

Dieter Bartels. 1989. *Moluccans in Exile: A Struggle For Ethnic Survival* (Socialization, Identity Formation, and Emancipation among an East-Indonesian Minority in the Netherlands). Publication Number 32. Leiden: Center for the Study of Social Conflicts and Moluccan Advisory Council.

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In order to gain a deeper understanding of the needs and changing nature of the Moluccan community in the Netherlands, the Dutch Ministry of Social Welfare, Public Health and Culture funded a research project between 1983 and 1987. These were the very years when the Netherlands government began to take more positive steps toward integrating this exile-community in Dutch life, and also a time when the dream of an independent Republic of the South Moluccas (RMS) to which the exiles might return had faded. This book is the final report on that project.

The project was conducted by the Center for the Study of Social Conflicts of the University of Leiden with the approval and support of the Moluccan Advisory Council. Four locations where Moluccans had congregated were chosen for a detailed analysis of their political ideology, lifestyle, and relative emancipation. Field visits were made to about a dozen other sites. Dr. Dieter Bartels, not a Hollander but an American-trained anthropologist with expertise in Moluccan culture, headed the research team composed of two Moluccans and a Hollander.

The nature of the accumulated data forms the structure of their report: it combines "age grades" as used by Moluccans resident in Holland, and "generational visions" within the Moluccan community. The "age grades" are: (1) Children (*nak-Anak*), (2) Youth (*Pemuda-Pemuda*), (3) Middle Age (*Bung/Usi*), and (4) Elders (*Orang-Orang Tua*).

Moluccans as a group first arrived in Holland in 1951, as ideological emigres following Indonesia's national independence from Dutch colonial rule. Moluccans (Ambonese) had been a loyal element in the Netherlands Indies Army (KNIL) and had resisted inclusion in the Indonesian State. Arriving in the Netherlands they had been discharged and placed in camps in remote areas where the dissipating dream of an independent republic (RMS) kept them unintegrated and increasingly bitter. During the 1960s and 70s this malaise led to acts of violence. Finally in the 1980s the Dutch government began to pursue a policy that it hoped would bridge the disillusionment of a failed dream and the hope of maintaining an ethnic identity.

In this study the Moluccans in the Netherlands fall into four "generational visions," which roughly correspond to the "age grades" and, therefore, fit neatly to the Moluccan classification scheme. The First Generation (Elders), born before 1931 in Indonesia, came to Holland as adults; they were either former KNIL soldiers or teachers, officials, seamen, and so forth. The Second Generation (Middle

Age), born between 1931 and 1950, came to the Netherlands as small children, who, in the case of KNIL children, were raised in the camps and educated in special Moluccan schools. The Third Generation (Youth), born in Holland between 1951 and 1965, were children of the first two generations. They may have started life in the camps but many were moved to Moluccan wards as a first step toward releasing Moluccans from the isolated camp existence. The Fourth Generation (Children) were those born after 1966. A few of these were born in camps, others in wards, but many of the younger ones were born and raised outside the wards in mixed neighborhoods where they became totally integrated into Dutch life. Each of these generational groups also shows different language skills—the first using mainly Ambonese Malay; the second bilingual but more at ease in Malay; the third more conversant in Dutch, but using a "Dutch Malay" creole amongst themselves; and the fourth speaking excellent Dutch as often their only language.

The book (or report) contains a great deal of description and analysis of Moluccan family life and interpersonal relations, but from the above information about age groups and generations one can see that the Moluccan community is slowly being integrated into Dutch life. Will it be able to retain an ethnic identity? That is difficult to say. Certainly some will retain it longer than others, but the trend is toward a weakening of this identity.

Especially interesting and well recounted is the experience of a group of Moluccans of diverse generations from Holland who went to Maluku to visit their ancestral villages and meet their relatives. The individual and generational reactions to the experience varied, but none of the participants chose to remain in Maluku. Though their homeland aroused strong emotions of kinship and human closeness, these sentiments soon faded in the face of poverty and lack of sophistication. The impossibility of "going home again," which was experienced by educated Indonesians some three-quarters of a century ago, was keenly felt by these Moluccans from Holland.

This book is a treasure trove of information about Moluccan society and about the pangs and frustrations of a group of exiles from that society. Their story is clearly told through descriptions and analyses of generational change. Not wanting to adapt to Dutch culture, they were forced by circumstances to make adjustments and now find themselves unable to step backward in time. Dr. Bartels and his research team have told a splendid story of acculturation in an adopted land.