

Dutch Colonization and Slavery of Asia: From Apology to Reparation

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ABSTRACT

This article is about the history of forced apologies and reparations for the 350 years of Dutch colonization and the Dutch war of occupation of the Republic of Indonesia from 1945-1949, the trade in enslaved people, the extermination of the indigenous population, their replacement by people willing to serve the Dutch colonists, and the looting and plundering of natural mineral resources and earthly products such as nutmeg. The apologies issued are half-hearted, enforced by lawsuits that focus on a few rather than entire populations. The apologies are limited to the Republic of Indonesia and then only for the period 1945-1949. Currently, the Netherlands is considering apologies and possibly reparations for the suffering inflicted on Africans in the transatlantic triangle. In the process, Asian genocides, torture, executions, beheadings, enslavement of people, and looting and robbery of people and land are being covered up. Perhaps this is neo-colonization at its best. This article also makes a proposal, based on the insights of the international reparation's movement and transitional justice, in the hope that the Netherlands and its Dutch municipalities will begin to mend their ways. At the heart of this proposal are methods for apologizing and repairing suffering. This can only be done together with our Asian sisters and brothers.

Keywords: Decolonizing the relation between the Netherlands and Sout-East Asia, apologies and reparations, International Redress Movement and Transitional Justice.

INTRODUCTION

In this article we raise critical questions about the neo-colonial behavior of the Dutch government and municipalities, such as the major Dutch cities, including Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht. Very much to the fore is the Dutch focus on the Transatlantic Triangle, on the atrocities committed during colonization and slavery but also looting and pillaging. Most of the countries the Netherlands colonized were on the Asian continent. Nonetheless, the Netherlands prefers to begrudge Asia while that may be where the Dutch invented the trade of enslaved people. After all, in the Republic of Indonesia, there was a constant search for 'willing' people to serve the Dutchman. In this article, we attempt to advise the Netherlands on a possible path from apology to reparation for its involvement in the initiation and perpetuation of slavery and the colonization of Asia.

"An apology must be genuine. It must, in other words, confess the deed, admit the deed was an injustice, repent, and ask for forgiveness (Brooks, 2021, p. 305)."

"There are two basic forms of reparations: victim-directed (compensatory) reparations and community-directed (rehabilitative) reparations (Brooks, 2021, p. 306)."

To accomplish this task, a literature review of apologies and reparations after 350 years of colonization and slavery by the Netherlands and its predecessors from the Republic of the United Netherlands (1579-1795) of Asia was used here¹. At the end of this literature review, a theoretical framework is presented that follows the argument of Professor Dr. Rianne Letschert.

This article is deliberately written in English. We do so because we want to propose that the Netherlands work out and implement apologies and reparations for the Dutch colonization and subjugation of parts of Asia with our Asian counterparts. In international literature, apology and reparation is called redress. Redress means to compensate for an injustice. This concept has been developed by the International Redress Movement in the theoretical part of this article. This article is structured as follows. First, it focuses on the apologies of the Netherlands for its colonization and slavery in Asia. Then comes a brief overview of the countries and territories in Asia to which the Netherlands has not apologized. Third, the practices of slavery and colonization, as well as what is known about apologies and reparations, are focused on the Netherlands and her cities like the city of Amsterdam. Fourth, we conclude with a theoretical framework in which redress is further elaborated.

EXPRESSED APOLOGIES

Legal scholar Rianne Letschert (Tilburg University) on the claim for an apology for the survivors of Rawagede.

([https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bestand:\(55\)_Waarom_vindt_Nederland_het_zo_moeilijk_om_sorry_te_zeggen_voor_Rawagede_en_Srebrenica.webm](https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bestand:(55)_Waarom_vindt_Nederland_het_zo_moeilijk_om_sorry_te_zeggen_voor_Rawagede_en_Srebrenica.webm)²).

Professor Dr. Rianne Letschert's main finding is that when apologies are enforced through litigation, they are unlikely to have the desired effect. That such apologies lead to claims for damages because those affected do not feel heard. That this kind of apology does not do justice to reality, where there are often many more people affected than those who filed the civil suit against the Dutch state. Also, because judges have to decide on the statute of limitations and, taking into account human principles such as fairness and humanity, decide to waive the statute of limitations. Below are some Asian examples of apologies and reparations for the damage caused by the Dutch during colonization and slavery. Some of these examples have been enforced through litigation.

Apologies and Reparations for Rawagede (1947)³

The Rawagede massacre took place on December 9, 1947 in Rawagede, now Balongsari, West Java. Widows of the murdered civilians filed a lawsuit against the Dutch state in 2008. On September 14, 2011, the District Court of The Hague ruled that the Dutch state was liable for

¹ https://www.parlement.com/id/vigfgov2wpxl/staten_generaal_1588_1795

² <https://ap.lc/vbQfr>

³ https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nederlandse_excuses_voor_het_koloniale_verleden

the damages suffered by the relatives and had to compensate them. The Dutch state would pay compensation of 20,000 euros per person and issue a formal apology. On Friday, December 9, 2011, 64 years after the massacre, Ambassador Tjeerd de Zwaan delivered the Dutch apology to the bereaved families in English and Indonesian in the presence of the world press in Rawagede.

Apologies and Reparations for Other KNIL Summary Executions (since 1945)⁴

Apologies for summary executions committed by the KNIL during the Indonesian War of Independence were expressed by Dutch Ambassador Tjeerd de Zwaan in 2011 and 2013. The December 2011 apology was specifically addressed to the widows of men summarily executed by Dutch troops in Rawagedeh, West Java. The 2013 apology, while formally addressed primarily to widows from South Sulawesi (South Celebes) who were invited to the ceremony (but did not attend), was broader and more general in nature, encompassing all summary executions committed by the KNIL during the "police actions" of the late 1940s throughout the archipelago, and was therefore delivered in Jakarta. The ambassador in Jakarta also indicated that all widows of men summarily executed by the KNIL could henceforth receive compensation from the Dutch state without court intervention.

Legally Enforced Apologies (JavaPost) ⁵

"Rawagedeh, South Celebes and Dutch restraint. In the summer of 2013, for the first time in history, the Netherlands officially apologized for crimes committed during Indonesia's war of independence (1945-1949). Indonesian victims had forced the Dutch government to do so through two civil lawsuits. Taking the legal route provided them with a voice in the country of the perpetrators and a chance to claim their rights. But the legal approach to speaking about historical injustice can also have downsides. Namely, it limits public debate to narrowly defined cases that fall within the parameters of legal evidence. Moreover, the fact that apologies must be legally enforced significantly reduces the likelihood of reconciliation - the purpose of apologies. The legalization of talk of historical apologies is thus a double-edged sword."

⁴ <https://historiek.net/nederlandse-excuses-executies-indonesie/36670/>

⁵ <https://javapost.nl/2015/09/09/juridisch-afgedwongen-excuses/>



Figure 1: Tjeerd de Zwaan, far left with the widows of Rawagede in West Java in 2011. © Romeo Gacad



Figure 2: Ambassador Tjeerd de Zwaan in 2011 during his visit to Balongsari (Rawagedeh) to offer an apologize. (ANP)

Apology of the King of the Netherlands to the President of Indonesia for the period 1945-1949

On March 10, 2020, during a visit to Indonesia, King Willem-Alexander van Oranje issued a statement apologizing to Indonesian President Joko Widodo for "acts of violence" committed by Dutch troops during the Indonesian War of Independence (1945-1949)⁶. The statement included the sentence:

⁶ <https://nos.nl/artikel/2326517-willem-alexander-biedt-excuses-aan-voor-nederlands-geweld-in-indonesie>

"For the acts of violence committed by the Dutch side during those years, I would like to express here now, in line with previous statements by my government, my regret and convey my apologies."

This statement was unexpected; some Dutch ministers and government parties were unaware of it and reacted angrily that they had not been consulted about the content and timing of such a statement. Although apologies to Indonesia had previously been discussed in councils of Dutch ministers, no agreements had yet been reached, and it was expected that they would await the outcome of a full scientific inquiry, which is due to be completed by September 2021. Instead, either the King or Prime Minister Mark Rutte appeared to have acted without the approval of the Council of Ministers, while the Foreign Minister said the royal apology brought little new and was in line with previous apologies, such as that of his predecessor Ben Bot in 2005 and that of the Dutch ambassador in 2013. Several Indo-Dutch and especially KNIL veterans reacted angrily to the royal apology, which they perceived as a betrayal and a "stab in the back", claiming that they had fought in good conscience for the colonial Dutch East Indies and that the Indonesian rebels had committed "much worse" war crimes. An Indonesian response to these apologies was published in the JakartaPost⁷. The headline of the article was:

"The Dutch apology to Indonesia is halfhearted, but it is OK."

"Hassan Wirajuda (Indonesia's former foreign minister) said that if the Dutch were really sincere and serious about making peace with their dark history in Indonesia, they should have apologized for 350 years of their colonization here, not for a brief period between 1945 and 1949 when they tried to regain control of Indonesia after World War II."

The foreign minister Hassan Wirajuda challenged the Dutch government to follow the courageous decision of Germany, which agreed to provide more than 1.3 billion euros (US\$1.44 billion) in aid to its former colony Namibia and the offspring of victims of German occupation in the past."

Commenting on Rutte's recent apology, Hassan said the Netherlands had made admission of guilt three times, but all referred to the atrocities committed during the revolutionary war in 1945-1949. "The apologies are just in bits and pieces, and they did not respond to all disasters caused by the Dutch colonialism for 350 years," said Hassan during a virtual discussion on Rutte's apology last month."

Dutch Government Apologizes to The Indonesian People for The Period 1945-1950

On February 17, 2022, in response to the research report Independence, decolonization, violence and war in Indonesia, 1945-1950, Rutte⁸, on behalf of the government, offered a "deep apology" to the Indonesian people for the "systematic and extreme violence by the Dutch military during the Indonesian War of Independence and the consistent repudiation of previous cabinets." The apology also seemed to apply "to everyone in our country who has had to live with the consequences of the colonial war in Indonesia, often to this day," including "all groups, including veterans, who behaved as good soldiers at the time. Rutte called the Commission of

⁷ <https://ap.lc/177d1>

⁸ <https://ap.lc/gmcqd>

Inquiry's report "penetrating and confrontational. "He also referred to the Dutch struggle against the Indonesian people as a "colonial war" and identified the "colonial sense of superiority" in the thinking and actions of Dutch political and military leaders at the time."

The Years, Months and Days of The Dutch Apology to Indonesia for Colonization and Slavery are Briefly Summarized Below (source: PAC_Apology_Version-2.xlsx). Collective Recognition of the Dutch East Indies Community is Included:

- **02.09.2001:** Netherlands to descendants of slave trade. Dutch Minister Roger van Boxtel expressed remorse for slave trade at the World Conference Against Racism <http://www.un.org/WCAR/statements/netherE.htm>
- **16.08.2005:** The Netherlands to Indonesia. Dutch Minister Ben Bot expressed profound regret for the suffering caused by the country's large-scale deployment of military forces In Indonesia in 1947. <https://www.nu.nl/binnenland/3563315/nederland-betuigt-spijt-indonesie.html> <http://indonesiadutch.blogspot.com/2009/10/speech-by-minister-bot-on-60th.html>
- **09.12.2008.** The Netherlands to Indonesia. The Dutch Ambassador to Indonesia expressed regret for the 1947 massacre of 431 villagers in Rawagede (Indonesia) by Dutch soldiers. Columbia university. "Netherland's regret Rawagede tragedy." Jakarta Post. December 10, 2008. <https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2008/12/09/haarkloverij-over-spijt-of-excuus-op-west-java-11651999-a894095>
- **09.12.2011.** The Netherlands to Indonesia. The Dutch ambassador to Indonesia, Tjeerd de Zwaan, apologized for the 1947 Rawagede massacre. Columbia university. Graham G. Dodds list. "Dutch apology for 1947 Indonesia massacre at Rawagede." www.bbc.com. December 9, 2011. Never Again! Apology and Coming to Terms with the Past. "Dutch apology for 1947 Indonesia massacre at Rawagede." www.bbc.com. December 9, 2011.
- **01.07.2013.** The Netherlands to victims of slave trade Dutch minister of Social Affairs and Employment Lodewijk Asscher apologized for the Dutch role in slavery. Vrieze, Gradus - Excuses afdwingen, 2013. p. 60. <https://historiek.net/toespraak-minister-asscher-bij-herdenking-afschaffing-slavernij/23159/>
- **2020.** Collective Recognition of the Dutch East Indies Community (2 million people in the Netherlands)⁹. "With the collective recognition, the government wants to show its thanks and appreciation for what the Indian community means to the Netherlands. And to acknowledge what the community went through during and after World War II. In the coming years, the government will allocate an additional €20.4 million for this purpose. <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/tweede-wereldoorlog/collectieve-erkenning-indische-gemeenschap>.
- Action plan for the special impulse for the recognition of the Dutch East Indies/ Indonesian community (East Indies, Moluccan, Papuan and Chinese-Indonesian communities: 2021-2024). The government made an action plan for the special impulse. For this purpose, they spoke with several people from the East Indies/ Indonesian community in the Netherlands. The plan has 4 goals: a) to increase knowledge about the history of the former Dutch East Indies/ Indonesian, b) to make the Dutch East Indies/ Indonesian heritage available, c) to improve the care for people from the East Indies community, and d) to encourage initiatives from the Dutch East Indies community."

⁹ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/tweede-wereldoorlog/collectieve-erkenning-indische-gemeenschap>.
<https://www.museumsophiahof.nl/wat-er-te-doen/extra-impuls-collectieve-erkenning>

- **10.03.2020.** Netherlands to Indonesia. Netherlands King Willem-Alexander apologized to Indonesia for the violent excesses by Dutch soldiers during the Indonesian independence war of 1945-49. <https://www.royal-house.nl/documents/speeches/2020/03/10/statement-by-king-willem-alexander-at-the-beginning-of-the-state-visit-to-indonesia>
- **17.02.2022.** The Netherlands to Indonesia and citizens. Prime Minister Mark Rutte offered apologies for systematic and excessive violence in Indonesia's 1945-49 war of independence. <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/toespraken/2022/02/17/eerste-reactie-van-minister-president-mark-rutte-onderzoeksprogramma-onafhankelijkheid-dekolonisatie-geweld-en-oorlog-in-indonesie-1945-1950>. <https://www.dw.com/en/netherlands-apologizes-to-indonesia-over-war-crimes/a-60817847>

The Dutch Apology Seen from An Indonesian Perspective (TheJakartaPost)¹⁰

A relevant question for this Amsterdam journey from apology to reparation is the Indonesian response to Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte's apology.

"President Joko 'Jokowi' Widodo has rightly refrained from giving an immediate response to the statement of apology from Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte for the 'extreme violence' committed by the Dutch colonial forces during the 1945-1949 revolution war that followed Indonesia's proclamation of independence on Aug. 17, 1945. Indonesia from the very beginning has decided to move forward, rather than becoming a prisoner of the bitter past. The issue has never been made a big fuss. When visiting Indonesia in March 2020, Dutch King Willem-Alexander expressed his apology for 'excessive violence' Indonesians endured during the four-year revolution. President Jokowi, who was standing next to the King, simply nodded and smiled. Jokowi's reaction seemed to reflect the attitude of Indonesian people, many of whom are survivors of the Dutch colonialization. The King also reiterated the royal kingdom's recognition of the independence of Indonesia on Aug. 17, 1945. The date itself is still disputed by some Dutch people until now, especially war veterans, but that's their own business. Those who question Indonesia's Independence Day, or insist that Dutch colonialism contributed much to Indonesia's existence today, will not change the history of the Indonesian nation. The dispute over the historical facts speaks more about the internal struggle of the Dutch people in dealing with their past. Their ancestors colonized the archipelago now called Indonesia for 350 years. As a victim of colonialism, however, Indonesia has made peace with the past."

OPEN ISSUES

The following are areas/islands in the Indonesian archipelago for which the Netherlands has not apologized for atrocities committed during the Dutch war after the proclamation of Indonesia as an independent state during the period 1945-1949. The same is done for the lack of Dutch apologies for the centuries-long period of colonization and slavery of the Indonesian archipelago by the Netherlands. It also focuses on the lack of apology for the cruel indentured

¹⁰ This article was published in thejakartapost.com with the title "The Dutch apology - Editorial - The Jakarta Post". Click to read: <https://www.thejakartapost.com/opinion/2022/02/22/the-dutch-apology.html>.

labor system applied to Hindustani from India, Chinese from China and Javanese from the Indonesian. Apart from this, it is well known that the Netherlands has never apologized to the other Asian countries, such as China, Japan, Malaysia, etc. for colonization and slavery. We begin with a broad overview of Dutch interventions in Indonesia Archipelago (Bhagwanbali, 2021).

Date	Event
1596-1597	Dutch expedition to the East Indies, including Java .
1602	Dutch East India Company (United East India Company or VOC) was founded as one of the first joint-stock companies in history. • The company was tasked with exploration, colonization, trade, and even the ability to engage in wars and mint its own money. • Until the late 18th century, the company sent an estimated million Europeans to perform different types of work in Asia. • Thousands of its ships traveled between Europe and Asia.
1619	Jakarta (then called Batavia), the present-day Indonesian capital, became an important port city for the Dutch and their capital in the region.
1660	The Dutch forced the Portuguese out of Sumatra's ports to control trade.
1799	The Dutch East India Company went bankrupt and dissolved. The Dutch Batavian Republic began formal rule over the region.
1821–1838	Padri War was a military conflict in West Sumatra between the Adat and the Padri, in which the Dutch aided the Adat. The Dutch also suppressed the Minangkabau people.
1825–1830	Java War was a key armed conflict in which the Dutch crushed the Javanese resistance .
1873–1913	Aceh War (Dutch War) was the longest conflict in colonial Indonesia in which the Dutch fought the locals and increased their colonial power over the region.
1945	Indonesia declared formal independence .

Figure 3: Selected History of Dutch Colonisation in Indonesia
(Source: StudySmarter <https://ap.lc/nODTL>)

Banda Massacre (1621)

"The Bandanese trade with the English, Portuguese, and Dutch. The VOC tries unsuccessfully to gain a monopoly on the nutmeg trade. The Bandanese refused to be dictated to. In 1609, the VOC unilaterally decided to build a fortress there. In response, the Bandanese murdered several Dutchmen. A period of war began. Governor-General Jan Pieterszoon Coen (the company's top man in the East Indies) organized a punitive expedition to Banda in 1621. He wanted to gain a monopoly on the nutmeg and mace trade for the VOC. Of the 15,000 inhabitants, only 1,000 remained. The rest were killed, fled, or transported to Batavia as slaves. All to secure the company's monopoly on nutmeg¹¹."

Atjeh War (1873-1913)

"**Acehnese War**¹², (1873–1904), an armed conflict between the Netherlands and the Muslim sultanate of Aceh (also spelled Acheh, or Atjeh) in northern Sumatra that resulted in Dutch conquest of the Acehnese and, ultimately, in Dutch domination of the entire region. In 1871 the Netherlands and Britain had signed a treaty that recognized Dutch influence in northern Sumatra in return for Dutch confirmation of Britain's right of equal trade in the East Indies.

The Dutch, considering Aceh as within their sphere of influence, decided to conquer the area and sent two expeditions to Aceh in 1873. The palace was seized and shortly afterward the Acehnese sultan died. The Dutch suspended military operations and concluded a treaty with the new sultan, who recognized Dutch sovereignty over the area. He was unable to control his subjects, however, and Dutch forces became involved in a prolonged guerrilla war in the countryside. This war, however, drained the colonial treasury, and public opinion"

Colonization and Exploitation of the Dutch East Indies (1602-1945)

"For more than 450 years¹³, the English, Portuguese and Dutch fought for power in the Indian archipelago. At stake was the exclusive right to trade in expensive spices such as cloves and nutmeg. Finally, in 1816, the Dutch became the masters; the colony of the Dutch East Indies was a fact. What were the consequences?

The colonization of the Dutch East Indies took place step by step. From the seventeenth century, Dutch merchant ships sailed to the East Indies under the flag of the VOC. At that time, this vast area with thousands of islands had already been conquered by powerful maritime nations such as Portugal, Spain and England. Their conquests in the 16th century were part of a global struggle for supremacy. The arrival of the Netherlands as a new competitor led to military actions and colonial wars that cost hundreds of thousands of lives in the following centuries. Eventually, the VOC won the battle and gained a trade monopoly in the 18th century. The presence of the Dutch became more pronounced: they occupied land in Java. After the demise of the VOC in 1800, these territories fell into the hands of the Dutch state.

Its military strength and the repression that accompanied it allowed the Netherlands to exercise economic and political power in this distant land. The exploitation of raw materials was the main goal. In its rule, the Netherlands uses local princes, just like the colonial powers

¹¹ <https://ap.lc/jLgdC>

¹² <https://www.britannica.com/event/Acehnese-War>

¹³ <https://www.deepl.com/write>

before them. They make money by exploiting their countrymen. For example, with the introduction of a land interest system; a form of tax collection. From now on, the peasants have to hand over as much as two-fifths of their harvest. The local princes take another part. Landlords also lost their land, which was then leased to Europeans and Asians.

For the first time, the Javanese people rose up against this corruption and exploitation. A bloody battle ensued, known as the Java War (1825-1830). The better-armed Dutch eventually crushed the rebellion. By 1830, the war was over. Approximately eight thousand Dutch soldiers were killed; Indian casualties were many times higher.

To restore order, King William I sends Governor Johannes van den Bosch to the Dutch East Indies. Van den Bosch introduces the culture system, which replaces the land interest system. Javanese farmers who grow commodities such as coffee, sugar, and tobacco must now give up one-fifth of their produce. These products are destined for the Dutch market. Those without land worked for the government for two months.”

VOC and Slavery

“Between 1594 and 1602, so-called pre-companies were already trading in South Asia, before they were merged into the Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie¹⁴ (VOC) in 1602. Unlike in the Atlantic region, where Europeans shipped enslaved Africans to the Americas via the transatlantic slave trade to work on plantations, the Dutch did not engage in large-scale slave-based plantation construction in Asia, although many slaves were traded within the VOC territories. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the VOC was the center of the slave trade in Southeast Asia. In 1750, there were an estimated 75,500 slaves in settlements under VOC rule, compared to 64,000 slaves in areas under WIC rule. Over a period of two centuries, the VOC extracted, traded, and used 600,000 to 1 million slaves, mainly from the Voor-Indië (now a part of India), later from Celebes and Bali. Slavery continued in the Dutch East Indies until decolonization. Slaves were mainly used for infrastructure, building fortifications and in households (slaves), according to traditional perceptions, slaves in the East were mainly a status symbol, but they were used as labor and had mainly economic value.

A 1687/1688 census lists the number of slaves held by European and Asian owners in various VOC settlements, as shown in the table below. This table illustrates the volume of the Dutch slave trade in the Indian Ocean region in 1688. Historian Markus Vink estimates that the total volume of the Dutch slave trade in the Indian Ocean region in the seventeenth century was slightly less than the Arab slave trade and between 15 and 30% of the transatlantic slave trade.

In the eighteenth century, the number of slaves in VOC territory increased. In 1625 there were 8,000 slaves in the VOC possessions; by 1775 there were 79,500. In 1779, 40,000 slaves lived in Batavia out of a population of 172,000.”

¹⁴ https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Verenigde_Oostindische_Compagnie

Plaats	Jaar	Slaven van VOC	Jaar	Totaal Nederlandse slaven
Ambon	1687/88	74	1688	10.569
Banda	1687/88	166	1688	3.716
Batavia	1687/88	1.430	1689	26.071
Kaap de Goede Hoop	1687/88	382	1688	931
Ceylon	1687/88	1.502	1688	circa 4000
Makassar	1687/88	112	1687/88	circa 1500
Malabar	1687/88	32	1687	circa 1000
Malakka	1687/88	161	1682	1.853
Molukken	1687/88	0	1686	circa 400
Anders	1687/88	268	1688	16.308
Totaal	1687/88	4.127	1688	circa 66.348

Figure 4: Number of company slaves and total Dutch slaves, with estimates of the extent of the accompanying annual slave trade, ca. 1688

Initially, the VOC acquired only limited territorial power, functioning as a state and for the most part exercising no direct power over what was produced in the East Indies. This production came about through VOC activities aimed at subjugating native princes (with or without military force) for the purpose of exclusive trade with the VOC at fixed prices favorable to the Dutch. The VOC waged war against native princes who violated the imposed contracts and treaties, or against competing European powers such as the Portuguese and English, because the Dutch wanted to maintain their trade monopoly. Over time, however, the VOC became increasingly involved in the internal politics of various states in the East Indies archipelago, both by playing them off against each other and, for example, by planting coffee in cooperation with the "regents" (local officials) of the sultan of the important Javanese sultanate of Mataram. The Dutch interventions contributed to the internal weakening and paralysis of Mataram through a series of succession crises and rebellions, including the Trunajaya Rebellion and the Javanese Wars of Succession. Eventually, in 1749, the Sultanate of Mataram disintegrated into three principalities, which the VOC could more easily play, although the Company never succeeded in controlling all of Java, and Dutch influence in the interior remained largely indirect.

During the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (1792-1815), French revolutionaries seized the republic and nationalized the bankrupt VOC, while the British seized the VOC possessions in the East Indies. After the British transferred these colonies to the United Kingdom of the Netherlands in 1816, they were administratively unified as the Netherlands East Indies, and an attempt was made to establish direct colonial authority to turn the archipelago into a victorious region."

NRC: Caribbean Hindustani and Colonization¹⁵

Caribbean Hindustani do not want an apology or a demand for reparations. They want their own commemoration of the colonial era. Competition with Afro-Dutch is not necessary, writes Ruben Gowricharn.

“Over the past year, Dutch governments and businesses have been falling over themselves to apologize for the Caribbean's colonial past. But it is not clear whether the year 2023 - which celebrates one hundred and seventy years of Chinese immigration, one hundred and sixty years of the abolition of slavery and one hundred and fifty years of Hindustani immigration to Suriname - will be dominated by colonial history or slavery. The Afro-Dutch speak mainly about slavery, while the Chinese, Hindustani and Javanese speak about a broader colonial past.

To be clear, slavery and indentured servitude are both part of colonial history, but they are two different labor systems. Unlike the indentured laborer, the slave was an asset that could be bought and sold and was owned by the planter for life. Slaves, like indentured servants and laborers, could not be sold and could be hired whenever the plantation needed them. Slaves could, however, be declared free. By 1863, the year of abolition, about one-third of slaves had been declared free by their masters. Thus, extending the duration of slavery had little effect.

In this context, the Dutch penchant for apologizing is remarkable, not only because of the speed with which apologizing has become an administrative culture, nor because of the scale on which the culture of apologizing has manifested itself, but above all because of the limitation of the colonial past to slavery and the generous financial resources allocated to it. One might ask: why not demand an apology and financial compensation from the Africans who captured and sold people as slaves?

In response, some Caribbean Hindustani emphasize the similarities and propagate that indentured labor is a new form of slavery. This is an untenable position because the two systems are not comparable, either legally or economically. But the Afro-Dutch criticism that Caribbean Hindustani want to ride on their success is another miss in this discussion. Caribbean Hindustanis do not want an apology, they do not want reparations, but like the Afro-Dutch, they want their own commemoration. This is not a competition, although it is notable that both public attention and financial resources are being unilaterally allocated in favor of the Afro-Dutch. What stings here is the failure to see other groups in colonial history, the ignoring of their presence in the Netherlands, and the disregard for their need to shape their own history and identity.”

¹⁵ NRC: <https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2023/05/01/koloniaal-verleden-was-meer-dan-alleen-slavernij-a4163456#/krant/2023/05/02/#118>



Ruben Gowricharn is professor of Caribbean Hindustani diaspora studies at VU University Amsterdam.

NRC (05-06-2023): Acknowledge the Entire Dutch Colonial Past¹⁶

"Thirty-three flag bearers will raise their flags on Dam Square at 8 p.m. on May 3. The flags symbolize the territories once colonized by the Netherlands. In the two minutes of silence that will follow, those present will remember the victims of this colonial past.

The organizer of this "inclusive commemoration" is Surinamese Dutchwoman Rishma Khubsing (41 years). "We pause every year on May 4 to remember the suffering that was done to the Netherlands," she says, "but we also have to recognize the suffering that the Netherlands did to other countries." As a child, she watched Memorial Day every year with her parents. She also heard stories from home about slavery and indentured servitude in Suriname. On Liberation Day, she once thought, "Our ancestors were also freed from miserable rule. We should think about that too.

Last year, the Advisory Committee of the Dialogue Group on Slavery advised the Cabinet to make July 1, the anniversary of the abolition of slavery, a National Day of Remembrance with the presence of the King and the Cabinet. The College also advised Prime Minister Mark Rutte to apologize for slavery in Suriname and the Caribbean islands. 2023 is the year of commemoration of slavery in these territories, 150 years ago this year. A lot of attention is rightly paid to Suriname and the islands, says Khubsing, "but why don't we remember all the victims of the Dutch colonial past?"

THE DUTCH CAPITAL: AMSTERDAM DATA ON SLAVERY AND COLONIZATION IN ASIA Maps of Amsterdam and the History of Slavery, Adams et al. 2021

¹⁶ <https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2023/06/04/erken-het-hele-koloniale-verleden-a4166327#/krant/2023/06/05/#108>

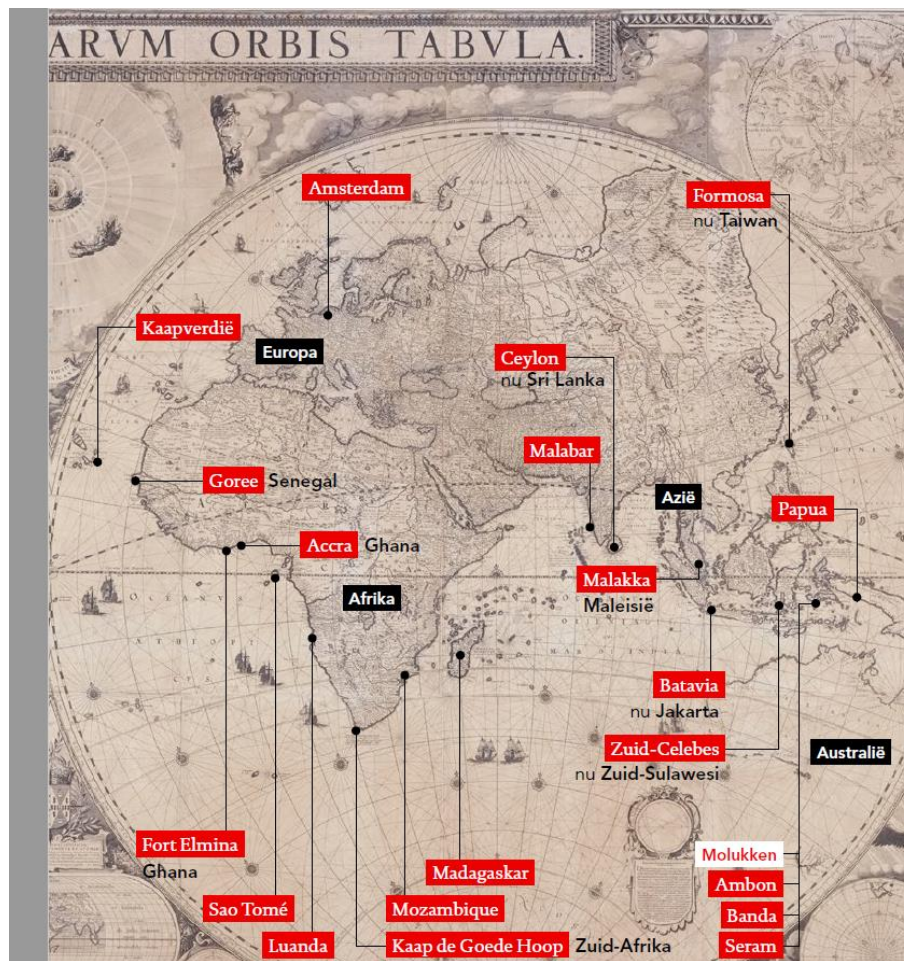


Figure 1: Joan Blaeu, 1648, Maritime Museum (New World Map)



Figure 2: Key moments in Amsterdam's involvement in the slave trade and slavery (p. 25)

The Role of Amsterdam and the Amsterdammers: Apologies

The inner city of Amsterdam was built on profits, products and services from the inhumane suffering of the indigenous people, the shipped enslaved people from Africa, the indentured laborers from India, China and Java, the indigenous enslaved people (especially in Asia) in the Dutch colonies in the East and West. Furthermore, Amsterdam was built on the suffering of the trade in enslaved people and their services and products. By enslavement we mean forced labor and the extortion of up to 20% of income by the perkeniers (plantation owners). Amsterdam's inner city is still a public testimony to this past. Gradually, more and more monuments, façade stones and exhibitions are appearing that comment on this dark history of the city of Amsterdam. A great example is the National Monument to Slavery in Amsterdam's Oosterpark.



Figure 5: National Monument Slavery Past, Oosterpark, Amsterdam, Holland. Made by Erwin de Vries in 2002

For more than 300 years, Amsterdam's elite were responsible for this trade and commerce. They were mayors and merchants. So far, only one mayor has apologized for this terrible past. That was Femke Halsema at Ketikoti in 2021 (1 July).

"Amsterdam Mayor Femke Halsema apologized Thursday afternoon for Amsterdam's role in its slavery past. She did so on behalf of the municipality during the Ketikoti celebration and commemoration at the slavery monument in the Oosterpark. Halsema made it clear that almost everyone in Amsterdam benefited from slavery: 'The city government, which was co-owner and manager of the colony, was at the forefront. Last year, researchers concluded in the report De Slavernij in Oost en West that more than half of the 374 mayors in Amsterdam's history were also directors or shareholders of trading companies and thus directly profited from slavery'¹⁷."

Remarkably, Amsterdam's "old elite" of merchants did not speak out. This also seems to be true for lenders and banks. Their apologies seem to have been outsourced to Mayor Femke Halsema. What is even more striking is that the mayor of Amsterdam, Femke Halsema, does not apologize on behalf of the people of Amsterdam. This is surprising because thousands and thousands of Amsterdammers were involved in the trade of sugar, coffee, rice, cocoa, spices and tobacco. They were also involved in shipbuilding, arms and ammunition production and trade. In addition, there were many Amsterdammers who sailed as seamen. It seems fair to ask whether these Amsterdammers were unaware of the colonial struggles and the trade in enslaved people and the services and goods they produced. Correspondence has now been found that suggests that not all of these Amsterdammers were ignorant. In short, the question Amsterdam must ask itself is: can the elite and the citizens of Amsterdam be excused?

¹⁷ <https://ap.lc/OIKJp>

The division of those involved in colonization and slavery into perpetrators and victims simplifies reality. Slavery and colonization involve many parties who play prominent roles. In fact, besides the political and administrative leaders, these are all the companies and people involved in facilitating colonization and slavery. In short this could include the Amsterdam elite directly responsible for colonization and slavery, the shipyards and the people who worked there, the bankers who provided loans, and all trading partners (including middlemen) of enslaved people and the services and products they provided on behalf of these parties. A similar argument applies to the victims. One example is the old Indonesian nobility in Indonesia, many of whom were loyal to their Dutch occupiers.

Number of Original Asian Amsterdammers and Their Colonization and Slavery Narratives

“Amsterdam will have a total population of 926,776 on June 30, 2023¹⁸. That's an increase of 0.94 percent. This trend has to do with the number of people who moved, died or were born, according to CBS.”

Below we try to estimate the number of original Asian Amsterdammers. We use the map from the book *Amsterdam and the History of Slavery*. In this book, the Asian countries named that suffered from Dutch colonization and slavery are Ceylon, Malabar, Malaysia, Batavia, South Celebes, Moluccas (Ambon, Banda, and Seram), Papua, and Formosa. In addition, we estimate the number of original Asian inhabitants of Amsterdam who came to the Netherlands from the Caribbean. These estimates are based on the website: "Alle.Cijfers.nl". See <https://allecijfers.nl/migratie/gemeente-amsterdam/>.

Table 1: City/ Country, Year and number of Inhabitants of Former Dutch Asian Colonies

City/ Country	Year	Number of inhabitants
Amsterdam	2023	921.468
Total Indonesian Migrants in the Netherlands ¹⁹	2022	349.301
Indonesians in Amsterdam	2022	22.904
Indians/ Pakistanis in Amsterdam ²⁰	2022	9.127/ 6.112 (2019)
Philippines in Amsterdam	2022	3.019
Surinamese Hindustani in the Netherlands	2021	160.000-170.000
Surinamese Javanese in the Netherlands ²¹	2008	6.400
Surinamese Chinese in the Netherlands	2008	3.300
Chinese in Amsterdam	2022	7.848
Total Asians in Amsterdam	2022	83.283

¹⁸ <https://indebuurt.nl/amsterdam/gemeente/amsterdam-blijft-groeien-zoveel-inwoners-zijn-er~325552/>

¹⁹ <https://allecijfers.nl/migratie-nationaliteiten-geboortelanden/indonesie/>

²⁰ In de periode 1853-1939 werden in totaal 74.000 contractarbeiders naar Suriname gevoerd. Van hen kwam 1% uit Madeira, 3% uit China, 4% uit andere delen van West-Indië, 47% uit toenmalig Brits-Indië (nu India en Pakistan) en 44% uit toenmalig Nederlands-Indië (Java). De interpretatie en toepassing van de contractvoorwaarden was in Suriname in handen van de planters, districtscommissarissen, agenten-generaal en rechters.

²¹ Bron:

Ko Oudhof, Carel Harmsen, Suzanne Loozen en

Chan Choenn (2011). Omvang en spreiding van Surinaamse Bevolkingsgroepen in Nederland. Bevolkingstrends, 2e kwartaal 2011

The above table should be seen as an attempt to estimate the number of Asian Amsterdammers. For a very accurate estimate we will have to use the Amsterdam Bureau of Research and Statistics. Furthermore, the country-of-origin designation is a crude measure of actual origin. For instance, people from Indonesia in Amsterdam can be divided into Indonesians, Indos and Totoks.

"In the Netherlands, 'Indo' refers primarily to the group of ethnic Dutch people with a partly Asian background and a family history in the former Dutch East Indies. Indos, together with Totoks - the Dutch who lived in the Dutch East Indies but did not intermarry - are also called Dutch Indians. Within the Dutch East Indies group, the Indos are the largest subgroup²²."

These three groups do not interact harmoniously in the Netherlands. They slander each other. For example, some Indonesians call Moluccans who served in the KNIL (Royal Dutch East Indies Army) 'murderers'. They also have different views on colonization and slavery. For Indonesians in Indonesia, the focus is on the revolution of sizes and types on the various Indonesian islands (perang kemerdekaan, or period Revolusi kemerdekaan, Purwanto et al. 2023, p. 13), and for the Indos and Totoks, the emphasis is mainly on the (genocidal) violence of the Dutch during the centuries of colonization and slavery. The latter group feels betrayed by the Dutch government then and now. They feel that they were used to protect the people living in Indonesia (from the revolution?).

Mutual denigration is also seen between Afro-Surinamese and Hindustani-Surinamese. See the debate in the Pakhuis de Zwijger on March 15, 2023.

"In recent years²³, several events have taken place that have exposed, and in some cases even intensified, ethnic tensions between Afro-Surinamese and Hindustani-Surinamese. These tensions can be traced back to colonial history as a result of the divide and conquer tactics of the Dutch colonizers. These tensions hinder the possibility of joining forces in a common struggle for emancipation and liberation. In the year in which the Afro-Surinamese community commemorates 150 years of the abolition of slavery and the Hindustani community commemorates 150 years of Hindustani immigration, the initiative was taken to seek dialogue between these two communities. The purpose of this dialogue is to discuss ethnic tensions and find ways to overcome them. A first meeting will be held on March 15, 2023 to begin this dialogue."

In this text, we highlight only some of the differences between populations from the same countries. These differences must be taken into account in the journey from apology to reparation. Moreover, the differences between ethnically mixed Dutch (Sterckx, 2016), Dutch who have lived or worked in Indonesia, and Indonesian Dutch show that this path from apology to recovery must be shaped together with each of these groups, as well as with those living in Indonesia today. This is also the case for the other Asian groups that have ended up in the

²² <https://www.federatie-indo.nl/indo/>

²³ <https://dezwijger.nl/programma/afro-surinamers-hindostanen-in-gesprek>

Netherlands as a result of colonization and slavery in Asia. This creates a common narrative that is a building block for a common future.

Apologies and Reparations for The Colonization and Slavery of the Dutch in Asia

The Netherlands has long struggled with its role as a colonizer and oppressor of indigenous peoples in Asia who had to serve as "subordinates" to the Dutch, as well as its role as a trader who traded in enslaved people in Asia. The half-hearted attitude of the Netherlands was once again evident in the debate in the House of Representatives on June 14, 2023.

"In the parliamentary debate on June 14, 2023, the Netherlands, through Prime Minister Rutte²⁴, de facto recognized the independence of Indonesia on August 17, 1945. This turned out to be only a de facto recognition, not a legal one. The Dutch government is again playing with words.

Little will change. Legal recognition could have far-reaching consequences for the restoration of Indonesia's colonial past. It would mean that the Netherlands attacked a sovereign state after independence, which is a war crime. There would be a legal upheaval in the legal system where right and wrong would be redefined to the detriment of the Netherlands.

The date maintained by the Netherlands and the UN, December 29, 1949, means nothing to Indonesians. Legal recognition would invalidate this date and thus allow previous agreements to be revised. After independence, it was not the Netherlands that paid Indonesia - Indonesia had to pay for its independence. Legal recognition would make Indonesia."

In order to offer apologies and reparations, we need to know how far the Netherlands has come by 2023 in apologizing for its 350-year colonization of the Indonesian archipelago. Apologies are also needed for the Dutch trade in enslaved people and their services and products in Indonesia and other parts of Asia, such as India and Malaysia. Some scholars argue that sincere apologies from the "perpetrators" are the basis for reparations. The question of whether this is the case is explored in a more theoretical chapter, which also discusses various insights into restorative practices.

Regardless, an apology and a path to reparation (as Amsterdam alderman Touria Meliani calls it) must be worked out for the city of Amsterdam. Amsterdam is in a special position for many reasons. First of all, Amsterdam is the capital of the Netherlands. Amsterdam was also the center from which the colonization of Asia and the trade in enslaved people, their services and products in Asia were directed. This began at the beginning of the Republic of the Seven United Provinces (1578-1795). Third, many Amsterdammers benefited from the colonization of Asia and the trade in enslaved people, their services and products. This includes not only the Amsterdam elite and their merchants, but also the Amsterdam banks, such as the Amsterdam Exchange Bank, and many Amsterdammers who were involved in building and manning ships and trading in enslaved people, their services and products such as sugar, tobacco, coffee, etc. Below is a table showing the Asian countries and continents to which the Netherlands has

²⁴ <https://ap.lc/8Py8z>

apologized and which have already been allowed to receive reparations from the Dutch government. The table focuses on Amsterdam.

Countries/ continents	Excuses (year)	Reparations (year)
Indonesian Archipelago	Amsterdam: Mayor Femke Halsema (1 July 2021): Apologizes for slavery in East and West	
Indonesian Archipelago	Amsterdam & National: King Willem-Alexander van Oranje (1 July 2023). King Willem-Alexander apologized on Saturday, July 1, 2023, in the Oosterpark in Amsterdam for the Dutch role in the past of slavery in the West and East. Literally, he said, "We talked to people who have roots in Suriname and also people who have ties to Indonesia (Javanese contract workers?). Among them people who have to go back only three generations to find a family member who was born into slavery. They made us realize how much pain is still in the capillaries.	
	National: King William-Alexander van Oranje (10 March 2020)	
	National: Prime Minister Mark Rutte (17 February, 2022): On February 17, 2022, in response to the research report Independence, decolonization, violence and war in Indonesia, 1945-1950, Rutte, on behalf of the government, offered a "deep apology" to the Indonesian people for the "systematic and extreme violence by the Dutch military during the Indonesian War of Independence and the consistent repudiation of previous cabinets.	
	National: Prime Minister Mark Rutte (14 June, 2023): Recognition of the independence of Indonesia 17 August 1945 by the House of Representatives of the Dutch States General	
Apologies and Reparations for Rawagede (September 14, 2011): court case	National: Ambassador Tjeerd de Zwaan delivered the Dutch apology to the bereaved families in English and Indonesian in the presence of the world press in Rawagede (Friday, December 9, 2011).	Court result: The Dutch state would pay compensation of 20,000 euros per person and issue a formal apology.
Apologies for summary executions committed by the KNIL	National: Dutch Ambassador Tjeerd de Zwaan in 2011 and 2013 .	Reparation: The ambassador in Jakarta also indicated that all widows of men summarily executed by the KNIL could henceforth receive compensation from the Dutch state without court intervention

Open Indonesian Archipelago Issues:

1. Banda Massacre (1621).
2. Atjeh War (1874-1913).
3. Colonization and exploitation of the Dutch East Indies (1602-1945).

Other Colonized and Enslaved Peoples of Asia:

1. Hindustani, Javanese, Chinese (also as contract workers to Suriname and Caribbean Islands)
2. Bengal, Ceylon, China (Guangzhou), South-India, Japan (Nagasaki coast), (Malabar (India), and Malaysia Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand (was Siam)²⁵²⁶.

Text quotes associated with the table above, see below. Dutch government apologizes to the Indonesian people for the period 1945-1950.

Rutte (17 February 2022): "Sincere Apologies" for Indonesia Violence after "Penetrating" Decolonization Report ²⁷:

"The main conclusions of the report "Independence, Decolonization, Violence and War in Indonesia, 1945 - 1950" are both "penetrating and confronting," Prime Minister Mark Rutte said in an initial reaction. "They are tough but inescapable. The Cabinet endorses the conclusions. We have to face the shameful facts."

The research covers the period from the proclamation of the Republic of Indonesia by Sukarno on August 17, 1945 up to and including 1949, the year in which the Netherlands signed the transfer of sovereignty on December 27. It was carried out by the Royal Institute for Language, Land and Ethnology (KITLV), the Netherlands Institute for Military History (NIMH) and the NIOD, the Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies.

"I am today offering a sincere apology to the people of Indonesia for the systematic, and widespread extreme violence by the Dutch during those years, and the previous Cabinets who consistently looked away," Rutte said. "These apologies are what they are: Full recognition that we have all failed," he added.

"The Netherlands waged a colonial war in which extreme violence was used systematically and widely, up to torture, which in most cases went unpunished," Rutte said at a press conference in Brussels. "The prevailing culture was one of looking away, shirking responsibility, and a misplaced colonial sense of superiority." It is, he said, "a painful observation and we have to take that into account".

According to the prime minister, the responsibility for "this black page in our history" lies first and foremost with the authorities at the time. "The Dutch government, parliament, the armed forces as an institution and the judicial authorities. The Cabinet takes full responsibility for their collective failure, which was the basis of the extreme violence in the period described."

Rutte also went beyond those apologies offered by King Willem-Alexander nearly two years ago on an official visit to Jakarta. "Each generation has to relate to its

²⁵ https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nederlandse_koloni%C3%ABn

²⁶ <https://ap.lc/h76cy>

²⁷ <https://nltimes.nl/2022/02/17/rutte-sincere-apologies-indonesia-violence-penetrating-decolonization-report>

own past, including us, and we feel that very strongly today," Rutte said. "This study paints a full picture of the tragedy of this period."



Excuses Willem-Aleander van Oranje²⁸ (10 maart 2020)

"Mr. President, on August 17 it will be 75 years since Indonesia claimed its place among the independent and free states with the Proclamation. The Dutch government explicitly accepted this fact politically and morally 15 years ago. We warmly congratulate the people of Indonesia on the celebration of 75 years of independence.

In the years immediately following the Proclamation, there was a painful separation that cost many lives. For the acts of violence committed by the Dutch side during those years, I would like to express my regret and apologize here and now, in line with previous statements by my government. I do so in the full knowledge that the pain and sorrow of the affected families will be felt for generations to come."

Excuses Femke Halsema²⁹ (1 July, Ketu Koti, 2021)

"For the active participation of the Amsterdam city government in the commercial system of colonial slavery and the global trade in enslaved people, I apologize on behalf of the municipal executive," the mayor said at the monument in Amsterdam's Oosterpark.

It is time to build the great injustice of colonial slavery into the identity of our city. With a generous and unconditional recognition," Halsema said. "Because we want to be a government of those for whom the past hurts and the effects of the past are a burden. A government for all the people of Amsterdam."

Apologies and Reparations for Other KNIL Summary Executions (since 1945)

"The 2013 apology, while formally addressed primarily to widows from South Sulawesi (South Celebes) who were invited to the ceremony (but did not attend), was broader and more general in nature, encompassing all summary executions committed by the KNIL during the "police actions" of the late 1940s throughout the archipelago, and was therefore delivered in Jakarta. The ambassador in Jakarta also indicated that all widows of men summarily executed by the KNIL could henceforth receive compensation from the Dutch state without court intervention."

²⁸ Part of his speech: <https://ap.lc/wLF2y>

²⁹ <https://shorturl.at/chks2>

THE THEORY BEHIND THE PATH AND EXCUSES TO RECOVERY/ REPARATIONS

professor dr. Rianne letschert (see introduction) points out that apologies enforced by lawsuits are "too little, too late". As a result, victims do not feel heard. After all, an apology enforced by a lawsuit will not make the victim feel that the apology is sincere.

At the Othering & Belonging Institute³⁰ in the United States, much practical and academic experience in apologetics and reparations has been gained.

"The Othering & Belonging Institute at the University of California, Berkeley advances groundbreaking research, policy, and ideas that examine and remediate the processes of exclusion, marginalization, and structural inequality—what we call othering—in order to build a world based on inclusion, fairness, justice, and care for the earth—what we call belonging."

To provide a framework for apology and reparations, we draw on the work of Professor Dr. Roy L. Brooks. The crux of the argument behind the questions of why, why there was so much brutal violence during colonization and slavery in Asia lies in the statement, "It is because the perpetrators see their victims as subhuman, not as equal to the perpetrator."

Before turning to the framework for apologies and reparations, we first answer the question "Is it appropriate to apologize and make reparations for the colonization and slavery in Asia that took place so long ago? This is not an easy question to answer. Especially because when it comes to Amsterdammers, the question focuses on "Are Amsterdammers (the descendants of the original Amsterdam population) anno 2023 guilty of colonization and slavery in Asia?"

"Since the seventeenth century, Dutch colonists in Asia and the Atlantic have traded people to work on plantations, in mines and in households. These slaves receive no wages and are forced to work. This often led to rebellions and escape attempts. It was not until 1863 that the Netherlands outlawed slavery (Dutch Canon³¹)."

We must turn to epigenetics to answer this question.

"Epigenetics³² is the study of how your behaviors and environment can cause changes that affect the way your genes work. Unlike genetic changes, epigenetic changes are reversible and do not change your DNA sequence, but they can change how your body reads a DNA sequence."

Epigenetics can be used to support the claim that colonization and slavery continue to reverberate long into the lives of the descendants of the Dutch who were responsible for introducing and perpetuating slavery and colonization in Asia. In short, this applies to all descendants of Amsterdammers who were directly or indirectly involved in the colonization and enslavement of Asia and Asians at that time. It is also plausible that this epigenetic effect occurs in the descendants of the Asian victims of that horrific period. In these offspring, this is called mother-to-child and, to a lesser extent, father-to-child intergenerational trauma. The

³⁰ <https://belonging.berkeley.edu/>

³¹ <https://www.canonvannederland.nl/nl/slavernij>

³² <https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-d&q=definition+epigenetics>

effects of slavery and colonization in Asia for Dutch people are addressed in the article: The Dutch Slavery and Colonization DNA: A Call to Engage in Self-Examination (Steinmetz, 2021).

"It is a fact that human conditions and circumstances influence the human DNA that is passed on to posterity. This goes through the mechanism of methylation. This mechanism is used by cells in the human body to put genes in the "off" position. Human conditions and circumstances are abstractly formulated, poverty, hunger, disasters and wars. These are also horrors that accompanied slavery and colonization. The Dutch, as slave traders, plantation owners, occupiers of lands, soldiers, merchants, captains and sailors, and administrators and their staff, have had centuries of experience with practicing atrocities. Because those experiences are translated into the DNA of posterity, it is understandable that Dutch authorities misbehave towards immigrants and refugees. Those institutions are political leaders, governmental institutions, such as the tax authorities and youth welfare, and also companies that do their utmost to avoid taking on immigrants. This behavior is called institutional color and black racism (Steinmetz, 2021)."

International Redress Movement

After this explanation of epigenetics and intergenerational trauma, we return to excuses and reparations and their theoretical underpinnings. The theory behind apologies and reparations is also known as the International Redress Movement. Redress distinguishes two strategies (Brook, 2021), namely criminal and civil. The definition of criminal redress is:

"Retributive justice in the form of state prosecution of crimes under both domestic and international law."

In short, individual perpetrators are convicted and imprisoned. Brook (2021) even says executed. Here we want to distance ourselves from the death penalty with an appeal to universal human rights. Moreover, the definition of civil redress is:

"Civil redress, on the other hand, works for the material benefit of the victims. It is a means of private redress."

In practice, there are two different models of redress each trying in its own way to do justice to the atrocities of colonization and slavery, to the unique culture of the apologizing country, and, most importantly, to the wishes of those affected (the colonized and the descendants of the enslaved). Model 1 is called the Tort model and model 2 is called the Atonement model. Both models are briefly discussed below.

The Tort model looks backward, continues to focus on the victim, and focuses on compensation (sometimes even punishment). The driving force behind this belief is to compensate the victim and/or the victim's family. The responsibility for this lies with the perpetrators (or their descendants). This may include personal physical, psychological, social, and material harm resulting from the perpetrator's intentional misconduct. Brooks (2021) warns that compensatory justice through litigation is not a successful strategy (see Apologies and Reparations for Rawagede, 1947).

In contrast, the Atonement model is forward-looking, perpetrator-centered, and restorative. A driving force behind it is the perpetrator's apology. Apologies lay the foundation for restoring the broken relationship between perpetrators and victims resulting from the atrocities of slavery and colonization. In doing so, the perpetrators show that they want to be morally responsible for what they have done. Unlike the Tort model, the Atonement model uses apology as a prelude to reparation and restoration. This often includes asking for forgiveness. According to Brooks (2021), proponents of the atonement model argue that reparations are the best way to reconcile offenders and victims (no statement is made here about witnesses). The argument is that it is better to strengthen victim communities than to compensate individual victims.

We will not discuss the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in detail here, although Brooks (20-21) devotes a long paragraph to it. Not because the method is not valuable. Surely it is valuable now that this method of reparations can be combined with a citizens' council that could possibly consist of Dutch- and Asian Asians. A Truth and Reconciliation Commission will not be discussed in detail here, because so far, we have not noticed a warm reception of this idea from the city of Amsterdam. But perhaps we have not been listening carefully. Here we make an immediate switch from the reparation's strategy to apologies and then, after these apologies, to reparations.

Apologies and Reparation

Brooks (2021) argues that apologies must be sincere. He goes on to say that there must be a recognition that colonization and slavery were unjust. He also argues that repentance and forgiveness are crucial. According to Brooks (2021), there is a global experience of apologizing. Examples include: "Queen Elizabeth of Great Britain apologizing to the Māori; Australia to stolen Aboriginal children; the Canadian government to Canadian Ukrainians; President Clinton to many groups, including Native Hawaiians and African-American survivors of the Tuskegee, Alabama, syphilis experiment; former South African President F.W. De Klerk to victims of apartheid; and Polish, French, and Czech notables for human injustice during World War II." In addition, about these excuses, Brooks (2021) makes the following moral judgment about apologies:

"These apologies are more complex than "contrition chic" or "the canonization of sentimentality." They are "a matrix of guilt and mourning, atonement and national revival." To that extent, an apology "raises the moral threshold of a society."

Finally, he (Brooks, 2021) refines his moral judgment about apologies after slavery and colonization:

"An apology by itself does not carry enough heft to elevate the level of humanity in the aftermath of an atrocity, in my opinion. Simply saying "I'm sorry" is not enough. Hence, the need for reparations."

Apology and reparations are often presented as Siamese twins. How this plays out depends on the intent of the apology. Here, we will elaborate on the concept of reparation. We do this because the city of Amsterdam wants to chart a route to recovery from Amsterdam colonization and slavery in Asia. And reparations are part of this. It may be useful at this point to reiterate

that the perpetrators are the descendants of the original Dutch and the victims the descendants of the original Asians at the time of colonization and slavery.

Brooks (2021) distinguishes two types of reparations. First, there are reparations aimed at the victim(s) (compensation for the harm done), and second, there are reparations aimed at the community of victims (rehabilitation). Victim-centered reparations have the disadvantage that the harm done cannot be repaired. Examples of reparations aimed at the community of victims are: improving community service, improving the quality of education, reforming institutions, providing scholarships, and establishing museums and moments to keep the suffering alive or remembered. In addition, Brooks (2021) argues that a distinction can be made between whether or not rehabilitation and reparations are money-driven.

"When medical or psychological assistance, job training or placement, special educational programs (e.g., special admissions), and other types of in-kind services, programs, or laws are provided to victims or their descendants on an individual basis, this is non-monetary, victim-directed (compensatory) reparations."

In addition to the International Redress Movement, another perspective on apology and reparation is Transitional Justice. This perspective is outlined by Professor Dr. Nicole Immler (2023). It relies heavily on the experience of history as communicative memory or living memory. Literally, it is about structures and traces that Immler (2023) believes slavery has left in the here and now. In short, in the lands of slave owners and colonizers, in our case the Netherlands and Amsterdam. This can include every day and institutional racism, such as the allowance affair, the DUO algorithms, and Dutch views on refugee reception. Transitional Justice looks for ways to contribute to being an 'equal citizen'. People of color want to be 'equal citizens', equal to the 'original' Dutch population. Immler (2023) says:

"Indeed, reparations can only promote recovery if they center marginalized groups and create equal citizenship. According to legal expert Lisa Laplante, it is essential for a well-run recognition and reparations process to first determine what form of justice is being sought. Is one seeking redress for a specific past harm with a causal link (reparative justice), the restoration of relationships between all involved (restorative justice), or a broader notion of equality in terms of participation and inclusion in society (civic justice) or socio-economic justice (socio-economic justice)?"

Furthermore, Immler (2023) distinguishes between the polarized public debate about "white" versus "black" and extended family discourses that are more about ancestral histories but also about adaptations to the Western world, such as "I speak a different language at home than at work or school. Many explicit and implicit rules have been formulated in Dutch society about how the extended family should behave. Language also plays a role. Structurally, for example, people in the Netherlands talk about parents when they talk about raising children, and not about grandmother, big sister, and aunt, who also contribute to raising children in the family. This distinction is necessary because translating the public and private debate into "equal citizenship" is likely to lead to different reparations in practice.

Finally, public debate often focuses on reparations, partly from the perspective of "victim-offender" and "shield and blame" frameworks. Within extended families and related communities, however, the focus is often on justice and social reparations. Immler (2023) further elaborates on "Transitional Justice:

"In this search for recognition, attention must be paid to questions of power: who determines what constitutes recognition and restoration?"

Questions of recognition are deeply intertwined with questions of power, and there is a high risk that they will confirm rather than change existing power hierarchies. The danger is that a policy of recognition may (consciously or unconsciously) reproduce a racial discourse, hierarchical relations or positions of superiority and inferiority. It is important that those for whom the policies are intended are those who determine the process and determine the content."

PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

This article can be read as a basis for advice to the Netherlands and its municipalities (especially the municipality of Amsterdam) on a path to reparations for the Asian residents of Amsterdam, the major Dutch cities, such as The Hague, Rotterdam, Utrecht and Arnhem, the Netherlands and Asians in Asia. The road that follows this advice is winding, congested, and can get stuck in the mud. First, because the mission does not specify the purpose, the desired results, and the process. Possible goals include repairing the damage (Still experienced by the descendants of colonization and slavery), creating equal citizenship (Asians feel like second-class citizens), creating a common future (Children and great-grandchildren should be able to build a future together.), etc. The process involves balance (acting together to realize the path to reparation) between Dutch Asians and Asian Asians. The results will have to seek an answer to the question: 'Does the Path of Reparation have a positive impact on the next generations of young people?'

Now that King Willem-Alexander of Orange has apologized and even asked for forgiveness for the centuries of Dutch colonization and slavery carried out through the transatlantic triangle, the time has come to take substantial steps to initiate this process for Asian colonization and slavery.

A second possible complication is the question of power. In short, who decides what the path to reparations should look like? Are all stakeholders involved? The stakeholders are the Amsterdam and Dutch Asians who migrated from Asia to the Netherlands/Amsterdam, voluntarily or involuntarily - including those who made a stopover in the Caribbean -, the original Dutch-Amsterdam population, and the Asians (descendants of formerly colonized and enslaved people). A secondary question about engagement is: what does this process of "together" determining the path to reparation look like? After all, each of these groups uses very different methods of decision-making, from full consensus to majority voting, from sharing narratives to simply meeting.

A third issue to be considered in the reparations process is the consequences of colonization and slavery. In the Netherlands, the focus is on the horrors of this period of colonization and slavery. In Indonesia, the focus is on resistance and revolution. For indentured servants from

India, Java and China, the focus is on Dutch deception. These different perspectives should guide the forms of apology and reparation.

Fourth, there are the conflicts among the Dutch people, the essence of which is, "you are not entitled to apologies and reparations.". Examples of such conflicts are the conflict between Afro-Surinamese and Surinamese-Hindustani. The latter group, according to some Afro-Surinamese, wants to ride on the apologies and reparations for slavery. Even worse is the conflict between the Asians who were loyal to the Dutch and fought with them against the indigenous people, and the Amsterdam Asians who were not. The former group is more often portrayed as "murderers."

Finally, as a psychologist, I would like to point out that the socio-psychological and clinical consequences of colonization and slavery are immense. This is evident in the here and now as descendants try to reconstruct their family histories. Extended families are often broken into untraceable pieces. The pain of colonization and slavery is still felt today. Land, property and the skills to farm that land were destroyed. Today, property rights prevail, which was not the case then. The land belonged to everyone.

A Possible Path to Recovery

In short, depending on the goals previously agreed upon between the Asians of Amsterdam and the Asians now living in Asia (preferably distant relatives), a path and process must be established to achieve reparation. Once again, it should be noted that the past cannot be undone. What is possible at the end of the recovery tunnel is forgiveness and reconciliation and building a common future with respect for everyone's identity.

Finally, we would like to offer guidelines for apologies and reparations. The scientific literature on apologies is not clear. The main findings are that apologies must be sincere and show that the "perpetrators" are taking responsibility for the devastation that colonization and slavery have caused in the past to other people's territories, lands, and peoples. It is also true that these apologies should not be half-hearted. Those of King Willem-Alexander of Orange are a good example of how apologies should be made. Those of outgoing Prime Minister Mark Rutte are often described as half-hearted. Finally, apologies should be clear about who the apology is intended for and how it relates to the lived reality of those populations.

In addition, we can say the following about recovery, keeping in mind that goals should be SMART. Reparation can involve several options. We will go through them point by point below. Number one is individual reparation. This is known to reach only a small group of people. It may be useful for small groups of people whose loved one was intentionally executed. Number two is collective reparations. These are for entire communities and tend to focus on improving education and health care. This reaches a large group of descendants of the victims. In the United States, (civil) lawsuits are often used to achieve this goal. This has been done in the United States with the pharmaceutical industry, American test psychologists and the state.

It will also be necessary to consider reparations as a prelude to building a (common) future together, an Asian and Dutch/Amsterdam one. This can be done through commemorations, working together to create a new narrative, exhibitions that highlight the different sides of slavery and colonization. Furthermore, from behind the desks, it is thought that education is

the means to work on a common future for our youth, Asian and Amsterdam. My suggestion is to invest this with the youth from Asia and the Netherlands themselves. This could possibly be done through a citizens' council, where a concretely formulated question could serve as a prelude to remedial measures intended for young people. This is an operation for and by young people.

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