies at the university encouraged me to dive deeper into my cultural heritage

and indigenous ways of understanding culture, life, and the world. In 2022, during my third and Junior year of college, I established, to my knowledge, the first Moluccan student organization in the United States, the Nunusaku Student Association. The establishment of the organization had a great personal significance, as its purpose was not only to amplify the narratives of historic and contemporary indigenous Moluccan narratives but also to honor the lives and stories of our ancestors and first-generation Moluccans in the Netherlands. Our student organization hosted educational seminars and various workshops to share all aspects of Moluccan culture, history, and arts in the United States. For this initiative, I received support from Moluccan elders from the second generation, which created the opportunity for me to connect and learn from fellow Moluccans and their stories. For example, I had the opportunity to meet a Moluccan elder who preserves the ancient craft of the traditional Moluccan warrior shield, *salawaku*. For the organization, he crafted a *salawaku* to display at our gatherings and events as a means for us to share and preserve our ancestral culture. Further, for one of our workshops regarding our ancient Alifuru symbolism, I was looking for the book *Amaone*. The book was hard to come by as it was last printed in 1985. A Moluccan elder, was kind enough to loan his copy in order for me to study the symbols for the workshop. When I returned to the Netherlands during my summer break I visited him to return the book. When discussing the organization and my work in the United States, he was emotionally stirred and proud that our young generation continues to tell the story of the Moluccan people. This is important, because the Moluccan story is part of Dutch history, which is neglected to this day. Most of our first-generation are no longer with us to share their story.

### **Fight for Recognition**

Annually our university hosts a Parade of Flags ceremony to celebrate the cultural

diversity among our domestic and international student communities. In 2022, I applied to carry the South Moluccan flag in the parade, and after verbal approval, I received an official written notice that the flag would not be able to be part of the Parade of Flags two weeks before the start of the event. I attempted to set-up an appointment with the department director in charge of the event to at least be able to understand why my request was denied. However, the department was unwilling to meet with me to discuss this further. Instead, I received an email that explained the request was denied as the flag did not follow certain requirements and to ensure 'equity', the flag had been denied. In response, I established and chaired the Indigenous Advocacy Committee at the Western Student Association, our student government, to address the inequity of the policy at the time, as it excluded the participation of students from underrepresented communities. After one year of advocacy, we succeeded. The flag policy was altered and a new criterium was added in which flags of underrepresented communities are included. Because of this, I was able to carry the South Moluccan flag in the Parade of Flags in 2023.

As I stood on the football field during the Parade of Flags with the flag of my ancestors, alongside those of countless nations, the university band played the national anthem of the United States. This victory should have made me feel contented or delighted but instead my heart cried. Here I stood, bearing the South Moluccan flag on American soil, in the land of the free and the home of the brave. The flag for which we have fought and that gave our families in exile hope. My thoughts were with my family and all those who have been killed, tortured, imprisoned, and had their human rights violated for bearing the symbol of our South Moluccan being and struggle. This moment for me, signified the beginning of my journey to contribute to a future in which our next generations may live to see an era in which our human rights are respected, and marked by justice and peace. With this story, I hope to inspire anyone, especially

students, to use their voice, to advocate for good and to stand with those who have been deprived of their very human rights; to fight for liberty and justice for all.

### **Findings**

In this section, I will highlight the key themes identified within the interviews conducted with the participants to illustrate the various post-colonial and generational experiences within the different generations of my Moluccan family in the Netherlands.

#### **Moluccan Post-Colonial Identity & Cultural Heritage**

Our present Moluccan cultural identity is shaped by the displacement of our first and second generation as a result of Dutch governmental post-colonial conduct. The lives and emotional experiences of the first and second generation on the ships, the barracks, former Jewish concentration camps and segregated neighborhoods in the Netherlands shaped our post-colonial identity. The emotional experiences are part of the intergenerational trauma passed down through the generations, manifesting itself in the pain of the Moluccan.

In the current year of 2024, our branch of the Latumaerissa line contains an ethnic mixture of Moluccan, Dutch, Indisch (Dutch-Indonesian), Menadonese and Korean. This is a result of the adaptation of the second generation, the integration of the third generation within Dutch society, the interaction with non-Moluccan cultural groups and the formation of interracial marriages. Within our family, the third generation consists of individuals who have parents that are both of Moluccan heritage, as well as individuals who have a Moluccan father and a Dutch mother. All members of the fourth generation of the Latumaerissa family grew up in an intercultural household. Because of this, within our fourth generation, our heritage both originates from the Moluccan and a secondary non-Moluccan cultural group, such as Dutch,



Indisch, Menadonese, or Korean. Nonetheless, the percentage of our Moluccan heritage does not define our Moluccanness.

In regard to the passing down of Moluccan culture and traditions, it became apparent that this was not a central part of the upbringing of the fourth generation in our family due to several reasons. For a third generation parent in our family, the decision to not pass down their knowledge of the Moluccan culture, language and story was a conscious choice. In their point of view, staying in the neighborhood would not bring them further in Dutch society nor would it allow them any chances of opportunity and self-development. This individual indicated that they did not want their children to be mistreated in the Netherlands due to their Moluccan descent. In addition, for another Moluccan parent within our family, it was too painful to talk about their heritage and the traumas of their family. For the other parent, it was simply not something they felt that was needed for the upbringing of their children in the Netherlands. Because of the diverse upbringings of the fourth generation within our family, our generation is in search of their Moluccan cultural heritage and identity.

Within our post-colonial society, hybrid identities of third and fourth generational members within our family are shaped through the combination of our ancestral heritage, history of displacement, experiences within post-colonial Dutch society, the experiences within the Moluccan neighborhood, multicultural upbringing, as well as the intergenerational transmission (or lack of) regarding our Moluccan cultural knowledge and the stories of our family.

Nevertheless, the search for our Moluccan past does not cease to exist. All participants of our fourth generation noted that, when they have children in the future, they want to pass down the history of our first-generation and the story of the Moluccans in the Netherlands. They recognized that these stories are an important part of our Moluccan identity. Milly noted in the

interview “I think it would be beautiful to pass down the true story of the Moluccan people”, and Neal added “Yes, and to ensure that the story is passed down correctly.” Among our fourth generation, it is agreed that it is important to continue the storytelling of our family history and heritage in order to make sure that our people and the Moluccan story are not forgotten.

Moluccan culture within the Netherlands is not solely the result of the traditional cultural knowledge that was brought to the Netherlands by the first and second-generation. Moluccan culture is also shaped by the search of the younger generations for their cultural heritage and Moluccan identity. The Moluccan culture in the Netherlands is an evolving diaspora culture influenced by the various unique generational experiences, and cultural adaptations drawn from our indigenous ancestral culture.

Within our family, oom Menucha searched for his Moluccan cultural heritage and identity during his early adulthood. His cultural journey resulted in the collective of Moluccan artifacts and literature. He noted that his knowledge of both the Moluccan culture, traditions and the stories of our family and colonial past are crucial topics that he aims to pass down to his children. Further, in my personal experience, I have been researching about the Moluccan culture in search of answers regarding my Moluccan identity, the ways of life of our ancestors and for the establishment of my student organization. Examples of adaptations of the Moluccan culture in the Netherlands are the revival of the tjakalele (traditional Moluccan war dance), and the revitalization of indigenous Moluccan tattoo practices among the youth. Other examples are the evolution of Moluccan music and Moluccan hip-hop performed in Dutch, Melaju or a combination of both, as well as Moluccan contemporary art that draws from our ancestral Alifuru culture and symbolism. Moreover, cultural practices that are still performed in the Moluccas to this day that have been continued in the Netherlands for generations are, but not

limited to: the custom of marrying in traditional Moluccan garments, as well as the customary black Moluccan garments for the Moluccan confession of faith ceremony.

Whether we grew up with Moluccan cultural teachings or not, our Moluccan cultural heritage is a central component in each Moluccan. Our heritage manifests itself in our identity and the perception of the self, even if we are still searching for stories of our first-generation or ancestors. No matter the percentage of Moluccan blood, our Moluccan descent forms our Moluccan being.

The Moluccan people in the Netherlands have maintained and revived Moluccan cultural traditions, norms, and values in order to prevent a loss or sense of disconnection from our heritage rooted in the Moluccan islands. My father noted in his interview that during his youth, the first generation Moluccans in the neighborhood of Wormerveer functioned as the key facilitators of Moluccan culture. For the second and third generation, members of the first generation formed the connection between our *Tanah Air* [home land] and the new environment in the Netherlands. The first generation stretched the importance of not only the cultural aspects of our heritage, but also to remember the stories of our ancestors and the islands from which we came.

The traumas and emotional experiences of some of the first, second and third generation members within our family established a culture of silence which has affected the knowledge of Moluccan heritage among some of the members of our second, third and fourth generations. In response some family members never considered asking their questions about our history and culture in fear of worsening the effects of intergenerational trauma. Our fourth generation appears to be open to learning about our heritage and the stories of our family and ancestors, due

to our experience with the culture of silence and upbringing outside of the neighborhood. We learn so we do not forget our origin and those who came before us.

### **Moluccan Neighborhood Wormerveer**

The Moluccan neighborhood in Wormerveer has played a significant role in the first, second and third generation of our family. The neighborhood physically embodies the history and memories of our family and community. The Moluccan neighborhood in Wormerveer served as a space for our family members to continue and preserve our Moluccan culture. The participants from the third generation indicated that during their upbringing, the neighborhood contributed to their Moluccan identity and understanding of Moluccan cultural heritage. For the first generation, it created familiarity as the structure of the neighborhood is modeled after our ancestral villages. In Moluccan Christian neighborhoods the church is centered in the community. In Moluccan Muslim neighborhoods such as Waalwijk and Ridderkerk the mosque is centered in the community. The community building, 'De Stichting', came in the 70's. The community building functions as a central component of the Moluccan neighborhood. It is the place where the community comes together for all kinds of occasions, celebrations, and traditions.

According to some of the experiences of the participants of our third generation, the neighborhood generated a sense of safety and familiarity. The neighborhood created a sense of social cohesion. However, after the eviction of my great-grandfather, family members look back at that period with mixed feelings and emotions of frustration and anger. All of the fourth generation members within our family grew up outside of the Moluccan neighborhood. However, for some the neighborhood served as a temporary home, as the place where we visit our grandparents regularly.

## **Rumah Tua**

Presently, among our second generation, three members live in a Moluccan neighborhood. My grandparents live in the neighborhood of Wormerveer, as well as oma Yke Latumaerissa-Patty, the wife of my grandfather's brother, Joost Latumaerissa. Opa Sias currently lives in the Moluccan neighborhood in Assen, in the Northern part of the Netherlands. All the members of our third and fourth generation currently live outside of a Moluccan neighborhood.

In our ancestral culture the rumah tua plays a significant role within the community. The rumah tua is the parental house which has been occupied by descendants of an ancestor for generations. The original rumah tua of the family Latumaerissa is located in Paperu. However, with the exile of our ancestor Radja Latumaerissa who was banished from Paperu due to his allegiance with the RMS, a secondary rumah tua originated in Ullath, Saparua. Family members indicated that the home of our great-grandparents was perceived as an adaptation of the rumah tua located in Maluku. However, with the eviction of our great-grandparents' home, the rumah tua changed into two homes. The home of my grandparents, and the home of Joost Latumaerissa and oma Yke Latumaerissa-Patty. For my father, his siblings, my cousins and myself, the home of our grandparents is our family's rumah tua. For oom Menucha, tante Tirza, and their children, the home of their parents, functions as their rumah tua. The rumah tua provides a space to get connected to our family, family history, heritage and the Moluccan story.

For some of the participants, the family home of our great-grandparents functioned as the heart of our family as it tied the first, second and third generation together. For my father, the home of his parents, function as the place that ties him, his siblings, and their children together. In addition, two cousins of my father indicated that the home of my grandparents was a place that tied their cousins together. Among the fourth generation members participating in this

research, three members, Dean, Samantha and I, have a direct familial connection to the rumah tua of our grandparents. This summer, I will be getting married from the rumah tua of our grandparents. Traditionally, in Maluku, the bride and groom are guided with music and dance from the home of the bride to the church or mosque.<sup>113</sup> In the Netherlands, some adapt this to their rumah tua.

### **Belonging Within the Moluccan Neighborhood Community**

Two third generation members within the family indicated that during their upbringing, they felt distanced from the Moluccan neighborhood in Wormerveer due to their experiences. According to one family member, his negative experiences were related to his biracial Dutch and Moluccan heritage. Tante Winda experienced bullying during her upbringing in the neighborhood due to their emigration from Indonesia. Moreover, my grandmother was perceived as a Javanese individual even though her heritage was full Moluccan. During this time, there was an extreme anti-Indonesian sentiment that lived within the neighborhood as a response to the Indonesian occupation of the South-Moluccas.

Some of the fourth generation participants indicated that it would be unlikely that they would move to the Moluccan neighborhood at this point of time. They indicated that they are used to living outside of the neighborhood as they have lived within various places of Dutch society for all if not most of their lives.

### **Moluccan Language**

Within our family there is a significant generational difference regarding the ability to speak the Moluccan language. For our first generation, Melaju Ambon served as their native and

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<sup>113</sup> Departemen Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan RI [Department of Education and Culture RI], *“Adat Dan Upacara Perkawinan Daerah Maluku”* [“*Adat and Wedding Ceremony of the Moluccas*”], 131.

primary language. Among our second generation, Melaju Ambon was taught as the first language within the household. However, among the third generation, the Moluccan language is no longer a stable factor. Among the five participants of the third generation, only three members are able to speak the language in the present. Oom Menucha, my father and tante Winda, are from a household with two Moluccan parents. This factor contributed to their Moluccan upbringing and knowledge of the Melaju language. Further, oom Robert and tante Silva were not taught the Melaju Ambon language during their childhood. In contrast to the other third generation participants, they both have a Dutch parent.

All members of the fourth generation within our family, including myself, are unable to speak the language. Some of us observed our grandparents speak the language during our childhood, however, as the language was never directly taught it never stuck. Two members of our fourth generation participants indicated that the lack of language, in their experience, creates a gap between the members of the third and second generation. To illustrate, some members of the fourth generation described experiencing feelings of alienation when Moluccans or family members of the same or older generations conversed in Melaju Ambon. It was indicated that this instance made them feel less Moluccan and decreased their sense of belonging within the community due to their lack of Moluccan language.

### **Efforts of Resistance & Republik Maluku Selatan**

Among our family there are five members, from different generations, are actively pursuing efforts of resistance to garner recognition and support for the Moluccan people and the Republik Maluku Selatan. Opa Sias and Lesley actively advocate for the human rights of Moluccan people in the organization Recht op Vrijheid [‘Right of Freedom’]. Opa Paul advocated for the Moluccan community in Wormerveer and collaborated with our local

municipality and mayor in order to build a better future for our community. Oom Menucha advocates for the repatriation of Moluccan cultural artifacts and human remains housed in Dutch museums through his organization Budaya Kita. Lastly, I include the efforts of my student organization in the United States as we aim to raise international awareness for the Moluccan cause.

All participants of the second generation have participated in RMS demonstrations in the past. Of the third generation, three out of five participants have participated in an RMS demonstration at least once. Of the fourth generation, two out six participants have participated in an RMS demonstration or gathering at least once. Among the second generation, RMS ideals are perceived as a central part of their cultural heritage. Among the third generation, three out of five participants indicated their support for the RMS movement. The fourth participant notes that they feel no connection to the movement and the fifth participant was unable to clearly state their thoughts regarding the movement.

Among the fourth generation, three participants are unsure, at this moment, of how they feel about the movement and currently do not feel a traction to the RMS. Two of the three participants indicated that this is due to the lack of knowledge regarding the RMS in their upbringing. Another participant stated that they do not feel connected to the RMS with certainty. Lastly, the final participant did not specifically state their thoughts regarding the RMS. As for myself, I feel a strong traction to the RMS movement. Overall, among the members of the fourth generation within our family, the search for our Moluccan identity and background is less connected to the RMS and more focused on the oral history of our family and the Moluccan cultural aspect.



### **Return to the Maluku**

The third and fourth generation indicated that they do not see themselves living in the Moluccas. Besides my father's sisters, every member of our third and fourth generation are born in the Netherlands. For most of the third and fourth generation within our family, returning is no longer a reality as their lives have grounded within Dutch society. They indicated that it will always remain a destination that will connect them with their heritage, which they aim to visit through vacation trips. The hope of returning to a free nation lives mostly among our first and second generation. However, most of the third and fourth generational members within our family have indicated their support for a free South Moluccas. The oppression of the Moluccan people and the violations of their human rights are nonnegotiable.

### **Intergenerational Trauma & 'Pain of the Moluccan'**

The Healing Foundation describes intergenerational trauma as the scars that are caused by the trauma of colonization. Intergenerational trauma is passed down to the younger generations by having them witness and experience the pain of their parents and elders through observation or the sharing of emotional stories.<sup>114</sup> Ingrid Bremmers (2018) conducted research on the sense of belonging among the second-generation Moluccans in the Netherlands. One of the second-generation participants of her research noted "I am the scar of my parents' wounds."<sup>115</sup> The trauma of colonization and the period during decolonization and the transition within Dutch post-colonial society have affected the Moluccan community on the individual and collective scale, resulting in broken relationships, disconnected families, violence, frustration, depression,

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<sup>114</sup> The Healing Foundation, "Intergenerational Trauma Animation," July 26, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vlqx8EYvRbQ>.

<sup>115</sup> Ingrid Bremmers, "De Kunst van het Thuishoren: Een derde-culturele ruimte gevoel van thuisbehoren onder tweede generatie Molukkers in Nederland" ["The Art of Belonging: A third-cultural space sense of belonging among second generation Moluccans in the Netherlands"] (BA Thesis, Utrecht University, 2018), 37.

or addiction.

Moluccan Health Care Psychologist, Bram Latumahina, works with clients from our Moluccan community. Latumahina notes that the effects of intergenerational trauma could cause feelings of fear, stress, or anger. After a long period, these feelings fester and cause physical health issues. Latumahina further describes that intergenerational trauma manifests differently among each individual. Besides intense emotions, some might experience feelings of insecurity, loneliness, distrust, or feelings that they are unable to identify. Moreover, Latumahina explains that some individuals have trouble displaying affection and withdraw from intimacy. In addition, Latumahina notes that pushing away the intense experiences of your parents or grandparents with the mentality of ‘life goes on’, strains the journey to healing. He explains that among these individuals, their emotions catch up with them as years later they experience unexplainable emotions, mood changes or anger outbursts.<sup>116</sup>

The factor that not only connects our family but all Moluccan families in the Netherlands is our shared history of exile. The pain that stems from our colonial and post-colonial history is present within our Moluccan family and connects the generations together.

In our family, the pain of the Moluccan is visible in the stories of each generation and manifests itself in its own way or form. The story of my great-grandparents represents those of the first-generation Moluccans who came to the Netherlands, not only on military order, but also on the promise of a temporary stay. Upon arrival they were unexpectedly discharged and stripped from their military rank. Further for decades, they experienced the constant humiliation of their people and military status, and they were ignored by the Dutch government. Their trust in the

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<sup>116</sup> Gina Wessels Beljaars, “Psycholoog Bram Latumahina Behandelt Veel Cliënten Met Intergenerationeel Trauma: ‘Ze Komen Specifiek Naar Mij Toe,’” [“Psychologist Bram Latumahina Treats Many Clients With Intergenerational Trauma: ‘They Specifically Come To Me,’”], Meer Dan Babi Pangang, March 1, 2022, <https://www.meerdanbabipangang.nl/psycholoog-bram-latumahina-behandelt-veel-clienten-met-intergenerationeel-trauma-ze-komen-specifiek-naar-mij-toe/>.

Dutch government was broken as they pledged their allegiance to the Dutch Royal Family and the Dutch Queen, they gave their lives for the Dutch flag during the Dutch colonial era, Japanese- and Bersiap era. They were left with nothing. The lives of the first generation and second generation in the Moluccan camps and barracks of dire circumstances while living in times of uncertainty in a place far away from their true home are intense experiences that built up as their stay in the Netherlands progressed.

My grandfather's story represents the trauma of Moluccan children who were left behind in Indonesia during the decolonization of the former colony, the lack of connection between the two different cultural worlds and their search for family and cultural identity. The stories of our elderly who traveled to the Netherlands with my great-grandparents in 1951, represent the pain of the second generation as they witnessed the hardships of their parents in the segregated camps and neighborhood in an era where the Moluccans were perceived as a nuisance or unfortunate remnant of Dutch colonialism within Dutch society. Our great-grandparents and the second generation members who grew up in the former colony, wrestled with emotional and physical stress from war violence in the Japanese and Bersiap era. They further experienced oppression, disappointment, feelings of homesickness, and depression. The first and second generation lived in between two cultural worlds and had to find their way to adjust and adapt to the dominant Dutch society and culture.

The stories of our third generation members within our family translate the differences between the second and third generation, in terms of their upbringing and their later life outside of the Moluccan neighborhood Wormerveer. These differences were a result of the culture of silence and the adjustment of the second generation within Dutch society. Some of the third generational members grew up in the neighborhood of Wormerveer but went to school in Dutch

towns or cities and established connections with individuals from various cultural backgrounds in the Netherlands. Further the notions of intergenerational trauma and a culture of silence among the Moluccan parents of the third generation members caused the generational difference in the transmission of knowledge regarding our Moluccan cultural elements or the stories of our family and ancestors. The disruption in the transmission of knowledge caused among some of the members of our third generation, feelings of frustration or alienation. If a disruption in cultural transmission occurs, it also influences the fourth generation. Moreover, some noted that for a long time they denied or distanced themselves from their Moluccan identity and heritage due to the negative connotation that Moluccans had within Dutch society, especially after the resistance actions starting in the 1970's.

In addition to witnessing of the pain and sadness of their grandparents and parents, the members of the third generation carry their own Moluccan pain as their negative experiences in the neighborhood, or feelings of alienation due to their 'half blood' Moluccan percentage, or feelings of not being accepted within the Dutch society in their true Moluccan form, manifested in it's own manner that is unique to each individual.

For the fourth generation, the pain of the Moluccan manifests itself in the search of cultural identity and the story of our family. We empathize with our elderly and the hardships that they have had to overcome. Even though we have not lived their realities of oppression in the past, our hearts feel for their pain. For me personally, this project has significantly influenced my mental health as I absorbed the traumas and emotions shared in the interviews. One of the participants noted in their interview that they perceived the Moluccan people as a broken people. Another participant noted the Moluccan people as a forgotten people.

Across several interviews with family members of the third and fourth generation, documentaries on the history of the Moluccan people in the Netherlands appeared to be a factor that contributes to an increased understanding of cultural identity and the perception of the self. The documentaries provide supplemental information and authentic historic footage and imagery. In addition to the stories that they might have heard from family members, these documentaries create a window into the experiences of our first generation in the segregated camps. Most importantly, the documentaries have served as an opportunity for members of our family to face their intergenerational trauma. The imagery evoked strong emotions among various family members and fostered discussion about our family's history, pain, and trauma, thus contributing to the process of healing. Documentaries about Moluccan history provide educational context that might have been lost in transmission between generations due to intergenerational trauma. It serves as an opportunity for young Moluccans to reconnect with our past and cultural identity.

The path to healing our intergeneration trauma is recognizing the pain of the Moluccan within our family. Through this awareness, we are able to discuss our pain and break free from the cycle of intergenerational trauma. Facilitating dialogue on the effects of intergenerational trauma and the lived experiences within any Moluccan family will serve as an essential tool for the healing of intergenerational trauma. Not only will Moluccan youths who are in search of their cultural identity become more connected with the stories of those that came before, but it will also serve as a method for the individual to alleviate the experienced pain of the Moluccan. A Moluccan saying that shares a similar message is *Ale rasa beta rasa* [What you feel, I feel too]. This saying conveys the importance of mutual understanding fostered by compassion and empathy. Further, dialogue within our family to foster the transmission of our cultural heritage

and the stories of our family and ancestors. Through dialogue, we ensure that we are not a forgotten people. As long as we know the story of our origin and the story of our first generation, the Moluccan story continues to live through us.

### **Moluccan Perseverance**

The personal narratives of my family members are a testimony to the Moluccan perseverance in the face of historical struggle, oppression and intergenerational trauma. For instance, some members of our family display Moluccan perseverance through political activism and advocacy. Opa Paul was a member of the Dutch political party *Christen-Democratisch Appèl* [Christian Democratic Appeal] to improve the socioeconomic position of the Moluccan in the local area. Opa Sias raises international awareness for the Moluccan struggle for independence at the United Nations in New York City and Geneva through the human rights organization, Right for Freedom. My father was a member of the Dutch political party *ChristenUnie* [Christian Union] and pushed for the inclusion of the grave rights of former Moluccan KNIL soldiers on the local political agenda. Further my grandfather, father, and tante Winda are active within the local church. The majority of my family finds strength in Christ.

Initiatives of Moluccan cultural resilience are also present among our family. Oom Menucha advocates for the repatriation of Moluccan cultural and ancestral artifacts housed within Dutch museums in collaboration with the Indonesian Embassy and cultural institutions. In addition, the Nunusaku Student Association shares Moluccan culture and history in the United States. Moreover, the Moluccan excellence within our family includes the musical talent of my cousins Dean and Samantha Berg who perform live music in their spare time. Milly's achievement as a finalist in the Miss Beauty of Noord-Holland in 2020. Oom Menucha also

founded the competitive Moluccan indoor soccer team FC Kakatua. Further, Opa Jozef, the father of oom Robert, was a renowned Volleyball coach in the region Noord-Holland.

Even though we have been ‘temporarily’ in the Netherlands for 73 years, after the forced stay of our first generation, our family has shown great resilience by making the most out of our lives in the Netherlands.

### **Discussion**

The pain of the Moluccan caused by Dutch colonialization and post-colonialization caused wounds that festered down the generational line. The pain of the Moluccan tied to our family history and the Moluccan story are passed down and carried with us to this day. The colonial and postcolonial wounds of our family’s past manifests itself differently within each generation, and differently among each individual. Yet, in the face of these colonial wounds, we draw upon the resilient strength of our Alifuru ancestors and family. In the face of oppression, we retaliate for recognition, representation, and justice for our first-generation, elders and parents.

Post-colonial Historian Gert Oostindie (2010) remarks “The Netherlands has become postcolonial over the last sixty five years, almost a lifetime, but at the same time the postcolonial minorities have become Dutch, and the significance of their colonial background has begun to evaporate.”<sup>117</sup> As I noted above, the intergenerational pain that stems from our colonial and post-colonial background as well our postcolonial present, and functions as a factor that touches each generation within our family. Starting 1951, our family has overtime, eventually adapted and integrated within Dutch society. We currently live in a globalizing and multicultural post-colonial Dutch society. The significance of our colonial background has not evaporated

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<sup>117</sup> Gert Oostindie, *Postcolonial Netherlands: Sixty-five Years of Forgetting, Commemorating, Silencing* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 241-242.

overtime. The colonial background of the Moluccan people and its influence on our community and family is one of the key factors that shapes our post-colonial Moluccan identity. Part of our post-colonial Moluccan identity and our colonial background is the shared Moluccan pain and the remembrance of our first-generation. The Moluccan identity has evolved among our different generations due the distance between our Tanah Air [home land] and the emergence of intercultural households. However, these components do not diminish the Moluccan identity, rather, they diversify and adapt or evolve the Moluccan identity and our understanding of Moluccanness in the current and ever-changing globalizing world we reside in. We do not need to prove our Moluccan cultural heritage; we are descendants of our Moluccan ancestors. Therefore, no matter the shape or form in which our culture manifests through each generation, we are Moluccan.

The generational narratives of the family Latumaerissa are only a fraction of the Moluccan experience and the impact of the Dutch colonialization and post-colonization. Each Moluccan family in the Netherlands has their own significant experience. However, our shared history in the Netherlands as a result of Dutch colonialism and decolonization, and our stories of remaining steadfast in face of historical and present struggle, binds us together as a people. For future research, I recommend further collection of Moluccan family narratives to gain a more diverse and in-depth understanding of the Moluccan community in the Netherlands.

## **Conclusion**

The main takeaway of this thesis is that the Moluccan people are not a remnant of the past. Our Moluccan pain is not a theme of fiction. It is something that has been passed down from generation to generation. The Moluccan pain manifests itself differently among every generation and individual, yet one of our shared pains is the treatment of our first-generation by



the Dutch government. We share the Moluccan pain, no matter our upbringing, our connection with the Moluccan neighborhood, our grasp of the Moluccan language, knowledge of the Moluccan culture and tradition, political views or religious background. Even though we dwell on our past, we learn and look ahead to our future. This is part of our Moluccan perseverance, as we have been resilient in the face of adversity, struggle and trauma throughout the generations.

Secondly, this thesis has discussed the generational differences within our family in various aspects of Moluccan culture and upbringing. Thirdly, in the present, most of our family members have grounded their lives in the Netherlands outside of the Moluccan neighborhood. Fourthly, most of our family members understand the necessity of a free and independent Moluccan nation. However, their thoughts regarding the means of achieving this ideal has historically changed throughout the generations. Lastly, as long as we continue to record and discuss our experiences and oral history, the story of the Moluccan people in the Netherlands will live on.

### **In Remembrance of the family Latumaerissa**

Ekleopas Latumaerissa (3 March 1919 - 22 November 2008)

Costantina Latumaerissa (6 May 1920 - 3 September 2001)

Jozef Latumaerissa (28 April 1939 - 24 December 2019)

Benjamin Latumaerissa, the date of birth and date of death are unknown.

Johosua (Joost) Latumaerissa (24 April 1954 - 30 October 2016)

Marcel Latumaerissa (31 January 1968 - 11 March 2022)

### **Special Tribute**

Opa Oties (1 December 1935- 25 February 2024) has made a great contribution to my thesis by sharing his knowledge and the stories of our ancestors that were passed down to him. Six weeks after my visit to opa Otis, he sadly passed away unexpectedly on the 25th of February 2024. During my conversation with opa Oties I was able to learn about his early life in Maluku. Opa Oties was born in the *kampong* of Roetoeng, in the island of Ambon. Opa Oties' family traveled all over the Moluccas as his father was a pastor. At the age of six, opa Oties moved in with family in the city of Ambon to attend school. At the age of seven, the Japanese invaded the Moluccas

In 1950, opa Oties fought in the independence war of the Republik Maluku Selatan. Opa Oties recalled seeing the RMS flag for the first time as he walked on his way home from high school. He saw young boys and women who had returned from the battlefield covered in blood. Opa Oties and others joined the fight for freedom the next morning. His father, brothers and sisters joined the movement. He recalled the items that he was given for battle "Three pieces of *sagu lempeng* with *kopra*, a bag of dried coconut with pisang and three bullets; two for the enemy and one for yourself. You were not allowed to surrender, it was part of our technical war,

*Perjuangan RMS.*” Opa Oties remarked “The former Moluccan KNIL were brought to the Netherlands with the promise that after six to eight months they would be able to return. But we fought in Maluku for more than three years.” Moreover, when the Indonesian army invaded New Guinea in 1950, one of opa Oties’ brothers helped former RMS President Manuma escape to the Netherlands.

In 1963, opa Otis studied in Czechoslovakia, he was unable to finish his studies due to the Indonesian coup that took place in 1965. In 1967 opa Oties arrived in the Netherlands and in 1971, he met his wife Giok Oei. In the Netherlands, opa Oties worked to build a better future for his family. Opa Oties remembered when he met my great-grandfather in the Netherlands and other Moluccans in barracks “Ekleopas was my cousin. I met him when I was in the Netherlands and I stayed in Hoogetveen. I went further into Drenthe, there was a barack with a large group of Moluccans who wished to return. I told them ‘Don’t do it, stay here and let your children continue their studies. There is no security there’.” With the passing of opa Oties we have lost another elder who will never live to see an era of peace and justice in Maluku.

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