Dutchmen often boast of a great tolerance for strangers which has supposedly characterized their culture for centuries. And indeed it can be said that Dutch society has shown a capacity to absorb substantial groups of foreigners into its culture. The 'repatriation’ during and shortly after the Indonesian struggle for independence is a recent example. During the later 1940s and throughout the 1950s some 150,000 Netherlands citizens of Eurasian origin left Indonesia for a country that many of them had never seen before.1 Because – by the standards of those days – their assimilation proceeded smoothly, this is looked upon as a recent success story.

In 1968 what was then called the Ministry of Culture, Recreation, and Social Work (CRM) published van Amersfoort's *Surinamers in de lage landen* (Surinamese in the Lowlands). In his introduction the Director-General of Social Development remarked that foreigners had always been assimilated smoothly into Dutch culture and that there had therefore been little need for any thorough research on immigration. For some years to come, questions from interested parties abroad about the migrant situation in the Netherlands would continue to receive vague answers which were not based on research. To some extent van Amersfoort's book could at least meet this need. In fact according to the Director-General, *Surinamers in de lage landen* had come just in time, for negative reports about the Surinamese, who at that time were entering the Netherlands in greater numbers than ever before, were being circulated in the press. Van Amersfoort's findings would, he hoped, put an end to much of the prejudice. Did the Director-General also expect to be able to guide this wave of immigration in the right direction by providing the correct information?
The findings of research comparing Britain and the Netherlands, which Christopher Bagley carried out in 1969 and published in *The Dutch Plural Society* (1973), were flattering to the Netherlands. (The words on the cover went straight to the point: ‘the Netherlands is one western European country which can claim a measure of success in its race relations’.) The Dutch, he found, showed hardly any prejudice at all against immigrants of a different colour. While discrimination on the basis of colour was fairly widespread in Britain, the Dutch would react negatively only to strangers who disregarded general codes of social conduct. According to Bagley, respecting different cultural groups was a characteristic of social life in the Netherlands. In addition, unlike in Britain, the Dutch government was prepared to spend a lot of money on welfare and other social measures for the benefit of the newcomers in situations where the relative harmony was insufficient to guarantee the immigrants a satisfactory existence.

*Omdat zij anders zijn* (Because They Are Different) was published five years later (Bovenkerk 1978). In the mean time, a relatively large immigration of foreign workers, in addition to the Surinamese and Antilleans, had taken the Netherlands by surprise. From the research material collected in this book, the editor Frank Bovenkerk came to the unequivocal conclusion that ‘racial discrimination and racial prejudice are daily facts of life’. Since then, most publications have focused on conflict, racial discrimination, and deprivation of ethnic minorities in education, housing, and the labour market, rather than on tolerance (Alers 1974; Biervliet 1977; Bovenkerk 1977; Luning 1976; Rapport 1972). Nowadays there is no need to apologize for the absence of research results and scientific publications. The current prevalence of complex minority problems has reduced the proverbial ‘Dutch tolerance’ to little more than a concept for promoting the Netherlands. Even those who award such a quality to seventeenth-century Dutch culture run the risk of being accused of naivety or of distorting history.

However, it is not merely the illusion of exemplary tolerance that seems to have been lost; many of the immigrants who cherished dreams on their departure for the Netherlands have lost their illusions too. The problems confronting Surinamese and Antillean immigrants are discussed elsewhere in this book. Here I shall try to indicate how this disappointment came about, and why the situation was so much more favourable in the 1960s. In passing I shall make a few comparisons with West Indian migration to Britain. But since
this is mainly an introductory article, I shall not dwell at length on the current circumstances of West Indians in Britain or in the Netherlands nor shall I discuss the often disastrous consequences for Surinam (and possibly, in the future, for the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba as well).

Incidentally I must point out that in contrast to the rich research tradition on West Indian immigration in Britain, historiography on the Surinamese and Antilleans in the Netherlands is still in its infancy. Consequently I can sketch only a broad outline here, and in addition shall confine myself to the twentieth century. The reader will note that I pay far more attention to the Surinamese than to the Antilleans. This merely reflects the fact that immigration to the Netherlands of the former has been far more substantial than of the latter. However – at least until Surinam’s independence in 1975 – it is unlikely that Dutch society adopted a different attitude towards the Surinamese from that towards the Antilleans.

**Migration in the Caribbean**

The history of the Caribbean is, among other things, the history of migration streams: first, to the West Indies from Europe, Africa, and Asia, later within the area, and finally, from that area to Europe and the USA. Since the Second World War this latter migratory movement has grown to such an extent that research on the Caribbean diaspora has become an integral part of Caribbean studies. In this respect, the Surinamese experience and, to a lesser extent, the Antillean one, do not differ from the general Caribbean experience. Hence the twentieth-century migration history of the Dutch West Indian colonies begins within the Caribbean itself.

Until the refineries were put into operation – Shell in Curaçao (1918) and Lago in Aruba (1929) – the Leeward Islands of the Netherlands Antilles were poor. The population, especially the males, looked elsewhere for temporary jobs. In 1905 men from Curaçao were recruited to build a railway in Surinam; during that period they also went to Venezuela to work in the oilfields (Koot 1979: 35, 47–8). Nearly 1,300 day-labourers of Netherlands nationality (that is Antilleans) were granted entry into the Dominican Republic for the sugar season of 1919/20 (Castillo nd: 53). Between 1917 and 1920, 5,000 labourers from Curaçao and Aruba departed for Cuba; they too had been recruited for the sugar industry (Paula 1974). Though the last of this group were not repatriated until the
1930s, the majority returned much earlier; Cuba had been a disappointment and besides there had been an upswing in the Leeward economy. From the 1920s to the next turning-point in the Leeward economy in the mid-1950s, the refineries in Aruba and Curaçao were like magnets attracting workers from all over the Caribbean.

Among the labourers who went to the Leeward Islands, there were many Netherlands-Antilleans from the Windward Islands and from Surinam. For the Windward Islanders, 'educated to emigrate' (Crane 1971), this merely meant a change in destination; migratory labour was typical for their small islands. Since the abolition of slavery in 1863, there had been substantial intra-rural mobility in Surinam; also, among the Amerindians and Maroons in the sparsely populated interior of the Guianas there was a tradition of migration which extended beyond the 'town' or coastal districts. But within the Caribbean this Surinamese outward migration was relatively new: Surinam had been more isolated than the Leeward Islands, where the trading centre Curaçao, in particular, had for centuries focused on the countries around the Caribbean Sea.

The Surinamese population in the Antilles was relatively large; in 1947 there were 3,900 Surinamese in Curaçao and 1,600 in Aruba. This amounted to 3 per cent of the Surinamese population at the time, or 8 per cent of the Afro-Surinamese ('Creole') group within that population – from which most emigrants were recruited. In 1960, 2,800 Surinamese lived in Curaçao; in 1971 some 1,900 (Bovenkerk 1975: 9–10).

Few data are available on the emigration of Surinamese and Antilleans to destinations other than the Netherlands, but we know that smaller numbers were involved. The USA attracted quite a few of these migrants. Around 1975 an estimated 2,000–3,000 Surinamese lived in New York (Bovenkerk 1975: 11).

Thus in the twentieth century, emigration was or became a familiar pattern for Antilleans and Surinamese. There were, however, a few differences. At first the inhabitants of the poor and barren Leeward Islands migrated more, and in more directions, than the Surinamese. Only when Aruba and Curaçao experienced their economic boom did emigration from these islands cease to be replaced by immigration. Among the immigrants were large numbers of Surinamese. This marked the beginning of Surinamese migration within the Caribbean, which began later than the corresponding Antillean migration. In contrast, migration to the
Netherlands had been primarily a Surinamese matter from the beginning.

**The smooth migration to the Netherlands**

Although I mentioned earlier that I would confine myself to the twentieth century, I must none the less stress that emigration from the West Indian colonies to the Netherlands has a far longer history. This applies especially to Surinam where, in the course of the nineteenth century, a Jewish and slightly coloured Creole élite had taken over many of the positions hitherto reserved for Dutchmen. As a plantation colony, Surinam no longer lived up to expectations. In comparison to the Netherlands and the Netherlands East Indies, Surinam offered Dutchmen few career and status opportunities, so they turned away. The Surinamese élite was able to occupy positions vacated by departing Dutchmen, though never at the top. One of the conditions for membership of this local élite was to be assimilated into Dutch culture and, especially, to have studied in the Netherlands. Therefore in sending their children to the Netherlands to study they were not merely slavishly imitating the Dutch ideal, but were also engaging in rational career planning. Since the end of the last century, this migratory stream has been gradually rising and, especially after the Second World War, the middle classes and, to a lesser extent, the lower classes have also become involved in this migration of students to the Netherlands.

Only to a limited extent did a comparable tradition develop in Curaçao, the most important of the Antillean islands. Hoetink (1972) offers a plausible explanation. In Surinam the departure of the Dutch élite had opened up the possibility for Jewish and slightly coloured Surinamese to occupy positions in the colonial bureaucracy provided they had the right training; hence their orientation towards the Netherlands. In Curaçao the situation was different. A small white élite, which was in many respects alienated from Dutch culture, fearfully tried to stay in power. A training in the Netherlands was of little use to the coloured people, for whom there was no chance of securing a position in the civil service anyway. They were better advised to go into trade, if possible under the protection of a, usually Jewish, patron. This did not require a Dutch training, especially since the successful traders were oriented more towards surrounding countries and islands than towards the Netherlands.

It is worth mentioning that although the establishment and
success of the refinery increased the demand for trained personnel, this demand was met by Dutch immigrants. Curaçao's working class either found unskilled jobs, or underwent on-the-job training with Shell; a relatively new middle class was able to benefit from the economic boom without diplomas, but with sufficient know-how and an enterprising spirit. At that time, studying seemed to offer few rewards.

During the first half of this century, there were only limited numbers of Surinamese and Antillean students in the Netherlands, but their importance can hardly be overestimated. This is not only because in small societies even a few can form a substantial group, but also and primarily because in many respects these students were to set the tone. In Surinam, it was the (ex-)students who embodied the orientation towards the Netherlands, who were to hold leading positions in the country, and who tried to organize a nationalist movement. It was also from this group that more and more examples of an alternative were provided: staying on in the Netherlands or cashing in on their training elsewhere, but in any case not returning to Surinam.

Until the 1950s it had been the students and people from the higher echelons of the society – either retired or on long-service leave – who had determined the image of the West Indian in the Netherlands. If there was ever any basis to the idea that the Dutch did not discriminate on grounds of colour, it must have arisen in the first half of this century. Conversations with Surinamese members of this group all show that they experienced 'benevolent curiosity' on the part of the Dutch, often based on shocking ignorance of the West Indies, a lack of the disdain towards non-whites, so customary among the Dutch in the colonies, and opportunities to establish careers in the Mother Country. Therefore it is hardly surprising that from the late nineteenth century onwards, more and more Surinamese failed to return after their studies in the Netherlands (van Lier 1977: 194–5). The Netherlands (and sometimes the East Indies) offered better career opportunities, a culture that was more attractive to this group, greater stability, and, in addition, less colonial obstruction.

Among the Surinamese in the Netherlands, some at least must have had nasty experiences to shrug off after almost a lifetime in the country. But, in general, these people had positive memories of their experiences and there are obvious explanations for this. These immigrants, who usually belonged to the upper echelons of Surinamese society, were familiar with Dutch culture. Sometimes they may
have had too rosy a picture of the Mother Country, but as a rule it was realistic. They more or less knew how things worked in the Netherlands and what they themselves would do there. They were, if necessary, prepared and able to make further adjustments. Later generations of immigrants sometimes referred to them scornfully as ‘black Dutchmen’, which seems rather unfair considering they were the first to choose to take advantage of opportunities in the Netherlands rather than face an uncertain future in Surinam. Tens of thousands of Surinamese and Antilleans were later to follow their example. Whatever this meant for their country of birth, the success of those pioneers deserves admiration rather than scorn.

Given their familiarity with Dutch culture, their reasons for coming to the Netherlands and their further careers there, it seems correct to conclude that these pioneers were different not in behaviour, but only in colour. This was something all parties could come to terms with. This silent immigration from Surinam, and to a lesser extent from the Antilles, set the tone well into the 1950s.

**The labourers**

Contrary to what is sometimes claimed, discrimination against West Indians did not, however, start in the 1960s. There were lower-class Surinamese and Antilleans in the Netherlands, even before the war, but, being relatively rare, they had little impact on determining the West Indian image and their own experiences remained largely unknown. It was perhaps for this reason that the notion of a discrimination-free Netherlands was able to survive for so long. But this group did in fact encounter expressions of racism, although it is difficult to establish whether or not these became structural.

Reports of discrimination began to appear in the Dutch press. Subsequent conversations with members of the Surinamese community in the Netherlands suggest that these may have been somewhat unrepresentative. Yet they do at least indicate that there was a problem:

> Here in the Netherlands life for us West Indians is not only made intolerably difficult, we even hardly get a chance to find a job.

> I and many of my race living here have often experienced it and still do . . . .

> Here one is convinced that we coloured people belong aboard
Caribbean migration to the Netherlands

ships. As a member of the Roman Catholic Transport Labourers' Union St. Boniface, I have experienced that not only Liberal, but also Roman Catholic employers are strongly opposed to employing me, on the basis of my colour.\textsuperscript{5}

Is His Excellency aware that in The Hague, and also elsewhere in the Netherlands, the West Indians are intolerably harassed? Does he know that when we ... are walking in lower-class and tradesmen's neighbourhoods, we are followed by a large number of children aged 7-11, and that these call us names such as 'rotten nigger', 'dirty nigger', 'water Chinese', words one would never expect to hear from the mouths of children, and that adults sometimes join in? ... In several Dutch towns there are brown-coloured-families who, in certain parts of this country so free, dare not go out. This 'cordial reception' forces many of us to resort to other European countries, although they had planned to spend their holidays here.\textsuperscript{6}

There are even some reports dating from the late 1930s, of racial discrimination being sanctioned and possibly even committed by the authorities. One case involved a group of Surinamese Creoles who wanted to mount a 'negro cabaret' in Amsterdam. The police, who had obviously been keeping an eye on them, forbade them to do so on the grounds that it would lead to the development of an undesirable 'American' ghetto. In another case in July 1937, the Indonesian Member of Parliament for the Communist Party, Roestam Effendi, asked the Minister of the Interior questions about the government's refusal to grant licences to café owners in Amsterdam who wanted to employ Surinamese staff. Although the minister denied this allegation, he did mention two other less far-reaching incidences of police intervention in cases of complaints against Surinamese staff.\textsuperscript{7} None the less there seems little doubt that the Mayor of Amsterdam was excessively restrictive, as illustrated, for example, in his 1937 ban on Surinamese musicians (Kloters and van Gelder 1985).

In the 1950s (leaving aside the German occupation, as well as the early post-war years, for which I have been unable to find any data), several incidents took place, mainly over the question of housing.\textsuperscript{8} After giving evasive answers to earlier questions in Parliament, the minister responsible felt obliged to make a clearer, though not necessarily more concrete, denunciation: 'I explicitly state here ... that the Government strongly disapproves of any form of discrimination against our overseas subjects'.\textsuperscript{9}
In 1950, when the Surinamese in the Netherlands were unlikely to have exceeded 5,000, a Surinamese government official, on returning from a tour of the country, for the first time spoke of his fellow countrymen abroad as a peripheral group which ‘disgraces the Surinamese name’. In later years, when Surinamese immigration became increasingly associated with problems and discrimination, this became a recurrent theme. Negative remarks about the waves of immigrants in the 1960s and 1970s were frequently uttered from the lips of more ‘smoothly adjusted’ immigrants who had settled earlier and were socially better off. Criticism was often heard from circles such as these, which supported the most unfavourable stereotypes held by the Dutch.

The exodus

Particularly in the 1960s and 1970s emigration from Surinam increased at a very fast rate. Like their predecessors, the immigrants chose to go to the Netherlands which culturally and linguistically was for them the least foreign country. Besides, the Netherlands was the only country in which Surinamese and Antilleans, being Dutch citizens, could settle without permission. The Kingdom Statute, 1954, had granted them Netherlands citizenship with equal rights. As the official figures show, the increase in the numbers of immigrants coming to the Netherlands was high (see Table 3.1).

Since a number of works are now available on the causes and course of this emigration there seems little point in covering the same ground again (van Amersfoort 1968; 1974; Bovenkerk 1975; Budike 1982; Entzinger 1984a; Koot 1979; Reubsaet 1982; WRR 1979; Zielhuis and Girdhari 1973). The general picture is very similar to that of West Indian emigration to Britain to the extent that the same factors are important: a push from small-scale societies, with relatively poor educational and health care provisions and a fairly low standard of living (although it was higher than in the rest of the Caribbean and Latin America, it was unacceptably low in comparison with the Netherlands), and a pull towards the Netherlands, and all the positive values it seemed to embody.

Due – among other things – to the effects of political developments and ethno-political discord within the country, emigration from Surinam, aptly referred to as either ‘a nation on the move’, ‘exodus’, or ‘escape’, has been far more extensive than from the Antilles. Since 1980 certain legal and practical measures have been
Table 3.1 *Net migration between Surinam and the Netherlands Antilles and the Netherlands 1960–85*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Net migration Surinam–Netherlands</th>
<th>Net migration Netherlands Antilles–Netherlands</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>674</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>1,156</td>
<td>447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>1,570</td>
<td>489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>1,526</td>
<td>929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>1,825</td>
<td>2,078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>2,301</td>
<td>1,319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>2,425</td>
<td>815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>2,988</td>
<td>657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>4,370</td>
<td>1,132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>5,558</td>
<td>1,277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>7,466</td>
<td>707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>6,313</td>
<td>1,185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>9,035</td>
<td>1,440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>15,674</td>
<td>1,473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>36,537</td>
<td>2,458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>621</td>
<td>2,131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>1,368</td>
<td>2,469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>4,710</td>
<td>2,557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>15,798</td>
<td>2,187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>16,705</td>
<td>3,163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>1,088</td>
<td>1,630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>2,858</td>
<td>996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>1,776</td>
<td>1,226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>3,768</td>
<td>4,527</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Staatsbureau Statistiek, Ministerie van Cultuur, Recreatie en Maatschappelijk Werk; Staatsdienst Statistiek, Ministerie van Welzijn, Volksgezondheid en Cultuur; Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, Afdeling Bevolking (see note 14 for 1980 figure).

Operating to reduce to a minimum the number of people entering the Netherlands from Surinam (independent since 1975). It is difficult to predict the future course of Antillean immigration, but recent figures suggest that it is on the increase. In any case, over the next few decades the Surinamese and Antillean community in the Netherlands is bound to keep expanding, both through natural growth and immigration.

Nevertheless, as Bovenkerk (1983a) convincingly shows, the situation in the Netherlands differed from West Indian immigration to
Britain in one crucial respect. After the Second World War, British West Indians were recruited or migrated spontaneously to take up the kinds of jobs that elsewhere in western Europe were reserved for Mediterranean labourers, namely in the worst paid and lowest status sectors of the economy. In the Netherlands, by contrast, with the exception of a couple of minor recruitment drives, there was absolutely no question of Surinamese and Antillean immigration being stimulated by a demand for foreign labour in the host country. In fact quite the opposite was true, although there are some spokesmen from these groups who for ideological reasons do try to place the Surinamese, Antilleans, and Mediterranean labourers in the same category.\footnote{15}

It was only in the late 1950s and the 1960s that labourers were recruited from Surinam and the Netherlands Antilles to work in harbours, industries, and hospitals. Neither the first experiment with Surinamese labour nor later recruitments were, however, entirely satisfactory. Employers were constrained by the knowledge that since the Surinamese and Antilleans were Netherlands citizens with the same rights as any other Dutch employee, they could not be dismissed arbitrarily if they worked badly or were no longer needed. For this reason, foreign employees were considered more suitable (Bayer 1965). The most successful of these recruitment drives involved the contracting of young Surinamese and Antillean women to work as student nurses in Dutch hospitals and other nursing establishments.

The total number of immigrants recruited collectively from the former West Indian colonies probably amounted to no more than a few thousand; their arrival made little impact on the labour-starved Dutch market which was coping with its acute labour shortage by recruiting foreign labourers \emph{en masse} from the Mediterranean countries. Later the Dutch population began to place these people in the same category as the Surinamese and Antilleans: they were all strangers with a different culture. The differences between West Indian and Mediterranean immigration to the Netherlands are, however, clearly evident from the composition of the immigration streams too. For a long time all the foreign labourers were men – family reunion is a fairly recent development. By contrast Antillean and Surinamese immigration became mature in the early 1970s, which implied that these immigrants were in every sense representative of their larger population (that is in age, sex, schooling, class, and, later on, even in ethnic background).
How a complex of problems arose

In the 1960s Dutch press reports on the Surinamese and Antilleans in the Netherlands tended to focus not only on how they would affect the political future of their countries, but also and especially on how they would fit into Dutch society. But since problems are always more newsworthy than successes, it is much easier to find material on the disappointing results of recruiting labourers for Dutch businesses than on the successful results of recruiting nurses.

Criminal behaviour among the Surinamese and Antillean population was also given a lot of coverage. Was it out of proportion? In retrospect, this is difficult to determine. Bovenkerk and Bovenkerk-Teerink found that between 1963 and 1970 the press was more careful in its reporting of Surinamese and Antillean incidents than of Turkish and Moroccan ones. They suggest ‘that journalists or editors, as the case may be, do exercise care when dealing with news items on Surinamese and Antilleans’ which places them in a more favourable light than Mediterranean labourers (Bovenkerk and Bovenkerk-Teerink 1972: vi). It apparently helped to be a ‘stranger’ from a former Dutch colony and thus be protected at least verbally, by countrymen with the opportunity and motivation to criticize in the Dutch press. In addition ex-Dutch West Indians could appeal to the guilt feeling about the colonial past in at least some sections of Dutch public opinion.

In the 1970s a new situation arose which made life more difficult for the migrants. It was composed of three elements: an increase in the size of the Mediterranean population in the Netherlands, a dramatic exodus from Surinam, and the economic recession. Since much research has already been and is still being undertaken on the effects of these new factors, my own contribution to this topic will be brief.

Britain relieved its labour shortage through post-colonial immigration, its ‘guest-workers’ came from its former Empire. And unlike the immigration of Surinamese and Antilleans into the Netherlands, West Indians in Britain were part of this category. The Dutch relieved their labour shortage by importing foreign labourers from the Mediterranean. Their numbers rose steeply, first through stepped-up recruitment programmes, second through spontaneous immigration, and third, after recruitment stopped in 1973, through family reunion. The figures are clear, as Table 3.2 illustrates.
Table 3.2  Foreigners from recruitment countries, Surinamese and Antilleans in the Netherlands 1960–83

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greeks</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>3,042</td>
<td>4,038</td>
<td>4,164</td>
<td>4,035</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yugoslavs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1,034</td>
<td>7,812</td>
<td>12,873</td>
<td>13,718</td>
<td>14,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,521</td>
<td>4,789</td>
<td>7,813</td>
<td>9,396</td>
<td>9,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spaniards</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>21,025</td>
<td>25,866</td>
<td>31,312</td>
<td>23,546</td>
<td>22,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turks</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>8,822</td>
<td>29,325</td>
<td>62,587</td>
<td>119,624</td>
<td>152,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moroccans</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>4,506</td>
<td>21,040</td>
<td>33,156</td>
<td>71,760</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisians</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1,215</td>
<td>2,161</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>719</td>
<td>39,950</td>
<td>92,870</td>
<td>153,120</td>
<td>244,240</td>
<td>304,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surinamese</td>
<td>12,700</td>
<td>18,000</td>
<td>28,985</td>
<td>104,154</td>
<td>177,600</td>
<td>190,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antilleans</td>
<td>13,630</td>
<td>21,221</td>
<td>29,812</td>
<td>43,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13,419</td>
<td>57,950</td>
<td>135,485</td>
<td>278,495</td>
<td>451,652</td>
<td>537,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, Afdeling Bevolking; Entzinger (1984a: 70); Reubsaet (1981: 6); WRR (1979: 48, 94). (See note 17 for figures on Surinamese and Antilleans.)

Large-scale immigration from the Mediterranean and Caribbean took place in far less favourable circumstances than prevailed immediately after the Second World War. The Dutch East Indians who migrated in the early 1950s did so during a period of rapid economic growth and within a context of relatively harmonious social relations. These circumstances, combined with certain qualities possessed by the ‘repatriated persons’, explain the relative smoothness of their assimilation into Dutch society (van Amersfoort 1974: 86–101). As both the Mediterranean ‘guest-workers’ and the post-colonial Caribbean immigrants discovered to their detriment, social circumstances particularly in the 1970s were of an entirely different order.

The causes are obvious. On the one hand, there was the economic recession which raised unemployment from a minimal 1.6 per cent in 1971, through 5.0 per cent 1975, 5.9 per cent 1980, to 15.1 per cent in the first half of 1985.18 On the other hand, there was a rapid increase in the size of the foreign population, which, in a deteriorating economic climate, reinforced discrimination and feelings of xenophobia on the part of the local population. Especially in the difficult 1970s, Surinamese immigration really did make it feel as if a whole nation was about to move in!
In addition to the circumstances in the receiving country, the characteristics of the immigrant group are of course important. In this respect, from the viewpoint of assimilation, Surinamese and Antillean immigration developed unsatisfactorily. At one time, emigration from the West Indian colonies was primarily from among an élite group who were both willing and able to adjust. After the Second World War, this all changed, and it inevitably led to friction. As early as 1963 the Surinamese government saw fit to publish a reader for young people warning that the Netherlands was certainly no paradise, and that adjustment to Dutch culture was of prime importance (Walman 1963).

What happened in the 1970s was that there was a marked increase in the numbers of immigrants, particularly from Surinam, who were totally unprepared. A growing percentage of those arriving at Schiphol airport knew little about the Netherlands and had insufficient background or education to adjust to a society that was totally alien to them. The contrast between the culture of the Surinamese lower classes and of the ‘Dutch’ was obviously enormous. Among those who were better trained and traditionally more oriented towards the Netherlands, the influence of Surinamese and Antillean nationalism may have made them less willing to adjust. In any case, the Dutch viewed all this primarily as a problem rather than as an addition to their own culture.

It was only in the second half of the 1970s that government statements and policies officially began to recognize that most of the foreign immigrants and their offspring would settle in the Netherlands permanently. The enormous wave of immigrants from Surinam immediately before independence (1975) had forced the government to come to terms with the permanent settlement of this group, after which it recognized the (semi-)permanence of other groups as well (Reubsaet 1982: 109 ff.). The government was now finally in a position to formulate a coherent policy towards ethnic minorities rather than to continue to regard them as temporary residents, especially since, apart from family reunions and a trickle of political refugees each year, further immigration is expected to come only from the Netherlands Antilles (WRR 1979; van Amersfoort and Entzinger 1982; Entzinger 1984a). In this respect, the Dutch situation is now closer to that of the UK, where the flow of immigrants has virtually been stopped through a series of laws, beginning with the Commonwealth Immigration Act, 1962.
Illusions and disappointments

The Netherlands was a country from which people emigrated; at least that is what the government believed after 1945. And until 1961 this opinion was largely upheld, despite the quarter of a million Dutch returning or Dutch East Indians coming to the country for the first time when Indonesia gained its independence in 1949. In 1961, however, more people entered the country than left. The Netherlands became a country to which people immigrated and, as the government reluctantly admitted, by the second half of the 1970s, it had become a multiracial (or rather multicultural) society with substantial ethnic minorities.

Though the post-colonial immigration from the Caribbean was not the most important stream in terms of numbers, the exodus from Surinam was definitely the most spectacular. The immigration took place in a period of recession, of rising unemployment, and, under the influence of family reunion, also of a further increase in the group of Mediterranean labourers. Circumstances in the Netherlands were thus unfavourably pitched against them. Besides, many of the Surinamese and Antillean immigrants of the 1970s had had fewer opportunities and less schooling, and were perhaps also less willing to adjust 'smoothly' to Dutch society, than were their predecessors.

This occasioned much publicity, sometimes of a negative kind, and a large number of studies which focused on the Surinamese and Antillean 'problem'. Such research can unintentionally lead to (further) stereotyping: it invariably focuses on problems, social disadvantage, and discrimination. As Bovenkerk (1983a) points out, it underestimates the great variety of circumstances under which the Surinamese, as well as the Antilleans, live.

None the less, by now there is no denying that minority groups have formed in Dutch society and are encountering discrimination, irrespective of whether they had originally come from the former colonies or from the Mediterranean. The notion of the 'Dutchman's tolerance', which the Netherlands had found so flattering, was seemingly lost in the 1970s; the steps from curiosity to racial discrimination, via xenophobia and resentment, sometimes seemed to have been taken all too quickly.

The immigrants themselves were probably even more disillusioned by the turn of events than the Dutch, although it is a mistake to envisage the settlement of Surinamese and Antillean
immigrants in the Netherlands entirely as a series of disappointments. In recent years, several novels have been published by Surinamese and Antillean authors like Edgar Cairo, Sonia Garmers, Astrid Roemer, and Bea Vianen, on ‘experiencing’ the Netherlands. In the earlier period, however, hardly anything was written on the subject and certainly nothing comparable to George Lamming’s *The Emigrants* (1954) or Samuel Selvon’s *The Lonely Londoners* (1956). Future research into the pre-1960s period might possibly be able to throw some light on how this phase was experienced.

It was not only worsening conditions in the Netherlands that led to disappointments, but also inadequate preparation for the new situation. The fact that the Surinamese government considered it necessary to publish a booklet in 1963 explicitly warning young people that the Netherlands was no paradise, and that thorough preparation in Surinam before they went and considerable adjustment once they arrived would be needed, was an indication that more and more Surinamese people were going to the Netherlands with unrealistic expectations. As one Surinamese labourer put it: ‘I never saw that cap full of plums for two cents that the friar told me about’ (Bayer 1965: 25). Needless to say, it was exactly during the exodus in the 1970s that immigrants started to arrive so ill prepared for life in Dutch society.

Immigration also involved establishing Surinamese and Antillean customs and institutions in the Netherlands; these supply certain outlets and function in a way as ‘havens in a heartless world’. But it is too early to tell to what extent the Surinamese-Antillean subculture will assume new characteristics to cope with its new circumstances; whether, for instance, the ethnic segmentation which is so strong in Surinam will survive.

With both groups in the Netherlands, and especially the Surinamese, a nationalist movement grew up in the 1950s, which became more important in the following decades and, among other things, strongly influenced political developments. According to this nationalist ideology, emigration (‘escape’, ‘exodus’) was seen as a betrayal of the Surinamese cause and return migration was strongly advocated (see for instance Doelwigt and Ooft 1968). It is hardly surprising that this should have influenced Dutch policy makers, who were only too eager to believe what they were hearing. Why develop a comprehensive integration policy if ‘they’ say they are returning anyway? In reality, however, migration to the Netherlands continued unabated and only among the Antillean population was
there any substantial evidence of return migration. As Bovenkerk (1973: 1, 45) pointed out, the considerable attention Surinamese publications paid – and continue to pay – to the subject of return migration has less to do with reality than with an illusion which is rapidly being lost (Doelwijk and Ooft 1968; Sedoc-Dahlberg 1971: 1; Walman 1963: 12–13, 39–41; Budike 1982: 9).

But as the political and economic situation in Surinam deteriorated, the choice of staying on ‘in the house of my children’ became more attractive (van Lier 1973: 35). Despite the many disappointments, the Netherlands apparently had more to offer than Surinam; and the possibility that many Antilleans will also come to a similar conclusion in the near future cannot be ruled out at all.

There is no denying that the recent history of immigration to the Netherlands has involved the loss of quite a few illusions to all parties concerned. Almost ten years ago, Lowenthal wrote that West Indians born in Britain ‘have lost most positive identification with their parents’ homelands and are ascribed second-class citizenship on racial criteria alone’ (Lowenthal 1978: 19). At the time, he thought the same situation could arise in the Netherlands. Now, there is no doubt that it has. Though recent West Indian immigration to the Netherlands is not wholly a story of disappointments, it is a fact that today few Surinamese and Antillean immigrants can still regard the Netherlands as ‘the paradise of Orange’ (Vianen 1973).

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Notes

1. Recent publications on these Indonesian Dutch are Cottaar and Willems (1984; 1985) and Ellemers and Vaillant (1985). The single-theme edition of De Gids is devoted to (the history of) ‘het buitenland in het binnenland’ (foreign countries within one's own) (Buitenland 1985). On foreigners in the Netherlands, see also Verweij-Jonker (1971).
2. Very little has been published on the history of Antilleans and Surinamese in the Netherlands. See however Maduro 1986 and Oostindie 1986; these publications discuss the period until 1955. In December 1954 Surinam and the Netherlands Antilles became independent partners within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Formally speaking, therefore, the colonial period ended in 1954.
3. The total number of Surinamese who studied at academic institutions in the Netherlands in the period 1700–1950 is no more than a few hundred (Oostindie 1986: 30). In 1952 there were over 100, in 1957 more than 350 (Sedoc-Dahlberg 1971: 72). The number of Antillean students in that same period was much smaller.

4. On their aspirations to climb the social ladder, particularly through studying in the Netherlands, van Amersfoort (1974: 140) remarks: 'on their departure, they often still relate to the Surinamese social ladder, but once the ascent has been achieved, Surinam loses its attraction'.

5. A Surinamese immigrant in De Maasbode (a Rotterdam daily newspaper), 12 August 1931.


8. I discuss the attitudes of Dutchmen towards the Surinamese in more detail in Kondreman in Bakraakkondre (Oostindie 1986). I have no reason to believe that it was any different for the few Antilleans living in the Netherlands.


10. Algemeen Rijksarchief, Gouverneur van Suriname, Kabinet Geheim no. 617.

11. This is typical. See e.g. Sowell (1975: 108) on the USA.

12. In 1960 the total Antillean population was 192,538, in 1972, 223,194, and in 1981 it had reached 231,932. The Surinamese population grew from 256,526 in 1960, to 349,637 in 1970, and to 393,000 in 1983.

13. Koot (1976; 1979; 1981) ascribes this to a number of different factors. Particularly important in comparison to Surinam were the higher level of prosperity in the Netherlands Antilles, the differences between the Netherlands and the Netherlands Antilles, which the Antilleans considered minor, the good chances of mobility within their own country, a relatively negative image of the Netherlands, and the lack of great political and ethnic tensions. Antilleans were also more oriented towards the Caribbean, in contrast to the one-sided orientation towards the Netherlands that is so typical of Surinam.

14. Reubsaet (1981: 5) points out not only that emigration in 1979 was equal to that in 1974, but also that the first months of 1980 showed the same picture as in 1975, the year of the dramatic exodus. Shortly after the military coup of 25 February 1980, this was reversed, so that total emigration in 1980 turned out to be less than in 1975 and 1979. From 25 November 1980 Surinamese immigration to the Netherlands was strictly regulated by the Surinamese–Netherlands Treaty regarding Mutual Settlement and Residence.

15. At the same time, Surinamese, Antilleans, and Moluccans (now some 40,000) sometimes describe themselves as one group; here the unifying criterion is a shared colonial past.

16. Sedoc-Dahlberg (1971: 104–5) established that 60 per cent of her respondents from the Surinamese student population in the Netherlands believed that their countrymen were discriminated against by the Dutch.
But only 33 per cent believed that they themselves were discriminated against. Her comment was that apparently there was a stereotype, in which ‘the common feeling of being discriminated against clearly has a socially binding function’.

17. In view of the fact that the vast majority of Surinamese and Antilleans in the Netherlands have Dutch nationality, it is very difficult to make a correct estimate (see for instance Kool and van Praag 1982: 3 ff; Reubsaet 1981: 4–6). The figures for 1980 (Surinamese) and 1983 (Surinamese and Antilleans) are based on recent, looser definitions. I have not included figures on immigrants from the former Netherlands East Indies, nor on Chinese and ‘Western’ immigrants. With the possible exception of the Moluccans, the situation of these groups is in many respects very different from that of the West Indians.