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Claire Harris
Western Washington University

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Postcolonial Citizenship and Identity in the Netherlands and France

CLAIRE HARRIS

Introduction

The 20th century saw a great deal of political upheaval, specifically in Europe. The two world wars rocked Europe and initiated the beginnings of moves for independence in many of Europe's colonies. This process of decolonization greatly shifted global politics, and has had lasting impacts on what identity and citizenship mean in this postcolonial context. This paper looks at how the Netherlands and France defined citizenship in the context of decolonization and how those policies regarding citizenship have impacted the postcolonial identities of the formerly colonized in the metropolises.

To begin, I look at a theoretical model of citizenship that differentiates between formal citizenship (the legal status of being a citizen) and substantive citizenship (the performative acts that people engage in to establish their status as citizen). I then explore the colonial system in the Dutch East Indies, specifically looking at the various racial constructions within the colony. Policies during decolonization were heavily racialized, often conflicting with the lines of racial construction within the colony. Once having migrated from the former colony to the metropole, many of these migrants were subject to racialized policies of assimilation, urging them to remain silent about their colonial experiences. Subsequent generations in the Netherlands have challenged this culture, and have fully established and reclaimed their postcolonial identity as Indos. I then look at the colonial system in France and the various stages of citizenship policies regarding their colonies, specifically Algeria. France saw higher levels of migration between the colony and the metropole, but that in no way improved the dominant racial discourse at the time. When migration began to become more permanent, similar assimilation tactics were set forth. There was also a shift to attempt to limit migration from the colony to the metropole. Similar to the experience in the Netherlands, subsequent generations of migrants have resisted the silence and have become highly politically active. Ultimately, colonial constructions of race which shaped citizenship policies during decolonization have created distinct postcolonial identities that have lasted for generations.

Citizenship

The concept of citizenship has been theorized for centuries, since the beginning of the Greek republic in Athens. It has been defined in varying ways over this time, as “a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community,” “an obligation and a calling to participate and actively engage in one’s community,” “the ability to participate in collective decision making and thus fulfill one’s role as an active constituent of popular sovereignty,” or “a set of institutionally embedded social practices” (Reiter, 2013, pp. 24-25). For the purposes of this paper, however, it is important to distinguish between substantive and formal citizenship. Formal citizenship is, of course, the formal legal definition of people, and whether or not they obtain the proper legal documents to state that they are a citizen of a certain polity. This status grants and is associated with certain privileges. Substantive citizenship is, however, far more involved and contested. Reiter argues that “substantive citizenship has two important dimensions—namely, substantive citizenship as a social role, and substantive citizenship as a relational asset” (2013, p. 26). The relationship between formal and substantive citizenship can be summed up in the following way. Formal citizenship is a required but not sufficient condition for substantive citizenship.

Citizenship is associated with a certain role that one plays in society, namely “the role of being a citizen invested with certain rights and duties, and protected by the state that makes and enforces the rules and laws that define citizenship” (Reiter, 2013). These duties can be thought of as public duties such as voting, civic participation, jury duty, and military service in some nation-states. But the social role of citizenship goes beyond the surface level requirements of the state. As a social role, citizenship needs to be “learned, accepted, and validated by others” (Reiter, 2013, p. 32). Thus, one is not only subjected to the state as a place in which their citizenship takes place and is validated, but they are also subject to their peers, citizens or otherwise, and their judgement of what a citizen looks and acts like. Thus, the role of a citizen can vary widely from country to country, depending on the different ways that citizens are socialized to understand the meaning of citizenship. In fact, “Holston argues that ‘The quality of ... mundane interaction may in fact be more significant to people’s sense of themselves in society than the

occasional heroic experience of citizenship like soldiering and demonstrating or the emblematic ones like voting and jury duty. Everyday citizenship entails performances that turn people, however else related, into fellow citizens related by measure specific to citizenship” (Reiter, 2013, p. 33). Substantive citizenship in fact takes place in our everyday lives through the various ways that we have been socialized to perform our status as citizens. While this requires a recognition of individual autonomy and possession of certain rights, those requirements are not sufficient for the full performance of citizenship.

Reiter also explores citizenship as a relational good, that is, a good subject to the forces of the free market. “Substantive citizenship is a contested status, and for it to translate into reality, it needs to be defended, upheld, substantiated, and negotiated vis-à-vis the state and other individuals and groups who share the same formal status” (Reiter, 2013, p. 27). It’s position as a contested status causes it to behave as if it were a positional good, that is, a good that only delivers the sought after benefit so long as not everyone possesses it. Citizenship status does not derive its value from absolute gains but rather from relative position to others. Thus, as more and more people acquire the status of citizen, the value of that status decreases (Reiter, 2013). This allows us to understand why citizenship policies are so often competitive and discriminatory. Thus, it becomes clear that the privileged who determine the rules to become a citizen have never perceived equal rights as inalienable rights¹ for all, but rather as a privilege reserved only for themselves, to be granted to others at their own will. “Equal rights [in citizenship] threaten to undermine the whole patron-client system that allows the privileged not only to perpetuate their own advantage, but to transform the underprivileged into their servants and clients” (Reiter, 2013, p. 28). Looking at citizenship in this way, we can see that “citizenship went hand in hand with exclusion

¹ I argue that inalienable rights, rights that do not depend on government or custom, do not in fact exist as those rights are socially constructed and are therefore essentially dependent on both government and custom. However, this paper will distinguish between citizen rights and inalienable rights as those rights that come with being a citizen of a political entity, and those that are not dependent on citizenship status.

from its very conception in democratic Athens” (Reiter, 2013, p. 34). This concept of citizenship is crucial in understanding citizenship policies during decolonization.

A major and perhaps primary way in which citizenship has served to exclude others is through racism, which conditions and constrains the effectiveness of citizenship for racialized subjects (Reiter, 2013). Racism, especially in societies structured by European colonialism, created whiteness as a norm and created a racialized “Other.” Whiteness served as a form of social capital that came with the privileges associated with citizenship. This paper will explore the ways in which formal and substantive citizenship has been problematized for descendants of the colonized in postcolonial Europe along racial lines and how that problematized citizenship has formed distinct postcolonial identities in both the Netherlands and France.

The Netherlands

Dutch Colonial Rule in the East Indies

Dutch colonial rule began in the 17th century with the creation of the United East India Company (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie), otherwise known as the VOC. The VOC, which was funded by the Dutch government, was the primary colonizing force in the East Indies, today’s Indonesia. Colonial rule in the Indies was characterized by fairly high numbers of settlers in the colony, as well as a trading scheme between the colony and the metropole for spices and other goods. In 1830, the Dutch instituted the Cultivation System, under which the Dutch decided which crops would be grown by the natives, and how much they required the natives to surrender to the Dutch in order to export and serve as a source of profit for the Dutch government. This era came to an end when Dutch liberals came into parliament and instituted private capitalism in the Indies. Under this system, the Dutch colonial state acted more as an intermediary between western companies and the rural Javanese people (Colonial Period of Indonesia, n.d.). While the Dutch were perhaps more liberal with their economic policies, they used this opportunity,

along with pressure from competing colonial powers, to expand geographically into the rest of the East Indies islands. This liberal period was also accompanied by the Ethical Policy, set forth by Queen Wilhelmina in order to raise living standards on the islands. It worked by privatizing industries and improving education. This period was accompanied by growing numbers of European settlers in the colonies.

The Dutch colonial legal system was plural in nature; it subjected different groups residing in the colonies to different legal codes. “Not only were ‘Europeans’ subject to ‘European’ law and ‘Natives’ to *adat* (customary law), but they were also prosecuted in different courts, and subject to different penitentiary conditions, tax laws, voting rights, and militia conscription” (Luttikhuis, 2013, p. 541). Though this was in part, unwritten legal practice in the early days of colonialism, it was codified into the constitution under article 109RR in 1854. This article distinguished between ‘Europeans,’ ‘Natives,’ and ‘Foreign Orientals.’ These distinctions first of all determined who was subject to which laws. Not only did this create divisions in the legal system, but it also manifested in sharp divisions in civil society as well. This legal separation created a sort of second-class citizen in the colony. Whereas, Europeans had a right to education, higher pay-scales, and pension rights, the natives had no such privileges. Finally, “having European legal status made one a viable marriage partner for other legal Europeans, because the (wife’s) risk of losing European status was averted” (Luttikhuis, 2013, pp. 541-542).

Characteristic of Dutch colonial rule in Indonesia was the formalized, racialized, categorization of those residing in the colony. The population in the Indies was divided into three hierarchical categories: Europeans (Dutch), Foreign Orientals, and *Inlanders* (natives). The so-called Europeans referred to whites, even those not born in Europe. “North Americans and Indo-Europeans were part of the European category, as well as—surprisingly! —Japanese persons” (Captain, 2014, p. 56). As a result of a treaty between Japan and the Netherlands, Japanese people living in Indonesia were considered Europeans until 1896. Because European women were not initially part of the colonizing move in Indonesia, interracial marriages were common, especially among the lower classes. Thus, a policy was devised in order to

categorize those children of mixed descent, known as Indo-Europeans. Mixed children were considered Dutch if they were acknowledged by their parents as their own and *Inlander* if they were not (Captain, 2014). These differences, though seemingly harmless, had juridical implications that would be problematized in the process of decolonization. Namely, Europeans were given the status of Dutch citizen while the natives were given the status of Dutch subject. While Indo Europeans were legally either native or European, they occupied a very specific social space in between these two categories, as neither European or native or both European and native. These juridical categorizations manifested in various ways throughout the colonial period, but this paper will largely focus on the implications of those categorizations during decolonization and afterwards.

While the legal code was clear on which laws applied to which racial groups, it was less clear on the definition of those racial groups themselves. The process of acculturation was distinct in the East Indies. “In so far as there is any substantial orthodoxy, it is that the acculturation of Java’s Dutch communities had become very marked by the late seventeenth century and remained so for the next two hundred years. These communities took on not just the skin pigmentation of the Asian neighbours, but also many of their social practices and cultural assumptions” (Knight, 2001). In the early days of the colony, this was partially due to the sheer distance from the Netherlands that led to cultural and physical isolation from their European heritage. This, combined with the ‘irregular’ relationships between European men and native women, in tandem with the cultural place of the *nyai*², inspired the notions of the mestizo character of Dutch colonial society. This mestizo character did not mean that the Dutch settlers were any less racist than their metropolitan counterparts. Rather, the racial lines were drawn differently and were perhaps more volatile than those in other European colonies. The evidence of this

² Native housekeeper and concubine popular in the early days of colonization

volatility of racial grouping and its implications became increasingly apparent during the process of decolonization.

Decolonization, Migration, and Citizenship

During the process of decolonization, “approximately 315,000 (former) Dutch nationals settled in the Netherlands between 1946 and 1968” (Jones, 2014). The first wave of migration was dominated by the *totoks* (White Dutch) during the brutal colonial war in Indonesia. After 1949, the migrants spanned a much broader group of people, including *totoks*, Indo-Europeans, and some of the Foreign Orientals who lived in Indonesia. The Netherlands, recovering from the devastation of the Second World War, did not become an eager fatherland for those seeking to migrate to the Netherlands. In the early years of migration, there was no real policy in regard to those returning from the colony. But after 1950, when larger groups of more diverse migrants made the journey with increasingly fewer contacts and resources in the Netherlands, government policy effectively changed in order to accommodate these newcomers (Amersfoort & van Niekerk, 2006).

But the repatriation and citizenship policies regarding those from Indonesia were problematized for any immigrants who were not white Dutch. Dutch policies regarding migration and citizenship were especially problematized for the Indo-Europeans. After having previously been constructed as Dutch citizens, during the process of decolonization, these Indo-Europeans were now encouraged to opt for Indonesian citizenship as they were seen as ‘rooted in the Indies’ and would not be able to adjust to life in the Netherlands. So while these Indo-Europeans had been constructed as European in the colony (if they were acknowledged by their father), their status as European was now taken away from them during the decolonization process. In order to facilitate the process of decolonization, the Dutch government offered loans for repatriates to fund their migration back to the Netherlands. These loans are revealed to be highly racialized, as they were granted to white Dutch but were denied to Indo-Europeans, regardless of where the applicant had been born. Even though most of these white Europeans were often born in the Indies, it was the Indo-Europeans who were constructed as “‘oriented towards Indonesia,’ and incapable of

assimilation in the Netherlands” (Captain, 2014, p. 57). While the Dutch government was providing boarding houses for immigrants, they simultaneously used the housing shortage as a justification for limiting migration from Indonesia, specifically that of the Moluccans³ and Indo-Europeans.

The case of the Indo-Europeans is an especially interesting one, as they were, during the era of colonialism, seen as full Dutch citizens (given they were legally acknowledged by their Dutch fathers). However, during the period of decolonization, their position as citizens was problematized, both in the formal and substantive sense. While Dutch nationals who were born in the East Indies or had lived there for over six months had the choice to opt for Indonesian citizenship, that choice was instead constructed as a duty by the Dutch government. “Secretary Peters stated in 1951, in reaction to members of the House, that it was ‘in the best interest of the Indonesia-oriented Eurasian Dutch to accept Indonesian nationality,’ while representing the reluctance of Eurasians to opt for Indonesian nationality as their own lack of judgment on their ‘true’ national identity” (Jones, 2014, p. 324). In fact, because of the racial constructions created under the plural legal system in the colony, Indo-Europeans were seen by the native population as a member of the colonizing force in the East Indies, and thus were not viewed as a part of the Indonesian nation. So the Indo-Europeans were constructed by the Dutch government to being outsiders of the Netherlands and were constructed by the natives as outsiders in the colony. They were encouraged to give up their Dutch nationality and Dutch citizenship and instead opt for Indonesian citizenship, even though this was a risky decision as they were not fully accepted by the Indonesians either. This same appeal was not made towards white Dutch repatriating to the Netherlands after the colonial war in Indonesia. These essentialist claims about Indo-Europeans effectively served to alienate

³ The Moluccans were an ethnic group that had very close ties with the Dutch in the Indies, serving as important allies with the Dutch in the colonial war against the Indonesian nationalists. Their migration to the Netherlands was initially viewed as a temporary migration, after which they would be granted their own sovereign state. After years of the Dutch government either ignoring the Moluccan’s situation or urging them to return to Indonesia, the Dutch government finally granted “social Dutch citizenship” to the Moluccans (Jones, 2014).

certain Dutch citizens along racial lines, which had been changed suddenly during the decolonization process.

Moreover, the identity ascribed to the Indo-Europeans was not consistent with their own self-ascribed identities. After years of being socially and legally constructed as full Dutch citizens, the sudden shift “reveals that the guarantees offered by citizenship are relative, situated, and reversible” (Jones, 2014, p. 319). Thus, three main concerns of those residing in the East Indies came into question. Namely, that “Dutch citizens in and from the overseas territories do not lose their Dutch nationality against their will...that their citizenship status guarantees the right to migrate to and reside in the Netherlands...and that, once settled in the Netherlands, they and their offspring are considered as real, competent, and permanent members of Dutch society” (Jones, 2014, p. 319). For Indo-Europeans, these guarantees of citizenship were problematized during decolonization. Something that seemed so static, and seemed to guarantee certain rights, was instead revealed to the Indo-Europeans as something quite fluid, that could be reversed at any time and did not necessarily extend the set of rights that it was thought to guarantee. Instead, status of citizen, along with the privileges associated with that status, namely to reside in the country of which one is a citizen, was questioned and was denied for many Indo-Europeans during the process of decolonization. Meanwhile, the *totoks*' rights to reside in the Netherlands were never questioned.

After a further deterioration of relations between Indonesia and the Netherlands, specifically regarding New Guinea⁴, the Dutch government abandoned its discouragement policy. Rather than continuing to discourage Indo-Europeans from repatriating to the Netherlands, the Dutch government instead focused on a strategy of assimilating the repatriates to Dutch culture. After the Dutch government came to terms with the fact that they had to accommodate this influx of migrants, they put forth an

⁴ New Guinea was disputed territory between the Netherlands and Indonesia until 1961, when Papua New Guinea declared independence from the two nations.

aggressive assimilation policy in order to integrate the newcomers as quickly and as effectively as possible. In the pillarized⁵ system that characterized the Netherlands during this time, the assimilation policy was implemented through the cooperation of the Dutch government and social organizations. These social organizations, largely religiously affiliated, “gave the integration policy a moral overtone: it was a duty to help one’s fellow citizens in dire straits” (Amersfoort & van Niekerk, 2006, p. 326). The Dutch government set up boarding houses as well as educational programs designed to integrate the first wave of Indo-Europeans into Dutch society. These boarding houses were contracted by the government through private companies and would be paid for by the immigrants once they were settled according to their financial need. At the very least, this first wave of immigrants were assured housing and food in their first years in the Netherlands. In addition to this, the Dutch government put forth a policy to reserve 5% of any new housing developments for repatriates from Indonesia (Amersfoort & van Niekerk, 2006). These education programs were centered within the household, teaching Indo-European women to cook with potatoes instead of rice, and to keep a ‘tidy, Dutch household.’ So not only were these assimilation policies racialized in that they solely focused on Indo-Europeans, but they were also significantly gendered in that the site of discipline was in the home.

Identity Formation

The discourse and policies regarding the migration of Indo-Europeans and other migrants from Indonesia has continued to inform Indo-European and Moluccan identity to this day. After the brief period in which the Dutch government constructed Indo-Europeans as fundamentally different from

⁵ Pillarization refers to the vertical separating of a society. In the Netherlands, pillars were based off of religions or various ideologies. Each pillar had its own broadcasting network, newspapers, and political parties. The pillars in the Netherlands were the Protestant, Catholic, Socialist, and Liberal pillars. The Netherlands underwent depillarization in the 1970’s, though remnants of this system are visible today.

European Dutch, the Dutch government drastically shifted their approach to one of forced assimilation. These efforts had a major impact on the identity formations of Indo-Europeans for generations to come.

The public narrative of the Indo-Dutch is one of ‘model migrants.’ They are considered to be very well integrated and assimilated according to the dominant public narrative. But this public narrative also holds up in the life-stories of many Indo-Dutch. But, in “this Indo-Dutch version speaks...of self-estrangement and self-effacement, while the public version speaks of otherness” (Pattynama, 2000, p. 286). Both versions are rooted in a cultural binary, in which white Dutch culture is at one end, and Indonesian culture is at the other. Pattynama instead explores the Indo-Dutch identity as a sort of masquerade in reference to the ‘mask of femininity’ in which women employ a feminine mask to compensate for taking up a masculine space (i.e. positions of authority). Thus, Indo-Dutch employ a mask as a strategy to navigate and renegotiate their place within the Netherlands. After decolonization, Indo-Dutch “discovered that they were no longer ‘almost white’ but a problem for a nation recovering from a war, and an unwelcome reminder of a colonial past the Dutch were eager to forget” (Pattynama, 2000, p. 291). The assimilation process that took place after decolonization worked largely to wash out the Indo-Dutch, to promote the Indo Dutch “from colonial ‘almost whites’ to silences ‘just like whites’, to end up as ‘white look-a-likeys’” (Pattynama, 2000, p. 292). This process will be explored in the discussion of the different generations of Indo-Dutch in the Netherlands.

After the rigorous attempts by the Dutch government to fully assimilate Indo-Europeans, the first generation of Indo-Europeans is characterized by silence and assimilation. “This concept of assimilation does not imply complete ‘sameness’...It does, however, imply that the newcomers are seen and see themselves first and foremost as members of the indigenous [Dutch] society” (Pattynama, 2000). With few connections in the Netherlands, the first generation of Indo-Europeans had no choice but to follow the Dutch policy of integration. They spoke about their experiences moving to the Netherlands in very vague terms, downplaying their own colonial history and instead focusing on their Dutch identity (Harris, 2016). This silence played out not only in language, but in customs as well. Several second generation

interviewees, when asked about their parents' silence, recounted experiences specifically with food, and that their parents would solely cook potatoes and not rice. A direct effect of the 'civilizing efforts' of the Dutch government, Indonesian customs and food became taboo, resulting in a silent generation of Indo-Europeans in the Netherlands.

But this characteristic is not all encompassing. The first generation of Indo-Europeans also saw several outspoken individuals that really advocated for an Indo-European identity within the Netherlands. Tjalie Robinson, a first generation Indo-European man, started several magazines targeted specifically at the Indo-European experience and an annual festival to celebrate their inheritance. "Robinson presents himself as a conscious Indo-European person, holder of a Dutch passport, whose resistance and rebellion are legitimate elements of good citizenship" (Captain, 2014, p. 63). Robinson made countless contributions to the creation of an Indo-European identity in the Netherlands. His magazine had over 10,000 subscribers in its heyday (Amersfoort & van Niekerk, 2006). He criticized other first-generation Indo-Europeans for being silent about their experiences and solely focusing on their Dutch ancestry rather than their Indonesian ancestry as well. But Robinson was certainly the exception and not the norm of the first generation of Indo-European migrants to the Netherlands.

The second generation was also critical of the first generation for their silence and assimilation. They "expressed their critique of the first generation Indo-Europeans, arguing that they had not prepared the younger generation to protect themselves against racism and likewise that they had not taught them to develop solidarity with other racial groups in the Netherlands" (Captain, 2014, p. 65). The second generation, contrary to their parents, was highly politicized, working with other racial groups in the Netherlands to secure a better position for themselves and to work to end racism in the Netherlands. Perhaps because they had seen what the assimilation had looked like for their parents, the second generation took a firm stance against that assimilation and attempted to define their identity in a new way, acknowledging their Dutch and Indonesian ancestry. This new politicization took form in creating community through activist groups in the Netherlands among other Indo-Europeans.

The politicization of the second generation Indo-Europeans not only resulted in a racial movement of Indo-Europeans, but it was also characterized by a sort of coalition politics among Indos and other marginalized racial groups in the Netherlands. Rather than erasing their own cultural identity, this generation found solidarity with the Moluccans, and with other post-colonial migrants and their socio-political situation in the metropole. Rather than the politics of difference that characterized the first generation, the second generation focused on a politics of solidarity (Harris, 2016).

But these groups were not solely focused on creating a politic. Groups were also formed in an attempt to find a common identity among Indo people. “Indo-European young men and women from the second generation were not able to articulate their specificity, as they hardly knew about the lives of their parents and grandparents in the Dutch East Indies and Indonesia” (Captain, 2014, p. 65). Thus, these political groups not only provided a means of politically engaging in activism, they also provided a space for Indo-European men and women to explore their cultural identities and what it means to be a post-colonial citizen in the Netherlands. The second generation was confronted with a dual identity, the one that their parents gave them, a complete rejection of their Indonesian heritage, and the one that Dutch society assigned them, as ‘other.’ (Harris, 2016). The duality of their identity spurred the need for community with other Indo-Europeans, and helped to create a specific political and social identity among second generation Indos.

Contrary to the second generation, third generation Indos can be seen as both depoliticized and commercialized. They have been described as “trendsetters in terms of fashion hairdo, music, and clubbing” (Captain, 2014, p. 58). Rather than a political identity, third generation Indo-Europeans have coopted the term ‘Indo,’ and have turned it into a social rather than a political identity, contrary to their parents. Many groups on social media are centered around the Indo identity, such as “Hoezo Indo” and “Indos Be Like.” These groups are highly commercialized (selling Indo merchandise) and feature a lot of memes about Indonesian food. Some third generation Indos have also taken a cultural interest in their own identity as Dutch rooted in the Indies, creating photo and interview projects exploring that identity.

Perhaps because of their distance from both the colonial war and the violence of the state regarding citizenship and assimilation, the third generation is markedly depoliticized and far more focused on cultural and social aspects of their identity.

The variety of identity formations among the different generations of Indo-European people speaks to the shifting government policies regarding citizenship in the Netherlands. The first generation, due to their precarious citizenship status, felt the pressure to assimilate and integrate as much as possible so as to prove their right to reside in the Netherlands. The second generation, after being confronted with a dual identity with a lack of specificity, resisted this ambiguity by creating political groups in coalition with other marginalized racial groups in the Netherlands, not only to fight racism, but also to further explore the specificities of their own identity. A further shift occurred in the third generation, in which Indos and Indo culture are instead seen as trendy and fashionable, with a marked lack of politicization. These identity and community formations are directly linked to shifts in Dutch government policy, and continue to shape racial relations in the Netherlands today. Ultimately, the Indo-Dutch existence undermines the established cultural binary of “we” and “they” as Indo-Dutch use the mask as a way to navigate their existence in Holland.

Algeria

Algeria's Colonial System

The French colonial system in Algeria was quite different than the Dutch system in Indonesia. While both were established as settler colonies, Algeria's relationship to France was much closer both politically and geographically. Rather than being a territory of France, Algeria was politically part of France. A greater number of French civilian settlers made their home in Algeria, and migration between the two was common for both the French and the Algerians. This can of course be partly explained by the

mere proximity of the colony to the metropole, but the political relationship between the two must also be acknowledged.

Algeria, similar to the Dutch Indies, began and continued to be a very important economic resource for the French. It was abundant in natural resources for industries such as mining and fishing. In order to take full advantage of these resources, part of the French colonizing mission was a massive restructuring of land arrangements in order to give the most profitable land and resources to European Frenchmen. This was commonly known as a 'depeasantification' process, "in which farmers became sharecroppers working on others land, or forced to become part of the uprooted rural proletariat, subproletariat, or part of the unemployed" (Loyal, 2009, p. 412). Not only was this policy formed in order to give the most profitable land to Europeans at the expense of native Algerians, but it was also coupled with the 'regroupment' policy of forced resettlement. The regroupment policy served two main functions: that of maintaining military control over the colony and pacifying the Algerians by destroying communities on an organizational and spatial basis and that of 'civilizing' and integrating Algerians into the French colonial rule (Loyal, 2009).

In addition to the coerced migration of Algerians within the colony, there was the forced naturalization of Algerians as well as other Europeans living in the colony. Though a naturalization path had been open since the late 1840's, mass naturalization laws didn't begin until 1870 when the Crémieux decree naturalized all Algerian Jews. This decree was a part of the effort organized by coreligionists in France to "help pull Algerian Jews out of their situation of 'ignorance and poverty' and to reform their schools and religious practices" (Smith, 2006, p. 104). Ultimately this was an attempt by the colonizers to further assimilate Algerian Jews to their French counterparts through force under the guise of the benefits of French citizenship. Because of the racial makeup of the colony during this time, with heavy numbers of non-French European settlers, allowing Algerian Jews to vote triggered an electoral crisis in which "the Jewish vote subsequently became a swing vote in certain regions" (Smith, 2006, p. 105). The act, in addition to other causes, thus triggered a swell of anti-Semitic actions in the colony.

Mass naturalization was extended to non-French European settlers in 1889. “This law automatically naturalized all foreign children of a foreign father who himself was born on French soil, and, as long as they did not refuse French nationality in the year following their majority, children born in Algeria or France to a foreign-born father, if they were still residing in France” (Smith, 2006, p. 105). France, in this sense, included the Algerian territories. These mass naturalization efforts were in part responding to growing numbers of non-French Europeans residing in Algeria and the growing fear that these settlers would create a ‘nation within the nation.’ “French citizenship was viewed as the first step in turning them into loyal French men and women, and patriotic defenders of a French Algeria” (Smith, 2006, p. 106). The naturalization acts therefore began a longer process of assimilating efforts that would be carried on by the schools, the military, and the political and legal systems in place.

It should also be noted who was excluded from these naturalization laws. No such effort was made to naturalize Muslims living in Algeria. In 1865, Napoleon II introduced a law that established a mechanism for naturalization of Muslims, but which required Muslims to “abandon their *statut personnel*, which meant forsaking their rights and obligations under Koranic law and thus practices integral to their religious practice and to their identity as Muslims” (Smith, 2006, p. 107). This requirement established that Islam was not a part of the French identity or culture, and in order to be considered ‘French,’ one must give up the Muslim faith. In Algeria, this was seen as a form of social suicide and thus very few Muslims pursued this route to become naturalized French citizens.

French colonial policy did not stop there at attempting to assimilate Algerian Muslims, but further attempts at assimilation were fraught with contradictions. While metropolitan politicians were adamant about reforms that would improve living conditions of the Algerians, each reform failed due to the opposition of Algerian settlers and their representatives in France. These settlers knew that political assimilation, especially when coupled with voting rights, was a direct threat to their dominance in Algeria and were “all too aware that their own enjoyment of political and economic domination in Algeria would quickly come to an end if even a tenth of the Muslim population was granted full and equal voting rights”

(Smith, 2006, p. 107). Thus the settlers in Algeria had a vested interest in denying French citizenship to the indigenous Muslim people in Algeria, as their naturalization would signal the end of European rule in Algeria. It was only after World War II that Algerian Muslims were able to become French citizens and still retain their personal status as Muslim. This was a part of the French colonial initiative to set up a *Union française*, which would grant partial autonomy to former colonies in an attempt to keep the French empire intact.

Decolonization, Migration, and Citizenship

The decolonization process in Algeria was long and painful for everyone involved. The end of the Algerian war in 1962 marked the formal ending of European empires and was a major moment in global news. But independence was a long time coming. The Évian Agreement set forth in 1962 was perhaps the most pivotal moment in the decolonization process. Created as a ceasefire agreement between the French government and the FLN (National Liberation Front). The Évian Agreement was made up of two main aspects: “the application of a self-determination process” and the “declaration of principles which would lay the foundation of future relations between the two countries” (Evans, 2012, p. 256). In terms of the self-determination process, “the transition period would be run by a Franco-Algerian Provisional Executive” who would be in charge of putting forth and organizing the referendum for independence, while at the same time uphold the rights of Europeans and Algerians, maintain the ceasefire, and direct the release of political prisoners (Evans, 2012). More important than the organization of this transitional period was the second aspect, that of determining the future of the two countries. This agreement set forth a plan for economic and financial cooperation and also dealt with the position of French people in Algeria. “French people would have three years to choose between Algerian and French nationality. In the meantime, their rights would be upheld as regards protection of their property, participation in public affairs, and religious and cultural freedom” (Evans, 2012, p. 256). The Évian Agreement was finally ratified in 1962, and the Algerian nation state was a reality 132 years after the original French invasion.

Male labor migration between the colony and the metropole had been happening on a large scale since the late nineteenth century. Because Algeria was seen as a part of France, Algerians migrating from Algeria to France before Algerian independence were not leaving one country for the other, as they were seen as French nationals, though citizenship was decoupled from nationality. Migration before 1945 has been characterized by “Abdelmalek Sayad as the ‘first stage’ of Algerian migration to France” and was largely organized by “tightly controlled networks” (House, 2006). This phase of migration was almost exclusively male, and was largely temporary in order to send financial support to their home communities. Moreover, “the journey to France and subsequent return were determined by the rhythms of the Algerian agricultural calendar and followed seasonal cycles” (Loyal, 2009, p. 418). Labor migration to mainland France disconcerted Algerian economic lobbies, who feared losing their “colonial workforce to mainland French employers” and that Algerian migrants, because of their naivety and politically immature, would fall “prey to Communist or Algerian nationalist ‘subversion’” (House, 2006). Thus, they supported hostile campaigns that constructed Algerian men as criminal and sexually aggressive, stereotypes that remain salient today.

After WWII, France moved in a direction that would further entwine Algeria and mainland France. “The Statute of Algeria (1947) granted Algerian men full citizenship in mainland France and instituted unregulated passage between Algeria and France” (House, 2006). This new policy, coupled with famine and anti-nationalist repression in Algeria, caused many more Algerians to emigrate in the hopes that the metropole would provide better economic opportunities and social relations. This period of migration is referred to by Sayad as the ‘second stage and was both qualitatively and quantitatively different from the first. By 1956 there were 300,000 Algerians living in France. “The Kabyle-Berbers, who had long dominated Algerian migration, were increasingly replaced by Arab migrants whose networks in France were much less well established” (House, 2006). Moreover, rather than single Algerian men emigrating to the metropole for a limited amount of time, entire nuclear families started to emigrate and were less focused on their communities in Algeria, thereby staying in France for longer

periods of time, allowing for further integration into the French working class. But though Algerians were now formally considered French citizens, they experienced a great deal of discrimination, especially in housing. Shanty-towns grew on the outskirts of Paris and became a key base for the independence struggle. “Repressive policing tactics in France and news of atrocities in Algeria, structural discrimination in the workplace, and a sustained attempt to forcibly assimilate migrants all reinforced Algerians’ resistance to colonial rule and led to their support for the FLN” (House, 2006).

The third stage of migration occurred after decolonization. While the Évian Agreement allowed for relative freedom of movement between the former colony and the metropole, after 1965, the French government sought to restrict access to France for economic migrants. For the French, “Algerian migration – and Algerians – remained extremely problematic from a state perspective: France had always looked to encourage European migration, judging Algerians to be ethnically distinct and undesirable on that basis since harder to ‘integrate’” (House, 2006). Thus, the French government continued to see Algerian presence in France as temporary. While French immigration measures became more and more strict, a family regrouping policy allowed spouses and children of labor migrants to move to France. This greatly characterized the third stage of migration – namely one of permanent residence in France. Although still considered formal citizens, Algerians still had incredible difficulties in housing and, after the demolition of the shanty-towns, were segregated in “temporary accommodation in prefabricated buildings since the authorities judged Algerians insufficiently ‘developed’ to accede immediately to council housing” (House, 2006). These areas were heavily policed by welfare officers and colonial police who maintained a neo-colonial order reminiscent of the 1930s.

Postcolonial Identity in France

These migration and citizenship policies had lasting effects on postcolonial identities of Algerian migrants and their children. “In France the Muslim descendants of Algerian immigrants, who have French citizenship, are still defined and treated as foreigners” (Loyal, 2009, p. 422). The stigmatization against their parents and grandparents, who lived in the shanty-towns and who worked as migrant workers has

continued against second and third generation French-Algerians. The discourse surrounding young Algerians was highly gendered, featuring “post-colonial stereotyping of young Algerian males centered on criminalization, and alleged their refusal to ‘integrate,’ whereas young women of Algerian descent were represented as ‘passive’ and ‘submissive,’ and, in theory, more predisposed to ‘integrate’” (House, 2006). These young people living in public housing were the primary targets of the integrating mission largely put forth by the French government. While these young people were not necessarily socialized under colonialism, they were still subject to many of the policing and integration strategies that were in place during the height of French colonialism in Algeria. While on the one hand they occupied a territory in which their formal citizenship was guaranteed in the metropole, their substantive citizenship was constantly called into question, and this incoherence “not only created great psychological anguish and suffering, but also saw them, depending on circumstances and their position in social space, both becoming resigned to and resisting the symbolic violence inherent in policies aimed at assimilating them into French values” (Loyal, 2009, p. 424).

It was perhaps this ambiguous social condition that motivated many young people of Algerian descent to be involved in social movements regarding racism and neocolonialism in France. In the early 1970s, Maghrebi students created the *Mouvement des travailleurs arabes* (the MTA), which organized students around their identity as ‘Arabs’ and Muslims fighting colonial oppression. (Aissaoui, 2009). One of the defining characteristics of the MTA, in contrast to other Maghrebi organizations, is that “despite evoking an eventual return to the home country and the importance of keeping North African traditions alive in emigration, and despite consistently invoking faithfulness to the Arab nation, the movement acknowledged that France was also the social space in which the life and sociopolitical experience of Maghrebis were being shaped” (Aissaoui, 2009, p. 159). This organization thus acknowledged the specific social space that the Maghrebis occupied, as members of an imagined French community and of an imagined post-colonial, Algerian community. This new generation of activists claimed the term *beur*, “a term derived from the French word *arabe* and altered using the urban slang of the French working

class” (House, 2006). This was a way that this new generation could self-identify and express their French-ness as well as their having North African heritage. The counter-culture of the *beurs* and a trans-national Islamic identity has achieved wider appeal. Moreover, a growing middle class of *bourgeoisie* has made great contributions to cultural production, specifically in film and fiction (House, 2006). But while this trans-national Islamic identity has gained a greater audience and wider appeal, the postcolonial citizens in France still experience wide forms of racism and discrimination on religious grounds.

Conclusion

Colonialism in both the Dutch East Indies and Algeria relied on very specific constructions of race in order to assert European power. The constructions of race were temporally and spatially specific, yet had lasting impacts across both time and space. These racial constructions became particularly salient during the process of decolonization, in which racialized identities were targeted for assimilation policies and missions, and were ‘Otherized’ both in the colony and the metropole. Even when granted formal citizenship, these racialized migrants were not recognized by their peers (in the case of France) or their governments (in the case of both France and the Netherlands) as citizens, thereby being denied substantive citizenship in the metropole. These policies have had lasting impacts on the postcolonial identities of French people of Algerian descent as well as the Indos in the Netherlands. Often, after a period of generational silence, these groups have become highly politically involved, and are in the process of reclaiming their identity through music, food, religion, and dance.

In the Netherlands, Indo-Europeans are seen as the model migrants, having fully integrated into Dutch society, while other immigrants continue to face systemic racism and discrimination. In France, racial and religious tensions remain of concern, though the French government is beginning to acknowledge the various postcolonial groups in the metropole. I will offer two potential explanations for the disparity in assimilation between the two countries. Perhaps one of the most significant differences between Algerian migrants and Indo-European migrants is their race. Indo-European migrants were

mixed race, and had been previously acknowledged as European during colonialism. Even though their status as European was later problematized, their European heritage ultimately played to their advantage in being welcomed into the metropolitan community. Meanwhile, it was native Algerians who were migrating to France, and thus could not play off of a blood relation to the metropole. Relatedly, religion likely played a large role in the assimilation of these groups as well. Algerians were initially denied all forms of citizenship due to their religion, as it was not deemed part of French culture. Meanwhile, Indo-Europeans, having been raised and acknowledged by European Dutch fathers, came into the Netherlands with largely similar religious views as the Dutch living in the Netherlands. Thus, the Netherlands did not have to concern themselves with incorporating another religion when working to assimilate Indo-Europeans. While these are a few possible explanations for the differences between Indo-Europeans and French people of Algerian descent, more research should be done exploring the impact of the various colonial wars in the two colonies.

Ultimately, postcolonial citizenship policies that problematized citizenship status along racial lines have had far reaching impacts on both Indonesian and Algerian diaspora living in the Netherlands and France respectively. Though these policies have been enacted differently, with different levels of success, they have created distinct groups within the metropolises that, while remaining French and Dutch nationals and citizens, have established a culture all their own.

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