

Name: Victor Rosa Molewijk

Student number: 625903

Supervisor: Dorus Hoebink

Course: CC4008 Master Thesis Class

Thesis Coordinator: Koen van Eijck

Date: 12/06/2024

Word Count: 69,759

Master Thesis:

The Process of Decolonising through Exhibitions

Masters Arts, Culture and Society

Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication

Erasmus University

Abstract:

This thesis highlights the colonial discourse that categorises collections in museums, perpetuating Western-centric thinking and differentiating between cultures instead of fostering connection. Decolonising the museum requires the removal of colonial categorisation and racial justification of objects in museums, as well as confronting visitors about the wrongdoings of colonial history, which involves critically examining and challenging colonial narratives through exhibitions. The research examines the decolonisation process and the intention behind the curator's ideology in three Dutch museums - "Ons Koloniaal Verleden" by Wereldmuseum Amsterdam, "Koloniaal Den Haag: Een onvoltooid verleden" by Haags Historisch Museum and "Ons Land, dekolonisatie, generaties, verhalen" by Museum Sophiahof.- and their engagement with the Dutch colonial legacy.

The thesis uses qualitative embedded examination, qualitative content analysis, and the social performance model as research methods. It aims to provide an in-depth understanding of decolonisation and how postcolonial criticism is incorporated into museum practice.

Key words: Colonialism; decolonisation; museum; discourse; postcolonial theory; performance model;

Table of contents

Chapter I: Introduction: Research topic and question	5
Chapter II: Previous Research and Theoretical Framework.....	8
2.1 Part One: Colonialism and the Museum	9
2.1.1 Intersections of Power and Identity: Exploring Colonialism, Postcolonial Theory, and Identity Politics	9
<i>Unpacking Colonialism: Definitions, Impacts, and the Imperative of Decolonisation</i>	9
<i>Unveiling Layers: Postcolonial Theory's Role in Decolonising Institutions and Challenging Eurocentrism.....</i>	11
<i>Intersecting Identities: Exploring Identity Politics in Museums and Colonialism.....</i>	15
2.1.2 Decolonising Museum Practices	17
<i>The Rise of Museum Ethics.....</i>	17
<i>Navigating the Theory of New Museology: Ethics, Inclusivity, and Community Engagement</i>	19
<i>Reclaiming Narratives, Redefining Identities.....</i>	22
2.1.3 The Exhibition as the Carrier of Meaning.....	25
<i>Mapping Memories: Navigating Emotional Landscapes in Museum Narratives</i>	26
<i>Performing Museums: Unveiling Narratives through Social Engagement and Spatial Dynamics</i>	29
2.2 Part Two: Colonialism and the Netherlands	31
2.2.1 Shaping Colonial Legacies: Dynamics of Power, Resistance, and Independence in the Dutch East Indies and Suriname	31
<i>Colonial Exploitation, Racial Hierarchy, and Political Struggles: Dynamics of the Dutch East Indies.....</i>	32
<i>Occupation, Internment, and Resistance: The Japanese Era in the Dutch East Indies</i>	35
<i>Struggles for Sovereignty: From Dutch Colonialism to National Independence in Indonesia</i>	37
<i>From Colonisation to Emancipation: Tracing Suriname's Complex History of Sovereignty, Enslavement, and Social Evolution</i>	38
<i>Suriname's Independence Journey: Dutch Influence, Sociopolitical Shifts, and Post-Colonial Realities</i>	39
2.2.2 Unravelling Postcolonial Threads: Dutch Society, Migration, and Commemoration	41
<i>Dynamics of Integration and Identity: Postcolonial Migration in the Netherlands ...</i>	42
<i>The Indo-European Diaspora: Challenges of Identity, Migration, and Integration... ..</i>	44
<i>The Surinamese Diaspora in the Netherlands: Migration, Integration Challenges, and Cultural Evolution</i>	45
2.2.3 Unveiling the Layers: Reassessing Dutch Colonial History and Its Contemporary Significance.....	46
<i>Unmasking the Dutch Golden Age: Rethinking Colonial History and Collective Memory.....</i>	46
<i>Unveiling Colonial Legacies: Shifting Narratives in Representation and Recognition</i>	50
<i>Navigating Power Dynamics: The Role of Recognition in Promoting Equality and Justice</i>	52

<i>Apologies as Agents of Recognition and Reconciliation in Postcolonial Justice</i>	54
<i>From Struggle to Recognition: The Evolution of Postcolonial Citizenship in the Netherlands</i>	55
<i>Unveiling the Hidden Legacy: The Dutch Role in the Atlantic Slave Trade</i>	57
<i>The Dutch-Indisch Quest for Recognition: From Advocacy to Government Action</i> ...	62
2.3 Conclusion of the Literature Review	66
Chapter III: Research Design: Methods and Data	69
3.1 Case selection.....	70
<i>Wereldmuseum Amsterdam</i>	71
<i>Exhibition: “Our Colonial Heritage”</i>	72
<i>The Haags Historisch Museum</i>	72
<i>Exhibition: “Colonial The Hague: an unfinished past”</i>	73
<i>Sophiahof Museum</i>	73
<i>Exhibition: “Ons Land: Dekolonisatie, generaties, verhalen”</i>	74
3.2 Data Collection and Justification	74
<i>Comprehensive Data Collection and Interpretive Analysis of Museum Exhibitions</i> ..	74
<i>Unveiling Exhibition Narratives: A Deep Dive into Thematics, Performance Elements, and Interrelations</i>	75
<i>Insights into Museum Operations and Decolonisation: Interviews and Data Collection</i>	76
3.3 Methods for Analysis	77
<i>The Social Performance Method</i>	78
<i>Qualitative Content Analysis</i>	80
<i>Data Analysis and Coding: Unveiling Patterns and Themes</i>	80
3.4 Operationalisation	82
<i>Unveiling the Social Performance: An Exploration of Museum Elements</i>	82
<i>Theoretical Framework Operationalisation</i>	85
Chapter IV: Results	90
<i>Wereldmuseum Amsterdam’s “Our Colonial Heritage”</i>	90
<i>Haags Historisch Museum’s “Colonial The Hague: An Unfinished Past”</i>	120
<i>Sophiahof Museum’s “Ons Land: Dekolonisatie, generaties, verhalen”</i>	143
<i>Exploring Museum Perspectives: Comparative Analysis of Dutch Museums and their Decolonisation Effort</i>	159
4.2 Comparative characterisations of the thematics.....	164
<i>Broadening Colonialism</i>	165
<i>Exploring Oppression and Legacy in Dutch Museums</i>	166
<i>Humanising Narratives of Enslavement</i>	167
<i>Giving Agency through Resistance</i>	168
<i>From Innocence to Accountability</i>	172
Chapter V: Discussion and Conclusion	175
5.1 Discussion of analysis and summary	175
5.2 Discussion and Conclusion	176
5.3 Recommendation.....	180
References	182

Appendices.....	196
Appendix 1: Interview guide.....	196
<i>Schedule.....</i>	<i>197</i>
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>198</i>
<i>The Interview.....</i>	<i>198</i>
<i>Topic List & Questions.....</i>	<i>199</i>
<i>The Debriefing & Closure.....</i>	<i>205</i>
Appendix 2: Interview summaries	205
<i>Interview Valerie Veenliet - curator Haags Historisch Museum</i>	<i>205</i>
<i>Interview Maria Rey-Lamslag - Curator Wereldmuseum Rotterdam</i>	<i>206</i>
Appendix 3: Codetree results into the main thematic codes	207
Appendix 4: Document Groups of Atlas.TI.....	208
Appendix 5: Code Groups of Atlas.TI.....	209

Chapter I: Introduction: Research topic and question

The museum originated in Europe during the 18th and 19th centuries to preserve heritage and culture, present knowledge, and represent national identity (Roque, 2020, p. 55). Traditionally, museums have been perceived as neutral educational institutions (Rydell, 2006; Bennett, 1988), presenting historical events without judgment and giving them a sense of authority (Dalal-Clayton, 2020, p. 86). However, the collections the museum preserves, and presents were formed through a network of objects and individuals, including communities, curators, and museum staff, and thus, in their exhibitions, museums reflect the social and cultural processes in which they were formed (Waterton & Watson, 2013; Byrne et al., 2011).

The modern museum, born out of World Fairs, initially showcased technological advancements with a utopian ideology, often stereotyping colonised cultures while glorifying Western culture (Bennett, 1988; Rydell, 2006). Governments established museums to recalibrate societal power dynamics, providing cultural and recreational outlets within a bourgeois framework for museum visitors. This trend continues in modern museums, which align themselves with the nation and showcase its development through artworks and objects, fostering a sense of national unity among visitors (Bennett, 1988; Macdonald, 2012). However, at the same time, museums can serve as catalysts for social cohesion and change, influencing conduct and facilitating educational encounters (Bennett, 1985; Bennett, 1998).

Presently, museums struggle with how to properly regard their colonial histories in their methods of research, acquisition, preservation, and display. For example, what is the distinction between art and ethnographic material (Volkenkunde Museum, 2020; Van Huis, 2019)? Of significant concern is the Eurocentric orientation that Western museums traditionally tend to apply, idealising Western culture while marginalising and exoticising other societies through limited representation and language usage. This approach reinforces colonial and racial hierarchies and touches upon identity, national identity, and social cohesion (Rydell, 2006, p. 102; Waterton & Watson, 2013, p. 551). This is reflected in the colonial discourse through the museum's historical vocabulary, commemoration, exhibitions, and the categorisation of museum collections (Aldrich, 2010; Hancock, 2015; Volkenkunde Museum, 2020, p. 81).

However, museums are increasingly acknowledging the need for necessary changes in the decolonisation process. It is becoming more common for visitors and communities to play an active role within museums, leading to public debates regarding the museums' ideology and urging recognition of the injustices of Dutch colonialism (Turunen, 2019, p. 1014). More and more often, museums confront visitors about the country's wrongdoings in its colonial history. In a process called decolonisation, museums try to remove the colonial categorisation and racial justification of the objects belonging to the (former) coloniser's museum (Van Beurden, 2018, pp. 73-78). As another example, Turunen argues that the core of the decolonial debate is built on acknowledging Indigenous

knowledge, epistemologies and ontologies. Then, the past may function as a source of power to recover currently marginalised and repressed knowledge that can challenge current paradigms of Western knowledge and imagine different decolonial futures (Turunen, 2019, p. 1017). Given that the Netherlands' history consisted of more than 400 years of colonialism, it is noteworthy that commemoration or education on Dutch colonialism is comparatively limited compared to other countries with a colonial past (Van Huis, 2019, pp. 215-16). Therefore, the decolonisation of Dutch museums is socially relevant since the decolonisation of museums influences the country's behaviour towards its colonial history and its current social effects (Scott, 2012, p. 182).

By focusing on three museums and their exhibitions - the Wereldmuseum Amsterdam, the Haags Historisch Museum and the Sophiahof Museum in the Netherlands - and their engagement with the Dutch colonial heritage, this thesis provides insight into the complexities that arise when an institution goes through the process of decolonisation. This results in the following research question:

To what extent and in what ways are postcolonial and decolonial museum theories translated into actual museum practices within Dutch museums dealing with the Dutch colonial legacy in their exhibitions?

An approach to decolonising museums may involve organising exhibitions that critically examine colonial history. These exhibitions challenge prevailing narratives and include diverse perspectives within their narrative (Volkenkunde Museum, n.d., p. 81). The input from various postcolonial migrants and individuals of colour engaged in anti-neoliberal, feminist LGBTQ, and disability activism impacts alterations the museums may undertake in their decolonisation efforts. These efforts of decolonisation align with an international postcolonial movement that can reshape perceptions and remembrance of colonial discourse (Van Huis, 2019, pp. 241-42).

One way to critically examine the museum when discussing its efforts to address historical and colonial issues is through the lens of post-colonialism. In terms of the museum, post-colonialism can be defined as removing colonial categorisation and racial justification of the objects belonging to the (former) coloniser's museum (Hancock, 2015, p. 5). Next to the analysis of post-colonialism, the museum's discourse can be indicated by examining how current exhibitions are presented within museums (Sauvage, 2010, p. 110). Therefore, it is essential to consider the intention of the curator and the way the museum presents an exhibition. Curators contribute significantly to the development of exhibitions, given that collections are influenced by a social network of objects and agents, including associated communities and museum staff.

The case studies for this study primarily centre on the representation of Indonesia and Suriname, former colonies of the Netherlands, in Dutch museums. Given space constraints, this precludes a comprehensive examination of all territories once under Dutch colonial rule. The research employs an embedded examination of qualitative content analysis and the social performance model,

which is defined as the process by which actors convey the meaning of their social conditions to others through their performances, validating their objectives and justifications to gain audience approval, with cultural semiotics comparable to theatrical performances (Alexander, 2006, pp. 29-32), to understand the decolonisation process comprehensively. This research explores what happens after postcolonial criticism is applied to a museum: the incorporation of postcolonial criticism in current museum practice and negotiations, dilemmas and practical problems that come with it, and how organisations implement changing visions into the current working process. Doing so will shed light on the complex and multifaceted nature of the decolonisation process in Dutch museums dealing with the Dutch colonial legacy in their exhibitions.

With this, the postcolonial theory is used as a cultural context related to the research subject. Other theories, such as identity politics theory and performance theory, are crucial for comprehending heritage and its exhibition in museums. The following chapter provides a literature review and theoretical framework, helping the reader gain insights into what comes into play within the world of museums, the society it functions in, and its decolonisation process. The third chapter explains the research design and methodology while introducing the selected case studies. The fourth chapter analyses the case study using the theoretical framework and analysis methods. The final chapter concludes the research by summarising the most important findings. It aims to answer the research question in the most feasible way possible while recommending further research that could provide insight into these studies.

Chapter II: Previous Research and Theoretical Framework

This chapter aims to provide a comprehensive review of existing literature on museums' decolonisation efforts and identify gaps in the current literature based on the following research question:

To what extent and in what ways are postcolonial and decolonial museum theories translated into actual museum practices within Dutch museums dealing with the Dutch colonial legacy in their exhibitions?

This research makes a unique contribution to the field of heritage studies by examining the impact of postcolonial theory on a museum's decolonisation process. The literature review not only supports the research design but also provides a fresh perspective, demonstrating how these theories manifest in exhibitions, reports, and publicly available information from selected case studies.

The literature review is structured into two main parts, each with subchapters categorising topics clearly and concisely. The first part delves into museums, their theories, and their interconnected relationship with colonialism, offering a comprehensive understanding. It starts with postcolonial criticism, offering insights into colonialism and decolonisation, followed by discussions of postcolonial theory and identity politics.

The second part highlights the Netherlands and its involvement in colonialism. These subchapters provide historical background for the exhibition cases' themes. This section discusses the Dutch Indies as a Dutch colony, the Second World War and its consequences in the Dutch Indies, the Independence of Indonesia, Suriname as a Dutch colony, and the Independence of Suriname. The chapter then takes a chronological approach, exploring the postcolonial Netherlands and the topic of migration, including a detailed examination of the migrations of Euro-Indonesians and Surinamese. Finally, the chapter discusses the current political climate in the Netherlands, including lobbying and recognition, commemoration, public apologies, lobbying colonialism, museum representation of Dutch colonialism, and recognition and awareness of slavery and the Dutch Indies. The literature ends with a proper conclusion.

2.1 Part One: Colonialism and the Museum

The following first part explores museums, their underlying theories, and their complex relationship with colonialism, providing a thorough understanding. It begins with postcolonial criticism, which sheds light on colonialism and decolonisation and continues with discussions on postcolonial theory and identity politics.

2.1.1 Intersections of Power and Identity: Exploring Colonialism, Postcolonial Theory, and Identity Politics

Colonialism, postcolonial theory, and identity politics are intertwined concepts that shape our world perception. Postcolonial theory and identity politics intersect, both challenging dominant power structures and seeking to empower marginalised communities. Colonialism established enduring racial and cultural hierarchies, shaping contemporary notions of identity. Postcolonial theory disrupts these hierarchies by centring the experiences and agency of colonised peoples in shaping their identities. Identity politics extends this by advocating for the inclusion of marginalised groups in decision-making processes.

These concepts—colonialism, postcolonial theory, and identity politics—inform our understanding of power dynamics, identity formation, and political discourse. They challenge the historical marginalisation and misrepresentation of underrepresented communities, fostering a more inclusive and equitable society. A thorough understanding of these interconnected concepts is essential for the objectives of this research.

Unpacking Colonialism: Definitions, Impacts, and the Imperative of Decolonisation

When discussing colonialism, a clear definition is essential, as it is a term thoroughly used in this research. Said (1993) and van Beurden (2018) define *colonialism* as establishing settlements on foreign lands as a consequence of imperialism, through which the coloniser exploits natural resources and human capital for economic gain. As described by Said, Imperialism involves a metropolitan centre's dominance over a foreign territory. Ashcroft et al. (1998) suggest that Said's definition exemplifies cultural appropriation facilitated by Europe's historical expansion through imperialism in its colonies (Ashcroft et al., 1998; Van Beurden, 2018; Allen & Jobson, 2016). Additionally, colonialism represents European expansion overseas by imposing Western ideology onto the colony's society in the guise of representing "civilisation" (Aldrich, 2010; Bennett, 1995). This Western discourse persists today and is reflected in the nostalgia for colonial greatness expressed by former colonisers (Van Huis, 2019).

The issue of colonialism impacts a country's self-perceptions as it grapples with its historical legacy and the contemporary political system perpetuating racist structures stemming from that

colonial past. Colonialism influences former colonies, European modernity, and immigration, extending into political realms such as migration, thereby igniting discussions about decolonisation in politics and the media (Gruber, 2019; Van Huis, 2019).

Decolonisation involves compelling and dismantling all expressions of colonial power while deconstructing the power structures developed during the colonial era. Embedded within this process are elements of cultural and institutional powers entrenched in colonial discourse. Institutions such as museums have historically perpetuated a Western-centric perspective that glorifies Western nations while exoticising others, often neglecting their contemporary cultural realities (Turunen, 2019; Volkenkunde Museum, 2020; Ashcroft et al., 1998; Allen & Jobson, 2016). Thus, decolonisation requires a critical examination of European discourses and strategies from a position of privilege, exploring the mechanisms through which Europe imposed and perpetuated its colonial dominance (Tiffin, 2006, p. 95).

According to Ashcroft et al. (1998), globalisation, intertwined with the global economy and political autonomy, does not automatically lead to decolonisation. Colonisers can maintain control over colonies, delaying granting independence to colonised nations until they establish an elite class that preserves aspects of colonial control without the associated financial costs or humiliation. However, the dominance of Western education, language, and culture persists from the colonial paradigm over Indigenous languages and cultures (Ashcroft et al., 1998, pp. 57-58). To present a more comprehensive understanding of decolonisation, Indigenous knowledge, epistemologies, and ontologies as fundamental elements of the decolonial discourse, challenging established Western paradigms and envisioning alternative futures must be acknowledged and provided a platform (Turunen, 2019; Ashcroft et al., 1998).

Decoloniality expands decolonisation by re-examining historical and cultural domains, aiming for change, freedom, and the future while fostering inclusivity and representation (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2019; Turunen, 2019). It dismantles hegemonic control over resources and human capital in former colonies, eliminates colonial classifications and racial justifications for objects, and addresses historical injustices of colonial conflict, promoting social cohesion and advancing identity and nationhood (Allen & Jobson, 2016; Van Beurden, 2018).

It is crucial to recognise that colonialism and the need to reshape global power structures are challenges that are not quickly resolved. Decolonisation is an ongoing and urgent process originating from a long-standing movement to liberate colonies from political and epistemological suppression (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2019; Hanock, 2015; Van Beurden, 2018; Allen & Jobson, 2016; Tiffin, 2006). The complete recreation of national or regional identities (like those of Suriname and Indonesia and their respective diasporas) free from historical ties to the European colonial system is impossible (Ashcroft et al., 1998; Tiffin, 2006).

Unveiling Layers: Postcolonial Theory's Role in Decolonising Institutions and Challenging Eurocentrism

Postcolonial theory is integral to the decolonising of institutions, as it enables exploration of the multifaceted layers of colonialism, thereby aiding in the identification of underlying issues. Originating in the 1970s, postcolonial studies provide a comprehensive framework that extends beyond the post-independence era, encompassing colonisation's political, linguistic, and cultural ramifications and the cultural exchange within colonial societies. The theory critically analyses former European colonies, such as Suriname and Indonesia, colonial institutions, and the colonial governance system through historical, political, sociological, and economic lenses. It examines and challenges colonial discourse, explores the reactions and impacts of colonialism and resistance in pre- and postcolonial societies, and advocates for decolonisation. Moreover, it addresses structural ideologies, cultural frameworks, and representations stemming from Western imperialism, such as Eurocentrism, to highlight global development and challenge the dichotomy of First—and Third-World ideologies (Ashcroft, 2006; Painter, 2015).

In order to gain a deeper understanding, it is crucial to define the term "colonial discourse." In this context, discourse refers to a collection of coexisting and sequential interconnected linguistic actions occurring within social understanding. It represents a framework of articulated statements shaping the perspective through which the world is perceived. In society, this system is predominantly controlled by those in power, who define the parameters of truth and impose particular knowledge, disciplines, and values (Ashcroft et al., 1998; Wodak & Reisigl, 2015).

Colonial discourse exemplifies the intertwined relationship between power and knowledge, with those in power dictating what is recognised and how it is perceived, exerting control over others. This interrelation between knowledge and power is particularly evident in the colonial system, especially in the interplay between the coloniser and the colonised within colonial discourse. It encompasses the intricate web of symbols and actions that shape social life and perpetuate colonial dynamics, all under the influence of Eurocentric ideology. Colonial discourse offers an essential framework by highlighting that all interpretations of colonialism are rooted in and navigate a shared discursive environment shaped by the colonial system (Ashcroft et al., 1998; Wodak & Reisigl, 2015).

Postcolonial theory primarily focuses on the epistemology and representation of minority groups, particularly within the humanities and social sciences, and on themes of exile and displacement. Its distinctive aspect lies in its political stance, marked by an overarching rejection of all forms of nationalism while simultaneously embracing migration, liminality, hybridity, and multiculturalism. Its central aim is decolonisation, which involves confronting historical legacies and addressing the contemporary cultural impacts of colonialism on postcolonial nations (Painter, 2015, pp. 366-69).

The term "postcolonial" encompasses a collective of individuals who have experienced oppression or expressed dissent rather than referring to a specific geographical location or social structure. The postcolonial theory argues that the colonial process profoundly modified the metropolis and the "colony" besides being restructured by decolonisation. Hence, the critique within postcolonial theory predominantly revolves around the experiences of individuals, particular locales, and institutions, making it a subjective pursuit (Loomba, 2015, p. 17). Therefore, examining colonialism requires investigating the classifications developed to comprehend 'capitalism' and its structured hierarchy of classes. These categorisations examine the interconnectedness of culture, ideology, and economics (Loomba, 2015, p. 24).

Critics argue that theorists in Western academia hold a privileged and dominant position, mainly because postcolonial theory has moved away from Marxist classicists' emphasis on material inequalities stemming from global capitalism's expansion between the First and Third worlds. Instead, it has embraced Foucauldian discourse and post-structuralist concerns with wandering facts and representation. This shift has led to overlooking capitalism's foundational role in expanding and maintaining European power. Additionally, by predominantly focusing on culturalism and Eurocentrism, critical aspects of capitalism's influence are disregarded (Geeta & Nair, 2013; Painter, 2015; Ashcroft et al., 2006).

Class is an essential concern within postcolonial discourse, as it shapes the perspectives of colonisers toward various groups and categories of colonised people. Nevertheless, the extent to which class was used to classify colonised societies without undergoing substantial changes to adjust their cultural distinctions from Europe remains unclear. Moreover, Western ideologies regarding class and race were deeply intertwined during this period, complicating efforts to associate the inequities, injustices, exclusions, and oppressions found in postcolonial societies solely with class dynamics (Ashcroft et al., 1998, pp. 33-34).

Furthermore, the dependency theory counterbalances the neglect of class theory and discussions regarding the First and Third world within the postcolonial paradigm. This theory, situated within postcolonial discourse, critiques world system theory and modernisation theory by examining the exploitation of colonised "Third World" nations through a historical lens. It argues that underdevelopment in these countries is not an internal fault but a consequence of their colonial past, which has hindered their independent development. Thus, underdevelopment is a preposition of the structural conditions of dominant global capitalism itself. In this way, the dependency theory exposes the ethnocentric bias inherent in modernisation theory. However, it is criticised for presenting "a static analysis of the relationship between developed and underdeveloped states" (Ashcroft et al., 1998, pp. 59-60).

When discussing colonialism and post-colonialism, the term nation is an important concept. The nation can be defined as an ideology, often characterised as a shared community, as described by

Benedict Anderson as an "imagined community." This notion has empowered postcolonial societies to cultivate a sense of self and break free from imperialist oppression. According to Franz Fanon, a nation embodies a national culture, encompassing the collective efforts of its people to express, validate, and honour their actions in constructing and preserving their identity (Ashcroft et al., 2006, p. 151). Furthermore, a nation can be seen as an unchangeable national construct rooted in shared collective principles. It upholds nationalism, where identifiers foster exclusive and uniform notions of national traditions. This can lead to a lack of representation to showcase the diversity within the nation since there is no space for other ideologies except for the hegemonic one within the nation. Therefore, the nation's construction serves as a means of control and dominance within society (Ashcroft et al., 1998, pp. 135-36). Fanon also recalls the dangers of nationalism since it can lead to the pursuit of hegemonic power, prejudiced views on identity, and demands obligatory national loyalty (Ashcroft et al., 2006, p. 151).

Another term often associated with colonialism, *imperialism*, is defined as establishing an empire and a strategic policy to acquire colonies for economic, strategic, and political purposes. It is often associated with the global spread of European influence (Ashcroft et al., 1998, pp. 111-112). Neo-colonialism is considered similar to imperialism, defined as 'new colonialism'. It entails that formerly colonised nations or developing 'Third World' economies, despite achieving political independence, need to establish an independent economic and political identity amidst the pressures of globalisation. Thus, they remain under the influence of former colonial powers and other Western nations through their dominant position in the cultures and economies of the former colonies. This influence is through various means of indirect control, such as international financial institutions, powerful multinational corporations, and cartels that manipulate prices in global markets and through the activities of educational and cultural Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).

Globalism is the phenomenon of global economic and cultural influences affecting individuals and local communities. In the twentieth century, globalisation has reshaped the dynamics of global social interactions, leading to a diminishing significance of the 'nation'. Individuals and communities now have access to globally shared knowledge and culture, and they are increasingly influenced by economic forces that extend beyond their state's boundaries, leading to a more interconnected world. Critics of globalisation argue that capitalist power structures underpin and perpetuate the global cultural and economic landscape. In postcolonial theory, globalisation is significant as it highlights the framework of global power dynamics, which persists into the modern era as a legacy of Western imperialism. Post-Second World War globalisation has seen the evolution of imperialism into supra-national operations encompassing economics, communications, and culture.

Moreover, how local communities engage with the influences of globalisation echoes the historical interactions and assimilation of imperial dominance experienced by colonised societies. Thus, it is argued that global culture continues the imperial dynamic of influence, control,

dissemination, and hegemony, rooted in a power structure that emerged through imperialism and remained centred in the West. Nevertheless, globalisation can be used as a social change and representation tool, enabling local communities and marginalised interest groups to empower themselves and influence those global systems (Ashcroft et al., 1998, pp. 100-103).

Another essential aspect of imperialism is Eurocentrism, referring to the discourse that collectively views Europe as the hegemonic centre of civilisation, considering it superior to the "Other" regions, often deemed "primitive." It positions Europe as the most advanced within the historical hierarchy and perceives its "Western values" as universal, enduring, uniform, and dignified. This narrative often traces back to imperialism, serving as justification for colonialism and Europe's endeavours in exploration, conquest, and trade. Over time, this discourse expanded to encompass the "West," including Western Europe and North America (Ashcroft et al., 1998; Xyploa, 2016; Geeta & Nair, 2013).

"Othering" serves as a mechanism to highlight distinctions, labelling non-Europeans as "primitives" and "others," often equating them with childlike attributes, such as an inability to manage emotions or engage in logical thinking. This justifies not embracing their perspective, allowing for the dismissal and preservation of one's cultural viewpoints and reinforcing notions of superiority, leading to a reluctance to question the legitimacy of the society's formation and a lack of interest in learning or understanding the colonised cultures (Janmohammed, 2006; Bhatia, 2002). "Othering" frequently emphasises physical attributes, contributing to the construction of the ideology surrounding body and race, which eventually evolved into prejudice and racism. This phenomenon was often driven by economic motives or the desire to control indigenous populations in colonial territories. Ashcroft et al. argue that imperialism simplifies the rich spectrum of ethnic diversity, racial blending, and cultural distinctiveness into a binary concept mirroring power dynamics (Ashcroft et al., 1998)

Another term that is linked to imperialism is Orientalism (Xyploa, 2016). According to Said (2006), "the Orient" is depicted as a man-made "European invention," whereby the East is perceived as oriental, romanticised and exoticised (Said, 2006, p. 87). Orientalism still influences institutions today and needs consideration (Bhatia, 2002, p. 37). Said argued that the Western world functions as a "cultural archive", justifying colonialism from a Eurocentric perspective. Europe propagated through its immaterial heritage and cultural production, including acquiring art and establishing museums (Said, 2006; Ashcroft et al., 1998; Smeulders, 2023).

Studying Orientalism is essential to comprehend the systematic control through which European culture governed and constructed the Orient during the post-Enlightenment era. The concept was implemented in museums to showcase the West's superiority. The Orient is a manipulative tool to maintain the imagery of the West's power and superiority, often including stereotypical caricatures, simplifying complex societies to portray them as primitive and insignificant, reflecting the West's Orientalist viewpoint towards Eastern cultures (Said, 2006; Geeta & Nair, 2013; Bloembergen, 2004,

p. 14). Stereotyping involves reducing something or someone to a manageable form and distinguishing between the 'self' and others (Loomba, 2015, pp. 59-60).

Postcolonial theory is integral to museums' decolonisation efforts as it provides a comprehensive framework to explore the multifaceted layers of colonialism. It enables museums to identify and challenge the underlying issues of colonial discourse, power, and knowledge (Ashcroft, 2006; Wodak & Reisigl, 2015). By critically analysing the colonial past and its ongoing impacts, the museums discussed in the case studies can confront historical legacies and promote a more inclusive and accurate representation of history.

Intersecting Identities: Exploring Identity Politics in Museums and Colonialism

Decolonisation often intertwines with themes of identity politicisation, where societal discourse shapes identity as an ongoing process subject to constant renewal, validation, or alteration. As a social and political movement, identity politics advocates for the interests of distinct communities, emphasising ethnic and cultural differences (Oostindie, 2011, p. 14). Therefore, identity politics includes political and academic discussions regarding collective identity and the principles of identity in social, cultural and ideological aspects. Discussing collective identity in terms of ethnicity often clashes with its position or entitlement to existence within society. Identity Politics Theory examines how ideologies are constructed within marginalised groups (Bernstein, 2005, p. 68), emphasising the role of the cultural environment in shaping collective action and the availability of legitimate cultural resources (Williams, 2004, p. 91).

Solomon claims that identity politics appeal to authenticity and difference, justifying the challenge to dominant representations in ethnic or racist terms due to its essentialist nature (Solomos, 1998, p. 52). Fraser's perspective divides identity politics between cultural politics of recognition and social politics of justice and equality, potentially overlooking interconnected socioeconomic injustices rooted in political-economic structures and cultural and symbolic injustices embedded in representation, interpretation, and communication patterns (Fraser, 2014).

Conversely, Williams argues that identity politics tends to isolate culture from institutions, politics, and economics, neglecting its role in shaping and constraining these institutions. Furthermore, the cultural context plays a significant role in enabling and constraining collective action. Culture intersects with institutionalised values, serving as an integrative and expressive force that defines boundaries for legitimate social action. Movements for social change often operate within socially accepted norms and values, leveraging culture to effect transformative change (Williams, 2004, pp. 98-99). Blee views identity politics as a strategic collective action aimed at transforming institutions, cultures, and their categories, values, and ideologies (Blee, 2002). Brown highlights that culture and

identity groups often emerge from marginalisation, with dominant groups controlling the state and exerting increased social regulation on marginalised groups (Brown, 2020).

When discussing collective identity in the sense of nationality, it assumes a feeling of connection or belonging, as Benedict Anderson recalls, 'an imagined community'. This sense of identity can be depicted within cultural concepts, often leading to shared history and cultural heritage showcased in museums that symbolise and help construct the community identity.

Nevertheless, the nation's ideologies influence identity, further impacted by national symbols establishing criteria for outlining cultural distinctions within the country. Within this, discussions are held regarding multiculturalism and how this affects or contributes to national identity. National identity can also be termed 'patriotism' or 'nationalism,' influencing domestic, foreign, social, and political policies. These expressions vary based on individuals' associations with their national identity, which can evoke support and feelings of alienation or resistance (Oostindie, 2011; Kaplan, 2006; Crooke, 2006). In order to create a multicultural society, the discussion of what identity stands for and how it might change is vital, as well as the efforts from all sectors of society to develop proper policies and adapt social relationships. It can be seen as problematic since it can influence the disassembling and recreating of public identities (Modood, 2010, pp. 155-156).

Identity politics is interrelated to museums since it revolves around nation-states and their portrayal of invented traditions through state institutions like museums. Furthermore, museums are observed as a form of identity expression due to their selection of cultural objects that showcase traditional and material representations. This process identifies and verifies identities, thereby also enabling ethnic groups to showcase a more comprehensive visibility of their identity, which grants them enhanced political rights, autonomy, or national status. Nevertheless, many identities remain underrepresented or "fixed" within museums, limiting their analysis and leading to the "museumification" of specific identities. Despite museums being the primary source for visitors to explore non-traditional identities, their biased and discursive representation hinders a comprehensive understanding of post-national, transcultural, or 'hybrid' identities (Kaplan, 2006; Crooke, 2006; Macdonald, 2006; Macdonald, 2012).

Ethnonationalism complicates the representation of sub-national identities or 'national' identities within museums. While global movement, migration, and communication technologies have enabled the evolution of non-territorial identities, their political and economic legitimacy within museums remains questionable (Macdonald, 2012, p. 5). Identity politics often excludes marginalised groups, flattening and oversimplifying identities in what is termed "identity reductionism" (Soares, 2018; Hancock, 2015). The museum's display of cultural differences reinforces the notion that cultural differences are categorical and objectify national identities, perpetuating underlying assumptions presented through the displayed objects (Macdonald, 2012, pp. 3-4).

Using the identity politics theory as an analytical framework provides a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationships between experience, culture, identity, politics, and power. It sheds light on the representation and recognition of political and institutional structures, elucidating the cognitive and cultural processes in shaping group identities. Furthermore, it helps clarify group behaviour and conflict, which are influenced by underlying psychological assumptions regarding the construction and influence of social identity. Since the construction of social identity involves cultural interpretations and is influenced by societal and political discourses, it contributes to the analysis of critical discourse (Bernstein, 2005; Krzyżanowski, 2010). Therefore, identity politics is essential within this research since it showcases the representation and ideology the museum looks through by presenting different identities of minorities of the Indonesian and Surinamese communities within the exhibition of colonialism and whether this representation has also been decolonised.

2.1.2 Decolonising Museum Practices

Central to decolonising the museum are the twin pillars of museum ethics and new museology. These interconnected concepts play a pivotal role in shaping the very fabric of museums in society. Museum ethics, for instance, ensure the ethical operation of museums, placing a strong emphasis on the display of the past and taking clear stances on ethical matters. On the other hand, new museology integrates various disciplines related to culture and politics, contributing to critiques of museums and underscoring their social function and engagement with diverse audiences.

Furthermore, by decolonising itself, the museum addresses the topics of commemoration, memorialisation, and identity politics while using postcolonial theories, prompting museums to ensure inclusivity and diverse representation. These concepts promote social change and progress by making museums people-centric and proactive in engaging with contemporary society through exhibitions and participatory initiatives. Together, they shape museums' role in society and their capacity to drive social change and progress.

The Rise of Museum Ethics

Museums serve as crucial agents in addressing the colonial past and navigating identity politics. They are instrumental in societal debates, fostering understanding among diverse cultures and facilitating conflict resolution while asserting ethical standards (Morales & Camarena, 2018; Soares, 2018). According to the International Council of Museums (ICOM) and UNESCO, museums play a pivotal role in acquiring, conserving, and exhibiting humanity's heritage while promoting education and enjoyment (ICOM Nederland, n.d.). However, formulating an "official definition" can inadvertently reinforce a European-centric perspective, potentially overlooking minority groups (Brown J, 2018; Brulon & Nazor, 2018). In response, there has been a shift towards democratising

pluralism and inclusivity in museum ethics, aligning with the United Nations' definition of a democratic museum as "a set of values and principles that should be followed for greater participation, equality, security and human development" (UN; Bosello & van den Haak, 2022; Marstine, 2011). Marstine argues that "democratic pluralism, shared authority and social justice" are distinguishable through confluent extents of policy and practice that state the socially responsible museum. Museums adapt their ethics through action groups, reflecting on their impact and striving for inclusivity (Marstine, 2011, pp. 10-14). This evolution underscores the museum's social obligations within interpersonal relationships, urging recognition of moral responsibilities to diverse communities. Ethical considerations guide museums through complex decisions, balancing conflicting priorities and differentiating public service from personal or political interests (Besterman, 2006; Marstine, 2011).

The museum ethics are regarded as an opportunity for development since they showcase understanding to sustain museum employees in making proper choices that improve the museum. Museum ethics discourse originated in 1925, when the American Association of Museums (AAM) introduced ethics codes, providing guidelines for proper demeanour and obligations within institutions, distinguishing between ethical principles and applied ethics (Marstine, 2011, pp. 4-7).

The International Council of Museums (ICOM), a non-governmental organisation, plays a crucial role in shaping museum ethics, involving 140 member countries guiding the principles of museum ethics (Kaplan, 2006, pp. 163-164). ICOM employs principles and guidelines, known as the Code of Ethics for museums, to fulfil its global role. This Code serves as a professional conduct guideline, a soft law, or a legal obligation, and it functions as a tool to implement international legal instruments safeguarding cultural heritage (Garlandini, 2018, pp. 169-171). ICOM influences knowledge production and shapes the global decision-making of government-funded museums closely tied to their respective communities (Soares, 2018, p. 167). Gardalini (2018) notes that ICOM shapes government policies beyond museums, underlining its global responsibilities. However, ICOM's role does not influence academic or theoretical museum discussions (Garlandini, 2018, pp. 174-75).

Soares (2018) highlights that the organisation's Eurocentric origin influences its practice, although efforts are made to address this bias (Soares, 2018, p. 167). The Code emphasises making museums accessible to all segments of society while catering to the interests of professional and educated visitors, often resulting in the exclusion of various communities (Brown J, 2018, p. 120). However, ethics codes can occasionally be updated according to changing conditions, shared values, and ideologies. Furthermore, the ICOM Code and the Museums Association Code obligate museums to validate that any object's origin has a "valid title" for purchase, loan, inheritance, or exchange. This means thoroughly documenting the origin of objects to prevent the illegal acquisition of artefacts (Besterman, 2006, pp. 435-440).

Besides ICOM, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) plays a crucial role in museum guidelines, collaborating with ICOM on issues like the

"Protection and Promotion of Museums and Collections". This collaboration enhances the recognition of the museum's significance in preserving, researching, communicating, and educating about cultural heritage (Garlandini, 2018, pp. 169-170).

When considering the museum's identity, it is crucial to recognise that collections are formed through interactions among the creators of the objects, collectors, and present-day museums. Curators manage collections, drawing upon their expertise and enthusiasm, which may intersect with private collecting practices or market consultancy if collections are accessible to visitors. Preserving the collection as part of the public domain is an ethical obligation of the public museum to maintain societal trust. With this, the curators are the 'gatekeepers' ensuring public access (Besterman, 2006, pp. 433-439).

Transparency is a key aspect of ethical museum policies. They should align with the museum sector's Code of Ethics. An ethical museum strives to be considerate and inclusive, aiming to prevent misinterpretation while fostering mutual understanding and trust among diverse cultures, thereby contributing to societal well-being. Moreover, it serves as a space where narrative truth and factual accuracy are cultivated and openly discussed. Ethical museums raise questions regarding the balance, perspective, and assumptions underlying cultural ideas. The ethical museum can showcase prejudice, deceit, or ignorance within a carefully interpreted context that allows visitors to understand the societal harm they can cause (Besterman, 2006, pp. 438-441).

At the institutional level, clear organisational values grounded in ethics are vital, with staff expected to adhere to them, determining the museum's ethical integrity. Prioritising the museum's public interest over personal interests should be essential. National-level committees within the museum sector's profession review ethical violations, offering guidance for resolution, which may include formal procedures and the potential membership removal from professional associations (Besterman, 2006, pp. 438-441).

Decolonising museums in the context of Indonesia and Suriname, as seen through the exhibitions of the Wereldmuseum Amsterdam, The Haags Historisch Museum, and the Sophiahof Museum, demonstrates the application of evolving museum ethics and the push for democratic pluralism and inclusivity.

Navigating the Theory of New Museology: Ethics, Inclusivity, and Community Engagement

In the realm of museology, an essential factor for promoting inclusivity is the implementation of museum ethics. Moreover, museology and postcolonialism contribute to museum critiques by focusing on their foundational values, such as their social function, integration efforts, and engagement with diverse audiences, empowering minority groups to redefine historical narratives and promoting active citizen participation (Brown & Mairesse, 2018; Morais & de Souza, 2018; Soares,

2018). Brulon and Leshchenko (2018) define *museology* as a political and power-structured territory of knowledge shaped by organised actors and geopolitical aims (Brulon & Leshchenko, 2018, pp. 67–69). Museology has evolved by integrating various disciplines intersecting culture and politics, including (art) history, sociology, and cultural studies, while influenced by Foucauldian cultural theory (Kreps, 2008).

Within museology, "poetics" and "politics" are essential terms. "Poetics" refers to "the practice of producing meaning through the internal ordering and conjugation of an exhibition's separate but related components," encompassing how museums utilise specific representative approaches to assert authenticity and imitate reality. The term "politics" confines "the role of the exhibitions or museums in producing social knowledge," showcasing how interpretation through the lens of new museology helps conceptualise how meanings of specific objects evolve through their connections to other objects or through narrative choices within a given display or collection and how those meanings may alter with shifts in context or over time (Mason, 2006, pp. 20-21).

Museums aim to differentiate themselves from cultural institutions via thematic specialisation. Influenced by these strategies and market-driven criteria, museums must navigate institutional hybridisation, which aims to improve the museum's position within the regional and international cultural markets. This interrelates with the museum's management and administration system to maintain relevance while adapting to evolving societal values. Consequently, this may replace previously prevailing normative objectives like artistic, national, or aesthetic considerations. Moreover, the internationalisation of museum management has diminished the relevance of regional museums, as historical distinctions based on national or regional identities have become less significant. There has been a simultaneous increase in museum models prioritising corporate capital interests, accompanied by the gradual privatisation of museums as they become integrated into commercial and urban event culture. This mainly occurs in European countries, including the Netherlands, where state funding for culture has decreased drastically, prompting regional cultural policies to increasingly adopt public-private models similar to those in Britain, Canada, and the United States. This progress aligns with globalism since it illustrates the coexisting emergence of conflicting discourses concerning the museum's representation in postcolonial societies and the influences reshaping its institutional framework (Rectanus, 2006, pp. 385-386).

Moreover, social change has influenced museums' ethical perspectives, shifting their decision-making, planning, programming, and orientation towards appropriate actions, representation, and inclusion (Besterman, 2006, p. 431). However, institutional bureaucracies, funding constraints, and commitments to everyday routine have led to a cumulative shift within the museum, deviating from the general ideology necessary to maintain the values of shared authority and foster social understanding among diverse communities. While changes within museums are observable, they are mainly through exhibitions rather than altering the museum's entire collection and aesthetic.

Consequently, ethical considerations contribute to variations in how museums approach their representation (Marstine, 2011, pp. 4-7). Their stakeholders range from local audiences to source communities abroad and from public funding bodies to private sponsors. To fulfil their obligations to these stakeholders, museums must navigate competing demands. Nevertheless, the museum should extend beyond simply being responsive to its stakeholders since museums function as arenas for creative interaction, where conventional values and orthodoxies can be challenged (Besterman, 2006, pp. 435-436).

As legal entities, museums may trigger various demands from communities aiming to establish their own institutions. However, this could hinder acknowledging museums founded by marginalised communities as legitimate by governmental authorities. Museums usually operate as non-profits, often government-funded. Nevertheless, those without funding may resort to commercialised approaches, disregarding their identity and aim within the collections. This is especially true for marginalised groups that are challenging long-term sustainability (Morales & Camarena, 2018; Soares, 2018).

The new form of museology (New Museology) emphasises museums becoming people-centric and proactive. It is dedicated to fostering social change and progress, closely intertwining with museum ethics, seeking to democratise museums and their practices. Therefore, it encourages collaboration between museums and communities, fostering greater appreciation and relevance (Kreps, 2008). The social dimension is viewed as vital to society, prompting them to move beyond symbolic roles and actively engage with contemporary society through exhibitions, events, and participatory initiatives (Brown & Mairesse, 2018, p. 533). Consequently, the dynamic interaction between the community and the museum—whether through the museum's efforts to enhance community engagement or through community groups' heightened interest in heritage activities—sparks an examination of its objectives and outcomes and sheds light on its societal role (Crooke, 2006, pp. 170-172).

When it comes to local and community histories, the museum should prioritise acknowledging rather than solely emphasising the grand narratives typically presented in national museums. The community has emerged as a vital stakeholder, actively participating in community networks, advocating for access and inclusion, and representing diverse interests. Heritage and museum endeavours are integral to their social and political expressions. The term "community", which has replenished "public" and "visitor", signifies the museum's aspiration to provide a more inclusive and relevant experience while trying to unite and revitalise the community by adjusting its policy. These principles resonate with ongoing museological discussions concerning social responsibility, equity, and democracy (Crooke, 2006, pp. 170-172). Museum ethics emphasises the significance of community involvement within museum spaces. By advocating for participatory methodologies in development, the new museology strives for collaboration between professionals

and community stakeholders (Kreps, 2008; Besterman, 2006). Enabling "community curators" through community participation enhances their skills and potential, ultimately benefiting both the museum and the community by fostering greater appreciation, value, trust, and recognition among the museum audience and the community. It often results in museums increasing their value and relevance and offering a more welcoming service.

Furthermore, it enables the museum to self-reflect, reach new audiences and reaffirm the role of museums in modern society. Additionally, community engagement preserves local identities and enables social and developmental functions. Simultaneously, it leads to expressing interest in establishing their own museums and exhibitions to underscore the significance of marginalised historical representation, fostering group capacity building and empowerment, and moving away from the dominant narrative (Crooke, 2006, pp. 182-83).

Thus, museums serve as custodians of intergenerational equity, transcending local and national boundaries. They are also arenas for dynamic interaction, where conventional values can be challenged, and societal well-being fostered (Besterman, 2006).

However, there is apprehension about the casual incorporation of the term "community" into policies or its deployment as a mere label for social programs. This occasionally creates a superficially progressive and symmetrical appearance rather than fully integrating it into the comprehensive approach. Therefore, the term "community" should influence political change and increase democratic processes (Crooke, 2006, pp. 170-171). Furthermore, tensions persist between the museum sector and its community involvement. One of the museum's ethical goals within inclusivity is reconfiguring the hierarchy of interpreting and representing history and identity. This underscores the necessity of external intervention or review, as it is unrealistic to represent the entire community comprehensively. Nevertheless, this raises concerns about the equity of authority between the community and museum experts (Crooke, 2006, pp. 183-184).

The museums discussed in the case studies aim to promote inclusivity and social understanding by incorporating postcolonial perspectives and engaging with diverse communities. However, challenges remain in fully integrating these perspectives into the broader institutional framework. Ethical considerations and continued collaboration with community stakeholders are essential to achieving the goals of new museology and fostering dynamic interactions that challenge conventional values and promote societal well-being.

Reclaiming Narratives, Redefining Identities

Understanding colonialism as a comprehensive system that shaped modern national identities and values is crucial for understanding how history's 'acceleration' and 'democratisation' emerged as the cultural model following the end of the national colonial order (Sauvage, 2010, p. 100). The

handling, display, and interpretation of material culture by museums raise complex issues surrounding "representation" and "ownership," emphasising the significance of cultural values beyond tangible artefacts. Museums can mirror, honour, and cultivate the human intellect, embracing diverse perspectives in observing, studying, and understanding the world. By promoting social change, museums can adopt an inclusive, transparent, and non-assumptive approach (Besterman, 2006, p. 440).

When considering decolonisation, the museum needs to examine its role in cultural identity and consider returning colonial collections (Roque, 2020, pp. 55-62). Adjusting historical exhibitions as a means for change and contextualising earlier selected collections allow museums to regain their roles and engage visitors in a different interpretation (Sauvage, 2010; Harrison, 2011). Furthermore, changing the museum's name could contribute to decolonisation if the name originates from figures or terms fitting colonial discourse (Chwatal, 2018). Decolonising the museum aims to redefine its purpose by considering the influence of visitors and other stakeholders and distancing it from its colonial discourse. Nevertheless, it is a complex process due to the challenges of determining accountability among those responsible and the influence exerted by various museum stakeholders (Gruber, 2019, p. 240). The shift from the anthropological perspective within museums and the departure from a predominant academic framework for ethnographic exhibitions suggests a transfer of authority from curatorial teams to professional managers and administrators. This shift towards managerial oversight in museums is associated with an "audit culture," marked by implementing policies to improve accountability and perceived transparency within institutions while prioritising responsiveness to stakeholders (Shelton, 2006, p. 76). Through the museum's decolonisation, there would be sufficient space to research and reflect while taking responsibility for its role in keeping the collective memory of colonialism alive (Gruber, 2019, p. 240).

Decolonisation enables the museum to enhance its capacity to meet the public's needs by offering opportunities for direct involvement in shaping the museum's content, character, and values, thereby influencing its outcomes. An example is when museums started actively advocating for inclusive programs and engaging in co-curatorship with Indigenous communities toward the end of the 20th century. This transformative approach led museums to assume a "dynamic" role, creating new exhibitions and expanding anthropological perspectives within museological discourse (Roque, 2020, p. 55).

The museum plays a pivotal role in decolonisation as it is considered an educational institution partly representing national history (Rydell, 2006, p. 135). In addressing decolonisation in museums, it is crucial to understand the connection between colonialism and museums. Its related disciplines, such as archaeology and ethnography, continue to influence museum representation with a Eurocentric perspective (Bennett, 1995; Said, 1978; Foley, 2000). This underscores the importance of the museum's active participation in the decolonisation process.

Ethnographic museums are particularly problematic and require prioritisation in their transformation and decolonisation since they originate from anthropological analysis based on first-hand observation through fieldwork and documentation of a community's lifestyle, focusing on documenting the differences in customs and behaviours within people's society. Therefore, anthropology contributed to the colonial discourse, as it initially focused on comparing European culture through forms of Darwinism to other cultures worldwide (Ashcroft et al., 1998; Gruber, 2020). Decolonising museums involves removing colonial categorisation and racial justification while returning objects to former colonies (Hancock, 2015, p. 5). Roque (2020) highlights the Eurocentric identity of early museums from the late 18th century. These museums used colonial discourse to categorise collections and narratives, legitimising Western superiority and indirectly substantiating the colonial and racial system through biased viewpoints (Roque, 2020; Foley, 2000; Hancock, 2015; Rydell, 2006; Drieënhuizen, 2023; Bennett, 1995). Moreover, museums must reassess their chronological evolutionary presentation to further decolonisation efforts, as objects are often portrayed within a chronological framework of evolutionary development detached from their original context, perpetuating colonial narratives of humanity's history (Sauvage, 2010; Roque, 2020). This historical emphasis on evolution and technological progress reflects a Western cultural hierarchy.

Furthermore, museums' portrayal of other cultures often objectifies national identities, legitimising facts through object presentation (Roque, 2020; Bennett, 1988; Macdonald, 2012). Museum terminology and labels derived from colonial discourse reflect the perspective of 'elite' European society, reinforcing the notion of superior competence in object conservation and display. This indirectly influences visitor understanding and necessitates revisions to outdated descriptions (Gruber, 2020; Foley, 2000; Roque, 2020; Turunen, 2019; Dalal-Clayton, 2020). A decolonisation strategy could involve displaying objects and images with accompanying scripts highlighting the collector's societal positioning and colonial ideology associated with the objects' sourcing (Drieënhuizen, 2023; Kunst, 2018; Rydell, 2006).

A key strategy in decolonising museums is to reposition collections of the colonial past in new interpretative frameworks, collaborating with communities represented in these collections. This collaboration can transform museums into 'contact zones,' where diverse communities intersect, engage, and mutually influence each other through interaction (Mason, 2006; Roque, 2020).

A way to establish decolonisation is to research former colonisers and their (art) institutions holding onto colonial objects with significant historical and cultural significance for their former colonies. As set out in the 2002 Declaration of the Importance and Value of Universal Museums, prominent European museums will adapt their collections to remove any form of racism (Van Beurden, 2018, p. 77). Museums should engage in decolonisation from a critical perspective when considering the representation of history in contemporary society, as inclusivity emerges as a key concern in the decolonisation of museums (Foley, 2000; Janes & Sandell, 2019).

Decolonising entails rethinking heritage to address power dynamics and promote equality, confronting the modern order through discourse and challenging colonialism's silencing by activating non-Eurocentric cultural archives and giving voice to experiences and memories that have been marginalised or erased (Vázquez, 2020, pp. 8-14). Turunen suggests exploring how colonial discourse profoundly influenced existing cultures, societies, and national identities. By actively involving their predominantly white audiences, museums can promote historical accuracy and challenge the notion that Europe holds sway over the rest of the world (Turunen, 2019, p. 1013).

Decolonisation explores the active involvement of museums in shaping discussions on colonial collections, mirroring political purposes. Objects are considered world heritage and belong to everyone, and notions of rescue and preservation often justify their transfer to Western museums (Roque, 200, pp. 56-64).

It is essential to question the origin of the objects by observing the museum from a critical and open perspective and simultaneously recognising forms of colonialism (Hancock, 2015, p. 5), as objects collections reflect the unequal relationships formed by the colonial power, which assumes that force could have been included. Moreover, collecting objects was not merely a cultural pursuit but a strategic means of control over the colony's culture and religion. This was evident in the profits derived from these objects and resources, which underscored the political nature of such collections. Collecting objects simultaneously asserted hierarchical status and political power, with the objects often serving as trophies (Ter Keurs, 2009, pp. 147-56). Hence, the colonial legacy of museums, their objects, and their decolonisation efforts serve as reminders of the ties between historical violence during colonisation and its current portrayal as a form of colonial engagement (Gruber, 2020; Roque, 2020).

By reinterpreting collections, engaging with communities, and promoting inclusivity, the museums discussed in the case studies are actively working to address their colonial legacies and foster a more accurate and equitable representation of history.

2.1.3 The Exhibition as the Carrier of Meaning

One of the museums' primary challenges is developing exhibitions that allow visitors to encounter new artists and cultural programs while maintaining financial stability. Exhibitions serve as thematic reflections, often involving discussions on "translatability" within curatorial frameworks. Curators are tasked with translating the values inherent in one context to those of another, a fundamental aspect of their role. In the context of globalism, many curators prioritise thematic connections over national boundaries when presenting artists' works. This approach allows artworks to interact within the same thematic framework, enriching their collective impact. Therefore, the conceptualisation, design, and execution of exhibitions on a global scale are vital (Rectanus, 2006, pp.

387-88). When decolonising a museum, it is essential to remember what kind of narrative is presented to the visitor and the decision based on museology and museum ethics.

The interrelationship between commemoration and memorialising and the museum as a performance highlights the importance of critically examining the narratives presented by cultural institutions and how they shape our understanding of the past and present. It also underscores the need to acknowledge the subjective and complex nature of memory and history and to strive for a more inclusive and diverse representation of cultures and perspectives in museums and other cultural institutions.

Mapping Memories: Navigating Emotional Landscapes in Museum Narratives

During museum visits, emotional mapping is crucial in how visitors engage with the site. The interplay between physical and emotional maps is a key aspect to consider, as it can either validate or challenge the site's intended message. These two forms of dynamic mapping, with a 'negotiated' reading in the middle, represent a spectrum of visitor experiences. Personal and family memories shape the visitor's narrative, either aligning with or contesting the site's presentation. The performance of memories, imaginary mapping, and emotional realism are integral to the consumption experience at heritage sites. The authenticity of these emotions contributes to the overall performance aspect of the museum experience (Bagnall, 2003, pp. 89-93).

Crafting a narrative, such as a script, significantly impacts how visitors interpret the site. Therefore, critically examining the narrative approach is crucial, as historical impressions can easily transform into cultural and historical discourses (Nimako et al., 2014). According to Blaas (2000), the interpretation of the past is influenced by contemporary cultural discourse, which can sometimes distort historical events beyond recognition (Blaas, 2000, p. 52). Long-term memory is intricately linked to the formation and persistence of ethnic biases, including the recognition, categorisation, and storage of experiences. These ideologies are categorised into three memory structures: semantic memory, episodic memory, and the control system. The interplay among these memory structures elucidates cognitive mechanisms that translate into individual experiences, statements, and symbols assimilated into overarching themes, reinforcing existing biases. As society's collective memory, semantic memory encompasses ideologies structured as generalised and abstract attitudes, constrained by their organisation into socially applicable categories (Wodak & Reisigl, 2015, pp. 379-80).

Episodic memory relates to personal or narrated experiences, events, and patterns withdrawn from these experiences. In this regard, the listener's role is significant as they create a representation of the story through textual interpretation. General situational models interrelate narrated events or personal experiences and the format of semantic memory. The control system serves as an individualised social context model, interrelating communicative intentions and interests with situational and personal social factors. It coordinates various strategies, including perception,

interpretation, storage, use, or information retrieval. Additionally, it oversees the transition of information from long-term to short-term memory and the storage or activation of situational models in episodic memory (Wodak & Reisigl, 2015, pp. 379-80).

In the context of historical events, particularly in the act of commemoration, a distinction can be made between 'revival' and 'survival'. 'Revival' is unattainable without the element of 'survival', as reviving the past is only feasible when the surviving memory aligns with identical past events and is currently acknowledged (Blaas, 2000, p. 52).

History is a social construction of memory-defining events within collective memory (Dian, 2015). Therefore, commemorating Europe's colonial past must be considered for decolonising institutions, such as museums (Turunen, 2019). Commemoration is formed by collective memory, an intersubjective understanding of a country's past used to define its identity and role globally. It is also a process of representing, storing, and retrieving memories of historical events. It is a political construct that benefits the nation but can also serve as a shared trauma. National memories are cultural products inseparable from cultural elements (Oostindie, 2003; Dian, 2015). Reinterpretation and publication of national history are essential for nation-building to preserve its identity and character (Oostindie, 2003, p. 147).

Analysis of collective memory helps understand the development and conflict of a nation's memory (Dian, 2015). Collective memory functions through tangible documents preserved in archives rather than individual memories or unity. However, memory is subjective and open to different interpretations. Occurrences contribute to the collective memory process, but transformed occurrences hold more significance and influence collective memory (Ocasio et al., 2016). Archives help generate cultural structures and bring newly independent states into a union, but their colonial nature must be acknowledged to reverse their previous archival authority (Karabinos, 2013).

National narratives embody national memory, encompassing governmental rhetoric, educational curricula, and commemorative practices (Dian, 2015). Araujo (2013) further suggests that collective memory functions as a political tool for creating, preserving, and reinforcing identities. He argues that collective memory transcends individual recollections and events, focusing instead on how a group collectively interprets its shared memories in the present. However, it serves as the prevailing means by which society constructs its interpretation of the past while reinforcing distinctions that differentiate their identities from those of other societies (Araujo, 2013; Balkenhol, 2023; Beider-de Haan, 2006).

Meta-narratives are used to manipulate history in favour of the state but are often considered illegitimate (Dian, 2015). History can serve as a tool to indoctrinate and manipulate people, fostering solidarity within a nation (Loomba, 2015). Moreover, collective memory gains permanence through its institutionalisation in memorials or museums. As a result, commemorative memory is no longer characterised by the continuous transmission of experiences.

Consideration should also be given to the hegemonic historical discourse of Western European academic history, as other parts of the world's history are often overlooked when forming an academic narrative of global history (Chakrabarty, 2006; Sauvage, 2010).

Furthermore, historians are crucial in constructing societal narratives (Karabinos, 2013). Most preserved collective memory has been authored by individuals in positions of authority, such as colonial administrators, resulting in the marginalisation of oppressed voices and a noticeable absence of their perspectives in the collective memory. One method to address this issue critically is through reinterpreting collective memory that incorporates the oppressed perspectives while examining oral history and related imagery (Klinkers, 2023; Balkenhol, 2023; Sauvage, 2010). Museums, particularly in this case, employ autobiographical documents and personal testimonies as historical sources, facilitating diverse interpretations (Beier-de-Haan, 2006, p. 187).

Besides consulting "classic" stored memories from archives, amongst others, museums have adopted a new approach to memory preservation, increasingly incorporating oral history alongside academic or written sources to convey collective memory. Postcolonial cultural studies have prompted a broad reassessment of the significance of oral traditions and cultures, recognising that the emphasis on written communication in shaping notions of civilisation offers only a limited perspective on the multifaceted nature of cultural practices (Allen, 2023; Ashcroft et al., 1998).

In societies grappling with the legacies of colonialism, the privileging of written forms of expression has often reinforced European cultural norms and Euro-centric concepts of civilisation, overshadowing the value of oral traditions. This has resulted in an underestimation of the importance of oral culture, coupled with the misconception that postcolonial literature, primarily conveyed through written forms, supersedes it. Oral history originates from cultural traditions that pass down history verbally through generations, encompassing various forms such as genealogy, etiological stories, myths, songs, proverbs, prayers, poems, performances, and riddles. It is one of the oldest forms of historical preservation. Oral histories provide insights often overlooked by dominant collective memory, particularly those from marginalised groups. This recognition marks a significant shift in how museums preserve and present history. Nevertheless, since this is a recent development, much oral historical material still needs to be researched (Allen, 2023; Ashcroft et al., 1998).

The efforts of the discussed museums in the case studies to decolonise their exhibitions highlight the importance of emotional mapping, narrative construction, and the inclusion of diverse memory structures. By incorporating personal and collective memories, these museums challenge traditional historical discourses and promote a more inclusive understanding of the colonial past. This approach enhances visitor engagement and fosters a deeper connection to the material, contributing to the ongoing process of decolonisation in museums.

Performing Museums: Unveiling Narratives through Social Engagement and Spatial Dynamics

Whether national, regional, or community-based, museums play a crucial role as they can evolve into "global theatres of real consequences". They serve as portable social instruments, housing collections that undergo museological processes wherein statements and recognition concerning history, identity, value, and place are depicted, embodied, and deliberated upon (Kreps, 2008, p. 37). According to Schechner (2006), performance encompasses multiple dimensions, serving purposes such as entertainment, beautification, identity revelation, community building, healing, education, or persuasion. It achieves this by its ability to manipulate time through framing or storytelling. A performance can concurrently encompass one or multiple aspects, as they often overlap and interact (Schechner, 2006, pp. 22-39).

This is evident in performances where individuals exhibit particular restored behaviours they have been trained to perform. In such instances, it can be regarded as a protocol that must be followed during the performance, and therefore, it can be seen as symbolic and reflecting cultural discourse. Additionally, he argues that every social action or event, including revolutions, politics, and individual human growth, can be interpreted through the performance lens. However, he notes that the portrayal of the same event can vary with each occurrence due to framing and context. Furthermore, he relates objects to beings since performance is only possible through individuals' (inter)actions and interrelations (Schechner, 2006, pp. 22-39).

Alexander (2006) defines *Social performance* as the process by which actors, independently or collaboratively, communicate the meaning of their social conditions to others (Alexander, 2006, p. 32). This is accomplished through the actors' performances, establishing the validity of their objectives and justifications concerning the approval of their audience. The cultural semiotics underpinning this process can be examined in theatrical performances (Alexander, 2006, pp. 29-32).

Alexander (2006) suggests that performance studies are influenced by rituals stemming from social interactions, structures, and orders within cultural communication. These rituals are expressed through social performances in various forms, such as symbols and scripts.

To effectively use the social performance model in the museum and its exhibitions, it is crucial to examine how the exhibition is structured in terms of time and space and how the objects are presented concerning their original purposes. This approach primarily allows one to view the museum from the audience's perspective, revealing the museum's ideology and discourse constructed by the actors involved in the process (Hoebink, 2016, pp. 24-26). Additionally, it provides a method to compare the systems of different museums, showing their respective ideologies as well as their political, economic, and social circumstances and other external influences (Hoebink, 2017, p. 3). This model will be applied to the exhibition to analyse the exhibition's intended message and the curators' objectives. Suppose the presentation's message and objectives are clear. In that case, it is possible to

examine the six performance elements: Actors, Public, Collective representations, Social Circumstances, Script, *Mise-en-scène*, and Means of Symbolic Production (Hoebink, 2017).

Actors play a crucial role in the museum by influencing the target audience, shaping the museum's reputation, and fostering community engagement (Hoebink, 2017). In this context, 'actors' refer to anything that modifies a specific situation, redirecting attention from the symbolic representation of objects to how material objects engage in specific interactions, thereby shaping social dynamics such as power imbalances or networks of social connections, causing them to be observable or traceable (Harrison, 2011, p. 58).

As the museum's target audience, the public benefits from social inclusion, involving the people in the museum's discussed topics. Collective representations create meaning in the museum's performances, aligning with its mission and vision and reflecting in the exhibitions. Social circumstances, encompassing political, societal, and cultural factors, interact with the museum and shape its environment. The script represents the story being conveyed, encompassing both textual and visual elements experienced within the museum and the museum itself.

The *mise-en-scène* encompasses the overall presentation of the collection and its intended focal points, including the arrangement and display of objects and the utilisation of multimedia to facilitate knowledge transmission (Hoebink, 2017). Another aspect to consider, relating to the *mise-en-scène*, is the space syntax. Hillier and Tzortzi (2006) define space syntax as the spatial configuration that impacts visitor behaviour in terms of movement. This includes how visitors navigate the exhibition, their routes, and their interaction with the space. Considerations include how the shape and layout of the space influence these behaviours, the interconnectedness of different areas and the choices they give visitors in their movements (Hillier & Tzortzi, 2006, p. 283).

Considering space syntax and the patterns and layout, it provides insights into how objects and cultural representations are integrated across the different areas, aligning with the overall configuration of the exhibition. The spatial design intertwines with the object experience, creating a performance in terms of the visibility and accessibility of objects within the space and their cognitive placement within the environment. Furthermore, it demonstrates, alongside its design, the social and pedagogical ideology of the museum through factors such as space accessibility and atmosphere (Hillier & Tzortzi, 2006, pp. 285-94).

The process of symbolic production becomes evident during a performance, where the surroundings within the room, including the room itself, express the overarching narrative through material elements. Thus, these surroundings symbolise these ideologies and can be defined as the means of symbolic production. Integral components of this symbolic production include architecture, museum collection, and multimedia use (Hoebink, 2017). These components hold significance because the architecture of a museum typically embodies either 18th and 19th-century architectural styles, symbolising the grandeur of Western history and culture, or modern architectural designs,

which present a more neutral backdrop highlighting both the museum collection and notable advancements in contemporary Western architecture. The museum's collections reflect the museum's origin, artistic and academic proficiency, and policies for selecting and contextualising displayed objects, exposing underlying ideologies. Therefore, the museum's architecture and spatial image contribute to its identity and marketing (Rectanus, 2006; Hoebink, 2017). Similarly, it is important to note how multimedia incorporates images, sounds, and interactive digital elements and integrates with objects and scripts. Multimedia is a crucial component that impacts visitors, enabling their participation in the performance through interactive engagement (Hoebink, 2017).

The performance method is excellent for analysing all the aspects discussed above within the case studies since it can be used to challenge colonial narratives and promote a more inclusive understanding of history. By involving diverse actors and communities, these museums of the conducted case studies create dynamic and impactful exhibitions that contribute to the ongoing process of decolonisation.

2.2 Part Two: Colonialism and the Netherlands

The second part focuses on the Netherlands and its colonial involvement, providing historical context for the themes of the exhibition cases. It covers the Dutch Indies as a Dutch colony, the Second World War and its impact on the Dutch Indies, the independence of Indonesia, Suriname as a Dutch colony, and the independence of Suriname. The chapter then adopts a chronological approach, examining the postcolonial Netherlands and the issue of migration, with detailed analyses of the migrations of Euro-Indonesians and Surinamese. Lastly, it addresses the current political climate in the Netherlands, including lobbying and recognition, commemoration, public apologies, lobbying related to colonialism, museum representation of Dutch colonialism, and the recognition and awareness of slavery and the Dutch Indies.

2.2.1 Shaping Colonial Legacies: Dynamics of Power, Resistance, and Independence in the Dutch East Indies and Suriname

Post-1815, the Netherlands assumed control over the Dutch West Indies and the Dutch Indies, encompassing Indonesia and Suriname, through the WIC and VOC trading companies (Delgado & Mycock, 2023; Blakely, 1993). These companies, serving as the Netherlands' trade and colonial representatives, played a pivotal role in shaping the region's colonial history (Oostindie, 2005, p. 61).

Colonial Exploitation, Racial Hierarchy, and Political Struggles: Dynamics of the Dutch East Indies

Before the Netherlands colonised the Dutch Indies, the territory was controlled by the United East India Company (*Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie VOC*), which dissolved in 1799. The VOC, acting through the Netherlands, had authority over the governance of the Dutch Indies. The historical context of Dutch colonialism is necessary to understand the process of decolonising museum exhibitions focused on Indonesia at institutions like the Wereldmuseum Amsterdam, the Haags Historisch Museum, and the Sophiahof Museum.

According to Burgers, the VOC had the liberty to engage in treaties with other Asian countries or elites. Initially, the establishment of trading posts aimed to transform the colony into Southeast Asia's most centralised trading centre (Burgers, 2010, pp. 19-20). Over time, however, this evolved into the exploitation of the colony through increased taxation and coerced labour, in addition to trading and exporting the colony's goods (Burgers, 2010, p. 58). By the end of the 17th century, the Netherlands had achieved a trade monopoly throughout Asia, solidifying its position as the leading European power (Burgers, 2010, p. 43).

Nevertheless, in 1800, the VOC faced bankruptcy and was subsequently abolished (Burgers, 2010, p. 20). Indonesia was colonised in 1816 by the Netherlands as 'the Dutch Indies' until 1949 (Protschky, 2011; Burgers, 2010). In order to maintain the colonial bond between the Netherlands and the Dutch Indies, the royal family was emphasised, and the Dutch Indies were forced to be part of royal public holidays as well as sign agreements to swear loyalty to the crown (Klinkers, 2023, p. 118). During the colonisation, the Dutch regulated and gained a monopoly over Indonesia's plantations and mines through forced labour, which later resulted in the Cultivation System, implemented by Van den Bosch in 1830 and lasted until 1870 (Protschky, 2011; Breman, 2023). This resulted in a system of forced labour and forced farmers to use a part of their land to export products they had to lease to the government (Klinkers, 2023; Lauret, 2023).

Only recent research has changed the awareness of the large-scale slavery implemented in the Dutch Indies. In the first half of the nineteenth century, more than ten per cent of the population was enslaved, except for Java. A quarter of the population became enslaved as a result of being kidnapped or the maritime slave trade. The VOC was mainly responsible in the area of the Dutch Indies for the possession and trade of enslaved people, mainly originating from East Africa and diverse countries throughout Asia. Enslaved people were used in diverse places such as households and mines and as part of the working and building sector. The colonial government initiated the register of enslaved people in 1820 to decrease slavery within the Dutch Indies. This legislation caused those enslaved people who were not registered to gain their freedom, while the slave trade became prohibited. Slavery in the Dutch Indies was officially abolished on January 1, 1860 (Klinkers, 2023; Bosma, 2023; Schrikker, 2023).

When slavery was abolished, the owners of the enslaved received compensation for their lost "property" by the earnings of the Cultivation system. Furthermore, slavery was transformed into what would bypass the legislation of the abolition; "slavery of debt". As well as other forms of forced labour came to rise that continued the same functions as the enslaved people had. Another form that emerged was the forced labour of prisoners used for various purposes within the Koninklijke Nederlandsch-Indische Leger (KNIL) (Royal Netherlands East Indies Army). In 1873, this resulted in new legislation whereby those convicted of forced labour for three months or more may be used in different areas while they had to work while being chained to one another. These forms of forced labour led to a high mortality rate (Klinkers, 2023; Rossum, 2023; Breman, 2023; Schrikker, 2023). Eventually, slavery was not entirely abolished in the Dutch Indies until 1914. While forced labour, especially of prisoners, continued into the nineteenth century (Bosma, 2023, p. 149).

Within the Dutch Indies, a hierarchy existed through colonial power based on race: (Indonesian) natives, Europeans, Chinese and 'Other Asians' (Imhoff & Beets, 2004; Burgers, 2010). The Dutch Colonial government decided the identity of the population in several ways. The women's status depended on their spouses' status, meaning native women married to Europeans were automatically qualified to have European status (Imhoff & Beets, 2004, p. 53). The father's status decided the categorisation of children; however, European fathers' illegitimate offspring were classified as natives (Hewett, 2015, p. 192).

Nevertheless, most fathers legitimated their children to obtain European status. Others attempted to appeal for European status by changing their religion to Christianity or entering European education (Imhoff & Beets, 2004, p. 54). This categorisation was depicted in a hierarchical system. People recognised as Europeans were ranked the highest rank of society, while natives were ranked lowest. The Europeans (mainly the Dutch) put themselves at the top of the hierarchy and the natives below (Hewett, 2015, p. 192). The hierarchy was especially applicable within the law. Inhabitants who did not have "Dutch citizenship" were unprivileged within legislation and usually received severe punishments than the Dutch people with citizenship.

In order to comprehend the hierarchy within the Dutch Indies community, it is crucial to define Indo-European (Indo). The primary definition of an *Indo-European* is an individual of mixed racial descent with ancestry from both Indonesian natives and Europeans (Hewett, 2015; Buchheim, 2015). Indo-Europeans did not fit a categorisation; nonetheless, most obtained European status (Imhoff & Beets, 2004, p. 51). Concerning their status, Indonesian Europeans were in between the hierarchy of the full-blood Dutch colonial elite and the natives (Hewett, 2015, p. 192).

Formerly, Indo-Europeans were regarded as "white people" (Burgers, 2010, p. 363). Nevertheless, there was no significant distinction in practice between Dutch and Indo-Europeans since it was common for Indo-Europeans and Dutch people to have intermixed marriages (Burgers, 2010, p.

363). Imhoff and Beets argue that specific individuals of Indonesian-European descent, even without Dutch heritage, could acquire Dutch nationality (Imhoff & Beets, 2004, p. 48).

However, to escape the discrimination experienced by Indonesian-Europeans from the native population, some chose to identify as natives. Indonesians harboured resentment and mistrust towards Indonesian Europeans due to their societal position (Hewett, 2015, pp. 192-193). Nevertheless, most Indo-European communities feared losing their place in the hierarchy if they were confused with natives. They indulged in European education to prevent this, and the Christian religion should be identified with European culture instead (Hewett, 2015, pp. 192-193). This culminated in Indo-Europeans forming their community and culture, blending elements from both Dutch and Indonesian cultures. They mostly held social contacts within their community. In the 19th century, it was common for the Western population to take over the Indonesian culture partly, for instance, by letting their children learn the Malay language.

Nonetheless, in the 20th century, the Western population mainly practised the Dutch culture since intermixed marriages decreased as more Western immigrants settled in the Dutch Indies. This resulted in separate neighbourhoods between the Western and the native population, eventually resulting in the Indo-Europeans being disadvantaged towards the Western population (Burgers, 2010, pp. 129-134).

Between 1900 and 1940, the Dutch Indies contained approximately 40 to 70 million inhabitants, where 20 to 90 thousand were identified as Western or European (Burgers, 2010, pp. 129-134). Within the hierarchy of the colonial system, Europeans had more social mobility and power within the government, as well as in other financial and political aspects, compared to Indonesians. Furthermore, the colonial hierarchy was implemented within the colony's jurisdiction, separating Europeans from Indonesians in legislation (Captain, 2014, p. 56). The Dutch Indies were full of opportunities for the Dutch population since all job opportunities were given to the highest ranking in the hierarchy: the Dutch. Following this, many Dutch inhabitants moved to the Dutch Indies for job opportunities. In 1900, the number of Dutch and other Western inhabitants doubled while taking over the leading roles of jobs in the Dutch Indies (Burgers, 2010, pp. 102-115). Furthermore, natives earned less money for the same labour as the Europeans, nor were they employed for supervisory jobs (Burgers, 2010, pp. 129-134). Instead, they were mainly employed as staff at Dutch houses, labourers or farmers (Burgers, 2010, p. 364).

Concerning the formation of political unions, distinct legislation existed in the Dutch Indies in contrast to the Netherlands. In the Dutch Indies, residents were prohibited from assembling or creating political unions (Burgers, 2010, pp. 129-134). Nevertheless, national political movements did arise, hoping for future independence. One of these unions was the Perhimpunan Indonesia, of which Mohammed Hatta was chairman. He would later play a prominent role in Indonesia's independence. Another union was the "Algemeene Studieclub" (General Study Club) in Bandoeng, of which

Soekarno was a secretary. At the end of 1926, Soekarno started to publish his political thoughts and tried to assemble the necessary political parties to work together to gain Indonesia's independence. In 1927, it established the Perserikatan Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian National Comite) with Soekarno as chairman, renamed in 1928 to Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI, The National Indonesian Party). An assembly was established between different political parties and committees, Permoefakatan Perhimpoeanan-Perhimpoeanan Politik Kebangsaan Indonesia (PPPKI, Assembly of the Political Committees from the Indonesian Nation). Soekarno started public gatherings to speak his political thoughts on Indonesia's decolonisation between 1928 and 1929. On December 29, 1929, a hundred PNI leaders and associates were arrested by the Dutch government, including Soekarno (Burgers, 2010, pp. 194-215).

Occupation, Internment, and Resistance: The Japanese Era in the Dutch East Indies

Before delving into the case studies, it is essential to understand the historical context of the Japanese Occupation of Indonesia during World War II. This period marked significant changes in the power dynamics and socio-political landscape of the Dutch East Indies, influencing contemporary narratives of colonialism and decolonisation.

On December 8, 1941, the Netherlands declared war against Japan. During the invasion of Indonesia by the Japanese on March 9, 1942, nationalists welcomed the Japanese military because they expected to gain control over Indonesia's regime together (Touwen-Bouwsma, 1996, pp. 6-9). The widespread backing for the Japanese Occupation among Indonesians can be attributed to the persuasive influence of Japanese propaganda, which conveyed the overarching theme of "Asia for the Asians." This narrative portrayed the Japanese as liberators of Indonesia and disseminated anti-Dutch sentiments. Additionally, efforts were made to encourage collaboration between Indonesian members of the KNIL and the police, who were encouraged to work with the Japanese forces (Touwen-Bouwsma, 1996, p. 4).

The KNIL, comprising predominantly Indonesian personnel, operated as a professional military force. While approximately seventy-five per cent of its soldiers were of Indonesian descent, compulsory military service for Dutch individuals was introduced in 1917 in the Dutch Indies. When the Japanese invasion occurred, the KNIL was assigned to defend the Dutch Indies, yet they faced significant challenges due to inadequate weaponry and training (Burgers, 2010, p. 247). However, on March 8, 1942, the KNIL capitulated, leading to the incarceration of approximately 8000 soldiers as Prisoners of War (POWs) in internment camps (Plomp, 2010; Cribb, 2011).

At the beginning of April, the Japanese compelled all residents of the Dutch East Indies to undergo registration and identification based on their racial background (Burgers, 2010, p. 295). Those of European descent, including Indo-Europeans, found themselves in internment camps if they

were unable to demonstrate Indonesian ancestry (Hewett, 2015; Plomp, 2010). However, approximately 120,000 to 220,000 Indo-Europeans were able to stay outside the camps (Buchheim, 2015, pp. 107-108).

Within the internment camps, which were under Japanese commanders' authorisation, as well as Indonesian police (Plomp, 2010; Burgers, 2010), the women and children were segregated from the men. Approximately 10,000 to 13,000 civilians were interned (Plomp, 2010; Cribb, 2011), with a mortality rate ranging between 10 and 16 per cent. Notably, specific camps experienced mortality rates exceeding 50 per cent. The majority of the internees succumbed to these harsh conditions in 1945. The divergent conditions within the camps can be attributed to factors such as geography, climate, and the overseeing authority (Plomp, 2010, pp. 297-298). Men aged between 20 and 50, as well as prisoners of war (POW), were compelled into forced labour, leading to a mortality rate of 9.5 per cent (Steijlen, 2009; Van Imhoff & Beets, 2004).

One of the locations where POWs were subjected to forced labour was the Burma Railroad, stretching between Thailand and Burma, known as the Death Railway. It was constructed to enhance the mobility of Japanese soldiers during the Pacific War. This 415 km railroad traversed challenging terrains and jungles in immobilised regions. Preparations for its construction commenced in March 1942, engaging a total of 61,811 POWs, with 17,990 being Dutch. Ultimately, 20.5% of the POWs, including 15.5% of the Dutch contingent, lost their lives while working on the Death Railway (Steijlen, 2010, pp. 96-97). Boys aged 11 to 16 were sent to a separate camp alongside sick and elderly men. The severe neglect of this specific camp resulted in an alarming mortality rate (Velden, 1997, p. 513).

On March 20, 1942, a significant shift occurred as the Japanese prohibited the display of the Indonesian flag and marginalised nationalist involvement in the government. By May 1942, Japan had gained complete control over Indonesia, extending its authority to the civil service and police. The Japanese administration implemented new regulations, including the exclusive use of the Indonesian language, with the Dutch language expressly prohibited (Touwens-Bouwsmas, 1996, pp. 11-15). Furthermore, to exert control over the media, all forms of communication were either censored or prohibited (Benda, 1956, p. 553).

Nonetheless, discontent persisted among the Indonesian natives as Japan showed no intention of granting independence to Indonesia. In an effort to foster better relations with nationalists, the Japanese appointed vital figures, including Soekarno and Hatta, as general advisors within the Japanese military board. Although Japan declared its intention to grant independence to Indonesia in 1944, this commitment went unfulfilled as Japan surrendered on August 15, 1945, prior to realising the promise (Burgers, 2010, pp. 275-288).

Struggles for Sovereignty: From Dutch Colonialism to National Independence in Indonesia

After the Japanese capitulation, the nationalists claimed Indonesian independence on August 17, 1945. However, only in 1949 did the Netherlands acknowledge Indonesia's independence, which shows the complicated relationship of colonialism between Indonesia and the Netherlands. Until then, the Netherlands held on to the belief that they would re-establish the Dutch colonial order despite Indonesia's declaration of independence (Bijl, 2012; Oostindie, 2011; Wijaya, 2019), as discussed in the exhibitions of the case studies.

Throughout the Japanese Occupation, Indonesian youths underwent military training and ideological indoctrination by the Japanese. After 1945, during Sukarno's New Order's rise, an assembly of Indonesian men, "*Pemuda*", attacked and executed Indonesian Europeans and Indonesians they believed had been loyal to the Netherlands. Numerous battle groups emerged from these youths, collectively known as the Permoeda youth, actively fighting for Indonesia's independence (Burgers, 2010; Frederick, 2012). The Japanese Occupation, combined with Indonesia's national revolution, led to the targeted killings of many individuals of European descent between 1945 and 1949, a period commonly referred to as the Bersiap period (Frederick, 2012, pp. 366-372).

In 1947, the Netherlands sent its military to restore its regency over the Dutch Indies. In order to regain the islands from the nationalists, the Dutch military attacked them in July-August 1947, known as the "First Offensive."

However, the Dutch government could not eliminate Indonesia's forces (Burgers, 2010, pp. 504-522). Even though the Netherlands and Indonesia were in negotiation about Indonesia's independence, the Dutch government attacked Indonesia again in December 1948, known as the "Second Offensive" (Burgers, 2010, p. 621). In 1948, the United Nations (UN) issued a report stating that the Dutch troops' killings in Indonesia were intended and ruthless (Wijaya, 2019, p. 187). Nevertheless, the UN restrained them by leveraging the refusal of Indonesia's independence with the financial aid that would be bestowed on the Netherlands (Scagliola, 2007, pp. 238-239).

In November 1949, the Netherlands signed a general amnesty with Indonesia, officially ending their colonial war (Scagliola, 2007, p. 252). On December 27, 1949, during the Dutch-Indonesian Round Table Conference in the Hague, a transfer of sovereignty agreement was signed, acknowledging Indonesia's independence (Oostindie, 2011; Wijaya, 2019).

In 1965, Indonesia offered the Netherlands the opportunity to renew the political relations between the countries. If Indonesia and the Netherlands would prosecute each other for their war crimes, it would jeopardise a vital economic interest in both countries (Hewett, 2015, pp. 249-251).

By recognising the struggles and resilience of the Indonesian people during this transitional period, these museums in the case studies may contribute to a more inclusive and just representation of history. This recognition is crucial for promoting social justice, validating the experiences of

marginalised communities, and fostering a deeper understanding of the ongoing impact of colonialism.

From Colonisation to Emancipation: Tracing Suriname's Complex History of Sovereignty, Enslavement, and Social Evolution

Another essential period that is necessary to discuss is the Dutch colonisation of Suriname in order to elevate more into the case studies. In 1667, Suriname was colonised by the Zeelanders (Zeeuwen), leading to the transfer of sovereignty to the WIC in 1683, which eventually led to the Society of Suriname, entailing the partnership of the WIC, the city government of Amsterdam and the Aerssen van Sommelsdijck family (Gezius, 2023; Nationaal Archief, N.D.). During this period, the Dutch enforced enslavement of the Indigenous population of Suriname via legislative policies, sparking a six-year conflict between the Dutch and the Arawaks, which persisted from 1668 to 1684. In 1686, the Arawaks, Caribbeans and Warraus were able to make peace properly and being able to gain some freedom, such as the recognition of their territory as well as getting out of the enslavement of their people (Gezius, 2023, pp. 239-241).

By the early eighteenth century, Suriname emerged as a significant plantation economy within the Dutch empire, comprising around 700 plantations where enslaved individuals were compelled to work under forced labour conditions. The population mainly consisted of almost 300,000 imported African enslaved people, which comprised over 90 per cent of the population. Some enslaved people managed to flee the plantations and build new independent communities with their authority and legislation within the living area in the jungle, named the Maroons (Blakely, 1993; Oostindie; Gezius, 2023). The Dutch colonial government tried to overthrow the community of the Maroons but failed to do so. In 1837, the Maroons and the colonial government signed a peace treaty named "Akte van Verband", whereby the colonial government tried to gain the Maroon community for its plantations but was unsuccessful (Gezius, 2023, pp. 241-242).

A strict colonial hierarchy was in place, where enslaved people were restricted to performing certain types of physical labour, compelled to wear distinct attire from the colonisers and slaveholders, and compelled to convert to Christianity. Moreover, a hierarchy existed in Dutch culture and language, administrative structure, and the predominance of European values. Nevertheless, due to the economic decline in 1773, the Netherlands could not profit from Suriname, and the Society of Suriname considered the colony a burden. Furthermore, the WIC was abolished during this period. As a result, most of the Dutch population left the colony by the end of the eighteenth century (Blakely, 1993; Oostindie, 2003; Gezius, 2023). In 1795, the Society of Suriname transferred its sovereignty to the government of the Netherlands (Nationaal Archief, N.D.).

When slavery was abolished in 1863 in Indonesia, it took three years longer for it to be abolished in Suriname, resulting in a ten-year lasting transitioning period known as the "state

surveillance". With this, the Netherlands tried to reform and modernise Suriname by implementing a new administrative system of districts and district commissioners to register and control labour and counter illegal imports of enslavement (Klinkers, 2023; Niamko, 2023; Lauret, 2023; Bosma, 2023; Gezius, 2023). Suriname was reformed into districts under the colonial government, entailing fifteen outer districts and one city district, Paramaribo. In the nineteenth century, Paramaribo counted 20,000 inhabitants. It became the foremost part of the colony's economic and political elite, formed by former plantation owners, civil servants, and the trading elite. Former enslaved people who gained their freedom came to Paramaribo for paid labour (Gezius, 2023, pp. 244-245).

Furthermore, the military police corps was implemented within Suriname because discipline and jurisdiction needed to be reformed after the abolition of slavery. Due to the growth of the Surinamese population, the Dutch government tried to modernise Suriname simultaneously, as was done with the Dutch Indies. This resulted in the plantation owner losing their power since they were no longer permitted to condemn and punish their workers. Nevertheless, the enslaved people were still forced to work on the plantations. However, some of them were able to gain some freedom by getting paid and being able to choose which plantations to work for.

Between 1863 and 1900, the enslaved people were replaced with British-Indian and Javanese indentured labourers who were exported to Suriname from India and the Dutch Indies. There was little difference between the new form of indentured labour and enslavement, which lasted until the Second World War since people were treated poorly while not allowed to break their contracts which could result in being prosecuted and imprisoned (Blakely, 1993; Oostindie, 2003; Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2023b; Klinkers, 2023; Nimako, 2023; Lauret, 2023; Bosma; Gezius, 2023). Nevertheless, during the 1930s, the process of the modernisation of Suriname was halted due to the uprising of nationalism and political awareness among the population of Suriname, which followed into having to maintain the Dutch colonial power through repression and violence (Klinker, 2023, pp. 118-119). At the end of the "state supervision", many plantation owners had financial troubles and sold their plantations to former enslaved people who had gained their freedom (Gezius, 2023, p. 246).

Since 1963, July 1 has become a national holiday and commemoration day of the abolishment of slavery in Suriname (Balkenhol, 2011, p. 157).

Suriname's Independence Journey: Dutch Influence, Sociopolitical Shifts, and Post-Colonial Realities

Following extreme riots in Suriname in 1969 due to social and political tensions, the Dutch government interfered despite its reluctance to involve itself in the internal affairs of its territories. Labour unrest lasted until half of the 1970s, and the Dutch government found the idea of using its military to protect fundamental human rights, legal security, and proper administration reprehensible.

The intervention of 1969 affected the relationship between Suriname and the Netherlands, simultaneously affecting the liberal Netherlands' international image (Meel, 1990, p. 78).

The Dutch government wanted to eliminate its sovereignty over Suriname, which would eliminate its colonial image. Additionally, significant funds were allocated to Suriname, resulting in economic growth through aid initiatives. Furthermore, there was a desire to halt the increasing migration of more than 40,000 Surinamese migrants. Consequently, the Dutch government sought to refrain from intervening in Suriname's governance, anticipating that independence would prompt Surinamese immigrants to return. The transfer of sovereignty was envisaged as a means to address these challenges (Oostindie, 2011).

Due to the past experiences the Netherlands has had with the decolonisation of the Dutch Indies and its interrelated independence war, the Dutch government wanted to handle the independence of Suriname with the consideration of involved politicians of Suriname, which had become independent within the Dutch realm since the Statue of 1954. Eventually, Suriname declared its independence on November 25, 1975 (Allen et al., 2023; Jong, 2022; Balkenhol, 2011; Meel, 1990; Oostindie, 2011). Initially, under the 'Agreement on Residence and Settlement of Mutual Subjects,' the Surinamese populace was granted the option to opt for either Dutch or Surinamese citizenship and residency until the sovereignty transition, which eventually remained until 1980 (Oostindie, 2011; Meel, 1990).

Suriname was able to gain its independence in 1975. Nevertheless, such 'independence' might be considered shallow, primarily because the European notion of the nation often influenced the leaders of the independence movements. The remnants of the former colonial administrative, legal, and economic systems restricted their independence, effectively enabling continued state control even after achieving independence. Furthermore, independence did not automatically entail complete liberation from colonialist values, which often endured along with political and cultural frameworks after independence (Alofs et al., 2023; Ashcroft et al., 1998; Meel, 1990; Oostindie, 2011). This colonial impact that is still reminiscent of today is also an important theme behind the exhibitions within the case studies.

Suriname's dependency on the Netherlands persisted to some extent due to substantial amounts of development aid. A unique connection between the Netherlands and Suriname also persisted regarding formal citizenship. Furthermore, the Netherlands was required to aid Suriname in foreign affairs, defence, migration, and the economy. The Dutch' obligation towards Suriname evolved into a more consistent friendship (Ashcroft et al., 1998; Balkenhol, 2011; Meel, 1990).

Suriname changed its educational goals and methods to nationalise its history and culture. Doing so resulted in more consciousness, appreciation, and respect. Nevertheless, after 1989, its education system was not renewed (Alofs et al., 2023, pp. 69-70).

In 1980, Suriname experienced a military coup, followed by the December Murders in 1982, during which fifteen political opponents of the government were executed. This was followed by a period of military dictatorship from 1980 to 1987, a guerrilla conflict, and the massacre of the Maroon community Moiwana in 1986. Since the democratisation process in Suriname proved to be delicate, it increased the number of Surinamese individuals permitted to immigrate to the Netherlands (Oostindie, 2011).

Following the restoration of democracy between 1985 and the 1990s, the traditional parties in Suriname welcomed Dutch aid. However, concerns regarding sovereignty and external interventions resurfaced. Additionally, there was a notable decline in political engagement and participation during this period (Oostindie, 2011, p. 178).

2.2.2 Unravelling Postcolonial Threads: Dutch Society, Migration, and Commemoration

Examining the postcolonial period in the Netherlands is essential to grasping the contemporary political agenda and discourse on decolonisation within Dutch society and its museums. The term 'postcolonial' refers to the period following the colonial era, in this case, the time after the conclusion of the Dutch colonial period and the initiation of the decolonisation process during the post-war era (Oostindie, 2011).

Jong (2022) characterises post-colonialism in the Netherlands as a critical viewpoint on assimilation policies aimed at immigrants from former colonies and labour migrants who strive to integrate their narratives into the dominant discourse (Jong, 2022, p. 1003).

This thesis primarily focuses on the decolonisation process within the Netherlands, particularly in Suriname and Indonesia, and its enduring consequences, such as the permanent migration settlement it triggered in the Netherlands. These historical events, far from mere relics of the past, continue to influence commemorative practices profoundly and significantly shape the current political agenda. Understanding the ideology behind the exhibitions used as case studies is therefore crucial.

According to Oostindie (2011), Dutch society is impacted by the "contemporary legacies and obligations" from the Dutch colonial era. Present-day postcolonial debates primarily concern interpreting and recognising colonial history and its enduring effects (Oostindie, 2011, p. 24).

The postcolonial regulations in the Netherlands during the 1970s marked a significant turning point, demonstrating international solidarity. This era witnessed a shift in societal norms and policies, reflecting a global recognition of the need for change. Post-colonialism, initially a domestic initiative to foster the development of mature, critical, and democratic citizens, evolved into a progressive movement promoting tolerance and anti-racism education by the 1980s. These efforts to assimilate domestic and immigrant communities were intended to strengthen social cohesion and national cultural identity. However, in the 1990s, this approach faced opposition from conservative forces. By

the 2010s, a resurging postcolonial 'antiracist' movement, primarily led by communities with roots in pre-colonised countries, began to challenge cultural symbols, calling for changes to the curriculum and a reframing of the national narrative toward a more inclusive perspective (Jong, 2022, p. 1002).

Dynamics of Integration and Identity: Postcolonial Migration in the Netherlands

Due to the postcolonial period, the Netherlands experienced waves of immigrants from the Dutch Indies and Suriname, related to post-war decolonisation and the country's transformation into a multicultural society (Oostindie, 2011, pp. 13-16), which is discussed as well within the exhibitions of the case studies.

Post-1945, the Netherlands, with limited experience in hosting foreign settlers, lacked active policies for assimilation. Instead, it relied on pillarised institutions to aid willing newcomers in assimilation. The 1950s-1960s witnessed a significant shift as the Netherlands grew wealthier and less segmented. The reception of repatriates from the Dutch Indies became crucial, primarily dependent on private initiatives, especially those of churches. The 1970s posed a new challenge as the Netherlands grappled with a large influx of migrants, leading to a slackening of integration goals and fragmentation into three ministries, with local councils developing their policies. The 1980s saw a shift towards limiting the role of welfare institutions for ethnic minority groups with the establishment of the national minorities consultation platform LOM (Landelijk Overleg Minderheden) and reduced local government involvement.

Furthermore, society fluctuated between doctrinaire liberalism and multicultural pluralism, with policymakers aiming for immigrants' recognition of their cultural identities while integrating into Dutch society (Jong, 2022, pp. 1011-1012).

Postcolonial migrants had advantages in integration due to their familiarity with the Dutch language and culture. However, upon arriving in the Netherlands, they found that their colonial backgrounds set them apart from other Dutch citizens and migrants. This distinction allowed them to highlight their unique identities without significantly compromising their connection to Dutch society. While their plea for recognition of their identity persisted, it gradually collided with the pragmatic realities of integration, diminishing the relevance of their colonial past.

The integration of migrants was not just a matter of policy but also deeply intertwined with identity politics. This resulted from the appealing yet empirically uncertain belief that it would enhance their connection to Dutch society and promote integration. This notion may reflect elements of the 'pacification policy' observed during the era of pillarisation or the subsequent concept of 'repressive tolerance'. Over time, the space for such politics expanded alongside shifts in Dutch society, particularly with the decline of pillarisation, the rise of multiculturalism, and the diminishing significance of *verzuiling* due to factors like secularisation (Oostindie, 2011, pp. 14-15).

Moreover, in discussions about successful integration, Indo-Europeans are frequently cited as prime examples, a status they now share with Surinamese Dutch. These two groups, originating from former colonies, are regarded as successfully integrated, indicating they are no longer considered problematic (Captain, 2014, p. 60). Despite successful integration, there was immense pressure on the welfare state, leading to heightened debate and increased scrutiny over the costs of immigration and cultural differences. Migrants' utilisation of social provisions and their representation in various aspects of society were often perceived as different, primarily along aspects such as race and ethnicity. Furthermore, immigrants were seen as threatening for their socio-economic and cultural 'backwardness', portrayed particularly regarding issues such as crime rates. As migrants were being categorised as immigrants, 'coloureds', or 'foreigners', it became critical to challenge and replace these labels with positive ones and images to combat the stigmatisation associated with involuntary identities (Modood, 2010; Jong, 2022; Oostindie, 2011).

Consequently, it has resulted in a more parochial definition of national identity and increased scrutiny of immigrant communities. This resulted in the discussion of the integration of immigrants within Dutch society, especially since 1989 (Modood, 2010; Jong, 2022; Oostindie, 2011). There was an assumption that minorities should be integrated and adapt to the Dutch culture and its norms and values (Balkenhol, 2023, pp. 85-86). A compulsory civic course teaching Dutch culture, culminating in an official citizenship ceremony, is necessary to facilitate integration. Conservative opposition to multiculturalism stemmed from the perceived 'taboo' against linking crime and unemployment with ethnic minority communities (Balkenhol, 2011; Jong, 2022).

In Dutch society, the general principle concerning minorities has been accommodation rather than assimilation. The significance of toleration is that disagreement and diversity do not necessarily result in conflict. This mindset has fuelled an obsession with 'national identity,' leading to an increasingly explicit involvement of all groups of postcolonial migrants in the social discourse about national identity over the past few decades.

Postcolonial migrants embody Dutch colonial history and its accompanying ambivalent associations. This created room for identity politics, which the Dutch government was particularly sensitive to maintain even while the overall minority policy grew stricter. Thus, the Dutch national identity represents the feeling of belonging as the foundation for a 'static' essentialist comprehension of culture, along with a notion of citizenship rooted in culture. On the other hand, citizenship was regarded less as a combination of civic, political, and social rights and more as adherence to norms, values, and cultural customs. The latter were to be safeguarded from the invasion by 'inferior' cultures, posing challenges for second or third-generation immigrants to be fully embraced as citizens. Since the early 2000s, there has been a call to reaffirm national identity in politics, society, and the educational system (Blakely, 1993; Jong, 2022; Oostindie, 2011).

A significant portion of Dutch discourse advocating against racism and flexible migration policies from the 1970s to the 1990s was driven by a sense of justice and a desire to atone for the events of the Second World War (Oostindie, 2003, p. 138).

The Indo-European Diaspora: Challenges of Identity, Migration, and Integration

After Indonesia's decolonisation with the transfer of sovereignty in December 1949, the Netherlands and Indonesia agreed to grant European status to Indonesian Europeans for two years after the transfer of sovereignty. However, it implied that Indonesian Europeans had to decide between Dutch and Indonesian citizenship. The Indonesian government reassured Indonesian Europeans of their safety if they opted for Indonesian citizenship. Nevertheless, those who had experienced the Bersiap period were hesitant, mainly because it would entail renouncing their European status (Blakely, 1993; Hewett, 2015). This resulted in the most significant immigration wave coming to the Netherlands and other countries, such as Australia and the United States, between 1945 and 1963. Numerous people were forced to leave due to Indonesia's new government. Approximately 300,000 Dutch and Eurasians were 'repatriated', whereby approximately 252,000 Dutch and Indonesian Europeans migrated to the Netherlands, while 31,000 Indonesian Europeans remained in Indonesia after choosing Indonesian citizenship in 1951 (Blakely, 1993; Captain, 2014; Hewett, 2015; Oostindie, 2011).

The colonial system characterised the migrants from Indonesia as three ethnic groups: the Europeans and 'foreign orientals'—mostly Chinese and Arabs—besides the 'native' community. The classification of Europeans included the totoks, meaning the Dutch immigrants and their descendants, as well as Indo-Europeans, who had more powerful ethnical and cultural linkages to Indonesia compared to the totoks and became known as Indos (Indisch-Dutch) (Oostindie, 2011, pp. 26-28).

Before 1949, Dutch politicians depicted Indo-Europeans as exemplary Dutch citizens. However, between 1951 and 1967, the Indonesian Europeans who settled in the Netherlands faced challenges in establishing their identity, with their position in Dutch society further complicating the matter (Bijl, 2012; Captain, 2014). The Dutch government implemented a discouraging migration policy, refusing to recognise the migrants as integral members of Dutch society. A racial focus emerged, referring to Indo-Europeans and Eurasians primarily as foreigners whose prospects were in Indonesia instead of the Netherlands. Furthermore, Indo-Europeans and Eurasians were considered incompetent in adapting to Dutch society (Captain, 2014; Oostindie, 2011).

Consequently, the Dutch authorities were unwilling to assist or supply the necessary documents for migration. The main reason for this was a misconception that the Dutch East Indies could be preserved. Therefore, the migration was considered a symbol of defeat. Furthermore, due to the poor economic status of the Dutch post-war country and its housing shortage, migrants were

considered not welcome because the country was barely able to provide for its inhabitants (Captain, 2014; Oostindie, 2011).

In 1956, the Dutch government significantly shifted its migration policy towards Indo-Europeans. The increasing marginalisation of Indo-Europeans within Indonesian society prompted this change. The new policy aimed at assimilation and integration, viewing Indo-Europeans as both integral citizens of the Netherlands and as 'others' requiring civilisation within the nation's boundaries. The Dutch government implemented this policy through the help of welfare workers, who re-educated the Indo-Europeans and Eurasians through housework and cooking. They also scattered them across the country to prevent community building, with the emphasis that Indo-Europeans were required to prioritise their Dutch lineage and suppress their Indonesian heritage. This resulted in many Indo-Europeans largely disregarding their Indonesian heritage and previous experiences and almost living 'invisible' in Dutch society. The Dutch government considered this a successful way of integration.

Despite that, the migration of Indo-Europeans and Indonesians caused emancipatory issues, paired with identity struggles and emotional and social connections interrelating the past with the present. These align with calls for justice, recognition of historical injustices in Indonesia, and understanding concealed legacies of colonialism and discourse within Europe (Immler, 2022, p. 676). Many found themselves in lower-ranking jobs compared to their roles in the Dutch Indies. Some eventually emigrated to other countries, while most Indo-Europeans formed a close community within the Netherlands through conventions, magazines, and online forums (Bijl, 2012; Oostindie, 2011).

When discussing Dutch colonialism, the Indo-European community is an important community to consider as a stakeholder for museums within their process of decolonisation.

The Surinamese Diaspora in the Netherlands: Migration, Integration Challenges, and Cultural Evolution

The migration of Surinamese to the Netherlands occurred for multiple reasons. Due to the labour unrest in Suriname and the comparatively favourable socio-economic conditions in the Netherlands, there was a massive wave of immigrants. Furthermore, Suriname's declaration of independence in 1975 fueled immigration, with approximately 150,000 migrants, nearly half of the Surinamese population, relocating to the Netherlands due to economic and political issues such as the December Murders that followed (Meel, 1990; Oostindie, 2011; Jong, 2022; Blakely, 1993; Balkenhol, 2011).

The first wave of immigration, from 1975 to 1980, encountered significant integration challenges in the Netherlands, particularly affecting disadvantaged segments of Afro-Surinamese communities. The situation was a source of embarrassment for the Dutch government, which was responsible for their reception and support. The economic crisis and the escalating competition for

employment and housing led to conflicts between the Dutch and Surinamese communities, with many settling in the western part of the Netherlands, often in unsafe and unsanitary boarding houses (Meel, 1990; Blakely, 1993; Oostindie, 2011).

Furthermore, Afro-Surinamese faced prejudice, being viewed as objects of curiosity or potential threats, with racist stereotypes perpetuated by the media depicting them as fractured families, drug-addicted criminals, and unemployed troublemakers. Progressive organisations like the Anne Frank Foundation responded by fighting against racism through information dissemination and civic education. Nevertheless, many Surinamese migrants still faced marginalisation within the Netherlands (Jong, 2022; Oostindie, 2011; Balkenhol, 2011).

Nowadays, the Surinamese population in the Netherlands grows more rapidly than in Suriname itself. Moreover, the Surinamese community in the Netherlands has assimilated more into Dutch culture over recent decades and become distinctly ethnic, identifying more strongly as Afro-Surinamese, Hindustani, or Javanese. In the Netherlands, the various ethnic groups have increasingly pursued their own paths (Oostindie, 2011).

When discussing the process of decolonisation and the topic of colonialism, the Surinamese community is an important community to consider as a stakeholder and as a representative for museums.

2.2.3 Unveiling the Layers: Reassessing Dutch Colonial History and Its Contemporary Significance

Understanding colonial history is vital for comprehending a nation's past and its contemporary implications. In the case of the Netherlands, colonial history has often been romanticised, overshadowing the harsh realities of colonialism and exploitation. However, in recent decades, there has been a heightened awareness and interest in the post-colonial aspects of Dutch history, driven by a more critical perspective and non-Dutch scholarly influence. There have been shifting narratives surrounding Dutch colonial history, including perspectives on slavery, recognition of victims and perpetrators, the role of education, the influence of identity politics, and the exploration of alternative historical sources. This paragraph offers a comprehensive overview of the evolving understanding of Dutch colonial history and its ongoing societal impact.

Unmasking the Dutch Golden Age: Rethinking Colonial History and Collective Memory

In discussing colonial history, the Netherlands overlooked the global context of aggressive colonialism, instead referring to a proud and nostalgic era known as the "Golden Age," which highlighted the Dutch Republic's emergence as a leading hegemonic power. This perspective primarily emphasised the country's economic prosperity, international political influence, cultural flourishing,

religious tolerance, and the successful transition to democracy, downplaying colonial and racial contexts after 1945 (Oostindie, 2003; Essed et al., 2014; Balkenhol, 2010; Delgado & Mycock). Until the late 1960s, Dutch education predominantly presented the colonies through a Holland-centric lens, depicting colonialism as favourable and progressive. However, in the 1970s, this perspective shifted as colonialism was considered to have ended with Suriname's independence, leading to a more Eurocentric focus on education (Delgado & Mycock, 2023, p. 43). Despite addressing colonialism, the Indonesian Independence War and the infamous "politioenele acties" remained largely unaddressed (Delgado & Mycock, 2023, p. 36).

The role of the West India Company (WIC) in the Atlantic region was often overlooked in Dutch historical narratives due to a lack of interest, with the history of the WIC frequently outweighed by the United East India Company (VOC) (Oostindie, 2011, pp. 130-131).

Until the 1970s, slavery was predominantly associated with the WIC, causing the historical perception of enslavement to be primarily associated with the Transatlantic region. Unlike the VOC, which had a greater focus on the Asian region, the WIC was heavily involved in the trade of human trafficking. Therefore, the colonies under the jurisdiction of the WIC relied heavily on slave labour, with enslaved individuals comprising the majority of the population (Van Stipriaan, 2023, p. 26).

Instead of focusing on the dark history of enslavement and colonisation associated with the WIC and VOC, there has been a tendency to focus on the prominence of Dutch trading and economic prosperity, minimising the direct involvement in enslavement and framing it merely as participation in the existing transatlantic slave trade. Moreover, in discussions of slavery within education, there is often a greater emphasis on the abolition of slavery in North America rather than on the role of the Dutch complicity (Nimako et al., 2014; Jong, 2022; Van Stipriaan, 2023; Rossum, 2023; Delgado & Mycock, 2023).

However, compared to the 1950s to 1970s, the current historiography emphasises the (post)colonial dimension, influenced by the identity politics of postcolonial communities (Oostindie, 2011, p. 224). With the disappearance of the taboo surrounding the Second World War in the 1970s, a renewed focus on the history of the Dutch Second World War emerged, leading to critical perspectives on Dutch colonial history (Scagliola, 2007; De Keizer & Plomp, 2010). Some Dutch citizens consider the lack of the history of Dutch colonialism in education frustrating. Bijl argues that this causes a "colonial amnesia" among historians, the media, and the government. Primarily due to the nostalgia expressed by the people who lived in the Dutch Indies (Bijl, 2012, pp. 441-452). During the 1970s and 1980s, there was a gradual shift, with increased attention directed towards the Dutch colonial past. This resulted in historical narratives expanding beyond the Eurocentric and nationalistic glorification of colonialism, embracing non-Western perspectives and fostering a more critical outlook towards the VOC and WIC. Moreover, there was an increasing interest in studying colonialism and enslavement within regions such as South Africa, Suriname, and Indonesia worldwide, as well as the

growing influence of non-Dutch scholarship. As migration to the Netherlands increased, more stakeholders with roots in these colonies became interested in contributing to research efforts and advocating for recognition (Oostindie, 2011; Jong, 2022; Van Stipriaan, 2023).

During the 1990s, historians and anthropologists increasingly showed interest in exploring new non-colonial sources to understand history, including oral history, musical history, and tangible artefacts. Eventually, this led to a more profound interest in exploring slave history, resulting in a more analytical and critical approach (Van Stipriaan, 2023; Delgado & Mycock, 2023).

Since 1992, the history of slavery has been mandatory in Dutch education, expanding to include the postcolonial relationship between the Netherlands and Indonesia. By 2006, the curriculum further incorporated topics such as the VOC, slavery and the decolonisation of Indonesia, Suriname and the Dutch Antilles, as well as the abolition of slavery. Since 2020, there has been an increased focus on the history of the WIC and its involvement in slavery. Additionally, in 2021, there was a shift away from a Eurocentric perspective towards more attention on Dutch history related to slavery (Geugten, 2023; Delgado & Mycock, 2023). In December 2022, the Dutch government apologised for participating in the practices that perpetuated slavery globally (Allen et al., 2023, pp. 11-12). In 2023, the Netherlands designated July 1 as the first official year of commemoration for slavery, focusing on acknowledging the history of slavery and its effects nowadays (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2023b).

One of the monuments in Amsterdam, initiated by an Afro-Surinamese community, symbolises a call to reassess official historical narratives that have overlooked the alternative histories of Black Dutch. This can be associated with July 1 as the National 30 June/1 July Committee, deliberately named to parallel the Dutch National Committee 4 and 5 May, emphasising the importance of recognising and honouring the history of enslavement alongside the Holocaust. The National 30 June/1 July Committee arranges an annual commemoration at Surinameplein in Amsterdam on June 30. In 1993, the committee designated June 30 as the official day of reflection to mark the anniversary of slavery abolition, known as *Keti Koti*, traditionally celebrated on July 1 (Essed et al., 2014; Balkenhol, 2011; Nimako et al., 2014; Oostindie, 2011). In the second half of the twentieth century, the abolition of slavery was primarily commemorated in private, rarely getting public attention. However, at the beginning of the 1990s, this changed when enslavement and the history of the Netherlands, Suriname, and the Antilles were commemorated in public space. Public recognition of slavery increased, with more initiatives organised around commemoration and education (Balkenhol, 2023, p. 83).

Nevertheless, when the Netherlands recalls wartime events, it until recently adopted an innocent stance, selectively focusing on the German Occupation while overlooking Dutch war crimes in Indonesia (Scagliola, 2007; Van Leeuwen, 2010; Immler, 2022; Steinmetz, 2021).

Additionally, the Dutch government excluded veterans and a minority of the Indo community who had experienced the Indonesian war from the commemoration at the National Monument on Dam Square in Amsterdam (Scagliola, 2007; Steijlen, 2009). The National Monument commemorates the fallen victims and military in the Second World War and is, for most of the Dutch population, associated with the Holocaust. On May 4, known as de "Dodenherdenking" (Remembrance of the Dead), there is an annual silence of two minutes at the Dam Square Memorial to remember all the war victims. The king and the prime minister hold speeches in honour of the victims. It is a national commemoration day with significant media attention. Most of the Netherlands consider this commemoration more significant due to its national status (Van Ginkel, 2010; Scagliola, 2007; Jordan, 2023).

However, Indo-Europeans who migrated to the Netherlands felt compelled to repress their wartime memories (Van Leeuwen, 2010; Immler, 2022). This changed when the Indo-European community in the 1980s embarked on a campaign for acknowledgement in the commemoration of the Japanese Occupation during the Second World War in Indonesia, alongside the national remembrance of the Second World War in the Netherlands. This quest for recognition extended to acknowledge past suffering, societal shortcomings, and the entitlement to symbolic and financial gestures. In their pursuit for acknowledgement, the Indo-European community drew parallels between their plight and that of the Jewish community, seeking similar acknowledgement and compensation from the government. Addressing this frustration required justification in both the political and public spheres, particularly as Dutch politicians had only begun to acknowledge their plight in the 1970s through remorseful gestures of recognition. This struggle for recognition laid the groundwork for postcolonial identity politics (Oostindie, 2011, pp. 215-16). Furthermore, a movement from the people of Colour pushed to elevate the remembrance of colonial history within civic culture and education, prioritising it on the political agenda. They advocate for incorporating post-colonialism as an essential component of the national narrative (Jong, 2022, p. 1016).

Additionally, in 1988, a separate memorial site, the Indisch Monument, was unveiled in The Hague, featuring an official annual commemoration on August 15. However, according to Scagliola, the Indisch Monument in the Netherlands, in particular, is a source of contention; its purpose, whether to commemorate the victims or the perpetrators of the war, remains unclear, adding to the complexity of the matter. Steijlen adds that the Indisch Monument is more exclusive to a minimised group (Scagliola, 2007; Steijlen, 2009; Oostindie, 2011).

In recent years, the annual commemoration at the Indisch monument in The Hague on August 15 has drawn an average attendance of 2,000 people. The media, such as television, allocates significant airtime to commemoration, whereas the commemoration of slavery on July 1 barely receives any media attention (Oostindie, 2011, p. 94).

The transition from depicting the Dutch as innocent traders, overlooking the hardships of colonialism, such as institutional racism and the hierarchy system, to recognising their role as colonial perpetrators signified a significant hegemonic shift in the Dutch commemoration of colonialism. This led to the changing dynamics within the debate regarding colonialism nowadays (Immler, 2022; Essed et al., 2014; Allen et al., 2023). Other facets of Dutch national history are experiencing renewed introspection and increasing research, particularly regarding the Netherlands' leadership in European colonial expansion, notably its significant and enduring role in directing and benefiting from the slave trade. The transition and debate regarding the societal perspective on colonialism, slavery, and its commemoration are essential to consider in the research of the case studies and the museum's contribution to this.

The dynamics of these memory debates are unique. In many ways, this critique presents a more direct and thought-provoking challenge to the revered notion of the 'Dutch Golden Age' as a measure of national-cultural achievement, sparking new avenues of intellectual exploration.

Furthermore, the national consciousness has overlooked numerous contentious elements of this era, often due to their remote occurrences and the prevailing narratives of the time (Jordan, 2023, p. 28).

Unveiling Colonial Legacies: Shifting Narratives in Representation and Recognition

When addressing colonialism in various forms of representation, such as memorials, exhibitions, and commemorations, the ongoing political discourse and collective memory of colonialism influence the selection of specific elements for display, often at the expense of others. This was exemplified by critical reviews within the museum sector in 2013, where celebrations of the 'Dutch Golden Age' disregarded its exploitative aspects and historical events (Jordan, 2023, pp. 27-29). The Amsterdam Museum's decision in 2019 to abandon the 'Golden Age frame' and incorporate the negative aspects of colonialism marked a significant shift in this approach (Delgado & Mycock, 2023, p. 44). The subsequent public discussion and lobbying led to the perception of the previous perspective as outdated and elitist. Instead, a more neutral chronological perspective was deemed more appropriate, emphasising the experiences of the less wealthy classes in the Netherlands. These collective efforts shape the creation, revision, and alteration of collective memory by curators, cultural critics, academic researchers, and the expectations of descendants and communities (Jordan, 2023, pp. 27-29).

Moreover, the government endorsed the establishment of institutions specifically dedicated to the Dutch East Indies, such as the Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde (KITLV, now known as the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian & Caribbean Studies, founded in 1851), the Indisch Genootschap (Indies Society, established in 1861), and the Koloniaal Instituut

(Colonial Institute, founded in 1945). Additionally, organisations like the Koninklijk Nederlands Aardrijkskundig Genootschap (KNAG, Royal Dutch Geography Society, established in 1873) primarily focused on, though not exclusively, the Dutch East Indies.

Despite the Dutch's perceived cultural superiority, they genuinely appreciated certain aspects of Indonesian 'high' culture. However, Caribbean popular culture was often dismissed as 'backwards', while its high culture was viewed as a distorted reflection of metropolitan culture at best. Indonesia's influence on metropolitan culture and imagination was profound, whereas Caribbean culture did not have the same impact initially.

Another aspect is that the Dutch left a lasting cultural impact in the Caribbean and managed to establish populations with a strong orientation towards the metropolis compared to Asia. Researchers typically prefer to examine the foundational cultures in Asia itself when considering Asian Surinamese culture. Contrarily, Afro-Caribbean cultures were often viewed as degenerations or "bastard cultures" rather than fascinating creations of European and African cultural elements. Nevertheless, it also indicated the perception that the Surinamese culture held little significance. An illustration of this is evident in the pre-war acquisition policy of Dutch colonial museums, which largely overlooked the Native American Indian and Marron cultures of Suriname. As a result, the colonial past has never been very well-known in Dutch national discourse (Oostindie, 2003, p. 140).

For this reason, there is a hegemony in the portrayal of Indonesian (colonial) culture within museums. 'High' end Indonesian objects have been displayed in the museum, compared to Surinamese objects and storytelling. As Oostindie argued, the immigration wave of the 1970s and the lobbying after that for recognition have resulted in the museum world paying more attention to representing Caribbean history and culture (Oostindie, 2011, pp. 229-231).

As a result, there was a noticeable increase in attention given to the Indisch Dutch and Moluccans within museum settings, a departure from previous neglect. Institutions like the Rijksmuseum and the then-named Tropenmuseum, somewhat reluctantly, started collecting and displaying Caribbean artefacts, prompted by the Dutch government and expecting to engage new audiences. This newfound interest sparked a fresh focus on cultural collaboration with the countries of origin.

The establishment of Sticusa, a cultural organisation formed shortly after the war to foster cultural collaboration between the Netherlands and the colonies, was swiftly rejected by Indonesia. Despite its efforts to promote cultural exchange, Sticusa was seen as a continuation of Dutch colonial influence. Sticusa operated in Suriname for an extended period, but its perceived Neocolonial stance ultimately led to its demise (Oostindie, 2011, pp. 229-231).

However, compared to Indonesia, there is a recent resurgence of interest in cultural exchange with Suriname, aligning seamlessly with the inclusive gesture extended to postcolonial migrants in the Netherlands. The Dutch government has also started formulating an international cultural policy

emphasising the colonial aspect. This renewed interest in cultural collaboration on shared heritage in The Hague also meets the aspirations of the Surinamese community in the Netherlands. Therefore, with increased research, writing, and exhibitions focusing on the West, the centre of attention has shifted more towards the Netherlands. Suriname has seen a growing amount of research, written works, and exhibitions in the Netherlands, often conducted by individuals without Caribbean heritage (Oostindie, 2011, p. 232).

The preservation of monuments or archives follows a similar pattern: the resources, drive, and critical players predominantly originate from the Netherlands (Oostindie, 2011, p. 232). However, historical colonial institutions like the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies and the Wereldmuseum Amsterdam have broadened their scope to encompass postcolonial history and Dutch individuals with colonial ancestry. The media landscape, including newspapers, mainstream and niche magazines, academic journals, university curricula, and exhibitions exploring colonial history, race, ethnicity, and the official historical narrative, all reflect a burgeoning postcolonial awareness that has emerged over the past decade or two. Notably, migrants have played a significant role in compelling a re-examination of the past, mainly due to their deep-rooted connection to historical narratives and enduring colonial legacies. Ironically, their colonial heritage has given them the cultural leverage to articulate their aspirations and advocate for their interests (Oostindie, 2011, p. 239).

Navigating Power Dynamics: The Role of Recognition in Promoting Equality and Justice

Recognising colonialism's impact and the challenges faced by postcolonial immigrants is crucial for giving voice to their experiences. In this context, the concept of recognition becomes indispensable.

Recognition, a concept closely intertwined with respect, is not just a philosophical idea but a crucial tool for promoting equality and justice. In this context, recognition refers to acknowledging and validating individuals' and communities' diverse identities, experiences, and contributions within the political sphere. It encompasses actions to ensure equal legal treatment and acknowledge the diverse statuses of individuals and communities. These actions entail specific duties and commitments and involve acknowledging, verbalising, safeguarding valuable attributes, promoting them, and assigning particular status to specific attributes of the acknowledged entity. Recognition cannot be separated from power dynamics and struggles; it should be willingly given and manifest as mutual acknowledgement. Another form of recognition is through representation, which includes establishing monuments or commemorations of events to raise societal awareness and shed light on historical truths and past abuses. *Recognition* is an ongoing process that does not inherently imply a final result (Seymour, 2010; Immler, 2022; College voor de Rechten van de Mens, 2023).

The 'politics of recognition' is a term that refers to legislative regulations designed to guarantee the social circumstances necessary for individuals and groups to maintain self-respect and self-esteem. It can be narrowly construed within politics and informal interactions or have legal ramifications. Formal statutory recognition may refer only to symbolic principles. In contrast, the institutional effects of recognition might be delegated to informal and administrative domains, or constitutional aspects may imply particular institutional setups. The 'politics of recognition of distinction' starts within society and acknowledges negative distinctions through alienation, stigmatisation, stereotyping, exclusion, discrimination, racism, and the influence of identity politics. These distinctions establish a sense of otherness or inferiority, complicating equal inclusion within society (Modood, 2010; Seymour, 2010; Immler, 2022).

Group identity, characterised by subordination or marginalisation, interacts with modes of oppression in an unequal 'us versus them' dynamic. These distinctions often revolve around race, ethnicity, cultural heritage, or religious affiliation. For example, in a political context, this could involve recognising Indigenous rights or acknowledging the historical injustices faced by certain ethnic groups. Pursuing recognition or accommodation is legitimate in conflicts where specific distinctions are upheld, and particular claims are asserted. The nature of distinction is tackled through group assertiveness, lobbying, and institutional and policy reforms aimed at addressing the grievances of marginalised groups (Modood, 2010; Seymour, 2010; Immler, 2022). In summary, the concept of group identity and its interaction with modes of oppression is a vital aspect of the recognition discourse, and understanding it is crucial for promoting social justice.

Slandering, distorting, denying, or withholding recognition from an identity group is not just a form of oppression but a type that endangers equal dignity. Recognition is not just a desire but a vital component of multicultural equality and integration. It serves as a positive distinction and civic principle that should generally guide relations among citizens and within society (Modood, 2010, pp. 162-65).

The notion of 'multi-perspective', as used in the exhibitions of the conducted case studies, proposes re-evaluating dialogue, acknowledging one's dialogical self and engaging in a broader dialogue with others while acknowledging their diverse perspectives. For instance, this could involve considering multiple viewpoints on a policy issue in a political context. Engaging with complexity may weaken a political struggle, favouring a straightforward narrative regarding identity. Embracing 'polyphony', acknowledging overlooked aspects of oneself, might be perceived as a risk in an insecure environment. For example, in a social context, this could involve recognising and valuing the contributions of all members of a community, even those who are often marginalised (Immler, 2022, p. 716).

'Transformative justice', as a component of recognition, involves systematically addressing historical injustices. It aims for a participatory process that acknowledges and transforms victimhood,

representing a central form of recognition in fostering agency, participation, and forging relationships while reshaping power dynamics. Transformative justice is not just about addressing the immediate effects of injustice but also about tackling its root causes. Recovery measures should prioritise empowering marginalised groups to create equal societal positions. A functional recognition process must determine the type of justice sought, whether it be reparative justice, involving compensation for past harm; restorative justice, which focuses on rebuilding relationships among stakeholders; or civic justice, which ensures the inclusion and equality of marginalised groups in society, encompassing socio-economic justice. This comprehensive approach to justice, with recognition at its core, is crucial to transformative justice (Immler, 2023, pp. 96-97).

Apologies as Agents of Recognition and Reconciliation in Postcolonial Justice

When discussing recognition, apologies by legal responses to opposing the repressive predecessor regimes' misconducts are crucial elements of transitional justice (Wijaya, 2019, p. 182). Apologies are necessary to be able to, in the case of what is discussed in this research, showcase the dark history of colonialism and acknowledge its contemporary effects within society (Immler, 2023, p. 105).

Public apologies, within the framework of transitional justice, represent a unique form of reparation. They stand apart from financial compensation or significant actions like restitution, rehabilitation, and assurances of non-recurrence. Instead, they serve as a powerful tool for interpersonal reconciliation. Issued by state representatives, such as the prime minister or foreign affairs minister, public apologies aim to provide acknowledgement and redress for victims of humanitarian law violations. Prior to issuing a public apology, a state often establishes a commission to research the events and determine the responsibility for acknowledgement and apology, particularly for severe breaches of international human rights or significant violations of humanitarian law (Wijaya, 2019, pp. 182-185).

In this unique role, public apologies contribute to the recording of history and the formal acknowledgement of events within national commemoration. They also address enduring harm inflicted upon an innocent group (Wijaya, 2019; Immler, 2022).

Public apologies, beyond their role in interpersonal reconciliation, have a profound impact on accountability. They are not only relevant to the victims and citizens impacted by the abominations but also to other States, shaping the dynamics between the former colonial powers and their previous colonies. They serve as a form of recovery for human rights violations. Therefore, the victims must be considered within the process, monitoring and evaluating a public apology to make it more effective and efficient (Wijaya, 2019; College voor de Rechten van de Mens, 2023).

The exhibitions from the case studies focusing on Indonesia and Suriname are critical components of the decolonisation process. These museums play a vital role in recognising and acknowledging colonial histories and their lasting impacts on society. By integrating the concept of public apologies into their narratives, these institutions contribute to the broader framework of transitional justice, fostering reconciliation and a more inclusive understanding of Dutch history.

From Struggle to Recognition: The Evolution of Postcolonial Citizenship in the Netherlands

The quest for complete citizenship for postcolonial immigrants has evolved from entering the country to advocating integration and delving into the more intangible aspects of acknowledgement, recognition of colonial history, or contributions to Dutch culture, and understanding the specific role of each postcolonial "community" within a multicultural society.

The demand for recognition of culture and history is not a mere request but a deeply rooted struggle, a testament to the resilience of postcolonial communities. This struggle is intricately tied to the assurance that postcolonial identity seamlessly merges into Dutch culture. The central theme driving the ambitions to mobilise these communities was the recognition of their identity and hardships during and after post-colonialism (Oostindie, 2011, pp. 71-75). The benefits of recognition were granted to the identity politics of postcolonial migrants. This led to the establishment of several memorial institutions, including the Moluccan Historical Museum, the NiNsee, and the Indisch House, as well as governmental gestures of apology and reconciliation. These efforts have decreased tolerance in recent decades for excluding (post)colonial literature from the official canon (Oostindie, 2011, p. 127).

Reflecting their marginal importance to the metropolis, the Caribbean colonies remained virtually absent from Dutch historiography and public consciousness for centuries. The shift began in recent decades and was attributed mainly to the significant migration from Suriname to the Netherlands. The migration raised awareness among the Dutch public about these Dutch establishments in the Caribbean, leading to a vocal Caribbean interest group capable of bringing their historical perspectives to prominence (Oostindie, 2003, pp. 142-143). In the past two or three decades, there has been a notable increase in the publication of books about the history of Suriname compared to the three centuries prior, as well as its representation within museums, as can be seen in the conducted case studies.

The updated official canon of Dutch history is a significant milestone, allocating a significant portion to the colonial past and its enduring impacts. It addresses the demands of postcolonial migrants as articulated by their leaders, organisations, or representatives, typically involving organised demonstrations, media engagements, and political advocacy (Oostindie, 2011, p. 127). The re-examination of colonial history has significantly impacted the canon. The concept of 'pillarisation,'

which characterised the upbringing of the first post-war generation, has been integrated into a segment discussing the multicultural Netherlands.

Moreover, colonialism, a topic they scarcely encountered during their school years, now receives significant attention. Therefore, the canon mirrors the changes in our comprehension of history, partly influenced by the migrations following decolonisation.

Expanding the canon in a postcolonial context demonstrates a readiness to incorporate "newcomers" who have long been fellow citizens (Oostindie, 2011, p. 161). While discussions about colonialism outside academia are often infused with moral considerations, the historiography of colonialism has tended to move away from moralising.

In broader society, colonialism remains a subject plagued with ethical questions and matters of judgment (Oostindie, 2011, p. 138). As key players in this narrative, the Dutch government and related institutions have shown an increased awareness of the past, its repercussions, and its roles. However, proper recovery and recognition require more than symbolic gestures; they necessitate engaging diverse communities, descendant groups, governments, and former colonial territories impacted by Dutch colonialism and the history of enslavement. While this approach risks fragmentation, with numerous initiatives and projects addressing historical legacies and their contemporary impacts, it also provides an opportunity to amplify voices discussing colonial and enslavement history. This includes diverse opinions, perspectives, and narratives, examining the connections between Dutch society, its government, colonialism, and slavery (Allen et al., 2023, pp. 440-441).

Additionally, it is imperative to explore the interrelations between colonialism, slavery, and their descendants, as well as marginalised communities, ensuring their voices are heard on these issues (Allen et al., 2023, pp. 440-441). Moreover, repatriates from the East Indies, unlike migrants from the Caribbean, could seek financial restitution for the war, Bersiap and the 'cold reception'. The rationale behind these gestures stemmed from recognising the validity of such requests and the belief that acknowledging the postcolonial communities would facilitate their identification with Dutch society. Slogans like 'Bound in Freedom', the motto endorsed by the government for the commemoration of slavery, vividly encapsulated this objective. The broad focus on (post)colonial culture and history, driven by well-established postcolonial advocacy groups, can also be seen as the culmination of confronting the colonial past. As the battle to recognise their identities progresses, the query of how 'distinct' one truly is becomes increasingly urgent (Oostindie, 2011, pp. 125-126).

The progress and effectiveness of different initiatives by the Dutch government reflect their capacity and influence, affecting how quickly official recognition of slavery and colonialism became integrated into national narratives (Araujo, 2013; United Nations, 2019). These initiatives, a beacon of hope, have the potential to reshape the narrative and provide redress for historical injustices. Nevertheless, there is a stigma associated with the fact that most descendants of the perpetrators

maintained significant social, economic, and political positions, which they were unwilling to endanger by accurately recounting past moral wrongdoings within society.

Recognition, especially its representation in the public sphere through commemoration, museums, monuments, festivals and holidays, is crucial (Araujo, 2013; United Nations, 2019). The emergence of the remembrance of enslavement and colonialism empowered descendants to advocate for their ancestors' legacy and seek to redress historical injustices while providing them opportunities to express their perspectives in public spaces (Araujo, 2013, pp. 15-16). Within the recognition process, there is a need for the revival of the memory of enslavement and colonialism, often accompanied by demands for financial reparations. Social and historical actors frequently emphasise publicly remembering this traumatic history (Araujo, 2013, pp. 2-4).

The decolonisation process, the commemoration of colonialism and enslavement history, and the pressure to research these topics are caused by the lobbying of several diverse communities and grassroots organisations, activists, and scientists (Kraaijenoord & Thielen, 2023, pp. 74-77). Organisations that stand out in lobbying for themes such as colonialism and the aspect of racism that comes along with it are the Nederlanders Centrum Buitenlanders (NCB, Dutch Centre Foreigners), the Welzijninstellingen voor Surinamers (Welfare work Surinamese), and the progressive criminal law organisation Willem Pompe. The concept of everyday and institutional racism gained traction through the efforts of emerging activists, expanding the semantic implications of 'antiracism' and challenging the notion of Dutch history as an unchallenged model of 'tolerance' dating back to the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic (Jong, 2022, pp. 1009-1014).

Disputes concerning the presence of statues depicting colonial figures in public areas have helped raise the matter of colonialism on the political agenda and in the public debate. These debates have contributed to a civic culture where increasing voices are acknowledged, illustrating the interconnectedness of immigrant and native population perspectives within debates concerning citizenship (Jong, 2022, pp. 1015-1016). Different initiatives within popular culture persisted in supporting and expanding awareness of Dutch colonial history, sparking a public debate about Dutch involvement in the Atlantic Slave Trade (Delgado & Mycock, 2023, p. 41).

Unveiling the Hidden Legacy: The Dutch Role in the Atlantic Slave Trade

The Netherlands' significant role in the Atlantic Slave Trade has been frequently disregarded, with little discourse on its involvement in enslavement and racism (Nimako et al., 2014; Balkenhol, 2011; College voor de Rechten van de Mens, 2023). Right-wing politicians dismissed these concerns, viewing them as victimhood and undermining Dutch pride (Oostindie, 2011; Jordan, 2023; Nimako et al., 2014; Essed et al., 2014; Balkenhol, 2023). While some politicians like Balkenende praised Dutch colonial history, referring to slavery as a brief episode rather than an integral part, his refusal to issue an official apology sparked protests and calls for apologies and reparations (Oostindie, 2011;

Balkenhol, 2010; Nimako et al., 2014; Essed et al., 2014). This lack of recognition prompted a reassessment of the plight of the enslaved and their descendants (Nimako et al., 2014; Balkenhol, 2011; College voor de Rechten van de Mens, 2023).

Economically, the Dutch significantly profited from the slave trade, transporting half of all enslaved individuals between 1650 and 1675. The Dutch government was the final European country to abolish slavery. Although the trading of enslaved individuals was outlawed in 1814, slavery continued on Dutch colonial plantations until 1863. After abolition, Dutch owners were reimbursed for their financial losses, while liberated enslaved individuals served as indentured workers for another decade before being replaced by Asian labourers (Jordan, 2023, p. 29).

Migration from Suriname to the Netherlands raised awareness of slavery, but official recognition remains mostly symbolic (Oostindie, 2011; Nimako et al., 2014; Balkenhol, 2023).

Nonetheless, the smaller Javanese community from Suriname voices its concerns less than other communities, leading to fragmented perceptions of Suriname's history along ethnic lines, diminishing the credibility of prevailing ideologies within the diaspora (Oostindie, 2011, pp. 147-148). This has also resulted in a discussion of enslavement history primarily focusing on the activities of the WIC in the Caribbean areas, neglecting the enslavement activities and trade of the VOC in the East Indies and surrounding areas that took place in the 17th century. Increasing awareness of the mutual influences between communities may be crucial for developing a comprehensive commemoration culture surrounding enslavement (Jouwe, 2023; Oostindie, 2011).

Compared to the Indisch and Moluccan communities, the Surinamese community, particularly Afro-Surinamese, exhibited greater political activism seeking civic and socio-economic justice to counter misrepresentation, discrimination, and institutional racism, while emphasising the Netherlands' direct responsibility for its colonial history and ongoing repercussions (Oostindie, 2011; Immler, 2023, pp. 96-97). Increased awareness could lead to changes within the economic system, facilitating the acknowledgement and apology for the history of enslavement. Immler suggests that those apologies should come not only from the government but also from other institutions directly or indirectly linked to the history of enslavement. Furthermore, he argues that recovery payments could help re-establish the economies of former colonised areas connected to the Dutch Atlantic slavery system, representing a form of structural restoration of rights (Immler, 2023, p. 103).

Grassroots initiatives gained momentum when the Dutch government consented to the petition request by the collective Sophiedela, among others, leading in 1998 to the concept of a national slavery monument as a catalyst for fostering social integration among ethnic minorities. Under the direction of the Ministry of the Interior, various Afro-Surinamese, Antillean, Aruban, African, Maroon, and Indigenous organisations united their efforts with the umbrella organisation, the National Platform of the Legacy of Slavery (LPS Landelijk Platform Slavernijverleden), which collaborated with the government (Nimako et al., 2014; Essed et al., 2014; Oostindie, 2011; Stipriaan, 2023;

Nimako, 2023; Jouwe, 2023; Balkenhol, 2010). The initiators of the commemoration and the monument were convinced that official recognition of the commemoration is essential for the equality of citizenship in Dutch society (Balkenhol, 2023, pp. 86-87).

In 2002, on July 1, the National Slavery Monument was established in Amsterdam to commemorate the abolition of slavery in 1863. This event, attended by both the prime minister and the queen, marked the government's acknowledgement of its slavery history (Oostindie, 2005; Oostindie, 2011; Essed et al., 2014; Nimako et al., 2014; Nimako, 2023; Jouwe, 2023; Balkenhol, 2010). However, this monument has been contentious since there is a notable division within the Surinamese community in the Netherlands regarding memorial culture, with many feeling unrepresented and the broader society showing little interest. Furthermore, it is still in the process of being recognised as a public holiday, known as *Keti Koti* (Balkenhol, 2010; Oostindie, 2011).

Movements like Black Lives Matter and Kick Out, *Zwarte Piet*, Black Heritage Tours, alongside educational movements and initiatives supported by cultural groups, academics, and archivists, such as the Mapping Slavery Project and *Keti-Koti* tables, alongside institutions like the Black Archives, are actively working to claim more visible rights in Dutch society, shifting the narrative from trauma to a focus on freedom, equality, and the fight against oppression and underscore the importance of centralising the history of enslavement in Dutch society. They collaborate with museums and schools to achieve this goal. Notably, museums have formed a network called "Canon Museums," which connects objects to specific periods in Dutch history (Delgado & Mycock, 2023; Immler, 2023; College voor de Rechten van de Mens, 2023; Stipriaan, 2023; Essed et al., 2014). This resulted in the discourse on the history of enslavement expanding into a broader conversation. The proactive actions of the Dutch museum sector and the local community leaders play a pivotal role in enhancing public awareness of this issue (Jordan, 2023; College voor de Rechten van de Mens, 2023). This is noticeable since the history of enslavement is also extensively depicted within the conducted case studies.

The narrative must highlight the government's connection to Dutch enslavement history. Various literacy publications cover topics like enslavement, colonialism, and racism, underscoring their interconnectedness (Steinmetz, 2021; Jong, 2022). The National Institute for Study of Dutch Slavery and its Legacy (NiNsee) aims to engage broader society through education, research, and collections (Oostindie, 2011; Stipriaan, 2023; Nimako, 2023; Jouwe, 2023). One primary example is that the term "enslaved" has replaced "slave" in Dutch discourse, reflecting evolving vocabulary (Essed et al., 2014, p. 34).

On July 1, 2020, there was a shift in the discussion between lobbying interest groups and the Dutch government. According to the National Institute of Dutch Enslavement History (NiNsee Nationaal Instituut Nederlands Slavernijverleden), the government wanted a new discourse which would be able to construct a 'shared past' instead of emphasising the regrets and shame regarding the

Dutch involvement with slavery, the government wanted to adapt the discourse to connectedness. While the government simultaneously showed the interest groups more understanding (Immler, 2023).

After the Ketikoti celebrations in 2020, the Dutch government held a debate regarding institutional racism and an advisory and Dialogue Board regarding the enslavement past was established to research which steps the government needed to undertake in order to give its official recognition to the enslavement past. In 2021, the results of the report 'Chains of the Past' advised acknowledging the history of enslavement as a crime against humanity and officially apologise on a national level while establishing a national enslavement history museum, making July 1 a national commemoration and public holiday, and conducting further research and education regarding the enslavement history and legacy, as well as implying a royal foundation for structural and long-lasting payments for repay measurements for the Caribbean Islands among others (Immler, 2023; College voor de Rechten voor de Mens, 2023).

In 2020, there was a resurgence of international interest in the complex legacies of colonial slave trading. Simultaneously, within the Netherlands, the ongoing Dutch involvement was brought to the forefront through demonstrations, such as the one of June 1, 2020, which was the most outstanding and significant. This specific protest focused on issues such as violence against anti-black activists, ethnic profiling, an alleged Dutch tax fraud scandal involving repeated victimisation of immigrants, and Dutch endorsement of "lethal immigration policies" at Europe's borders, among other things (Steinmetz, 2021; Jordan, 2023; Allen et al., 2023). These confrontations underscored an uncomfortable aspect of the well-known national narratives that shape Dutch identity, emphasising core civic values of mutual tolerance and respect for diversity (Jordan, 2023, p. 32).

Additionally, antiracist activists criticised prominent symbols within Dutch society, including colonial statues and street names, traditions like Black Pete, and the overlooking or misrepresentation of slavery in museums and educational institutions (Jong, 2022; Balkenhol, 2010). Protests and criticism have led to changes in societal discourse on slavery. In 2022, historical research revealed the royal family's involvement in colonialism and slavery. Multiple cities investigated their specific histories of enslavement, with plans for further examinations into the Netherlands' involvement in colonial and enslavement history, emphasising the need for additional research (Lauret, 2023; Allen et al., 2023; Immler, 2023; College voor de rechten van de Mens). Currently, the government is committed to reparative and restorative justice, focusing on the misconduct and damage, though the recovery remains largely symbolic (Immler, 2023, pp. 96-97).

In 2021, the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam organised a comprehensive exhibition on slavery (Jong, 2022, p. 1015). The museum's exhibitions inspired the creation of books, movies, and educational materials incorporated into the national curriculum. Numerous endeavours embraced a multi-perspective approach, examining various roles and encounters throughout the Dutch colonial era from the 17th to the 19th century, encompassing the WIC's roles in the Atlantic slave trade and the

VOC in colonial slavery in South Africa and Asia. Simultaneously, they analysed how this system influenced economic and cultural dynamics in the Netherlands (Jordan, 2023, p. 32).

On July 8, 2021, six petitions were presented to the government concerning the history of enslavement, requesting the government's official apology, the designation of July 1 as an official commemoration and public holiday, and an independent investigation into the Netherlands' involvement in the enslavement history. This investigation aimed to assess the impact on contemporary society, identify affected parties, determine those involved, and evaluate the broader implications for fostering societal cohesion within the Netherlands - a related publication followed in 2023 (Allen et al., 2023, p. 12).

Between 2021 and 2022, the mayors of The Hague, Rotterdam, Amsterdam and Utrecht publicly apologised for their cities' involvement in colonialism and enslavement, followed by policies for further acknowledgement, including commemorative activities, monument establishment, and renaming streets (Jouwe, 2023; Stipriaan, 2023; Steinmetz, 2021; Jordan, 2023; Allen et al., 2023). It has increased awareness of enslavement, resulting in more municipalities and provinces, museums, castles, estates, and (financial) institutions researching their connections to the enslavement history (Allen et al., 2023; Jouwe, 2023; Immler, 2023; College voor de Rechten van de Mens, 2023; Stipriaan, 2023).

On a national level, several ministries are involved in addressing enslavement history. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap OCW) is responsible for education, research, heritage and monuments. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment Opportunities (Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid SZW) handles the Dutch implementation of the decennium of people from African Heritage. The Ministry of Domestic Affairs and Royal Affairs (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties BZK) researches the royal family's connections to enslavement. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken MBuZa), in collaboration with the University of Suriname, established the Anton de Kom-educational chair board and was involved in the 2001 Durban declaration during the global Anti-Racism Conference in South Africa, where the Ministry for Big Cities- and integration policy expressed deep remorse for enslavement and slave trade on behalf of the Dutch government (Allen et al., 2023; Nimako et al., 2014).

On December 19, 2022, the Dutch government issued a public apology regarding Dutch enslavement history, initiating 2023 as the memorial year for slavery. King Willem-Alexander and Prime Minister Mark Rutte's apologies were significant milestones, reflecting the acknowledgement achieved by the commemoration movement. However, Suriname expressed dissatisfaction with the Embassy and the government's lack of desired engagement during the apology. Following the apology, Dutch government representatives engaged with organisations advocating for recognition and aftermaths of slavery, as well as with governments in countries affected by Dutch enslavement

(Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2023c; Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2023b; Allen et al., 2023; Delgado & Mycock, 2023; Jordan, 2023; Immler, 2023; Stipriaan, 2023).

The Dutch government aims to collaborate intensively with communities and countries sharing the enslavement history to increase awareness, recognition and understanding within Dutch society (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2022; NOS, 2022). Plans include formally rehabilitating historical figures who led resistance efforts, such as the Marrons in Suriname and the Curaçao hero Tula (NOS, 2022).

Prime Minister Rutte underscored the multifaceted nature of history, advocating for an open and honest dialogue about the past. While stressing the significance of understanding slavery's historical context, he did not acknowledge the concurrent end of financial support to the National Institute for the Study of Dutch Slavery and its Legacy (NiNSee). The institute was forced to close, and government support only resumed for four years in 2019. Since then, NiNSee has advocated for more stable funding, and staff members have collaborated with the government to establish the National Slavery Museum, initiated in December 2017 (Delgado & Mycock, 2023; Stipriaan, 2023; Jouwe, 2023).

Despite the development within the process of acknowledging and recognising the enslavement history, further research is necessary to explore specific dimensions of imagery and the psychological, social, and cultural effects of enslavement and colonialism on society, as well as historical trauma and the systematic research that needs to be conducted on commemoration. It is crucial to consider which institutions and individuals should be responsible for conducting these studies and ensure transparency in the process (Balkenhol, 2023; Nimako, 2023; Stipriaan, 2023).

The Dutch-Indisch Quest for Recognition: From Advocacy to Government Action

In contrast to Suriname organisations, Indisch organisations have observed increased financial contributions from their members, prioritising representing their members' interests over pursuing abstract goals in identity, solidarity, or conviviality. Favourable prospects of recognition and financial compensation led to increased membership and the establishment of new organisations (Ootsindie, 2011, pp. 78-79).

A significant concern among portions of the Indisch generation was the lack of understanding encountered within Dutch society, directing the focus of the struggle for recognition primarily toward the Dutch government. While the government may have limitations in its capacity to view its citizens from a different perspective, it can foster a culture of remembrance and offer tangible gestures. However, the government faced constraints that the Indisch generation considered less significant, particularly regarding its policy to maintain positive diplomatic relations with Japan and Indonesia while balancing respect for repatriated Dutch citizens (Oostindie, 2011, p, 142). Moreover, the Indisch

issue revolved around recognising full citizenship, where their Dutch identity would be acknowledged (Oostindie, 2011, p. 155).

The Indisch quest to acknowledge their identity served as a precursor to the challenging journey of multiculturalism, exemplified by successful community-building initiatives like the Tong Tong Fair. This event has become the Netherlands' foremost multicultural festival and the largest Eurasian gathering globally. However, widespread resentment was felt due to the perceived lack of recognition for the hardships endured by the Indisch during the Japanese Occupation and their resettlement in the Netherlands. This frustration was not expressed in the context of a distinct culture, but whenever frustration was voiced regarding politicians' reluctance, mentions of the colonial era inevitably sneaked into the discussion. In the Netherlands, criticism was directed toward the perceived privileging of those of Dutch origin over those of Indo-European origin within the Indisch community (Oostindie, 2011, pp. 109-112).

During the 1950s, the first period of the "Indisch commemoration cyclical movement" (Steijlen, 2009, p. 66), Dutch Indonesian Europeans left a literary imprint through personal memoirs recounting the Japanese Occupation and the Bersiap period. Given the scarcity of existing literature on these subjects, the recollections of these internees became a vital historical source, contributing significantly to the formation of collective and national memory in the Netherlands (Plomp, 2010, p. 298). The Dutch government funded these publications to address its historical role during the colonial era. Additionally, they sought financial compensation for lost income and belongings and recognition of the upheaval they experienced, affirming the legitimacy of their grievances and frustrations. The requests were specific and, to some degree, attainable, but for many, they came too late, leaving them feeling resentful (Oostindie, 2011, p. 155).

Moreover, the movement has advocated for the recognition of war commemoration and compensation specifically for the Dutch and Indo-European victims of the Japanese Occupation in Indonesia (Hewett, 2015; Bucheim, 2015). This also led to the inclusion of an urn at the National Monument to symbolise the Dutch Indies in 1950. It was considered a triumph for the Indo-European community, symbolising the recognition of their wartime memories (Captain, 2010; Hewett, 2015; Oostindie, 2011).

Furthermore, between 1950 and 2009, 3400 war memorials were established that commemorated the Second World War, with 400 dedicated to the Dutch Indies. Nevertheless, most of these were established after the 1980s. In the 1960s, the first memorial for the Dutch Indies was established after an Indo-European community's initiative. The memorial site established in the 1970s at Bronbeek in Arnhem is dedicated to commemorating the Japanese Occupation of Indonesia. These memorials signified a shift towards acknowledging victimhood, with the unveiling of the women's internment camps memorial being a significant moment. Princess Wilhelmina played a crucial role, serving as a symbol connecting the Dutch Royal Family with the heroes and victims of the Pacific

War. These memorials imply that after three decades, the Dutch government finally acknowledged and recognised the Indo-Europeans (Touwens-Bouwsma, 2010; Oostindie, 2011).

In 1972, Indisch interneees gained eligibility for inclusion in general measures, such as the broad legislation offering financial assistance to victims of the Second World War. At the urging of parliament, this was succeeded in 1981 by organisations or individuals interned in the East Indies. These benefits were a one-time, tax-free payment of 7500 guilders to breadwinners who were victims or their descendants. The matter of back pay had evolved into a prolonged legal dispute. Throughout the Japanese Occupation, the East Indian government refrained from disbursing salaries or pensions to its government officials and military personnel. Instantly post-war, these victims insisted on compensation for their lost income. Initially, the Netherlands responded without commitment, but the State was compelled to alter this stance. This struggle lasted for acknowledgement and recognition for at least sixty years (Oostindie, 2011, pp. 78-80).

Additionally, in 1990, the Dutch government, represented by the Minister of Defence, apologised to the East Indian veterans for failing to offer them adequate understanding and support upon their return to the Netherlands (Oostindie, 2011, p. 90). The parliamentary bill, known as UIG, now explicitly referenced a "moral responsibility." Many claimants argued that only complete compensation would honestly acknowledge the injustices suffered by those who, as full Dutch citizens in the East Indies, had been affected. However, the payment amount and the restricted range of benefits provided by UIG fell significantly short of what many deemed reasonable despite the absence of consensus among various Indisch organisations. This showed that the UIG made a distinction between the war victims, resulting in not all victims receiving acknowledgement and recognition, which was perceived as indicative of discrimination.

In 1992, nineteen organisations united under the banner of the Indisch Platform resolved to maintain pressure on the government and to gain recognition for all war victims of the Japanese Occupation. Establishing the umbrella group, *The Gesture (Het Gebaar)*, would foster enhanced cooperation between the Indo community and the government. Prime Minister Wim Kok's second cabinet presented this in 2000, issuing a clear apology for the recognised flaws in the rehabilitation process. Through this initiative, the Dutch government aimed to acknowledge the Indo-Europeans by providing compensation for war victims, supporting collective projects, and investigating the Japanese Occupation of Indonesia and the decolonisation of Indonesia. The inception of "Het Gebaar" was, in part, influenced by international recognition elsewhere for the war victims of the Japanese Occupation in Indonesia, as well as the financial compensation of overdue payments of wages for former government officials and military personnel within the Dutch Indies and financial compensation for the war victims of the Japanese Occupation in Indonesia. Following this, as well as research conducted by the NIOD, a backpay arrangement was announced by the Dutch government in 2015 and a policy of collective recognition (Steijlen, 2009; Oostindie, 2011; Rijksoverheid, 2021).

The Rawagede massacre, which took place in 1947, was finally acknowledged by the Netherlands in 2011 following the District Court of the Hague's ruling that the Netherlands acted unlawfully in the executions and demanded the State to compensate the victims' widows financially. The Dutch government provided financial compensation to the victims' descendants, marking the first instance of the Netherlands being held accountable for crimes committed in Indonesia and the subsequent liability for these crimes. This led to a public apology by the Dutch government in 2011, three months after the court's decision, which was accepted by the Indonesian government and the victims' descendants. This apology was significant as the government had previously hesitated to acknowledge any liabilities. Before the events were brought to court, the Dutch government acknowledged the massacre and provided financial compensation to the village where it occurred but did not take responsibility. This acknowledgement and responsibility can also be seen as recognising Indonesia's Declaration of Independence in 1945 (Wijaya, 2019, pp. 189-190).

In 2013, Prime Minister Mark Rutte announced on behalf of the Dutch government that a public apology would be made for all executions committed by the Dutch military in Indonesia between 1945 and 1949. The Dutch Embassy in Jakarta issued a public apology the same year (Wijaya, 2019, p. 191).

In 2017, the Dutch government, in collaboration with the Indisch community, established the Sophiahof Museum, which became a meeting place for the cultural and historical heritage of the Dutch Indies. Furthermore, the government formed a campaign on the importance of commemorating the colonial and war events that took place within the Dutch Indies and subsidised 94 projects through the subsidy regulation named Collective Recognition Indisch Molluscan Netherlands (Collectieve Erekenning Indisch Moluks Nederland CEWIN-regulation) (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2023).

In 2020, the Dutch government decided to increase the funding for the CEWIN regulation by 20,4 million euros from 2020 until 2024 to commemorate the 75 years since the end of the Second World War in the Dutch Indies. With this, the government intends to give an extra drive of appreciation for the Indisch identity and to increase recognition of the Indisch heritage publicly through subsidising exhibitions within museums - such as the one that are conducted in the case studies - monuments, historical material magazines, and organisations behind cultural outings that interrelate with the Indisch community such as the Tong Tong Fair, the Indisch Platform, Stichting Nationale Herdenking 15 Augustus 1945, Stichting Pelita, Het Moluks Historisch Museum, Het Indisch Herinneringscentrum and Stichting Beheer Sophiahof, which would increase the knowledge within society regarding the Indisch historical heritage. Furthermore, the government intends to increase organisations' accessibility to sources of Indisch heritage and take measurements of the increasing knowledge of the Dutch-Indies history within the Dutch education system. The goal is also to increase the caretaking of the Indisch community within municipalities by emphasising the importance of the Indisch identity and encouraging initiatives by the Indisch community. This resulted

in the Dutch government implementing a commission for the increase of knowledge regarding the Dutch-Indies history, whereby the commission presented an advisory report in 2023 called "Share and Connect" to the government (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2023; Rijksoverheid, 2021; Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2023a).

Moreover, in 2020, Dutch King Willem Alexander publicly apologised for the Dutch army's "excessive violence" following the Indonesian Declaration of Independence (Immler, 2022, p. 693). This apology was expanded in 2022, coinciding with the research publication on Independence, Decolonisation, Violence, and War in Indonesia from 1945 to 1950. Prime Minister Mark Rutte issued a public apology in February of that year, acknowledging the Dutch government's engagement in "colonial warfare" characterised by systematic and extensive violence from 1945 to 1949 (Jong, 2022; Immler, 2022; Delgado & Mycock, 2023).

Nevertheless, some critics noted that the public apology lacked specific vocabulary, such as "war crimes" and "human rights violations," suggesting that the government still does not fully take responsibility for the events. By avoiding these terms, the government may attempt to avoid legal repercussions and limit further discussion of the topic in public debate (Immler, 2022, pp. 694-695).

2.3 Conclusion of the Literature Review

The literature review has thoroughly examined the decolonisation process and its societal impacts, exploring various interconnected topics related to the research question: "*To what extent and in what ways are postcolonial and decolonial museum theories translated into actual museum practices within Dutch museums dealing with the Dutch colonial legacy in their exhibitions?*"

Initially, colonialism and decolonisation were defined to contextualise discussions on museum decolonisation. Colonialism typically entails the imposition of Western ideologies and taxonomies on colonised societies, perpetuating ongoing political and social issues like migration and racism. Decolonisation involves dismantling colonial power structures ingrained within institutions like museums, advocating for removing colonial narratives, and instead including Indigenous perspectives to challenge prevailing Western-centric paradigms. These institutions have historically employed a colonial discourse, perpetuating a Western-centric perspective (Turunen, 2019, p. 1017). This Eurocentric approach often glorifies Western nations while exoticising others, frequently neglecting their contemporary cultural realities (Volkenkunde Museum, 2020, p. 81-82). The decolonisation effort seeks to recognise and validate Indigenous knowledge, epistemologies, and ontologies. It also strives to recover marginalised and suppressed knowledge and challenge prevailing Western-centric knowledge paradigms (Waterton & Watson, 2013; Rydell, 2006; Turunen, 2019).

Decolonisation is a multifaceted process that involves dismantling hegemonic control, eliminating colonial classifications, and addressing historical injustices. These actions are not just about fostering social cohesion and advancing identity and nationhood development but also about

challenging the role of museums in perpetuating Western hegemony. This process is integral to fostering social cohesion and advancing the development of identity and nationhood (Allen & Jobson, 2016; Van Beurden, 2018).

Second, the museum's origin and evolution in ethics are also analysed, as they play a crucial role in the current discourse surrounding decolonising museums. The first museums displayed objects from other cultures, aestheticising them and taking them out of their original context to justify Western hegemony and imperialism. The modern museum originated from World Fairs, which focused on modernism and technological advancements through a utopian ideology, often stereotyping the colonised inhabitants through ethnic and racial categories (Bennett, 1998; Rudell, 2006). This means that decolonising museums is still an ongoing process with various challenges. Decolonising museums involves changing how colonial history is represented, rearranging collections, collaborating with represented cultures, and adopting a critical perspective in representing history. This requires removing colonial categorisation and justification and promoting inclusivity to showcase power dynamics and equality (Van Beurden, 2018; Hanock, 2015; Foley, 2000; Janes & Sandell, 2019). The International Committee for Museology (ICOFOM) and the International Council of Museums (ICOM) have played significant roles in the discipline's development (Garlandini, 2018).

Commemoration and identity politics theories are crucial to heritage and how museums present it for political purposes, representing identity and encouraging national integration.

Historical narratives in the Netherlands have significantly shifted from a Dutch-centric view of colonialism to a more critical and postcolonial understanding. Lobbying, education, identity politics, and exploration of new non-colonial sources have played roles in this evolution. Despite this progress, ongoing debates and challenges persist regarding recognising and commemorating colonial history, highlighting the need for continuous research, education, and dialogue (Oostindie, 2011; Scagliola, 2007; De Keizer & Plomp, 2010; Bijl, 2012; Jong, 2022; Van Stipriaan, 2023; Delgado & Mycock, 2023).

This research is grounded in the cultural context of postcolonial theory, providing a foundational framework for comprehending the complex dynamics at work. Additionally, theories such as social performance and identity politics are utilised to gain deeper insights into the actions and perspectives of the museum. Collectively, these theories enrich the understanding of the museum's operations and their underlying motivations. Furthermore, these theories further analyse the challenges and conflicting interests within museums during decolonisation. The postcolonial theory helps analyse the colonial discourse in museums and sheds light on the dilemmas and conflicting interests organisations face during decolonisation. Since it focuses on individuals and institutions impacted by the colonial process, including those relocated due to colonialism, it also acknowledges the ongoing global legacy of colonialism and its impact on international relations. It also notes the intertwining of race-ethnicity and class within colonialism, with race being a socially constructed concept linked to

the economic and cultural hierarchy (Ashcroft et al., 1998; Painter, 2015; Wodak & Reisigl, 2015; Loomba, 2015).

The identity politics theory is a phenomenon that focuses on cultural, psychological, or symbolic aspects rather than challenging power relations. It provides a comprehensive view of the interplay between experience, culture, identity, politics, and power and can help analyse the ideology behind certain groups (Williams, 2004; Fraser, 2014; Blee, 2002; Brown, 2020; Oostindie, 2011). Thus, it enables us to offer a broader perspective on how the Dutch Indies are represented through identity and what is lacking in this representation when viewed through a colonial lens. Collective memory and national narratives play a crucial role in the consumption experience at heritage sites. These social constructions benefit the nation but can also be a shared trauma. The analysis of collective memory helps understand the development and conflict of a nation's memory, and historians play a decisive role in constructing societal theories. However, history is often used to indoctrinate and manipulate people, and the colonial nature of archives must be acknowledged to reverse their previous archival authority (Bagnall, 2003; Blaas, 2000; Nimako et al., 2014; Wodak & Reisigl, 2015; Dian, 2015; Oostindie, 2011; Araujo, 2013; Balkenhol, 2023; Beider-de-Haan, 2006).

Commemoration and identity politics theories are thus essential to heritage and the definition of how a museum presents heritage for its own (political) purposes. Since heritage thus represents identity, the museum can use it to encourage national integration. Moreover, drawing from the literature clarifies the following theories, which can be measured through exhibitions, reports, and publicly available information from selected case studies. It also identifies certain matters, which enables us to reach the core of the implemented research question.

The literature review identifies gaps in research, including the need for further investigation into decolonisation's impact on contemporary political systems and the elimination of colonial classifications and racial justifications for objects. As well as the need for more research on the history of enslavement under the VOC. Addressing these gaps is crucial for advancing identity and nationhood development.

The limitation is that most of the literature regarding Suriname and the Indonesian colonisation mainly comes from Dutch sources. The potential gaps in the literature and the space limitations focus on a more elaborative history of Dutch colonialism and its other former colonies. Nonetheless, the review contributes to understanding decolonisation and identifies areas for future research and action.

Chapter III: Research Design: Methods and Data

This thesis aims to explore the practical implications and challenges that arise during the decolonisation process of the museum. It examines the incorporation of postcolonial theory into current museum practices. According to the following research question:

To what extent and in what ways are postcolonial and decolonial museum theories translated into actual museum practices within Dutch museums dealing with the Dutch colonial legacy in their exhibitions?

Furthermore, the research investigates how organisations implement changing visions into their existing working methods. Next to the postcolonial theory, this research examines the evolution of curators' values, thoughts, and visions as they manifest in an exhibition. It explores how collections are shaped through intricate social networks involving communities and museum staff (Byrne et al., 2011, p. 15). As exhibitions result from social and cultural processes, analysing the content and values transmitted throughout this process is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of the exhibition (Waterton & Watson, 2013, p. 551).

Moreover, the profound impact of colonialism's connection to museums on museum representation is explored. The research recognises that specific strategies and approaches are crucial in the process of decolonising museums. These efforts foster inclusivity, challenge existing power dynamics, and confront historical injustices.

Additionally, the research delves into how the relationship between emotional and physical mapping at museums significantly shapes how the site's message is interpreted. This influence is particularly evident in the context of collective memory, national narratives, and how historians construct societal theories.

In order to answer the research question, the thesis analyses the exhibitions related to the colonial past of the Wereldmuseum Amsterdam, Haags Historisch Museum, and Sophiahof Museum. This research holds significance as decolonisation is a highly debated and critical issue within the museum community. Furthermore, it enhances the body of knowledge for other museums undergoing similar transformations, providing valuable insights. It fosters an increased recognition of the significance of museums in the present era, shedding light on their fundamental purposes and their societal contributions, such as preservation, research, communication, and education.

The analysis involves examining the exhibitions' objects, label texts, and wall texts. It utilises the social performance method and qualitative content analysis as primary methodologies supported by the theoretical framework. Additionally, supplementary materials such as audio guides and exhibition books are considered. Interviews with exhibition curators further enrich the understanding

of the subject matter. By exploring the decolonisation process of colonial objects, the study provides a comprehensive perspective on colonial heritage, particularly within Dutch society.

The study is situated within the theoretical framework of postcolonial theory, which provides insight into the underlying dynamics. Additionally, museology and identity politics theories are utilised to deepen comprehension of the museum's actions and perspectives. These theories facilitate the observation of relevant concepts and interpretation of findings, collectively enhancing our understanding of the museum and its underlying motivations.

The research methodology employed in this thesis is qualitative social research, which allows for a deeper exploration of expressive knowledge since it detects the specific case study's characteristics, opinions, indications, and nuances. Qualitative research enables a comprehensive understanding of social processes, including the values and motivations influencing individual and institutional behaviours (Bryman, 2012).

Finally, the data is coded, which helps identify phrases used in the data collection. These codes have been categorised into themes (Mayring, 2004). Moreover, they are essential agents affected by social factors (Byrne et al., 2011, p. 17).

Using Terminology: "Enslaved"

The shift from using "slave" to "enslaved" terminology stems from the guidance provided in the Words Matter booklet. This linguistic adjustment has gained traction in museums, as evidenced in discussions within chapters on Ethnicity and Museology and Postcolonial Theory. The move away from "slave" is motivated by ethnic considerations, recognising the outdated nature of the term. In this thesis, the narrative employs "enslavement history" alongside "slavery history" to infuse the individuals of that era with greater humanity, moving beyond mere labels. Enslaved individuals were human beings who endured enslavement, but this aspect alone does not define their entire identity. The thesis underscores the importance of adopting this new terminology as a form of decolonisation, a theme consistently explored in exhibition discussions. This shift in language has sparked significant interest in exhibitions, reflecting a growing curiosity and attention toward the stories of enslaved people, thereby altering the narrative. Furthermore, in engaging with sources, there has been an increase in accessing oral histories over colonial perspectives, amplifying the voices and experiences of the oppressed and enslaved individuals.

3.1 Case selection

The case study for this thesis focuses on three museums: Wereldmuseum Amsterdam, The Hague Historical Museum, and the Sophiahof Museum. These museums have been specifically selected because they had ongoing exhibitions addressing the Dutch colonial past at the time this research was conducted, making them ideal for comparison.

In all three case studies, a significant shift in the interpretation of colonial museum collections is evident, underscoring the importance of their selection for examination. Previously, these collections were approached from a colonial perspective, often glorifying colonialism and maintaining its discourse. However, there has been a marked transition towards a more critical viewpoint in recent years. This shift is reflected in all three museums, focusing on engaging visitors with a different narrative that incorporates diverse perspectives and challenges traditional viewpoints.

Furthermore, these three exhibitions highlight the need to reassess the narratives previously attached to the collections and objects on display. There is a concerted effort to correct the misconceptions inherent in earlier interpretations. Visitors are provided with extensive information to encourage a fresh perspective on colonialism. The voices of those who advocated for these changes are now prominently featured, underscoring the importance of their contributions. As seen in chapter two, this emphasis on recognition and lobbying sheds light on the background of migration and the government's response to it, enriching the storytelling process.

The presentation of collections has evolved significantly, moving from a strictly chronological order to a thematic approach. This shift, detailed in the qualitative content analysis, allows for a deeper exploration of key themes and emphasises the interconnectedness of objects within the narrative. Museum curators highlight this thematic treatment, offering a more nuanced understanding of colonial history. At institutions like the Wereldmuseum Amsterdam and the Hague Historical Museum, the provenance of objects is transparent, with details on how they were acquired. This contextualisation adds depth to the objects, transforming them from artefacts to meaningful contributors to the overarching narrative and thematic framework.

Each museum was chosen to host an exhibition on the colonial past concurrently in 2023. While Amsterdam's World Museum garnered the most attention, the Hague Historical Museum and the Sophiahof Museum were included in the selection process. Comparing these institutions offers insights into their respective narratives, origins, and approaches to exhibition curation.

Examining these museums in relation to each other provides a comprehensive understanding of their decolonisation processes. In order to provide a comprehensive understanding of the exhibitions, the background of each museum will be briefly introduced, along with an explanation of the individual exhibitions. This contextual information will aid in better understanding the significance and relevance of the exhibited content.

Wereldmuseum Amsterdam

Wereldmuseum Amsterdam, located in Amsterdam, is an ethnological museum established in 1926. Its primary focus lies in showcasing exhibitions that explore world cultures. With an emphasis on storytelling, the museum highlights universal themes and the shared human experience,

encompassing various aspects such as celebration, grief, and more. Wereldmuseum Amsterdam's exhibitions aim to promote cultural diversity and underscore the common humanity that binds us (Over Het Tropenmuseum, Tropenmuseum). Wereldmuseum Amsterdam is part of the Foundation of the National Museum of World Cultures, which consists of four merged ethnological museums: Volkenkunde Museum, the Africa Museum and the Wereldmuseum Rotterdam. The Foundation of the National Museum of World Cultures shares the same board, managers, curators, and some departments, including marketing. Wereldmuseum Amsterdam has exhibition makers who work specifically for that location and curators who sometimes work for multiple locations. The curators specialise in different regions and themes. The museums have permanent and changing exhibitions with a focus on cultural exchange. Exhibition makers collaborate with curators and contribute their expertise, often in thematic areas.

“The Wereldmuseum is a foundation within the merged organisation National Museum for World Cultures. And that is now a total of four ethnological museums that have merged. They share the depot, same board, managers and also curators and some departments, so marketing. It therefore works for all four locations. Other people who work specifically for one museum location“ (Interview curator Wereldmuseum Rotterdam).

Exhibition: “Our Colonial Heritage”

The exhibition 'Our Colonial Heritage' highlights the ongoing impact of colonialism and its influence on the world, including our physical, mental, and personal realms. Focusing on Dutch colonial history in countries such as Indonesia, Suriname, Curaçao, Sint Maarten, and more, the exhibition goes beyond the commonly known historical narrative. It explores how colonialism has shaped the present world and examines the experiences of individuals who endured colonialism. The exhibition aims to provide a multi-voiced and diverse perspective, inviting visitors to explore different viewpoints and learn about people's efforts to create their own lives, resist, and regain control in the face of colonialism (Our Colonial Inheritance, Wall Text, Wereldmuseum Amsterdam).

The Haags Historisch Museum

The Haags Historisch Museum centres around The Hague's history, focusing on the city's past. Its exhibitions aim to provide a comprehensive and multi-perspective narrative, offering a complete view of the city's history. Through its exhibitions, the museum encourages reflection and fosters social discussions naturally (Ontdek Het Haags Historisch Museum, Haags Historisch Museum, 2021). It actively promotes participation from the city's residents, fostering a sense of engagement and community involvement. The museum strives to create a collective memory and deeper connection to the city's historical heritage by involving the local community (Het Geheugen van Den Haag, Haags Historisch Museum, 2021).

The Haags Historisch Museum has worked for two years on the Colonial The Hague exhibition, with much interference from the people who represented it. A call has been made for this, and the museum has responded to well-attended events that attract these target groups (such as foundations such as the TongTong Fair, among others). There was also a collaboration with the Sophia Museum (whose exhibition is also included as a case study in this research). A lecture was given about the intention of the exhibition that the museum wanted to create, whereby the museum asked the representative group for their opinion and interference on what should be included in this exhibition.

In the end, many people participated, and some participants were interviewed about personal objects which the museum and participants considered important to display in the exhibition. A team of curators and professionals involved decided which objects were finally chosen for the exhibition. A conscious choice was made to focus on the Caribbean regions, Suriname, and Indonesia/New Guinea. Many of the objects on display are on loan from other museums, and mainly, an informative story is told that focuses on The Hague and its residents (Interview Valerie - Haags Historisch Museum).

Exhibition: “Colonial The Hague: an unfinished past”

As a government city, the Hague played a significant role in the Dutch colonial system despite not being a trading city like Amsterdam or Rotterdam. This exhibition at The Hague Historical Museum explores the unfinished colonial past of The Hague and its impact on former colonies such as Indonesia, Suriname, the Caribbean islands, and the Netherlands itself. The decisions made in The Hague had far-reaching consequences, often resulting in disastrous outcomes for many people. Traces of this colonial past can be seen throughout the city through buildings, restaurants, street names, and the diverse population. The exhibition aims to shed light on the stories of colonial administrators and those who experienced the consequences of these decisions, emphasising the profound influence of The Hague on the colonial history of the Netherlands (Colonial The Hague, Wall Text, Haags Historisch Museum).

Sophiahof Museum

The exhibition “Ons Land” is a joint project of the Indisch Memory Centre (*Indisch Herinneringscentrum*) and the Moluccan Historical Museum, both located in Museum Sophiahof (ONS LAND, Wall Text, Museum Sophiahof). Therefore, all three foundations will be discussed here briefly. Sophiahof Museum functions as a gathering space for various organisations and communities.

Het Indisch Herinneringscentrum, Moluks Historisch Museum, het Indisch Platform, Pelita en Nationale Herdenking 15 Augustus 1944. It was established in 2015 by the Dutch government as a form of Collective recognition (Museum Sophiahof).

The Indisch Memory Centre (Indisch Herinneringscentrum) is a national commemoration centre dedicated to the shared history between the Netherlands and Indonesia. It actively participates in national-level programs, campaigns, educational projects, and exhibitions (Indisch Herinneringscentrum). The Museum Maluku is a heritage institution responsible for overseeing collections, creating programs and initiatives, and engaging in partnerships with diverse collaborators. Its objective is to promote the empowerment of the Malukan community in society (Museum Maluku). However, Museum Sophiahof will refer to both the Indisch Memory Centre and the Moluccan Historical Museum for this thesis.

Exhibition: "Ons Land: Dekolonisatie, generaties, verhalen"

The exhibition "Ons Land: Dekolonisatie, generaties, verhalen" at Museum Sophiahof delves into the Dutch colonial history in Southeast Asia and its enduring impact. By featuring the stories of eight families, the exhibition provides a platform for eyewitnesses and their descendants to share their experiences. These personal and diverse stories resonate with visitors, shedding light on the complex postcolonial history and its varied interpretations. The exhibition follows a chronological narrative, beginning in the present and delving into the colonial past before returning to reflections on the present. It emphasises that Dutch colonial history is not a neutral subject, and the narrative presented is a work in progress. The exhibition aims to prompt conversations, inviting active participation from visitors to enrich the ongoing process of decolonisation and its understanding. "Ons Land" strives to create an inclusive and accessible presentation. The exhibition acknowledges the potential emotional impact of the personal content and images displayed and is committed to respecting the feelings of all individuals involved (ONS LAND, Wall Text, Museum Sophiahof).

3.2 Data Collection and Justification

Comprehensive Data Collection and Interpretive Analysis of Museum Exhibitions

In order to research the exhibitions of the Wereldmuseum Amsterdam, the Haags Historisch Museum, and the Sophiahof, this analysis encompasses the study of the exhibitions and the museum's efforts towards decolonisation. These case studies have been analysed using an interpretive approach to recognise the relevance, potential implications, legitimacy, and assumptions that form the narrative of the documents. Additionally, the interpretive approach was complemented by the social

performance and qualitative content analysis methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of the exhibitions.

The data collection process involved separate visits to each museum on different days, initially observing them without taking specific notes to gain a visitor's perspective. Subsequently, observations were made focusing on critical points derived from the elements of performance method analysis, particularly emphasising postcolonial theory. The World Museum Amsterdam and the Hague Historical Museum were visited multiple times to analyse various perspectives, and field notes were taken, with each category of performance element receiving emphasis. Notably, outstanding observations were interrelated with each element.

General notes were made on initial visitor impressions, and photographs were taken in each space to inform field notes for further analysis. Photographs of all the wall texts, theme descriptions, and labels within the exhibitions were taken. The focus was primarily on capturing labelled texts rather than objects due to the abundance of items essential for coding qualitative analysis concepts, particularly emphasising the script element. Label texts form part of the script element, informing narrative categories used for analysis and curator intentions. These visual and textual materials were then transcribed partially through the assistance of Google Documents and manual transcription, as well as the available booklets from the Sophiahof Museum and the Haags Historisch Museum that contained the audio scripts of the exhibition as label scripts.

Each exhibition hall was analysed by examining the names used for coding, wall texts, labels, and objects and categorised accordingly. Coding helped identify represented countries in each hall and discuss the grand narrative and exhibition themes. Postcolonial theory was applied critically to examine the museum's self-decolonisation process and identity political theory, focusing on how marginalised groups are represented and discussed in the script's narrative and through exhibited objects.

Performance element analysis and qualitative content analysis were essential. These combined elements of performance method analysis with QCA primarily focus on scripts. This approach enabled categorising how exhibitions are structured and differentiated representations of marginalised groups and objects. It was critical to analyse object origins and display methods from a decolonial perspective, considering their previous use in exhibitions with colonial perspectives. Postcolonial theory was instrumental in understanding the decolonisation process and aligning theoretical frameworks within the exhibition.

Unveiling Exhibition Narratives: A Deep Dive into Thematics, Performance Elements, and Interrelations

Qualitative content analysis, mainly focusing on the script elements, offered a deeper exploration of thematics, performance elements, and their interrelations. This comprehensive approach provided a clear perspective on the exhibitions' narratives and performance elements.

Furthermore, the analysis focuses on thematic elements within the exhibitions, often organised chronologically. Understanding the interaction between the objects and scripts is vital, with a critical analysis of label text being fundamental in this context. Therefore, the data was analysed primarily using the scripts from the case studies as the source material. With this, the analysis was carried out using QCA by coding and categorising the wall-, sub- and label texts, booklet texts and audio fragments that are part of the performance element of the script to align with exhibition themes while facilitating comparison QCA to identify themes that bring out the distinctive characteristics, opinions, and subtleties of the case studies in question, leading to a deeper understanding of the script and how this interrelates with the other performance elements and the objects presented.

Consequently, only the exhibition books from the Haags Historisch Museum and the Sophiahof Museum were analysed since Wereldmuseum Amsterdam did not offer an exhibition book during the visit. Furthermore, since the Sophiahof Museum's exhibition mainly consisted of intermixed media that accompanied the objects, an audio guide tour was necessary. The audio tour has also been scripted in the exhibition book. Therefore, it was decided to include this in the analysis.

The collected data was initially transcribed from images to documents, a process carried out partly manually and with assistance from Google Docs' transcription tool. However, limitations were encountered with the labels from Wereldmuseum Amsterdam; specific label texts were captured incorrectly in photographs, rendering them unreadable and unsuitable for analysis.

Insights into Museum Operations and Decolonisation: Interviews and Data Collection

The presentation of the Haags Historisch Museum regarding the process of the creation of the exhibition, as well as the interviews, were recorded and subsequently transcribed (available in a separate source document). Interview questions were developed using the theoretical framework, with interviews constituting an element of performance method analysis under actors interconnected with each exhibition's themes. Two in-depth qualitative interviews have been conducted with the curators from the Haags Historisch Museum and the Wereldmuseum Rotterdam to gain a better insight into the museum's functions and engagement during decolonisation. Since the Wereldmuseum Rotterdam and the Wereldmuseum Amsterdam are part of the same foundation, the museums share the same depots and curators. Often, the exhibitions of the museums travel between museums or are influenced by each other. Therefore, interviewing the curator of the Wereldmuseum Rotterdam was relevant to

conducting these studies. Mainly since the Wereldmuseum Rotterdam was working on its temporary colonial exhibition, "Colonial Past in Rotterdam", based on research on colonialism in Rotterdam.

These interviews provide essential insights into the decolonisation process. Moreover, qualitative interviews can partially determine the methods and coordination employed during the exhibition creation process and gain insights into how these aspects are perceived. Before conducting the interview, the interviewee was informed via email about the details of the conversation. The interview was conducted in person or through online social media, such as Microsoft Teams and lasted approximately 40 minutes. After confirming their willingness to participate, the content of the email was revisited, and the interviewee was asked for their consent to record the conversation and provide any clarifications if necessary.

The interviews have been analysed by identifying and reviewing clauses in-depth, attributing them to chronological structure, connections, and characteristics (Gubrium et al., 2012). This thesis uses interviews to assess the alignment between the foundation's representatives and their involvement in creating the case study's exhibitions. The theoretical framework and analysis of the exhibitions have guided the development of the interview topic list and subsequent analysis. This approach ensures the incorporation of relevant and in-depth questions during the interviews, with room for improvisation based on responses to previous questions (Hardon et al., 2004).

The interviews were conducted using a predefined interview guide, addressing different aspects of decolonisation in museums, specifically focusing on the representation and interpretation of colonial history and its consequences. A broader reflection on the museum's overall practices emerges by centring on the interviewees' narratives and their connection to decolonisation. The interviews were conducted in Dutch, recorded, and transcribed. The complete Dutch transcripts and all the primary sources utilised in this research can be found in a separate document. An English summary can be found in Appendix 2. These transcripts have been integrated into the documents imported into the Atlas.Ti program facilitates coding and analysis while emphasising the key themes discussed.

Nevertheless, there were some limitations since the original intention was to interview at least one person in each exhibition included in the case study, preferably starting with the curator. However, due to time constraints, no one from the Sophiahof Museum was approached for an interview. As for Wereldmuseum Amsterdam, attempts were made to contact them through various channels, but ultimately, they could not cooperate for an interview. A way to solve this was to analyse interviews with curators of the Wereldmuseum Amsterdam that have been published on their social media, as well as interviews published by other organisations such as NTR Caribisch Netwerk.

3.3 Methods for Analysis

Two main methods were employed for the qualitative embedded analysis: the performance method and qualitative content analysis (QCA). These methods were integrated by combining the

thematic elements of each exhibition. In order to apply the social performance model within the museum and its exhibitions, it is crucial to assess how the exhibition is structured in terms of both time and space and how objects are presented in comparison to their original purposes. This approach primarily allows for examining the museum from the audience's viewpoint, highlighting the interactive nature of museum exhibitions. In order to measure the effectiveness of this communication, the focus has been on the seven performance elements: Actors, Public, Collective Representations, Social Circumstances, Script, Means of Symbolic Production and Mise-en-scène (Hoebink, 2017). The analysis of each case study delves into every aspect or element of social performance.

This integration allowed for the acquisition of comprehensive insights into exhibition presentations and ideologies, thereby facilitating a thorough examination of the underlying concepts. The analysis involved studying the exhibitions, examining the museum's decolonisation process, and facilitating comparison among museum systems to reveal underlying ideologies, discourses, and external influences. It also provided comprehensive insights into the political, economic, and social circumstances affecting the museum. The methods aimed to understand the museums' intended message and the curators' objectives (Hoebink, 2017).

The analysis focused on the case studies of Wereldmuseum Amsterdam, the Haags Historisch Museum, and the Sophiahof Museum. These museums were selected for their unique approaches to the decolonisation process, reflected in their exhibitions on colonialism and their distinct museum practices. Mason (2006) argues that the museum's approach to the script, mise-en-scene, and means of symbolic production that empower the script's narrative is not just important but crucial. It interrelates to the objects displayed and the interrelation with the museum itself and its Foucauldian power dynamics (Mason, 2006, p. 26).

As Macdonald (2006) suggested, examining the exhibition's script is key to identifying political ideologies and the museum's objectivity regarding the political, historical, and social contexts hierarchy. This analysis can also reveal any absence of marginalised or politically driven agendas in the script or the degree of awareness brought to such matters. The analysis's primary focus has been on decolonisation within a museum, adopting a critical and objective approach. The analysis was informed by the theoretical frameworks of postcolonial theory, identity politics, and museum ethics drawn from the data collected. All the documented data has been analysed and coded using QCA.

The Social Performance Method

The social performance model of Alexander (2006), modified by Hoebink (2017), is used as an analysis method to research the exhibitions of the case studies and the scripts of the collected data, primarily consisting of Wall, Theme, and Label texts. According to Alexander (2006), the

performance model can offer a long-term perspective on cultural and organisational changes, facilitating an understanding of their social and political nature (Alexander, 2006, p. 37).

In order to analyse the case study exhibitions, Alexander's (2006) social performance model was employed, with modifications made by Hoebink (2017). His model's application within the exhibition enables an examination of the intended message and the curators' vision, which becomes evident through observing the seven performance elements.

Actors play a pivotal role in museums as they have the power to influence the target audience, shape the museum's reputation, and foster community engagement. In this particular case, the role of actors has been analysed by conducting interviews with the exhibition curators.

The *mise-en-scène*, which refers to the overall presentation of the collection and its intended focus, encompasses the arrangement and display of objects and the utilisation of multimedia to facilitate knowledge transmission. The target audience has observed this during their visit to the museum. In the context of this study, the actors refer to the museum itself and the curators, and their roles are analysed through conducted interviews. The target audience consists of the public visiting the museum and benefits from social inclusion, involving the individuals represented in the museum's discussed topics. Due to time limitations, reaching the target audience directly was not feasible for this research; however, the interview guide incorporates questions concerning social inclusion.

The script represents the story conveyed, incorporating both textual and visual elements in the museum. It has been analysed by examining wall-, theme-, and label texts and making observations while visiting the exhibition.

During a performance, the process of symbolic production is evident as the surrounding environment, including the room itself, conveys the overarching narrative through tangible elements. These surroundings symbolise ideologies and serve as the means of symbolic production, incorporating architecture, museum collections, and multimedia utilisation. The significance of these components lies in how museum architecture reflects historical grandeur or contemporary neutrality while museum collections expose underlying ideologies. Additionally, multimedia plays a crucial role in engaging visitors through interactive elements. Overall, the museum's architecture, collections, and multimedia contribute to its identity and marketing efforts. Therefore, attention is paid to these elements while analysing the case studies.

Various social circumstances, such as politics, culture, and society, exert a profound influence on the museum's environment. An analysis is being conducted to examine how the museum presents the concept of decolonisation within this context. In the case of this research, social circumstances include the lobbying groups that contributed to placing the topics of slavery commemoration and decolonisation on the political agenda, as well as the decolonisation of institutions like museums. The public represents the museum's target audience, and social inclusion involves engaging the individuals represented in the institution's discussed topics, such as the participants involved in the exhibition

itself. The analysis of social circumstances is supported by research into the theoretical framework and relevant academic sources on decolonisation, underscoring the urgency and relevance of these issues in our society.

Moreover, social inclusion is discussed within the results by analysing how the museum utilises social inclusion through participation with target representatives, for instance. Creating collective representations is crucial in shaping the meaning conveyed through the museum's performances and exhibitions. Such representations align with the museum's mission and vision, reflecting its commitment to critical reflections on decolonisation, which is evident through the scripted data.

Many of these elements have been transformed into questions incorporated into the interview guide and were addressed during the interviews. Additionally, all the obtained data were analysed, considering these elements.

Qualitative Content Analysis

Another method chosen for analysing the collected data in this study is qualitative content analysis, a well-established and widely used approach in social science research. This method is particularly effective in identifying recurring patterns and themes in the data and assessing communication and socio-cultural background (Bryman, 2016; Marying, 2004). A systematic and rigorous analysis allows a deeper exploration of social processes and individual and institutional behaviour (Bryman, 2012). The analysis is conducted using the Atlas software program, a widely used and respected tool in qualitative research. By utilising codes to organise the data, this approach leads to the emergence of themes that shed light on the unique characteristics, opinions, and nuances of the examined case study. Overall, the qualitative approach adopted in this study provides valuable insights into the complex social phenomena under investigation.

Data Analysis and Coding: Unveiling Patterns and Themes

The analysis was conducted using the program Atlas.ti, which aligns well with the methodology of transforming all acquired information into data, facilitating qualitative data analysis. This approach allows for a comprehensive examination of the data by identifying recurring patterns and themes within it (Bryman, 2016). A total of 1091 documents containing the collected data, including each document featuring a written script, such as e.g. a label text, were uploaded for analysis.

However, approximately 20 documents related to labels from Wereldmuseum Amsterdam were missing due to unclear contexts in the photographs of these labels. As a result, the analysis was

based on 399 documents of collected data, some of which contained multiple label texts within a single document. These documents were categorised into 35 groups, as detailed in Appendix 4, facilitating a more straightforward utilisation of qualitative content analysis and the social performance method. This categorisation clarified the size of each museum's collection used in the exhibition and the different thematic elements within each hall. This enabled a more precise analysis of themes and comparisons between museums. Additionally, it allowed for an assessment of whether the elements of the social performance model aligned with the presented themes through the analysis of the script with QCA.

Moreover, the categorisations facilitated the navigation of the collected data, making it easier to analyse various aspects of the social performance elements. Some documents also included photos, which played a crucial role in supporting the social performance analysis and significantly aided in elaborating field notes, underscoring the value of visual data in the research.

Furthermore, the categorisation allowed for a thorough examination of which collected data aligned with the theoretical framework and theories presented within the thesis. This enabled a comprehensive discussion of how the script and other elements are presented within the case studies.

In addition to categorising each significant document containing the collected data, the documents were also coded, resulting in a substantial number of codes that were then grouped together. These code groups can be observed in Appendix 5. Once all the codes had been categorised and merged, the process of interlinking the codes began to analyse the relationships between them, enabling the identification of which codes stood out the most and were most interconnected with other codes. However, reviewing all 661 codes individually was impossible due to time constraints.

Therefore, a division was made based on the principal codes, which were not only the most frequent occurrence within the analysed documents but also significantly influenced the themes of the researched exhibitions. Additionally, the following codes were selected based on their relevance to the thesis research and their significance during interviews with the curator.

Collection, Colonial Discourse, Discourse, Exhibition, Globalisation, Government, Museum, Multi-perspective, Netherlands, Postcolonialism, Stories, "Image Matter", "Words Matter",

From these codes, a selection was made of the top 20 codes with the highest number of quotations and the 20 top codes that showed the most interlinkages. This was done to identify common themes among the most frequently cited documents and to highlight the most significant themes within the analysed data, which resulted in the following codes being the most quotation codes;

Colonialism, History, Indonesia, Heritage, Racism, Culture, Suriname, Slavery, Politics, Migration, Resistance, Religion, Inequality, Education, Oppression, Violence, Music, Art, Military, Family

Furthermore, the 20 codes exhibiting the highest degree of interlinkage among each other are as follows:

Colonialism, Politics, Government, Stories, Netherlands, Anti-colonialism, Exhibition, Oppression, Collection, Culture, Decolonisation, Indonesia, History, 20th century, Abuse, Abolition of slavery, Resistance, Postcolonialism, Identity, Representation

The findings from these two sets facilitated a more profound examination of the significant themes addressed in each exhibition. Additionally, they underscored the necessity for additional exploration in academic literature to establish a more cohesive theoretical framework. This would facilitate a more profound analysis based on the common topics in the case studies exhibitions.

Moreover, an examination was conducted to identify codes appearing in the most frequently quoted and interlinked categories, yielding the following codes:

Colonialism, History, Culture, Politics, Resistance, Oppression

Predictably, these codes emerged as the most frequently quoted and interlinked codes. Interestingly, these codes also represent overarching theme categories due to their general nature. Consequently, it was determined that a thorough analysis of each category should be conducted by repeating the aforementioned analytical process. This involved examining the top 20 codes within each category that appeared in both the quoted and interlinked codes, culminating in identifying the following codes.

Oppression, Indonesia, Colonialism, Slavery, Resistance, Politics, Suriname, Independence, Government

These codes were subsequently linked together to form a network, creating a code tree that improves understanding of the coding process. Appendix 3 provides a detailed visual representation of the interconnected codes. Moreover, as these codes are derived from the qualitative content analysis (QCA), they are utilised with the theoretical framework and the social performance method to analyse the selected case studies in the results section.

3.4 Operationalisation

Unveiling the Social Performance: An Exploration of Museum Elements

Specific criteria and methodologies have been developed for operationalising social performance theory in museums. These methodologies lead to systematically analysing how museums use social performances to convey meaning, engage with audiences, and reflect cultural, societal, and political contexts within their exhibitions and programming.

Identification of Performance Elements:

Mis-en-Scène can be defined by observing and identifying what is displayed in the exhibition, focusing on the objects. This object-directed approach provides an overview of the technical and formal interrelations between objects, conveying the curators' knowledge and concepts. Furthermore, it is essential to consider the scene in which the objects are presented and evaluate if the scene adds significant meaning to the object or context of the collection. As well as if the scene conveys a particular enactment, feeling, or notion to the visitor. Capturing the mise-en-scène involves photographing the site for a deeper analysis.

Script: It is essential to consider the type of narration employed and how it conveys the story and overarching narrative. This is done by evaluating the museum's script, encompassing textual and visual elements experienced within it. This involves evaluating whether the narrative follows a chronological order or if narratives are interconnected, allowing visitors to create their own interpretation. The order of the script, whether chronological, geographical, or thematic, is also significant. Furthermore, it is crucial to consider the perspective and voice in which the text is presented, whether formal or informal, to engage the visitor. Analysing the script involves thoroughly examining the site and photographing all the texts presented for deeper analysis.

Collective Representation is identified by considering the meaning created by the performance. This requires a deeper analysis of the museum itself, including the actions taken by the institution, such as name changes, and how it presents itself to the community through official publications and policy documents. Understanding the museum's impact and goals, as well as the associations and elements related to them, is vital.

Social Circumstances can be observed by investigating the influence of political, societal, and cultural factors on the museum and its exhibitions, considering how these circumstances shape the museum's environment and narrative. Furthermore, it involves researching articles and academic literature on colonialism and decolonisation, political agendas, and historical perspectives. This includes considering topics such as recognition and lobbying and how the museum represents these through its performance. Additionally, assessing if the museum has received funding is essential.

Actors can be defined by focusing on the individuals behind the performance and exploring their ideologies. Understanding their objectives in presenting the exhibitions is crucial, whether to increase visitors, enhance the museum's reputation, or involve the community. Interviews and desk research are valuable methods for gathering insights into the actors' motivations.

The public is observed by examining the targeted audience and the communities associated with the museums. This can be accomplished through interviews to identify the target audience and assess how the museum engages its audience, such as through questionnaires or guest books. Co-

curatorship and desk research also provide insights into the involvement of represented communities in exhibitions.

Means of Symbolic Production involves observing the physical expression of the performance by assessing how the museum's spatial design and architectural features contribute to its identity and marketing, reflecting underlying ideologies and historical contexts. Furthermore, it is crucial to examine the overall presentation of the museum's collection, including the arrangement and display of objects, use of technology and space utilisation, which provides insight into the depth of the exhibition and its interaction with visitors—furthermore, assessing the role of multimedia in enhancing visitor engagement and participation in the performance, including interactive elements and their integration with objects and scripts. On-site observation, photography for further analysis, and consulting museum archives and exhibition booklets are essential steps in this process.

Analysis of Performance Elements:

Additionally, the performance method further analyses direct observations from the exhibition. Examining pictures taken during visits obtains additional insights into elements such as mise-en-scene and symbolic production. Categorising each hall and analysing thematic and labelled texts contribute to understanding the narrative and script elements. This approach provides a clear overview of each exhibition's themes and displayed objects, facilitating further analysis using the performance method.

Initially, the element of the actor was analysed through interviews with curators from The Hague Historical Museum and the Wereldmuseum Rotterdam. Although the curator from Wereldmuseum Rotterdam was not directly involved in the exhibition of Wereldmuseum Amsterdam, they share the same foundation. These interviews shed light on the museums' ideologies, revealing internal bureaucracy and adherence to museum ethics. Furthermore, the Wereldmuseum Rotterdam and Amsterdam utilise the same catalogue and exhibition creation methods, as experts from each museum collaborate within the foundation to develop exhibitions, which are often displayed in multiple venues. While the exhibition of the Wereldmuseum Amsterdam is an exception to this practice, their policies remain consistent due to the shared board.

Interviewing the curators elucidated crucial aspects of the actor element and its interrelation with other performance elements, such as public collective representations, social circumstances, script, and mise-en-scene. The interviews explored various topics, including the exhibition creation process focusing on decolonisation, identifying successful elements, examining museum ethics, and discussing other relevant themes.

The interview questions were formulated based on prior research and the theoretical

framework, resulting in discussion topics aligned with the themes. These topics were transformed into specific questions detailed in the topic list provided in Appendix 1, which outlines the research question, thematic divisions, general topics, and brief descriptions of each theme. Questions were created by consulting the theoretical framework of these topics. Additionally, the topic list includes specific questions to be asked during the interview and general background information questions found in the interview guide.

Theoretical Framework Operationalisation

Identifying colonialism and decolonisation within the museum by using Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonial theory is crucial for identifying and understanding colonialism and decolonisation within museums, providing a theoretical framework for systematic observation and analysis.

First, colonial discourse within museums can be established by observing concepts like *Colonial Power Structures* and the *Representation and Glorification of Western Nations*. This involves assessing how museums perpetuate or challenge colonial power structures and Eurocentric perspectives by examining their narratives, exhibitions and collections. Furthermore, the museum's efforts to adjust exhibitions and contextualise earlier collections to promote decolonisation is examined. Moreover, the way museums research former colonisers and adapt collections to remove racism to determine their alignment with decolonisation principles is observed.

When examining museums' decolonisation efforts, it is crucial to consider the *Progress and Challenges in Decolonisation*. This involves identifying their challenges in addressing colonial legacies and promoting decolonisation. As well as observing how museums actively advocate for inclusive programs, engage in co-curatorship with Indigenous communities, and create new exhibitions to expand anthropological perspectives.

Besides, examining *the representation and ownership* of material culture, including how museums handle, display, and interpret material. While considering and assessing how museums acknowledge and address the significance of cultural values. Besides its actions on colonial and postcolonial narratives, it is important to observe how the museum deals with the *Recognition of Indigenous Knowledge and Epistemologies* by looking at the representation of Indigenous knowledge, epistemologies, and ontologies within museum exhibitions and observing the museum's efforts in providing platforms for Indigenous perspectives and challenging established Western paradigms.

The Role of the Museum in the Promotion of Decoloniality is another critical aspect, which involves examining the museum's proactive initiatives in fostering inclusivity, addressing historical injustices and challenging hegemonic narratives. This includes whether museums have changed names to contribute to decolonisation efforts. Furthermore, by observing how museums dismantle hegemonic

control over resources and human capital, eliminate colonial classifications and racial justifications for objects, and promote social cohesion and identity advancement.

Furthermore, museums acknowledge and promote *Colonial Historical Legacy and Contemporary Impact on Society* are essential. This involves critically examining Europe's colonial dominance and its implications for present-day power structures and challenging the dominance of Western education, language, and culture.

Museums' *engagement with Postcolonial Theory* is crucial for understanding how museums apply postcolonial perspectives to examine former colonies, colonial institutions, and governance systems through advocating for decolonisation, addressing colonialism's contemporary cultural impacts, the museums' educational programs, and engaging with marginalised voices and communities to promote inclusivity.

The handling of Class Dynamics and addressing *Dependency Theory and Neocolonialism* are examined through how museums treat class dynamics within postcolonial discourse and critique global capitalism's impact.

Museums' Stances on Nationalism and Globalism are evaluated regarding their role in constructing national identities and interacting with global influence.

Moreover, the museum's approaches to *Eurocentrism, Orientalism, and Challenging Stereotypes* are observed to understand how they address these issues and promote nuanced understandings of cultural diversity.

Identifying Identity Politics Theory

Several key concepts can be used to analyse the interrelation between museums and identity politics, critically evaluate their representation practices, and assess their efforts to promote inclusivity, diversity, and social justice within museum spaces.

First, *Museums' Representation of Identity* is examined by evaluating how museums represent diverse identities within their exhibitions, considering factors such as ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexuality, and socioeconomic status. The extent to which museums engage with identity politics theory to understand the construction and representation of collective identities is also analysed.

Second, *Museums' Cultural and National Identity* is analysed by examining how museums portray national identity and cultural heritage and their role in shaping and reinforcing national narratives. This includes assessing whether museums reflect diverse and multifaceted identities or perpetuate essentialist and reductionist representations.

Third, evaluating *Museum Practices in Addressing Marginalised Identities* involves analysing museums' efforts to include marginalised identities and challenge dominant representations, examining whether museums promote inclusivity and diversity. The complexities of identity politics, including tensions between cultural recognition and social justice, are explored.

Fourth, the *Critique of Ethnonationalism and Identity Reductionism*, examines how museums address ethnonationalism and its impact on the representation of subnational identities within museum spaces. It also investigates whether museums engage in identity reductionism or flatten identities, limiting the complexity and diversity of identity representations.

Fifth, *Museum Practices in Decolonising Identity Representations* are explored by investigating whether museums incorporate decolonial approaches to challenge colonial legacies and promote more inclusive and equitable identity representations. This includes assessing the extent to which museums engage with post-national, transcultural, or hybrid identities and acknowledging the fluidity and complexity of identity constructions.

At last, *Museum Strategies for Promoting Dialogue and Understanding* are evaluated by examining museums' efforts to facilitate dialogue and understanding around identity politics issues, including negotiating conflicting narratives and perspectives. Additionally, museum initiatives to foster empathy and solidarity across diverse identities and communities are investigated.

Identifying Museum Ethics and Theory of Museology

Operationalising these aspects enables the systematic analysis of how museums uphold ethical standards, engage with communities, promote inclusivity, representation, and transparency, and contribute to societal well-being through their practices and policies.

First, it evaluates *Museums' Role in Addressing Societal Issues*, assessing how museums engage with societal debates, foster understanding among diverse cultures, and facilitate conflict resolution while upholding ethical standards. Additionally, it examines how museums contribute to knowledge production and influence global decision-making, particularly in government-funded museums closely tied to their communities. It also evaluates the impact of community engagement on fostering greater appreciation, trust, and recognition among museum audiences and the community by documenting instances of museums self-reflecting and reaching new audiences through community engagement initiatives.

Second, assessing *Pluralism and Inclusivity in Museum Ethics* involves evaluating museums' efforts to democratise pluralism and inclusivity in their ethical standards, aligning with the principles of a democratic museum that promotes participation, equality, security, and human development. This includes examining the implementation of democratic pluralism, shared authority, and social justice principles in museum policies and practices. Furthermore, it involves researching the representation of diverse communities and perspectives in the museum's exhibitions and collections and documenting efforts to adjust museum policies to provide a more inclusive and relevant experience for diverse audiences.

Third, *Ethical Codes and Policies* are analysed by reviewing ethical codes such as the ICOM and Museums Association Code to assess their effectiveness in guiding museum practices and

decision-making. The process also evaluates the museum's adherence to ethical principles outlined in codes, such as transparency, accessibility, and validation of object origins to prevent illegal acquisition.

Fourth, examining *Curatorial Practices and Collection Management*, investigating how museums manage their collections ethically, considering interactions among creators, collectors, and present-day museums. Moreover, it analyses the role of curators as "gatekeepers" ensuring public access to collections and preserving cultural heritage as part of the public domain.

Fifth, examine the *Promotion of Transparency and Mutual Understanding* by evaluating the level of transparency in museum policies and practices, particularly in alignment with ethical codes and guidelines. Assess how museums foster mutual understanding and trust among diverse cultures, prevent misinterpretation, and cultivate narrative truth and factual accuracy in exhibitions and programming.

Sixth, it examines *Organisational Values and Integrity* through the clarity and alignment of organisational values with ethical standards, emphasising the priority of public interest over personal interests. Furthermore, it investigates how museums handle ethical violations at both the institutional and national levels, including the role of professional associations in reviewing and resolving ethical issues.

Seventh, the *Museum's Social Function and Integration Efforts* are analysed by examining the museum's mission statements and strategic plans to identify goals related to social engagement and integration efforts. Furthermore, by evaluating museum programs and initiatives to foster community participation and collaboration. As well as documenting instances of community involvement in museum decision-making processes and program development.

Eighth, by examining the museum's *Collaboration with Communities*, we can identify the ways of collaboration between museums and community stakeholders, such as the involvement of community curators or the facilitation of participatory initiatives. It also assesses the impact of community engagement on museum value, relevance, and audience reception by documenting examples of community-led initiatives, such as establishing local museums or exhibitions focused on marginalised historical representation.

Identifying Commemoration

By operationalising these aspects, researchers can systematically observe and analyse how commemoration is represented and enacted within museums, providing insights into the complex dynamics of memory, identity, and historical interpretation.

This is done by first looking at the *Physical and Emotional Maps* within the museum, observing the museum's spaces' layout and design, and noting how it can affect visitors' emotional responses and interpretation.

Secondly, the *Script* and its impact on the visitor's interpretation will be examined. Historical impressions presented in exhibits will be compared with broader cultural and historical discourses to identify potential biases or distortions.

Thirdly, by researching *Memory Structures*, reviewing archival materials, oral histories, and museum collections to understand the interplay between semantic, episodic, and control system memory structures, and analysing how these memory structures influence the formation and persistence of ethnic biases in museum representations.

Fourth, by *Institutionalisation of Memory*, the role of museums in preserving and reinforcing hegemonic historical discourses, particularly regarding Western European academic history, is examined.

Fifth, we will look at the *Incorporation of Oral History* within museums by studying museum exhibits and educational programs to assess the incorporation of oral history alongside academic or written sources, documenting efforts to include marginalised perspectives through oral history narratives and related imagery. It will also analyse museum initiatives to reassess the significance of oral traditions and cultures in shaping collective memory.

Chapter IV: Results

This chapter's primary objective is to present the analysis results of the selected case studies: Wereldmuseum Amsterdam, The Haags Historisch Museum, and the Sophiahof Museum. In order to address the research question — *To what extent and in what ways are postcolonial and decolonial museum theories translated into actual museum practices within Dutch museums dealing with the Dutch colonial legacy in their exhibitions?* — concerning the role of postcolonial theory in the decolonisation process within Dutch museums addressing Dutch colonial history, this paper examines the application of postcolonial theory in exhibitions.

The first section, 4.1, is a thick description of the individual museums. It results from the performance analysis and the QCA, as discussed in 3. These approaches are integrated by considering the thematic elements present in each exhibition. The section concludes by comparing the museums with one another. As said, the result is a thick description informed by the theoretical debate discussed in Chapter 2. However, section 2 will carry the most theoretical weight.

This section will discuss a more generalising thematisation of the three performances. It will pay attention to the ways in which the most important elements of the academic postcolonial discourse are translated into museum exhibitions. Attention will be paid to what the museums have in common, but also how each one of them gives a distinguishing form to broader postcolonial questions. This section discusses the museum's approach to these themes, identifies which museum most frequently presented them, and examines why these themes are relevant to creating exhibitions focused on colonialism and decolonisation.

4.1 Analysing case studies through the means of performing elements

Wereldmuseum Amsterdam's "Our Colonial Heritage"

The exhibition "Our Colonial Heritage" goes beyond the commonly known historical narrative and explores how colonialism has shaped the present world. It examines the experiences of individuals who endured colonialism and aims to provide a multi-voiced and diverse perspective. The exhibition invites visitors to explore different viewpoints and learn about people's efforts to create their own lives, resist, and regain control in the face of colonialism (Our Colonial Inheritance, Wall Text, Wereldmuseum Amsterdam). By engaging with the communities represented in their collections, the Wereldmuseum aims to transform into a "contact zone" where diverse perspectives can intersect and interact, as discussed by Mason in *Reclaiming Narratives, Redefining Identities* of Chapter Two.

This approach reflects a critical perspective on heritage, addressing power dynamics and promoting equality by giving voice to previously marginalised experiences (Vázquez, 2020).

The exhibition consists of eight halls that are divided into specific themes. The Wereldmuseum Amsterdam shows its multi-perspective by presenting objects accompanied by scripts in each room from a classic perspective and then a critical perspective. This is also quite literally perceived in the set-up of the rooms that show the means of the symbolic production here, where it made a subtle division of "the backside", the critical side, which can refer to the "backside" of colonialism. Therefore, the mise-en-scène within the exhibition works very well.

When entering the exhibition, the visitor is welcomed by a big screen with an introductory video showing people first walking on a coast with different variations of flags that combine the Dutch and the flags of colonised countries. The video symbolises colonial heritage through the Dutch perspective. Afterwards, it shows a brief interview with residents of Amsterdam to ask their definition and identification regarding the topic of colonialism.



Mandoeng, R. (2022). Dutch Design Daily. photograph, Amsterdam. Retrieved January 18, 2024, from <http://dutchdesigndaily.com/nl/nieuw/onze-koloniale-erfenis/>.

The first hall is opened with the wall text "A profitable business for whom". It introduces the colonial perspective through the classical colonial discourse narrative, which means it first shows the

perspective from the coloniser itself, emphasising the benefits of colonialism as the trade. Therefore, the title of the wall text, "a profitable business," is suitable. The hall resembles the travels at sea through the internal design of the room, which has transparent blue colours. It also fits with the exhibition's opening, showing a coast. So, this can be seen as the continuation of the visitor's journey. Objects are displayed in display cases that show the tangible "positive" memories of the Dutch colonial past, accompanied by a romantic and geographic script. For example, classical objects such as Delft's Blauw objects are shown, as well as a colonial map, which can be argued to romanticise the trade at sea.



Mandoeng, R. (2022). Dutch Design Daily. photograph, Amsterdam. Retrieved January 18, 2024, from <http://dutchdesigndaily.com/nl/nieuw/onze-koloniale-erfenis/>.

However, the "for whom?" immediately shows the critical perspective through the visitor and is aimed at the narrative of the colonised. The narrative thereby wants to show the side of exploitation of colonialism. Therefore, it can be argued that Wereldmuseum Amsterdam has taken significant steps toward decolonisation by reinterpreting its colonial collections, since it aims to present a more balanced view, incorporating indigenous perspectives and epistemologies. This approach challenges

the established Western paradigms and provides a platform for alternative narratives (Turunen, 2019; Ashcroft et al., 1998).

This part of the critical side is literally portrayed at the "backside" of the first hall. The exhibit presents a literal portrayal of the front, romanticising and idealising colonialism while simultaneously depicting the concealed critique and exploitation on the backside, initially hidden behind curtains. Therefore, the *mise-en-scène* emphasises the script. The script accompanied by this side of the hall shows a more postcolonial view of colonial history, besides being thematic. With this, objects with a spiritual or ritualistic meaning refer to the authentic culture used, which is exploited by displaying a native headdress. By displaying these objects, the narrative also aims to clarify that the exploited and colonised already had their own culture, which contradicts the colonial discourse of the coloniser educating and culturing the colonised. This colonial narrative is displayed through an image that clearly shows an idealised image of colonialism, which could have been used as propaganda. However, since it is difficult to show the side of exploitation directly to the visitor through the colonial collection itself, much contemporary art elaborates on this part of the narrative.



Mandoeng, R. (2022). Dutch Design Daily. photograph, Amsterdam. Retrieved January 18, 2024, from <http://dutchdesigndaily.com/nl/nieuw/onze-koloniale-erfenis/>.

The "wealth from overseas" wall text presents the second hall. This room continues the narrative of exploitation with a particular focus on Indigenous raw materials. The *mise-en-scène* of the room has a general green theme, symbolising the woods with largely depicted pictures of the jungle as

backgrounds for the wall. It displays the romanticised image of agriculture while again showing a realistic image on the other side. It shows the exploited countryside through the massive imports and exports followed by agriculture. The objects displayed are put into stacked plastic green crates that resemble crates used for shipment.



Mandoeng, R. (2022). Dutch Design Daily. photograph, Amsterdam. Retrieved January 18, 2024, from <http://dutchdesigndaily.com/nl/nieuw/onze-koloniale-erfenis/>.

Most of the objects on display are contemporary objects that can be found in the supermarket, such as coffee from the brand Douwe Egberts or a can of soup from the brand Unox. These objects are also shown to make visitors aware of how the remains of colonialism are still present in today's society. These objects are not part of the colonial collection of Wereldmuseum Amsterdam itself. However, they are used as additional objects that need the script's elaboration and support to fit in context with the exhibition. Furthermore, contemporary art that the museum commissioned is on display. This showcases that the museum needs to fill the gap in its collection through its mise-en-scène. Besides using contemporary art, it needs to improvise by adding everyday objects to fit the objects to its narrative and, therefore, moving away from classical museum practices of only using objects from its depot or objects considered museum-worthy.



Photo of the objects shown with the label text "Salt." (2023). photograph.

Moreover, the script assembled within the room delves into the overseas trade, the raw materials involved in import and export, and their impacts, touching upon contemporary issues such as the exploitation of nature following climate change and seeking to draw connections to colonialism. This is made clear with the artwork "Tales of the Gold Mountain".

Tales of the Gold Mountain

This painting shows how Entsbeg in Papua, the biggest copper and gold resource in the world, was destroyed. Artist Maryanto portrays the landscape and the damage caused by the mining industry to raise the issue of the destructive exploitation of the area. He works in so-called gesso style, scratching out white lines on a black ground. It makes the devastated country even more desolate.

Maryanto (1977) Indonesia, Yogyakarta; 2012; acrylic paint, wood, fibre; purchases with support from VriendenLoterij; TM-6503-1a /m c (Wereldmuseum Amsterdam).

Additionally, it explores the dynamics of globalisation and capitalist trade as forms of Neo-colonialism. In contrast, it highlights the Indigenous agricultural knowledge and traditions of colonised peoples. The hall is interrelated with the following theme of enslavement. By addressing the

colonial history initiated by the VOC and continued by the Dutch government post-1816. The museum highlights the transformation from trade to exploitation, including establishing the Cultivation System, which imposed forced labour and land use on Indonesian farmers (Protschky, 2011; Breman, 2023), as discussed in 2.2.1 Colonial Exploitation, Racial Hierarchy, and Political Struggles: Dynamics of the Dutch East Indies.

By presenting these historical facts, the museum engages in the politics of recognition, acknowledging the abuses and injustices endured by Indonesians under Dutch colonial rule. This recognition is crucial for fostering an understanding of the historical grievances and their ongoing impact on Indonesian communities today.

Planting to survive: provision grounds

On plantations, the enslaved grew their own produce on so-called provision grounds. These grounds were not always fertile; the fertile grounds were for the plantation owner. Maroons - Africans and their descendants who escaped slavery to create their own communities away from the plantation - farmed small plots in the dense, fertile forest of Suriname. These plots were called *kostgronden*, the same term as used for the provision grounds on plantations.

In the forest, the maroons planted black rice, cassava, ochre and maize using seeds and cuttings, which they had smuggled, at times in their hair, out of the plantation. Sometimes they traded crops with Indigenous communities and with people on plantations, creating a new trade system. These crops enabled the Maroons to survive away from the plantations, almost out of reach of the colonial government. Their vegetable gardens formed the basis for new communities that still exist to this day (Wereldmuseum Amsterdam).

In the third hall, the theme is encapsulated by the wall text titled "Slavery, resistance, and resilience." This hall discusses the topic of enslavement, which usually mainly focuses on Trans-Atlantic Slavery history. It depicts enslavement within the city and the difference with enslavement on plantations while also highlighting the oppression and resistance in interrelation with enslavement, as discussed in 2.2.3: Unveiling the Hidden Legacy: The Dutch Role in the Atlantic Slave Trade.



Photo of the Object and Wall Text of “Slavery on the plantation: exploitation and dehumanization” in Wereldmuseum Amsterdam (2023). Photograph.

What makes this exhibition truly remarkable is its focus on the enslaved people in Indonesia, a topic neglected mainly in education, history books, and other exhibitions. This unique perspective makes the exhibition special and vital, as it offers visitors the opportunity to delve into a part of Indonesia’s colonial history that was previously unknown to many. By disseminating this information, the museum takes a bold postcolonial stance, aiming to reshape the narrative and enlighten others about the complex and often overlooked aspects of colonialism, which is in line with the discussion of Delgado & Mycock, 2023 regarding the awareness of historical enslavement as discussed in 2.2.3 Unveiling the Hidden Legacy: The Dutch Role in the Atlantic Slave Trade.

Symbolic production within the hall takes on two distinct forms in this space. The outer part of the room conveys a narrative of oppression while also showing the narrative of how slavery and colonialism have slowly been transformed into forced or, eventually, correlating into indentured labour, highlighting the migration wave towards Suriname. With this indentured labour, a section is dedicated to the Javanese labourers.

Indentured Labour

The abolition of slavery (in 1860 in Indonesia and in 1863 in Suriname) and the end of the Cultivation System (1870) did not bring an end to forced labour. In Suriname, the colonial state implemented a system of supervision. Workers from India (from 1873), Java (from 1890) and China (from 1853) were recruited to work

on the plantations in North Sumatra and Suriname under temporary contracts. Many left home under the misguided impression that they were heading for a better life. The reality was different. The work was exhausting, housing and healthcare were abysmal and the food was scarce. Many died of disease, fatigue or violence. The rights of contract workers were further restricted by the so-called penal sanction: a colonial law empowering planters to exploit and punish contract workers with extreme penalties for the slightest infringements. This sanction applied both in Indonesia and in Suriname (Wereldmuseum Amsterdam).

Furthermore, the exhibition shows it through a multimedia video platform showcasing scenes of the beginning of the indentured labour of the Moroccan people in the Netherlands. Therefore, the narrative links the past to the present and the consequences and effects slavery still endures in society nowadays. It shows how a system of colonialism has transformed into the globalisation system of today.

Moreover, what is also noticeable about the decolonisation within the narrative is that former resistance leaders such as Tula have been highlighted. Whereas they formerly were depicted in a negative way according to the colonised sources, they are now being characterised as resistance leaders against oppression. This is also the case at Wereldmuseum Amsterdam. Nevertheless, it does not elaborate on the leaders individually.

Resistance and freedom

Opposition to slavery had existed already since the 16th century, especially among the enslaved themselves. On 23 February 1763, under the leadership of the enslaved named Cuffy, five thousand revolted in Berbice, a colony in Dutch Guyana. Many of the enslaved rebelled and fled their plantations in Suriname to join militant leaders like Boni (c. 1730-1793). They and their descendants are known as Maroons. In the dense forests of Suriname, Maroons succeeded in building new lives for themselves. There are six groups of Surinamese Maroons, each with their own language and culture: Aluku, Kwinti, Matawai, Ndyuka, Paamaka and Saamaka. Following the Haitian revolution, in 1795 a major rebellion erupted in Curaçao, led by Tula. Because Curaçao does not have dense forests, it was harder to escape the plantations and start a new life. Nevertheless, many fled in boats to the continent of South America (Wereldmuseum Amsterdam).

At the same time, the inner part is divided by a circular room that encapsulates the human narrative of enslaved individuals. This inner space vividly portrays the culture and creativity that emerged amidst the system of oppression, highlighting the ingenious ways the culture was cultivated. The script is richly complemented with objects, including musical instruments. The instrumental objects are shown with the help of sound techniques that enable the visitor to listen to the musical instruments. At the same time, the script links the instruments to cultural activities related to the enslaved people, which frames the instruments in a different context than the objects might have had earlier in a different exhibition.

Du feasts and Tambú

Music and dance are ways to preserve traditions and to create and maintain communities. They are also means through which people connect with their spirituality. People express their freedom and joy through music and dance, even in the worst circumstances. Every year, on plantations in Suriname, the enslaved celebrated Du

feasts: a combination of music, theatre and religion. At these feasts, they would find ways to express their opposition to the system of slavery, indirectly and or symbolically, through odes - maxims and sayings. Already in the 17th century in Curaçao, the enslaved created their own festival and music tradition: Tambú, based on West African drum music. Tambú was prohibited until well into the 20th century, yet the tradition continues to this day. Tambú was also a means of opposing slavery (Wereldmuseum Amsterdam).



Mandoeng, R. (2022). Dutch Design Daily. photograph, Amsterdam. Retrieved January 18, 2024, from

<http://dutchdesigndaily.com/nl/nieuw/onze-koloniale-erfenis/>.

The fourth hall explores the theme of racism, as the wall text indicates, "Racism exists, not race" (Wereldmuseum Amsterdam, Our Colonial Heritage, Wall Text). Symbolic production takes a distinctive approach in this room, initially concealing the colonial and racial discourse. This space's script encompasses an anthropological and critical narrative when addressing racism. The narrative's anthropological and biological perspectives align with the viewpoint of decolonial discourse. This is done by displaying images of people of colour that do not particularly align with the overall image, which is usually shown to justify colonial or racial discourse. As discussed in 2.2.1 by Ashcroft et al., 1998 and Wodak & Reisigl.



Mandoeng, R. (2022). Dutch Design Daily. photograph, Amsterdam. Retrieved January 18, 2024, from <http://dutchdesigndaily.com/nl/nieuw/onze-koloniale-erfenis/>.

Thus, the script is transformed into a biography of decolonisation. Again, there is a contrast by displaying the colonial discourse narrative regarding race, which is concealed in a separate room in the middle of the fourth hall.



Loenen van, R. (2022). *Tropenmuseum Amsterdam* . Youtube . photograph, Amsterdam ; Youtube . Retrieved April 1, 2024, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kW-w6dJhnT4>.

Thereby, a difference is shown compared to the former halls since the exhibition's narrative is now reversed. Whereas the former halls concealed the criticism of colonialism and showed a new perspective, the classical portrayal of colonialism is now hidden. The fourth hall also shows a narrative the visitor can relate to since it showcases script and images of recent events, such as the demonstration of Black Lives Matter in Amsterdam in 2020.

Racism and anti-racism

Racism takes many forms. One of these is everyday racism which describes the conscious and unconscious behaviour of people in their everyday interactions that could be classified as racist. The term was coined by Professor Philomena Essed in the 1980s.

Racism can also be institutional: the systematic exclusion and/or discrimination of groups based on written and unwritten rules. This may include the manner in which companies hire new employees, schools assess pupils, and the tax authorities use algorithms to incorrectly accuse people of committing fraud.

There is a long history of struggle against all forms of racism. For decades, in the Netherlands, people have protested against the racial caricature of Zwarte Piet. In the summer of 2020 a record numbers of people took to the streets to protest racism in Netherlands (Wereldmuseum Amsterdam)

The fifth hall, labelled with the wall text "On the road to freedom," delves into the era of the struggle for independence and features a more conventional ethnological museum-style presentation when contrasted with the other rooms.



Loenen van, R. (2022). *Tropenmuseum Amsterdam* . Youtube . photograph, Amsterdam ; Youtube . Retrieved April 1, 2024, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kW-w6dJhnT4>.

Within this space, specifically regarding the case of Indonesian independence, as discussed in 2.2.1 Struggles for Sovereignty: From Dutch Colonialism to National Independence in Indonesia , objects are exhibited chronologically, complemented by an accompanying timeline of significant events. This is presented more traditionally compared to the other objects and thematics.

Nationalism, struggle and independence (1912-1962)

From the start of the 20th century, nationalist, Islamic, socialist and communist organisations in Indonesia raised a growing cry for freedom. The Dutch response was harsh. The Second World War and the Japanese occupation of Indonesia signalled the end to colonial rule. The majority of Europeans in Indonesia were interned in prison camps. At first, there was generally strong support for Japan among Indonesians, until the situation worsened and millions of Indonesians were compelled into forced labour.

Two days after Japan surrendered, Sukarno declared Indonesian independence on 17 August 1945. A period of violent conflict followed between Indonesian youths and (Indonesian) Dutch, Chinese, Moluccans and Indonesians loyal to the Netherlands. This period is known in Dutch history as the 'Bersiap'. The Netherlands sent over 100,000 soldiers to restore order in the colony. Four years of brutal bloodshed followed while the two sides negotiated.

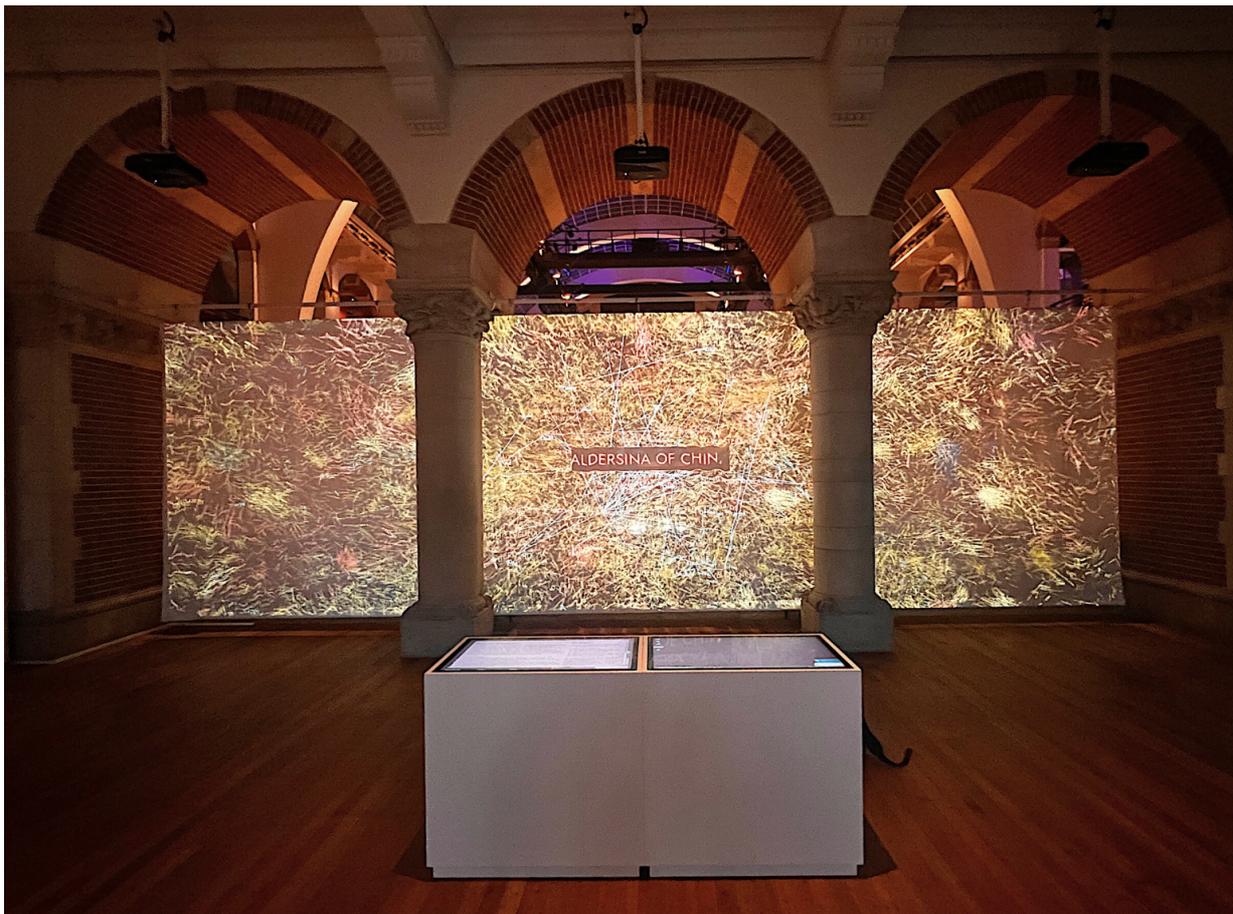
The Dutch State conceded to Indonesian sovereignty in late 1949 only after intense international pressure. This ushered the end of 350 years of colonial rule. That didn't include Papua, which the Dutch State did not cede to Indonesia until 1962. In 2022, the Dutch state offered an apology for the extreme, systematic violence which Dutch soldiers had employed (Wereldmuseum Amsterdam).

It can be argued that this is an intermix of how colonial objects used to be presented according to colonial discourse; however, the narrative and the script here are critical against colonialism. Therefore, the colonial display usage is used and transformed into an anti-colonial narrative. Nevertheless, the hall also displays a multimedia artwork that showcases the names of all

registered enslaved people and can serve as a memorial for the enslaved. This hall's characteristic is that it displays the effects of colonialism and consequences of the struggle against colonialism through forms of resistance, which can be military resistance, but also through showcasing books that have had significant influence and effects on becoming independent from colonialism.

The museum showcases interactive media artwork that enhances the immersive experience. This one-of-a-kind installation not only provides data on the names of enslaved people from the Caribbean, Suriname, and Indonesia but also allows visitors to engage with this information actively. They can search for the names of formerly enslaved people by region or gender, fostering a deeper and more personal connection to the history being presented.

“A name monument in tribute to enslaved people. Both Suriname and Curaçao as well as in Indonesia. We have now had research done, together with Leiden University. And we have a huge data set of about two hundred thousand people. And you can browse through it digitally, interactively, perhaps looking for your ancestors or looking for a place you know, an island you know, a plantation you may know. And with that we want to emphasize the humanity of something that is actually very inhuman, because slavery is by definition dehumanization. I hope that will be a very impressive place in the exhibition.” (Interview with curator Rik Herder, Wereldmuseum Amsterdam (voorheen Tropenmuseum), 2022a).



(N.d.). Mav Techniek. photograph, Amsterdam. Retrieved January 18, 2024, from <https://www.mavtechniek.nl/portfolio/tropenmuseum-onze-koloniale-erfenis/>.

The sixth hall highlights "the power of language" by creating a room filled with written words. It explores the script of education, the colonial influence, and language imposition upon the colonised, focusing specifically on the colonisation of Suriname. This space also brings attention to the contradiction by showcasing the endangered old languages that have suffered due to these colonial practices.

Native language, native knowledge

There exists a vast diversity of languages, forms of communication and knowledge transfer, beyond the globally well established and well known written languages. For a long time, Western scholars privileged their own written languages at the expense of others. This was also so during colonialism.

However, there are many other ways of communicating and transferring knowledge. Myths, songs, rhymes and rhythms, and forms of theatre have been passed from one generation to the next for centuries. These oral traditions remain a significant source of knowledge and wisdom. In this room, you can hear various songs which have been handed down the generations.

Beside oral traditions, countless forms of language and knowledge existed in the former colonies which were invisible to the Western eye. Some unique examples of this are displayed on the walls of this space (Wereldmuseum Amsterdam).

This hall's characteristic is that the mise-en-scène is surrounded by bright colours from the clothes displayed. At the same time, the hall itself is decorated with words on the walls. The mise-en-scène, in this case, perfectly conveys the theme of the room. The old language is shown to be scraped away. The piece is accompanied by audio explaining the privileges of colonising languages. The script and narrative mainly highlight the knowledge of Indigenous languages and knowledge, with objects specifically originating from Suriname.

Furthermore, a theme wall text illuminates the education that colonised countries received, the lack of education in the colonised areas, and the predominant focus on European culture and history within education. It also highlights the long-standing battle for proper education for colonised countries. Importantly, it celebrates the gradual but steady increase in societal awareness and the robust theoretical discussions on commemoration in the Netherlands.

Education and (anti) colonial awareness

Education in the colonies was generally only available to the elite. The enslaved in the Caribbean had no opportunity to learn to read and write. It was a deliberate policy of the colonial authorities to maintain difference and hierarchy between coloniser and colonised: education was seen as a means to gain status and power. This would change in the 19th century, especially through religious education. For Indonesian children, little schooling was available until 1900. Changes came gradually. National hero Raden Ajeng Kartini (1879-1904) fought to provide opportunities for girls to learn. Still, educational opportunities remained restricted.

Most Dutch educational materials nowadays still focus primarily on Europe. Through the work of academics, activists and artists recognition of the legacy of the colonial history has however increased. New studies and books, films, podcasts and art provide a broader perspective on the past (Wereldmuseum Amsterdam).



Wolzak, T., Mandoeng, R., & Kosmanndejong. (n.d.). KDJ. photograph, Amsterdam. Retrieved January 18, 2024, from <https://kosmanndejong.nl/nl/project/onze-koloniale-erfenis/>.

The seventh hall's text reads, "This is my religion," and shows the religious practices of the colonised through the display of traditional objects and contemporary art. The mise-en-scène in this hall more abundantly displays the narrative and contrasts the other halls, which conceal certain narratives by splitting the rooms. The objects on display are also accompanied by modern art that strengthens the narrative. The halls give a more optimistic view since they showcase the existing Indigenous religions despite colonial missionary missions.



Mandoeng, R. (2022). Dutch Design Daily. photograph, Amsterdam. Retrieved January 18, 2024, from <http://dutchdesigndaily.com/nl/nieuw/onze-koloniale-erfenis/>.

In the eighth hall, the focal theme revolves around "this is my home." This section predominantly explores the immigration of individuals from former colonised nations to the Netherlands, highlighting the cultures they have brought with them and how these have evolved into new cultural expressions. For instance, it features video footage of "Tante Lien," exemplifying the Indo-European culture that embodies a sense of nostalgia for Indonesia while being integrated with Dutch culture, as discussed in 2.2.2 The Indo-European Diaspora: Challenges of Identity, Migration, and Integration.

Furthermore, in this hall, commemoration is mentioned with particular emphasis on the National Slavery Monument and the commemoration of the Japanese Occupation.

Remembering, celebrating and commemorating

One of the ways to give history a place in the present is to continue remembering, celebrating and commemorating the past at home and within communities. A short distance from the Tropenmuseum is the National Slavery Monument, installed in 2002, where descendants of the enslaved and supporters attend a memorial each year on 1 July to recall the history of slavery and mark its abolition. On 15 August, National Remembrance Day, the victims of the Japanese occupation of Indonesia (1942-1945) are remembered at the Indies Monument in The Hague. All these rituals, memorials and celebrations contribute to the post-colonial story: they all direct our attention to that complex history and require our collective effort as we strive hopefully for a better future (Wereldmuseum Amsterdam).

Moreover, the Wereldmuseum Amsterdam discusses migration and integration, the migration wave of the Surinamese and Indonesian people who came to the Netherlands, and the struggles the migrants faced when arriving in the Netherlands. This topic is extensively discussed in 2.2.2 and 2.2.3 of Chapter Two. At the same time, due to these events, emphasis is also placed on the fusion of cultures nowadays. Again, there is a geographical division, but it showcases the interrelation because both countries are interrelated as former colonised countries and tied to the same theme.

Leaving Indonesia

Between 1945 and 1965, around 330,000 Dutch migrants from Indonesia came to the Netherlands, along with 12,900 Moluccans and many others, including Peranakan Chinese, Indonesian-Africans, Papuans and Minahasans. After the horror of Japanese occupation and the declaration of independence, another four years of conflict followed. It was a signal for many to leave. They arrived, often with just a few possessions, and traumatized.

Those without relatives in the Netherlands were placed in boarding houses. Moluccans were settled in former internment camps from the Second World War. Few in the Netherlands had any idea about life in the colonies and the experiences of the Japanese occupation. So these migrants were often met with disinterest, patronising attitudes and discrimination. It took a long time for them to find houses to live. But eventually, perseverance and effort prevailed and they made a home in the Netherlands (Wereldmuseum Amsterdam).

Leaving Suriname and the Caribbean islands

In the years leading up to Surinamese independence in 1975, hundreds of thousands of Surinamese people left for the Netherlands. They had little confidence in the independent country's prospects and felt their chances of finding work and education would be better abroad. In the Netherlands this influx of migrants caused triggered concern about migration. Areas were chosen where the new migrants could live. Initially, many found rooms in boarding houses, where the conditions were often inhumane. Later, the majority found places to live on the outskirts of the Netherlands's biggest cities, some through squatting.

In the past decades, many people from the Caribbean regions of the Dutch kingdom have also migrated to the Netherlands. In the first half of the 20th century most of those who came were students, but when the Shell and Exxon refineries closed on Curaçao and Aruba in the 1980s, many Arubans and Curaçasons decided to look for work in the Netherlands (Wereldmuseum Amsterdam).

The exhibition concludes with a circular area enclosed by screens showcasing various images and videos featured throughout the exhibition. These screens emphasise the direction that the society inheriting the legacy of colonialism is moving towards in the future. It can also be seen as a reference to the introduction video shown at the beginning of the exhibition.



Photo of the circular area screens (2023). Photograph.

The purpose behind the "Our Colonial Heritage" exhibition can be asserted based on insights from the interviews conducted with the curator of the Rotterdam World Museum and the Haags Historisch Museum.

An exhibition maker makes the exhibition according to storyline, resulting from research within the disciplines of colonialism, art history, and heritage studies. There is an emphasis on connecting heritage to a cultural identity. The curators are divided into the sections of museum studies, anthropology, and area studies; therefore, experts that are specialised in different areas, in this case, Southeast Asia and the Caribbean Islands and connecting colonialism and the past of the used countries for the exhibition. While also wanting to connect the theme of colonialism to globalisation.

“Now new curators have also been hired in recent years who are more thematically specialised. So, for example, the person who was uh our colonial heritage uh primarily responsible in Wereldmuseum Amsterdam was curator uh colonial past, but then the Caribbean. So, then they combine, (...) region with a certain theme and so where. Curator Southeast Asia with the theme of globalisation. So, you see that uh ethnological museums of the past no longer want to be busy with othering. Just looking at the other person elsewhere in the world from your own perspective, but looking much more thematically and also globalised, so to say, also introducing your own perspective” (Interview Curator Wereldmuseum Rotterdam).

With this, the decolonial discourse narrative must be changed into what is now globalisation and how this contributes to the visitor's perspective. Colonial origin is seen in how the museum employs sections and divisions in creating exhibitions through employees who often come from anthropology or area studies and, therefore, are regionally divided in expertise. This causes the inequality of experts in regions, such as Africa, which currently has only one expert for the whole region, while others from East Asia are also experts in specific countries. However, this colonial ideology is changing because employees are slowly divided into thematic specialisations instead of only regional ones. This is also the case for the exhibition in Wereldmuseum Amsterdam, whereby the primary responsibility was specialised in the colonial past; however, it was only for the region of the Caribbean, which shows that thematic and regional sections can be combined. Another one in charge of the exhibition specialised in globalisation and Southeast Asia.

Decolonising the museum involves careful consideration of the analytics behind the framing of objects, as argued in 2.1.2 in Chapter Two by Besterman (2006) among others. This process is crucially aided by the inclusion of regional experts, whose perspectives help to prevent objects from being taken out of context. The emphasis on domestic versus international decolonisation is also notable, particularly in terms of language and image use. For instance, in the United States, there is a growing trend towards the use or non-use of specific terms or capital letters, a development that countries like the Netherlands and the wider museum community are learning from and adapting to.

“Certain requirements have now been imposed that we believe should be the norm, so there is an inclusion diversity policy. There are ideas about word use, but that is a process, so also about language use. Something we can do now. At some point you become aware (..)” (Interview curator Wereldmuseum Rotterdam).

The exhibition is trying to reinvent the impact of colonialism by re-branding or renaming specific stereotypical images and narratives from colonial discourse. This is extensively discussed in 2.1.2 of Chapter Two by Sauvage and Harrison. This is also with the help of an earlier published literal work called "Words Matter," published by the Foundation of the National Museum of World Cultures, which conveys different chapters that discuss counter-racial slurs such as "slaven" (slaves) to be renamed to "totslaafgemaakten" (enslaved people), to bring a more humanising perspective to this theme. Using a different vocabulary to indicate specific terms changes the perspective and eliminates the discourse of stereotypical and stigmatised terms. This is also valid for images, which the museum calls "Image Matter". By being selective in the representation of images, the museum makes sure it does not overrepresent the stigmatising images of abuse that are linked with slavery or are racially categorised images. It is of importance that the abusive part of slavery is being narrated. However, it is also important to showcase the human side of enslaved people so that the audience can be educated and connected or recognise parts of the culture enslaved people made for themselves.

“If you have not experienced history yourself or if it does not affect you, then it remains a saying that maybe you have a certain distance and those images do not affect you either. But for someone else it is very intense and with that the stereotype images of the past and the pain repeat again and again, that is to say being black and oppression and pain. That becomes, say, a cartoon that you keep telling the whole time. And perhaps in the Netherlands or European museums, especially those images have been collected or, er, ended up in the archives. But there are also other images. Or if they are not, maybe you can fill that in differently with contemporary artists who work around identity or something. So, let's say that awareness of which images to use and what is the power of museums precisely because we reach many people, what is the position of power again and the role you have to take in taking the lead again” (Interview curator Wereldmuseum Rotterdam).

This also shows the museum's ideology, which emphasises humanising all beings as equals despite the diversity and creating social cohesion. This approach aligns with Marstine's (2011) notion of "democratic pluralism, shared authority and social justice," showcasing the museum's commitment to social responsibility and ethical integrity, as discussed in 2.1.2 The Rise of Museum Ethics. It wants to emphasise a more anthropological perspective and, therefore, steps away from former narratives that would "exoticise" specific individuals and objects. It is something that the museum wants to prevent in its future narratives when creating exhibitions and permanent collections.

“The fact that it is already called The Museum of World Cultures already gives a certain look. Now again. And no longer ethnology, but world cultures of global cultures. And one of the slogans, say, of the Museum is that despite all differences, we are all the same, so it is much more about being human. And that, of course, fits in with anthropology” (Interview curator Wereldmuseum Rotterdam).

This is also done in the exhibition by not categorising each hall per country but instead categorising the exhibition through themes, which enables the exhibition to emphasise cultural exchange by creating a multi-perspective narrative with multiculturalism. In this way, the visitor can also see the inter-dimensional similarities of colonialism in different countries dealing with the same oppressive system and its contemporary effects and impacts. In this way, the narrative switches from focusing on the differentiation between 'distant' cultures and trying to connect cultures with the emphasis on "world citizenship". Cultural exchange and social cohesiveness are the central themes for the museum, and the goal for impact instead of focusing on differentiation.

This is mainly done by showcasing objects and collaborating with personal stories of the colonised areas discussed in this exhibition, mainly Indonesia, Suriname and the Caribbean Islands. These collaborations represent diverse multi-identities from a multi-layered perspective, as discussed in 2.1.2 Reclaiming Narratives, Redefining Identities by Besterman and Shelton, among others. Representation is essential due to the interpretation being made into these multi-perspectives. It is also a form of decolonisation since, due to the collaboration of multi-diverse identities, the knowledge is

retrieved from academia and a personal point of view of specialisation, causing more social representation. Therefore, the narrative is not only built on historical analysis and contexts as is traditional but involves more contemporary artists and personal stories, whereby contemporary art can serve as an elaboration on the narrative. Nevertheless, there must be a selection in representation since only some voices can be represented, which can cause limitations.

This exhibition intends to raise a broader awareness regarding decolonisation in cultural and historical aspects while showing the (self)reflection of the museum, which might also come across to the visitor. In this way, the museum as an organisation can contribute to decolonising and dismantling power structures and connecting to society through education in its programming and narrative while getting rid of the former Eurocentric perspective as discussed in 2.1.2 of Chapter Two. Decolonisation within the museum is aimed to reach not only its audience but also within the program, the creation of the exhibition, the way of curating and the employees.

“Power position you have as a museum with the voice you have with the exhibition you make with the artists you program or the texts you write, so that's a position of power, you already mentioned your perspective. The Eurocentric perspective is the second thing, so to speak. You actually have to look at all of those. They sometimes say the 3 P's to your staff, your audience in your program, so you have to. It's about who you're addressing, But it's also definitely about who you're hiring from and It's about what words you use, or what programs (..)” (Interview curator Rotterdam Museum).

By doing so, the museum also mirrors the political activism that demands a policy of diversity, inclusivity, and societal norms that are currently taking place in society by implementing these changes within the museum itself. The museum hopes to contribute to the public debate on decolonisation by creating and following ICOM guidelines regarding diversity policies while spreading awareness, humanising enslaved people, and working against objectifying colonial discourse stereotypes. On an educational level, through the collaboration of the museum and schools, a special education program is created from the exhibition, with the help of interactive art pieces, such as “The Privilege Pyramid” found in the fifth hall with the theme “On the road to freedom”. It illustrates the social hierarchy, allowing visitors to determine which aspects they consider most privileged.

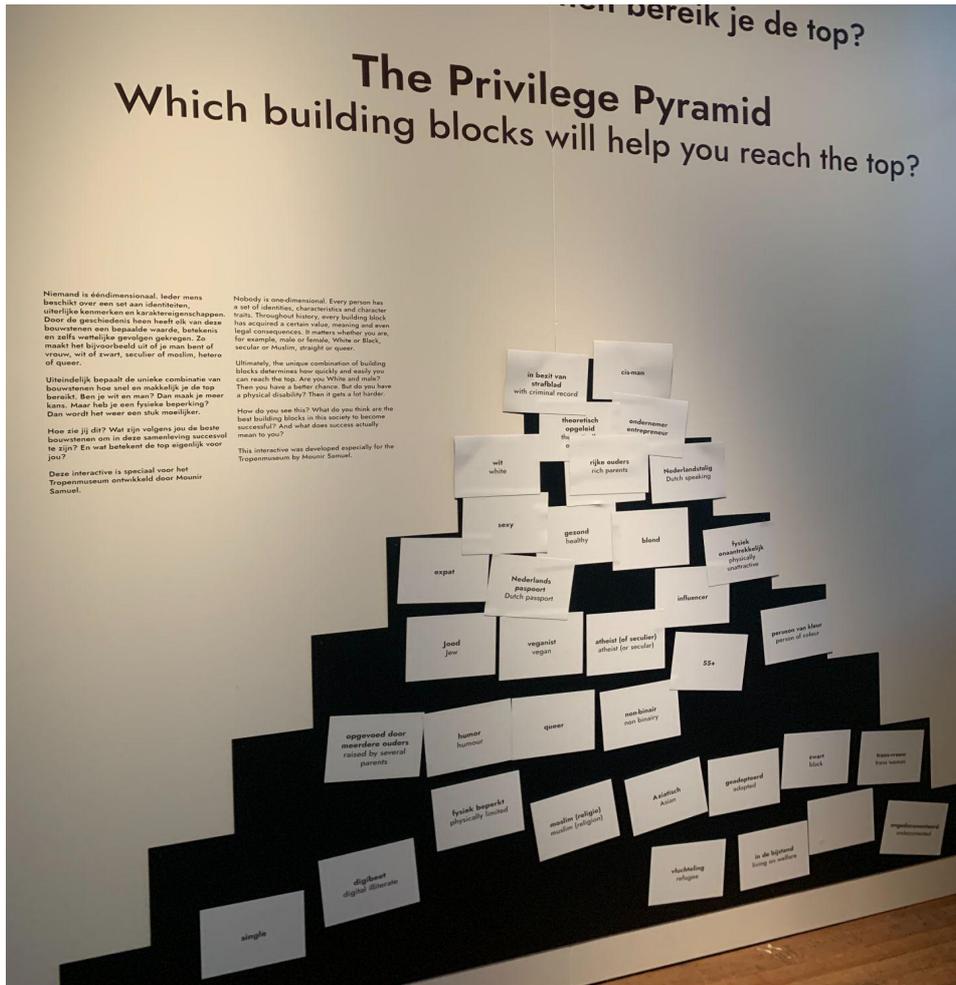


Photo of the interactive art piece “The Privilege Pyramid” in Wereldmuseum Amsterdam (2023). photograph.

This exhibition is essential for Wereldmuseum Amsterdam since it shows a big step in how the museum itself is going through a decolonisation process and can make use of its collection, which can be seen as a colonial burden, in the way that the museum has retrieved its collection and the history behind the museum, to show forms of self-criticism and self-reflection to show a clear message to the world that the museum takes the topic of decolonisation very seriously. It also acknowledges this matter in one of these label texts.

The International Colonial and Export Exhibition of 1883

In 1883, Amsterdam's Museumplein hosted the International Colonial and Export Exhibition. Like other countries where similar exhibitions had been held since the mid-19th century, the Dutch government organised this event to show off the country's achievements and progress.

For European powers, these exhibitions were an opportunity to proudly display their colonial possessions and commercial products. In many of the exhibitions, displays also included living people. Mock villages were set up, where people would also be displayed as if in Human Zoos. In 1883 people from Suriname and Indonesia were made to sit, or to perform surrounded by objects from their homeland to be observed by Europeans eager to see these 'exotic, primitive' people (Wereldmuseum Amsterdam).

Overall, it can be said that the performance elements, as discussed in 2.1.3 *Performing Museums: Unveiling Narratives through Social Engagement and Spatial Dynamics*, regarding the mise-en-scène of the objects that were displayed within the exhibition, are an intermix of the collection that the Wereldmuseum Amsterdam already entailed with the combination of everyday products and new contemporary artworks, whereby some were commissioned by the museum, to emphasise the interconnectedness and consequences of colonialism in contemporary society. The objects enable the curator to share new and critical information with the visitor. Alternatively, where objects obtain a new meaning, whereas they might have been formerly used in another narrative, that would justify colonialism. Furthermore, all objects are interconnected to each thematic hall they are presented in or often form an interrelation with a topic in the former or following hall. Due to differences within the setup and decoration in each hall, the themes come off very clearly since the design of each hall really mirrors the theme it is presenting.

The exhibition uses a thematic approach rather than focusing on individual countries. It follows a loosely chronological order framed by these themes. The introduction explores maritime trade, setting the stage for the colonial period. It then moves into the establishment of plantations and the critical exports that relied on enslaved labour, connecting to the theme of racism—a colonial construct used to justify oppression. This theme highlights how colonial-era racism continues to impact contemporary society.

Language is also explored as both a tool of oppression and a means of resistance, illustrating its dual role in colonisation. Similarly, the power of religion is examined for its role in both subjugation and empowerment. After these themes, the exhibition returns to a chronological narrative with the final hall, "This Is Our Home," which focuses on the postcolonial period and the ongoing consequences of colonialism in contemporary society.

This methodological shift allows a deeper understanding of how narratives and themes are constructed. Informed by postcolonial theory, as discussed in 2.1.1 *Unveiling Layers: Postcolonial Theory's Role in Decolonising Institutions and Challenging Eurocentrism*, it blurs the distinction between the first and third worlds. Prominent figures from the colonial past are reexamined, presenting a more human narrative through diverse stories and perspectives. Imperialism is scrutinised, particularly at the Wereldmuseum, where globalism underscores the interconnectedness of colonial history with today's world.

Furthermore, in terms of script, most texts use a clear, critical approach. There are important questions to consider in decolonising the classical narrative and making the visitor aware of the oppression and exploitation behind colonialism. The script tends to be more critical within its wall- and theme texts, whereas it comes across as more neutral within its label texts. Furthermore, the exhibition tends to narrate the display through a geographical categorisation when presenting the

thematics of each hall. The first hall introduces the visitor to a brief history of Dutch colonialism and informs the visitor of the geographical parts of the world where colonialism occurred. Therefore, the wall text already shows a precise geographical categorisation within its script. Then, it interrelates the geographical parts that were colonised to Dutch colonialism. Furthermore, the theme-labelled texts, titled after the region in which colonialism took place, are also geographically categorised.

A profitable business for whom?

By the end of the 16th century, the Dutch had begun to sail the oceans in search of products to trade, as did their European counterparts. Wherever they landed, whether in Asia, Africa or the Americas, they encountered well-established and prosperous economies.

By the 17th century the trade in spices and other products was profitable. The Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie or VOC) and the Dutch West Indies Company (West-Indische Compagnie or WIC) were two of the largest Dutch trading organisations. They founded a global network exploiting pre-existing trading networks. Violence and repression were inherent to the process the companies employed, but was often met with resistance from the colonised.

The business of profiteering was not only based on the transportation of commercial goods, but also on the exploitation of people. Captured, sold and traded in huge numbers, these enslaved people were traded like goods and treated like property. They were deprived of slavery, their rights and humanity. This was the system of slavery (Wereldmuseum Amsterdam).

Caribbean region

The Dutch West Indies Company (West-Indische Compagnie or WIC) was founded in 1621. Its principal focus was the so-called triangular trade route - the Transatlantic trade route linking West Africa, the Caribbean and North and South America. Ships sailed with weapons, gunpowder, iron and cloth from Europe to Africa. There the Dutch traded these goods for enslaved Africans, who they transported to the Americas. From there, ships brought rum, sugar, coffee, tobacco and cotton back to Europe.

The WIC was authorised by the government to sign treaties, to wage war and to conquer territory. But, unlike the VOC, they had no private army. The WIC never had the kind of monopoly the VOC was able to create. Independent merchants remained active in the Atlantic.

(Wereldmuseum Amsterdam)

Nevertheless, other theme-labelled texts within this hall demonstrate a more thematic origin, which also interconnects these geographic texts, indicating that the script does take a thematic approach.

Territory Dress

All the elements in this sculptural dress by Susan Stockwell refer to colonial history. Maps of former Dutch colonies, for example, with red roads dripping like blood down the sleeves. The sail of the ship in the hollow stomach is an Antillean guilder banknote.

The artwork also addresses the position of women in colonial times. While maps define boundaries and property, during the colonial period a woman's body was often someone else's possession, used for work, status, sex or reproduction.

The dress has a long train incorporating interpretations of angisas: Surinamese headscarves. Occasional dark flowers stand out against the blue seas, folded in a type of batik once made exclusively for the royal courts of Java.

Susan Stockwell (1962-); Territory Dress; UK; 2018; paper, cotton, plastic, metal; purchase; 7175-1a, b (Wereldmuseum Amsterdam)

Therefore, the museum demonstrates its use of diverse narratives and their interconnectedness, aligning with the decolonisation process as it diverges from solely embracing the traditional ethnographic narrative. The texts and scripts also present a more critical viewpoint, shifting the colonial narrative towards a postcolonial perspective that questions colonialism, departing from the glorification often associated with the colonial discourse. In terms of chronology in the script, it overlaps between the past and the present, as the exhibition intends to do so, to emphasise the consequences of colonialism in contemporary society.

In terms of collective representation, the World Museum, undergoing a process of decolonisation, underwent a significant transformation, reflected even in its name change from the Tropical Museum. Initially a repository of colonial artefacts, it now endeavours to confront the consequences of colonialism head-on. There is a significant shift now where the museum formerly might have taken an Orientalist approach to identifying particular objects. While still showcasing the Western ideology inherent in colonialism, it now provides a platform for marginalised perspectives, enriching its narrative with diverse voices. The museum fosters greater awareness and understanding of its collections' origins by conducting interviews with marginalised groups and incorporating their stories. The museum's efforts to tell these stories from multiple perspectives are crucial for recognising the impacts of colonialism. This aligns with the broader concept of transitional justice, where public apologies serve as a tool for acknowledging past atrocities and fostering reconciliation (Wijaya, 2019, p. 182).

The museum's exhibitions provide a space where the colonial past is displayed and critically examined, reflecting the need for public acknowledgement of historical injustices, as discussed in paragraph 2.2.3 Apologies as Agents of Recognition and Reconciliation in Postcolonial Justice. Furthermore, this approach bridges the classical and decolonial viewpoints, allowing visitors to witness the museum's evolution firsthand. Postcolonial theory is effectively applied, emphasising the representation of marginalised groups and moving away from the traditional Western narrative, instead opting for a more interconnected global perspective. This is also reflected when examining the aspect of actors within the ideology of the exhibition makers.

“It's very important that people actually get a broader picture of history. What you used to learn at school and also in those museums is a bit one-sided. Still very Eurocentric. That's why we work with so many artists, musicians, poets, activists and politicians. All kinds of people contribute to bringing the story to the present. We are a museum. We mainly have historical objects. Very beautiful objects that tell a lot. But we have fewer 21st century objects. That is why all these collaborations are super important to us” (Interview with curator Rik Herder, NTR Caribisch Netwerk, 2022).

Wereldmuseum Amsterdam's 'Our Colonial Heritage' sheds light on the ongoing impact of colonialism on the world, including its influence on our physical, mental, and personal realms. Its primary focus is Dutch colonial history in nations like Indonesia, Suriname, Curaçao, Sint Maarten,

and beyond. This exhibition also continues the decolonisation process of the museum and former exhibitions that already discuss colonialism. This exhibition mainly focuses on the consequences of colonialism in contemporary society. By highlighting the impacts of Dutch colonialism and the resilience of these communities, the museum plays a critical role in addressing the historical injustices and fostering a multi-perspective dialogue. This reflects the importance of engaging with the complexities of postcolonial identities and ensuring these narratives are included in the political and social discourse (Seymour, 2010; Immler, 2022), as discussed in 2.2.1. Navigating Power Dynamics: The Role of Recognition in Promoting Equality and Justice.

“We started renewing the permanent display in 2017, but this exhibition completes that. Yet another step in the story about the colonial past and how it continues to this day. And a new step in how we can talk to each other about the colonial past” (Interview with curator Wendeline Floris, Wereldmuseum Amsterdam (voorheen Tropenmuseum), 2022c).

Wereldmuseum Amsterdam has an extensive collection of colonial objects obtained by the coloniser and objects that are now considered looted art due to their historical origin. It also shares depots with the other museums that are part of The Foundation of the National Museum of World Cultures. This label text, on which the museum explains the origins of its collection, is a great example of Wereldmuseum Amsterdam's critical perspective and self-reflection.

The origins of our colonial collection

A large part of our collections was acquired during the colonial period. This was a period characterised by grossly unequal power relations and violence. Consequently, some of the objects we care for, including objects in this exhibition, may have been obtained through looting or in other dubious and unjust situations. The museum is actively researching to clarify the provenance of its collections. For more information on this research and our policy framework, 'The Return of Cultural Objects: Principles and Processes', see our website: www.tropenmuseum.nl/en/our-colonial-inheritance (Wereldmuseum Amsterdam).

This illustrates the museum's evident decolonisation journey, acknowledging its colonial origins given that it has colonial origins and is the sole institution directly tied to colonialism that has adopted a critical stance on itself and its collections. Throughout its history, it played a role in presenting, collecting, and shaping a colonial narrative for its audience. This is evident before entering the museum through the means of symbolic production since the architecture of Wereldmuseum Amsterdam embodies much of its colonial history, as the building initially served as a colonial institution before its conversion into a museum. This historical context is evident in the architectural details, which include references to the colonial ties with the Dutch East Indies. These references are manifested through incorporating sculptures depicting VOC figures, Buddha figures, mythological animals, religious symbols, and essential products from colonial trade (Wereldmuseum Amsterdam).

“We are here in the former colonial institute. Founded about 100 years ago, actually, you could say, as a kind of propoganda machine of the colonial project. Especially in the then Dutch East Indies. We are 100 years later and

things are of course very different now. This exhibition, 'Our Colonial Heritage,' is also about the colonial legacy within our institute” (Interview with curator Rik Herder, Wereldmuseum Amsterdam (voorheen Tropenmuseum), 2022c).

Regarding the public aspect, the Wereldmuseum Amsterdam stands out with its unique interactive narrative experience. It goes beyond a traditional collection, offering a dynamic exploration of the social power of collective representation and the individual visitor. The museum's reach extends beyond its walls, providing insights into society through interviews. This is exemplified by a video montage at the exhibition entrance featuring interviews where individuals share their perspectives on colonial heritage.

Secondly, regarding social circumstances, the exhibition broadly represents the colonised areas, such as the Indonesian archipelago, the Caribbean region, and part of the African region. However, it can also be argued through the representation that the exhibition can be considered city-concerned towards Amsterdam, which is interesting since the museum itself is not city-focused. Nevertheless, a lot of city-oriented perspectives can be found within the exhibition. This is evident through two video fragments shown at the exhibition's beginning. These two fragments both take place within Amsterdam. In contrast, one of the videos shows the interview mentioned before, as well as the apologising video of the mayor of Amsterdam on the city's behalf for the role it played in colonialism and enslavement. This showcases the recognition and awareness regarding colonialism in society that has already been achieved.



Loenen van , R. (2022). *Tropenmuseum Amsterdam* . Youtube . photograph, Amsterdam ; Youtube . Retrieved April 1, 2024, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kW-w6dJhnT4>.

Furthermore, as noticed in Chapter Two, Indonesian culture is described as something that was considered "high culture" during the colonial period. In contrast, Suriname culture was not—resulting in Indonesia gaining more attention in most museums and its depiction and representation. As far as the Wereldmuseum and its exhibition, it can be said that when comparing Indonesia and Suriname within the label texts that entail objects and a narrative regarding each country, 59 label texts can be interrelated with Indonesia, and 41 label texts that can be interrelated with Suriname. Thus, this claim. Observing the label texts throughout the exhibition is valid, and this can be explained by the fact that the Wereldmuseum has a more extensive Indonesian collection.

Despite the differences in the attention given to Indonesian and Suriname cultures, the exhibition maintains a balanced representation of both countries. The two cultures are often intertwined in the same thematics, demonstrating the exhibition's commitment to not favouring one colonised country over another or considering one story more important. Both countries are thoroughly explained and complemented in the narrative of Dutch colonialism and its consequences, ensuring a fair and comprehensive analysis.

Within the exhibition of our colonial Heritage, de Wereldmuseum discusses Indonesia's colonial History by showing extensive storytelling and also showcasing essential aspects of its colonised period, such as the International Network that was set up by the VOC Within Indonesia as the main Reason Why Indonesia was colonised. Also, it extensively discusses the subjugation and Resistance within Indonesia and the migration of Those who left Indonesia in the post-colony period. The topic of Indonesia can be found within each theme hall, while it is interrelated with the other colonised countries. This is logical since the Wereldmuseum has a great collection of Indonesian objects retrieved in the colonial period. Thus, sufficient material could support the intended script or narrative the museum tries to convey within this exhibition.

Indonesia's international network

The Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oost- indische Compagnie or VOC) was founded in 1602. In the 17th century, the VOC built up a huge international network, backed by the VOC army. The VOC expelled Portuguese traders from East Indonesia and the Malacca. Using threats, violence and war, they imposed treaties and monopolies on local rulers and traders.

The Dutch network spread throughout Southeast Asia and via Africa to Europe, trading in enslaved people, spices, fabrics and other valuable commodities. Late in the 18th century, the company began to decline due to stiff British and French competition, the cost of waging war, as well as corruption and maladministration. In 1798, the VOC was dissolved (Wereldmuseum Amsterdam).

The Wereldmuseum also includes Suriname as one of the main former colonised countries by the Netherlands. The country is extensively discussed, such as Indonesia, in every hall, whereas the thematics highlight parts of the country and its interrelation to colonialism and other colonised countries. Many objects interrelated with Suriname are found throughout the exhibition, particularly in

the thematic hall of enslavement; much attention is paid to the plantations of Suriname, whereas its products excessively were discussed in the former hall.

Decolonisation in Suriname and the Caribbean islands

The colonial system in the Caribbean was criticized from early on - primarily but not only by the enslaved. For example, White abolitionists, some of whom were motivated by egalitarian ideals, were critical of the inhumane conditions that characterized slavery and colonialism. Anti-colonial criticism increased in the 20th century. The Surinamese writer Anton de Kom (1898-1945) expressed this criticism most forcefully and eloquently in his book *We Slaves of Suriname* (1934). Such critique played a key role in dismantling the system. Wim Bos Verschuur was a white anti-colonialist and Surinamese nationalist in the same period as De Kom.

With the constitutional reforms of 1954 (the new 'Kingdom Statute'), the Caribbean islands and Suriname gained increased autonomy within the Kingdom. The Curaçao politician Moises da Costa Gomez played an important role in this. Suriname declared independence in 1975. In 1986, the island of Aruba received a special status. On October 10, 2010, the Netherlands Antilles legally ceased to exist. Curaçao and Sint Maarten received the status of autonomous countries within the Kingdom. Bonaire, Saba and Statia have been special municipalities' of the Netherlands ever since (Wereldmuseum Amsterdam).

Furthermore, in the first hall, the exhibition introduced the colonised link with the Caribbean, which included Suriname with the WIC.

Caribbean region

The Dutch West Indies Company (West-Indische Compagnie or WIC) was founded in 1621. Its principal focus was the so-called triangular trade route - the Transatlantic trade route linking West Africa, the Caribbean and North and South America. Ships sailed with weapons, gunpowder, iron and cloth from Europe to Africa. There the Dutch traded these goods for enslaved Africans, who they transported to the Americas. From there, ships brought rum, sugar, coffee, tobacco and cotton back to Europe.

The WIC was authorised by the government to sign treaties, to wage war and to conquer territory. But, unlike the VOC, they had no private army. The WIC never had the kind of monopoly the VOC was able to create. Independent merchants remained active in the Atlantic (Wereldmuseum Amsterdam).

Identity politics theory plays a pivotal role, as discussed in 2.1.1. *Intersecting Identities: Exploring Identity Politics in Museums and Colonialism*, giving voice to marginalised groups and shedding light on the ideologies historically attached to them. The emphasis is not solely on differences but also on the similarities between these groups, fostering connections and understanding.

This approach encompasses collective identity, including nationalism, shaped by the blending of cultures resulting from colonialism. Political identity theory is evident, with the World Museum highlighting colonial influences in Dutch culture through food, music, and clothing. There is now a greater emphasis on the identity of formerly colonised people, who were often portrayed as lesser within colonial discourse. The focus is on their culture and how it influences the Netherlands, highlighting the business consequences for Dutch society due to postcolonialism. This creates a new identity, constructed with more objective viewers, allowing visitors to learn about these groups from a different perspective. The exhibition challenges former dominant and racist representations by

showing cultural similarities and fostering recognition. The museum thus serves as a significant contact zone between visitors and different cultures, functioning as an educative collective.

The themes emphasise migration, closely intertwined with identity politics, as reflected in the presentation and display of objects. The exhibition illustrates the complex relationships between colonialism and ethnic identity, showcasing how these identities were depicted during that era. The thematic hall on racism highlights the stereotypical images used to justify colonialism and demonstrates how to counter these arguments through its displays and narrative.

“(…) there is a room in which we reflect on racism. Race theories that arose during colonialism. But racism is something that is still very current and exists and influences our daily lives.” (Interview with curator Wendeline Flores, NTR Caribisch Netwerk, 2022).

The shift towards inclusivity in museum ethnicity and museology is evident in the vocabulary used and the efforts to connect with diverse cultures. Renaming the Tropical Museum to the World Museum signifies a departure from outdated tropes and a focus on fostering connections rather than highlighting differences, as discussed in 2.2.3 by Jouwe, Stipriaan, Steinmetz, Jordan, and Allen et al.

This emphasis on connection allows visitors to identify more readily with various cultures, fostering solidarity and recognition for marginalised groups. The museum actively engages stakeholders, including marginalised communities, the government, and visitors, to promote a more inclusive narrative.

By serving as a model for other museums, the World Museum demonstrates how to continue the process of decolonisation. Initiatives like the publication of "Words Matter" showcase the museum's commitment to inclusive language and policies. Through employee education and training, such as racism courses for tour guides, the museum ensures a critical examination of its colonial legacy and implements necessary changes. This shift in perspective reflects the museum's evolving identity from one that perpetuates colonial viewpoints to one that critically examines its past and actively promotes inclusivity and organisational values.

Furthermore, museums like the World Museum actively engage in global discussions and social issues, aligning with society's current political agenda. This commitment stems from ethical considerations and a desire to move forward more inclusively. By embracing inclusivity and actively challenging colonial perspectives, museums play a vital role in shaping public discourse and promoting social justice on a global scale. With this, the curators also hope to engage the visitor within the discussion and enable the visitor to critically analyse their position within society interrelated to the consequences of colonialism and hope to inspire them with this exhibition for a different way of thinking or acting regarding this topic.

“What I hope visitors get out of this exhibition is that they at least learn something new, that they go home with new information, a little more understanding from the different perspectives they have seen. New stories and

new perspectives that they were introduced to in the exhibition. And ideally, that they want to contribute to a better world when they step outside” (Interview with curator Rik Herder, Wereldmuseum Amsterdam (voorheen Tropenmuseum), 2022b).

Moreover, the museum aims to combat misinformation and foster a more profound understanding by reshaping the narrative and amplifying the voices of marginalised groups. Through interactive exhibits, visitors are encouraged to contemplate the construction of society and contribute their insights. Notably, a dedicated wall in the museum focuses on the ongoing process of decolonising the institution, providing transparency and accountability. This initiative is pivotal in aligning with postcolonial theory and catalysing the museum's internal decolonisation efforts.

What stands out about the Worldmuseum Amsterdam is its heritage as an ethnographic museum, a characteristic that still influences its script. Certain narrative aspects retain their ethnographic origins, as descriptors often outline the objects' origins and cultural and ethnic connections. However, the museum has revised its approach, moving from a chronological and ethical organisation of objects to a thematic one. Nevertheless, this shift sometimes results in objects being presented out of context, requiring the narrative to stretch to connect them with the theme, display, and related objects. An example is the Niagara Hotel's label text, which is stretched to align with the exhibition hall's thematic focus, within the hall of "This is my home", which thematises the migration to the Netherlands.

Niagara Hotel, Lawang

According to accounts, a Dutch woman took her own life in the Hotel, because she was jealous when she saw her husband with another woman. Unmarried couples should think twice about spending the night here because her ghost may stir trouble in their room. In Indonesia, much attention is still given to ghosts of the colonial past that potentially lurk in old buildings.

Anoek Steketee (1974). *The Past is a Foreign Country*, Indonesie, Java, Lawang 2012, [reproduction]: TM-6479-24 (Wereldmuseum Amsterdam).

Haags Historisch Museum's "Colonial The Hague: An Unfinished Past"

Haags Historisch Museum's exhibition "Colonial The Hague: An Unfinished Past" highlights pivotal role of the Hague in the Dutch colonial system as a governmental city. The Hague Historical Museum has curated an exhibition that delves into the unresolved colonial history of The Hague and how it impacted former colonies like Indonesia, Suriname, the Caribbean islands, and even the Netherlands itself. The choices made in The Hague had extensive repercussions, often leading to disastrous outcomes for many. Remnants of this colonial past are still visible in the city through its architecture, restaurants, street names, and diverse population.

By presenting the colonial past and its enduring effects, the museum promotes an understanding of the challenges faced by postcolonial immigrants and the need for their recognition

within Dutch society. The museum's efforts align with the politics of recognition, which seeks to guarantee the social conditions necessary for maintaining self-respect and self-esteem among marginalised groups. This involves acknowledging the historical injustices and systemic oppression these communities have faced, thereby addressing the root causes of their marginalisation (Modood, 2010; Seymour, 2010), as discussed in paragraph 2.2.3 Navigating Power Dynamics: The Role of Recognition in Promoting Equality and Justice.

The museum, primarily a city museum rather than of colonial origin, still plays a role in the ongoing process of decolonisation. Their contribution to this lies in the curation of exhibitions and the narrative they construct through research and storytelling. By carefully selecting sources and conducting thorough research, they shape the narrative presented to visitors, influencing how colonialism is understood and portrayed. Exhibitions here have been developed with significant input from the descendant communities, ensuring that the stories reflect a broader range of experiences and viewpoints. This practice mirrors the principles set out by ICOM and UNESCO, which advocate for inclusivity and community engagement in curatorial practices. The museum's efforts highlight its role as an agent of societal debate and cultural understanding, as emphasised by Morales & Camarena (2018) and Soares (2018), as discussed in paragraph 2.1.2 The Rise of Museum Ethics.

In this process, the museum goes to great lengths to represent marginalised groups and illuminate the consequences of colonialism in society. By integrating oral histories and personal testimonies, the museum ensures that marginalised voices are heard and represented (Balkenhol, 2023), as the paragraph discussed 2.1.1 Unpacking Colonialism: Definitions, Impacts, and the Imperative of Decolonisation. Furthermore, by showcasing the personal objects and stories of individuals from these groups, visitors are informed and emotionally engaged with the ongoing impact of colonialism on everyday life. Street names, colonial-era buildings, and other aspects of the city's landscape remind visitors of its colonial past, prompting them to reflect on the persistence of colonial legacies.

Oral history sources provide alternative perspectives and narratives, offering insights into the experiences of those whose voices may have been marginalised or silenced in traditional historical accounts. By incorporating these diverse perspectives, the museum aims to present a more comprehensive and critical understanding of history, challenging dominant narratives and highlighting the importance of marginalised voices.

While acknowledging the limitations of traditional sources, the museum takes a critical approach to interpreting historical information, encouraging visitors to question and critically evaluate the narratives presented. This approach ensures that the exhibition reflects the experiences and perspectives of marginalised groups rather than perpetuating dominant narratives that may overlook or misrepresent their contributions.

The museum's commitment to decolonisation is evident in its efforts to represent marginalised voices, challenge dominant narratives, and provide a more inclusive and critical understanding of history. Through careful curation and storytelling, it aims to confront visitors with colonialism's ongoing legacy and encourage reflection on its impact on contemporary society.

Furthermore, it educates the public about colonial exploitation and the enduring legacies of these periods. This aligns with the understanding that public apologies, often preceded by thorough investigations and commissions, are necessary to address colonialism's historical narratives and contemporary implications (Immler, 2023, p. 105). By presenting these histories, the museum participates in a more significant societal effort to reconcile with the past, as discussed in paragraph 2.2.3 Apologies as Agents of Recognition and Reconciliation in Postcolonial Justice.

Regarding the *mise-en-scène*, the displayed collection comprises objects sourced from various museums, as The Hague Historisch Museum lacks an extensive array of colonial artefacts. Additionally, personal belongings from marginalised postcolonial immigrant groups are showcased. These items were carefully selected with the assistance of professionals to ensure they aligned with the exhibition's overall narrative and script. Given the leading curator's historiographic background, their perspective permeates the exhibition. The scene is set with a colour scheme dominated by red and brown, which continues throughout the exhibition, creating thematic cohesion among the displayed objects.

While some objects may have been previously presented within a colonial discourse narrative, they are now repurposed to support a decolonial narrative and empower marginalised voices through multi-perspective engagement.

The museum primarily examines the city's and government's roles in Dutch colonialism, offering a multi-perspective narrative demonstrating how the colonial past continues to influence contemporary society. This influence is observable in the city's architecture, with buildings historically financed by colonialism, and in the cultural landscape, characterised by the presence of various restaurants, street names, and the diverse demographic composition of The Hague's population.

When entering the exhibition's first hall, "De Ridderzaal", the visitor is led through all the halls through a timeline of events printed on the ground, connecting each hall. With this timeline, the visitor literally walks with the time of events in each hall connected to the narrative and its objects.



Photo of the timeline in the Hague Historical Museum (2023). photograph.

The Haags Historisch Museum focuses mainly on the (post)colonial countries of Suriname, Indonesia, and the Caribbean. At the exhibition's entrance, The Haags Historisch Museum informs the audience that the selection of these three regions, which the Netherlands colonised, is based on their extended duration of colonisation and their more recent history of decolonisation. This decision underscores the significance of these regions in understanding the colonial past and its subsequent decolonisation, as shown in the second hall through a video installation, which also narrates the origin and the definition of colonialism.

The exhibition, particularly through the initial multimedia video, clarifies the selection of countries featured in the exhibition. Additionally, the narrative deviates from a geographic structure to adopt a thematic approach. While Indonesia and Suriname share the same exhibition halls, their narratives are sometimes intertwined but not strictly presented along a geographic timeline. Instead, they are represented through thematic elements such as resistance leaders and diverse voices with varying narratives and stories. This thematic approach is especially evident in the sections on migration, where each country presents a distinct story regarding its migration and historical dependence.



Bink, M. (n.d.). Studio Wendy Rommers. photograph, The Hague. Retrieved January 18, 2024, from <https://wendyrommers.nl/haags-historisch-museum-koloniaal-den-haag/>.

Indonesia

Starting in the 17th century, Indonesia was increasingly colonised by the Netherlands. Early in the 20th century, the demand for independence increases among the population. The Netherlands takes firm action against this rising nationalism. During and after the Second World War, this accelerates. In 1942 Japan occupied Indonesia. On 17 August 1945, two days after the Japanese capitulation, Sukarno and Mohammad Hatta declared Indonesian independence. The Netherlands refuses to accept. A four-year war breaks out in which the Netherlands, with brutal military force in combination with negotiations, tries to keep a grip on its (former) colony. All population groups are affected by the violence during this period.

The negotiations between the two parties are only successful when the Netherlands is unable to suppress the 65 million inhabitants of Indonesia with a total of 220,000 Dutch soldiers and cannot win the war. Moreover, the Netherlands is subject to heavy international pressure. Finally, on 27 December 1949, the Netherlands recognises the Republic of Indonesia. For Indonesia, 17 August 1945 counts as the date of independence. The Netherlands recognises that date in principle, but also maintains 27 December 1949 as the day on which this process was completed (Haags Historisch Museum).

The exhibition includes 57 written texts about Indonesia and 55 written scripts about Suriname, indicating equal representation of both countries.

While Indonesia is extensively discussed, other countries are featured in each hall and theme. However, marginalised groups, oppression, and resistance leaders receive more attention, offering a critical examination of the Netherlands' colonial past. The exhibition also explores the violence against Indonesia, providing an elaborate narrative of its decolonisation and subsequent migration.

The exhibition further explores the cultivation system implemented in the Netherlands, as indicated by the labelled text in the hall "resistance and revolt".

School poster 'The Cultivation System', R. Visser, 1979, private collection

Van den Bosch goes to Indonesia with one mission: the income from the colony must increase. The Java War cost the Netherlands a lot of money and this must be compensated. To this end, in 1830 Van den Bosch introduces a new tax system: the Culture System. Farmers are compelled to do forced labour and plant a fifth of their land with products which will then be sold by the Netherlands. Between 1830 and 1870, the system generated enormous amounts of money for the Dutch. For example, railways and waterways in the Netherlands are built from these 'Indonesian revenues'. For the Indonesian people, the Culture System equals exploitation (Haags Historisch Museum).

Although the script does not explicitly state that political parties were prohibited in Indonesia, the text does suggest that the government attempted to suppress them, as indicated in the excerpt below.

The first congress of the Partal Nasional Indonesia (PNI) In Surabaya, with its three leaders behind the table: Samsi Sastrowidagdo, chairman Sukarno and Tjokrohadijoerjo Iskaq, photographer unknown 1928, Leiden University Library Collection (KITLV)

At the beginning of the 20th century, the call for an independent Indonesia increases. Associations that show an increasing commitment to this goal are being founded. Examples are Perhimpunan Indonesia (PI) and the Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI), with well-known members such as Mohammad Hatta and Sukarno. The Dutch government opposes these associations (Haags Historisch Museum).

The exhibition thoroughly examines Suriname's history as a Dutch colony. It showcases numerous objects related to Suriname, including the Society of Suriname's glass and maps depicting the region. Additionally, it delves extensively into the role of the Amsterdam-based Society of Suriname in colonising the region.

WHAT IS THE SOCIETY OF SURINAME?

The Society of Suriname governs the colony of Suriname from 1683 to 1795. Suriname comes into the possession of the Republic of the Netherlands in 1667. At first it is administered by Zeeland, but in 1683 the Society of Suriname takes over administration. There are three owners: the Dutch West Indies Company, the city of Amsterdam and the Van Aerssen van Sommelsdijck family, who are from The Hague. The Society determines the laws and policies in the colony. Suriname is intended to become a plantation colony, from which the Dutch state and especially entrepreneurs can earn a great deal of money. The owners use enslaved people to work on the plantations. The Dutch West Indies Company, and later private traders, brought these people from Africa through the transatlantic slave trade. The Society receives money for every enslaved person sold in Suriname and earns a great deal from this arrangement. In 1795, the Society is dissolved (Haags Historisch Museum).

WHO ARE THE MAROONS IN SURINAME?

Enslaved people sometimes manage to escape from slavery. Once they have escaped, they flee into the interior of Suriname. These people, and their children, are called the Maroons.

Surviving in the interior, where there is jungle, is extremely difficult. To provide for their livelihood, they therefore regularly attack plantations and thus form a major threat to the coloniser. Years of fighting between the African refugees and the Europeans follow. On 10 October 1760, the first peace treaty with the Ndyuka Maroons is concluded. In the years that follow, peace treaties are also reached with other Maroon groups. Every year on 10 October, the fight against oppression and for freedom is commemorated on the Day of the Maroons, a national holiday in Suriname (Haags Historisch Museum).

Additionally, numerous objects linked to Suriname, including items from plantations and relating to enslavement, are showcased. These objects are accompanied by brief narratives providing insights into plantation life. Furthermore, the exhibition highlights the individuals who held authority in Suriname and the legislations and policies they enacted in the country.

Travel sketchbook of Suriname, Adriaan van der Gon Netscher, 1843-1857, Teylers Museum

During his stay in Suriname and British Guyana, Van der Gon Netscher creates sketches in this book. These offer a good insight into the life of a plantation owner and contain drawings of colonial country houses such as Hof van Holland and Klein Poederooijen. The book also contains a drawing of a dance party of enslaved persons in Suriname (Haags Historisch Museum).

One notable aspect of the museum's engagement in the process of decolonisation is its portrayal of marginalised communities. Rather than adopting an anthropological lens, the museum often presents these groups through their own narratives. While it does provide historical context and discusses the impact of colonialism, it avoids presenting an ethnologically colonial perspective when depicting these marginalised groups.

The museum follows a chronological narrative, but it does so without strictly adhering to a hierarchical evolutionary development framework. Therefore, it avoids perpetuating a narrative of superiority or inferiority between colonisers and oppressed groups. Through engagement with marginalised communities and stakeholders, the museum strives for equality in its exhibitions, presenting the stories of colonisers and oppressed peoples with equal weight—a step towards decolonisation.

The exhibition utilised a multi-voice perspective, as discussed by Immler in 2.2.3 Navigating Power Dynamics: The Role of Recognition in Promoting Equality and Justice, to amplify the voices of marginalised and oppressed individuals, shedding light on colonialism and its underlying issues, such as oppression, enslavement, and resistance to decolonisation. It also addresses the challenges postcolonial migrants face in the Netherlands, offering a more pronounced narrative than previous exhibitions. Marginalised individuals are given a platform to share their personal stories, display personal objects, and showcase photographs, humanising their experiences for visitors.

Postcolonial theory, as discussed in 2.1.1. Unveiling Layers: Postcolonial Theory's Role in Decolonising Institutions and Challenging Eurocentrism, informs the exhibition, facilitating an analysis of former European colonies, colonial institutions, and governance from various perspectives. This challenges the colonial discourse by incorporating oral history and marginalised voices and

reinterpreting colonial objects to critique colonialism and its governance structures. For instance, the exhibition also confronts imperialism and Eurocentrism by highlighting the ownership of objects from Suriname Society by those who governed Suriname and showcasing resistance figures and their perspectives. However, the exhibition does not explicitly discuss global issues.

Chalice glass of the Society of Suriname, artist unknown, 1740-1760, Amsterdam Museum, on loan from Stichting Genootschap Amsterdam Museum

The fact that Cornelis van Aerssen van Sommelsdijck was co-owner of the Society of Suriname can clearly be seen on this glass. The coat of arms of the Society is composed of the coat of arms of Amsterdam, the coat of arms of the Dutch West Indies Company and the coat of arms of the van Aerssen van Sommelsdijck family. Between 1683 and 1795, the Society turns Suriname into a plantation colony, at the expense of the indigenous population and more than 200,000 enslaved Africans and their descendants (Haags Historisch Museum).

Through the lens of identity politics, as discussed in 2.1.1 Intersecting Identities: Exploring Identity Politics in Museums and Colonialism, the exhibition endeavours to depart from the traditional narrative surrounding the identity of marginalised communities. It accentuates their stories, identity, and the significance of objects deemed essential for these groups. Moreover, it actively involves stakeholders from these communities, engaging in discussions about the meaning of identity. The curation of objects is carefully done to align with the narrative and identity of these marginalised groups. Additionally, the exhibition sheds light on racism within colonial administration, as evidenced by the accompanying label texts.

IS RACISM PART OF COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION?

Yes, and racist thinking was inextricably linked to colonial times. That thinking continues today. There is actually only one race: the human race. Nevertheless, from the 17th century more ideas are developed that people can be classified according to 'races'. People were also attributed character traits, intelligence and moral characteristics. In the 19th century, a race theory with pseudo-scientific status even emerged. Black people and people of colour are considered less than white people. This notion is used to justify slavery and colonialism. Such ideas are persistent: stereotypes and prejudices live on. They form a breeding ground for contemporary inequality, exclusion, discrimination and racism (Haags Historisch Museum).

Moreover, the exhibition delves into identity politics within the context of nationalism, particularly emphasising its surge during the fight for independence, as depicted in the thematic wall text below. This insight offers visitors a glimpse into the formation of community identity in Indonesia during that era.

RISING NATIONALISM

From the beginning of the 20th century, more voices are heard in Indonesia expressing a desire for independence from the Netherlands. Young people educated in Europe are also increasingly critical of the Dutch government. In the 1920s, this criticism is voiced more broadly and fiercely, and the Netherlands opts for harsh repression. Under the leadership of Colijn, the colonial administration imprisons people who criticise the Dutch regime.

The Indonesian movement is divided by the colonial regime into cooperative and non-cooperative nationalists. The non-cooperative nationalists demand independence and do not want to cooperate with the Dutch government. The more moderate cooperatives are gradually trying to achieve self-government for Indonesia by working together. This was the approach of Soejono, the first and only Indonesian minister in a Dutch cabinet, the war cabinet in exile in London. Through his influence on Dutch politics, he is committed to complete self-government of Indonesia, but he is alone in his mission. Deeply disappointed, Soejono dies in London in 1943 (Haags historisch Museum).

The portrayal of identity politics within museums is closely intertwined with the depiction of heroes, primarily focusing on the city's past. However, this representation extends beyond local history to encompass national identity, as The Hague serves as the seat of the country's domestic leadership, reflecting the city's identity. Traditional objects such as portraits now carry different meanings within the narrative of colonialism and decolonisation, shedding light on how contemporary society is affected. This exhibition reveals diverse perspectives on identity, challenging the notion of fixed identities and highlighting the complexity of collective identities. Through shared experiences and objects, similarities emerge among individuals, demonstrating how colonisation has blurred the boundaries of identity, offering a more nuanced and layered perspective.

The exhibition aims to shed light on the narratives of colonial administrators and those impacted by these decisions, underscoring the profound influence of The Hague on the colonial narrative of the Netherlands. The Haags Historisch Museum takes a different take on multi-perspective through the storytelling, which not only shows the side of the coloniser, as the classic Eurocentric discourse represents the topic, but also tells the story of the oppressed. It is noticeable that Haags Historisch Museum also has a city-orientated perspective. The exhibition demonstrates this by highlighting the theme labels that centre around the colonial history investigated concerning the city's government and the active involvement of The Hague's residents and foundations. Nevertheless, the exhibition is focused on The Hague since the concept behind the exhibition originated from research on the civil servants of the municipality and their involvement in Dutch colonialism, as is shown in The Third Hall, "Decision Makers and their Decisions". This hall particularly looks at the colonial history that took place between the 18th and 19th centuries. What is noticeable about its mise-en-scène is that the red colours are used throughout the first three shown halls, complemented by the brown and grey colour palette.



Bink, M. (n.d.). Studio Wendy Rommers. photograph, The Hague. Retrieved January 18, 2024, from <https://wendyrommers.nl/haags-historisch-museum-koloniaal-den-haag/>.

This hall slowly introduces the narrative from the occurrences of colonialism and its regulations that lead to the topic of the fourth hall, "Resistance and Revolt". This hall shows the resistance and revolt against colonialism by showing both sides of the involved parties. It adopts a multi-perspective approach by showcasing not only those in power but also the oppressed individuals.

Decree regarding the liberty of Virginie, Colonial Office, 26 June 1860, National Archives

After years of legal battle, a decision is made about Virginie's future. From 1852 she and her children are free people. This is the 'resolution book' of the Ministry of Colonies, setting out all decisions. After Virginie officially gets her freedom, she decides to continue legal proceedings to secure a surname for her and her children. In 1860 she is formally granted the name Gameren. That decision is noted on this page of the book (Haags Historisch Museum).

This theme saturates the exhibition and underscores the curator's deliberate effort to present a distinct narrative. Additional objects accompanying the script contribute to a coherent historical storyline. However, when particular objects, particularly those associated with oppressed and enslaved individuals, are absent, the exhibition primarily relies on the script to effectively convey their stories to visitors.

“The historical part is very much built up with museum collection pieces, eh. But in general, those collections are quite limited, because they do indeed mainly tell the story of the coloniser. And if you're talking about objects that tell a different side or perspective on that story, they are often just not well represented in museum collections. Ehm and I think that is also the process of eh decolonisation, so that we also look at Okay not just this object (...). How can you tell that uh multi-perspective. (...) but also which means that we do have this object and other stories are not in the collection and what could we do about it?” (Interview curator, Haags Historisch Museum).

The exhibition takes a historical perspective by relating objects to events and using them to elaborate on those events. Objects are framed differently from their origin and often linked to a thematic script rather than individual labels. Often crafted as questions, these scripts provide an overview of events and address the Netherlands' role in colonialism and slavery. Both this hall and the former hall display objects traditionally, fitting the timeframe and the objects shown. There are no contemporary art objects in these halls.

The exhibition explores sources beyond traditional ones, including oral history, as discussed in 2.1.1 Intersecting Identities: Exploring Identity Politics in Museums and Colonialism by Allen and Ashcroft. Notably, the term "Golden Age" is absent from label texts and narratives. Instead, the ideology of the Golden Age and its glorification of colonialism are critically examined by presenting diverse perspectives. Objects typically associated with the Golden Age are interpreted not as symbols of success but as artefacts intertwined with the economic structures of Dutch colonialism, challenging conventional narratives.



Bink, M. (n.d.). Studio Wendy Rommers. photograph, The Hague. Retrieved January 18, 2024, from <https://wendyrommers.nl/haags-historisch-museum-koloniaal-den-haag/>.

In the fourth hall, titled "Resistance," the Hague Historical Museum highlights the VOC' and WIC's roles in the slave trade and the Dutch government's subsequent imposition of the Cultivation System. The museum's exhibitions delve into the hierarchy established during the colonial period, where Europeans were placed at the top, and native Indonesians were relegated to the lowest societal rank (Hewett, 2015).

By documenting these historical structures, the museum contributes to a broader understanding of how colonial policies shaped social and economic inequalities that persist in contemporary society. This aligns with the concept of transformative justice, aiming to address the root causes of injustice and empower marginalised communities, as discussed in paragraph 2.2.1 Colonial Exploitation, Racial Hierarchy, and Political Struggles: Dynamics of the Dutch East Indies.

IS THE HAGUE INVOLVED IN THE DUTCH EAST INDIES COMPANY AND THE DUTCH WEST INDIES COMPANY?

Yes, but to a very limited extent.

There is no 'chamber' in The Hague of directors of these two companies. Because the States General meets in The Hague, the directors are in The Hague regularly for consultation. Several lodging houses in the city are rented by these companies for use by the directors. There is also an important administrative department of the Dutch East Indies Company in The Hague, the Haags Besogne. The Haags Besogne has the task of keeping an overview of all correspondence with the Dutch East Indies. The employees report this to the board of the Dutch East Indies Company (Haags Historisch Museum).

The museum particularly focused on enslavement in the "Resistance and Revolt" hall, delving into its systems and resistance through a detailed description. Additionally, the exhibition showcases individuals in positions of authority within the system of enslavement through concise biographies and accompanying images alongside other figures relevant to the theme.

Furthermore, the exhibition emphasises the resilience and humanity of enslaved individuals while also noting the scarcity of objects associated with their experience, as they were typically not permitted to own possessions.

Moreover, the exhibition provides detailed information regarding the abolition of slavery. Furthermore, there is an in-depth exploration of how the era of indentured labour followed the abolition of slavery. This theme is thoroughly discussed in 2.2.3 Unveiling the Hidden Legacy: The Dutch Role in the Atlantic Slave Trade.

RESISTANCE FOR FREEDOM

Enslaved people resist slavery in many ways. Sometimes by minor sabotage, sometimes by large-scale resistance. On 17 August 1795, naval officer and later governor Albert Kikkert receives a message: on the Kenepa (Knip) plantation in Curaçao, owned by his brother-in-law, dozens of enslaved men are refusing to go to work. Inspired by the revolutions in Europe and the slave revolt in the French Caribbean colony of Saint-Domingue (later Haiti), they demand their freedom. The leader of the uprising is Tula, assisted by Carpatá,

Mercier and Wacao, among others. Carpata is Kikkert's house slave. Partly for this reason, Kikkert is extra keen to put down this revolt. Tula's following quickly grows to about two thousand people. The colonial administration sends several negotiators but rejects Tula's demand for freedom. Several weeks of violent fighting follow, until the uprising is crushed in a bloody manner.

Tula is captured on 18 September. He is tortured to death: crushed alive, burned and then beheaded. Carpata is forced to watch on. And Kikkert? He becomes part of the Curaçao elite and in 1816 is even appointed governor. Today in Curaçao, Tula is the symbol of resilience and resistance against Dutch slavery (Haags Historisch Museum).

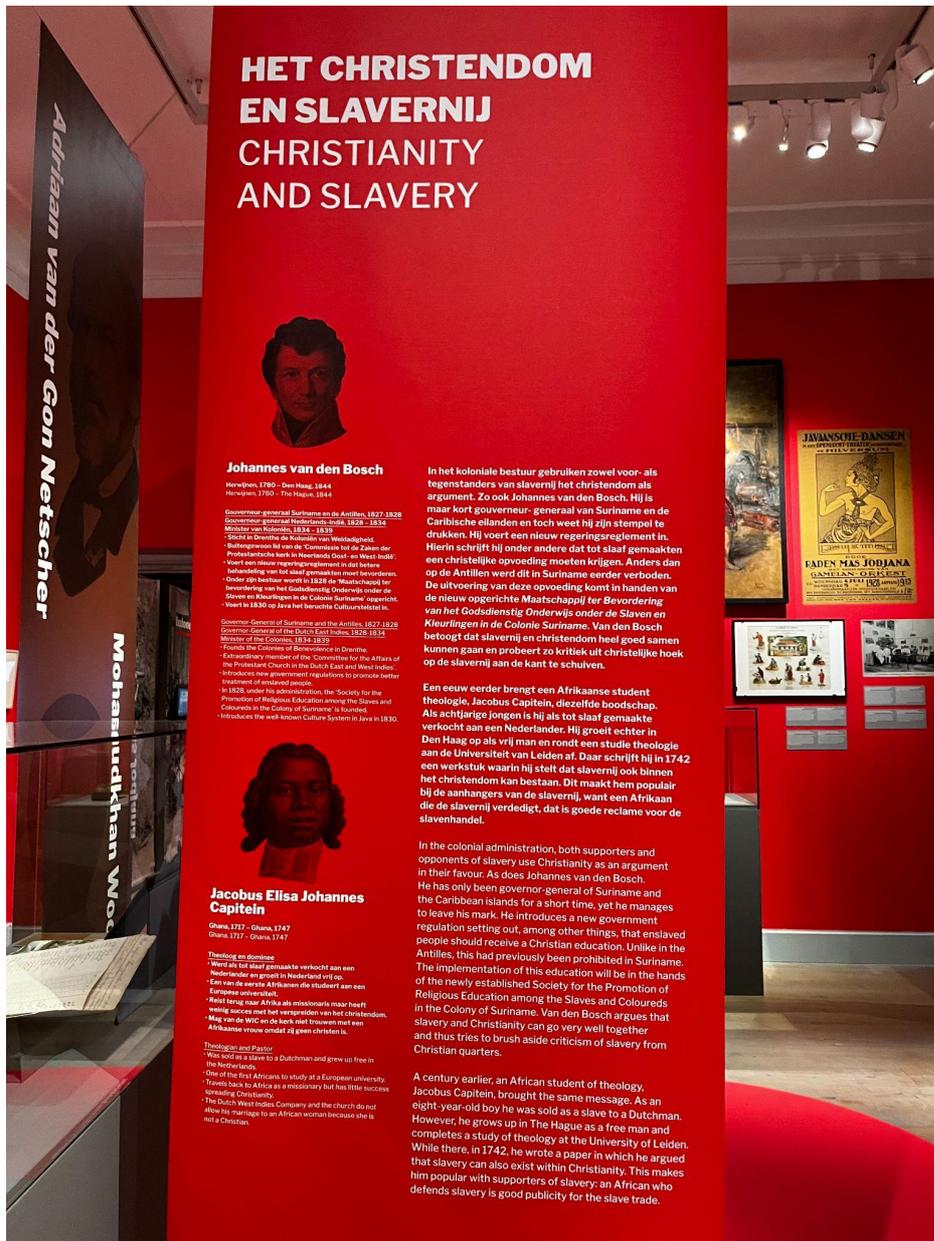


Photo of the Wall Text "Christianity and Slavery" in the Haags Historisch Museum (2023). Photograph.

The exhibition thoroughly explores the struggles for independence in Indonesia. It provides detailed accounts of opposition to independence, including factual statements such as Wilhelmina's

speech and displaying the label texts that clarify resistance leaders such as Sukarno and Hatta, the Independence War, the Declaration of Independence, and the end of the Japanese occupation. The exhibition also delves into the Netherlands' actions during its first and second offences, particularly highlighted in the 5th Hall of Migration. It also addresses the Treaty's transfer of sovereignty.

Transfer of Sovereignty to Indonesia with Mohammad Hatta, Queen Juliana and Willem Drees, 1949, National Archives Collection The Hague

On 17 December 1949, the time finally arrives: sovereignty is officially transferred to Indonesia. Those involved sign the deed of transfer at the Royal Palace in Amsterdam. At the same time, President Sukarno signs it in Jakarta, Indonesia (Haags Historisch Museum).

The museum offers a comprehensive examination of Suriname's independence, mirroring the depth of coverage given to Indonesian independence. The exhibition delves into the emergence of political consciousness and nationalism in Suriname. It provides detailed insights into the historical period, the Netherlands' role, and key figures, like Anton Kom, who played a significant part in these developments, linking his actions to events described in his book. The book served as a form of resistance against the colonial system, subsequently fuelling the resistance movements of the 1930s. Chapter 2 outlines the Dutch efforts to relinquish their control over Suriname, a theme effectively portrayed in the accompanying wall text.

Suriname

Even after 1954, the desire for complete independence persists in Suriname. However, there is extensive disagreement within the country as to how and when this should happen. When it takes office in 1974, the Arron government states that Suriname wanted to be independent from the Netherlands before 1976. The Netherlands is willing to cooperate; they want to end a relationship that is now mainly seen as a burden in their own country. The parliament agrees and on 25 November 1975 Suriname is officially an independent country, after more than three hundred years of Dutch rule (Haags Historisch Museum).

The "Migration/Decolonisation" hall thoroughly examines Indonesian migration, providing individual discussions on each country involved. The exhibition extensively details the migration wave of the postcolonial era in the Netherlands through written descriptions.

Migration

Connected to decolonisation, extensive migrations from the former colonies to the Netherlands take place. People leave because they are unsure about their safety or about the political and economic prospects of the new republics of Indonesia and Suriname. These are often difficult and even painful choices, as people usually feel strongly connected to their country of birth. Despite this, in the period 1945-1965 more than 300,000 people from Indonesia came to the Netherlands. Between 1974 and 1980, more than 200,000 Surinamese settle in the Netherlands, about a third of the entire Surinamese population. Because the Caribbean islands are still part of the Kingdom, the citizens of these islands can still settle freely in the Netherlands. People come to the Netherlands, but also leave for the Caribbean countries. The size of 'the seventh island', the Antillean community in the Netherlands, is now approximately 175,000, while the six islands together have more than 300,000 citizens. Traditionally, many of the people from the former colonies and especially the East Indies settle in The Hague. The city is considered the 'capital' of the Indo-Dutch and Hindustani Netherlands. Today, about 20 percent of

our city's residents are descended from people who experienced and resisted colonial oppression and violence, slavery and indentured labour (Haags Historisch Museum).

The hall does not delve much into the process of finding identity within Dutch society; instead, it primarily addresses housing challenges and aspects of integration, albeit not extensively. Regarding integration, the focus lies on the Indonesian community's initiatives in organising events like conventions for themselves. Additionally, the exhibition delves into the housing challenge resulting from the immigration wave between 1975 and 1980. living conditions, and identity crises experienced by migrants. The exhibition extensively covers Suriname's migration experience in the "Migration/Decolonisation" hall, addressing challenges faced when migrating to the Netherlands, including the housing crisis, as outlined in Chapter Two.

Protest against the poor housing of Surinamese, Rob Bogaerts, 15 June 1977, Anefo Photo Collection, National Archives The Hague

The Dutch government introduces a settlement and dispersal policy. Surinamese people are not allowed to settle in many cities and neighbourhoods. Although the Surinamese are officially Dutch citizens, they do not have the same rights as citizens residing in the Netherlands. As a result, they often live in overcrowded boarding houses or squat houses (Haags Historisch Museum).

The exhibition provides limited information about the Second World War instead of emphasising post-colonialism and wars linked to colonialism, illustrating their interconnectedness.

Public apologies are a significant focus of the exhibition, particularly in the context of migration. It delves into the apologies issued, such as those in 2022, including King Willem-Alexander's apology on behalf of the Dutch government. Additionally, the exhibition highlights 2023 as the year of commemoration for the abolition of slavery, marking 150 years since its abolition.

King Willem-Alexander and Queen Máxima are welcomed at the presidential palace in Bogor by President Joko Widodo and his wife Iriana during the state visit during which apologies are offered, Frank van Beck, 10 March 2020, Collection ANP

Research carried out in recent decades has concluded that the Netherlands acted especially violently and was guilty of war crimes during the war of independence. In 2020, King Willem-Alexander officially apologises for this violence. After another large-scale investigation, official apologies to Indonesia on behalf of Prime Minister Rutte follow in February 2022 (Haags Historisch Museum).

Noticeably, the mise-en-scène of this hall changes from the traditional display into a more modern form, which is fitting for the timeframe. Instead of displaying objects traditionally, it primarily uses written narratives complemented by multimedia elements that display different pictures, newspaper articles and footage of events and interviews. The walls are printed with giant pictures of events that fit the narrative. Every picture on the wall is presented in black and white. Nonetheless, the wall image corresponding to the text "The exception: West Papua (Dutch New

Guinea)" is showcased in colour, indicating its contemporary relevance and the fact that some of the depicted events occurred relatively recently.



Bink, M. (n.d.). Studio Wendy Rommers. photograph, The Hague. Retrieved January 18, 2024, from <https://wendyrommers.nl/haags-historisch-museum-koloniaal-den-haag/>.

The sixth hall, "A History for Today", shows the objects and narratives of the people of the Hague who were invited to collaborate on the exhibition, which gives a new insight into representation. These residents and foundations contribute stories and objects that represent the experiences of The Hague's residents, which are showcased in the exhibition.

It allows visitors to map their narratives onto the historical context, creating a negotiated reading that can validate or contest the museum's portrayal of history. This method of emotional engagement helps visitors connect with the material on a personal level, enhancing the overall impact of the exhibition (Bagnall, 2003, pp. 89-93). The Haags Historisch Museum's approach to commemoration includes using personal stories and testimonies to provide a more nuanced understanding of the Indonesian and Surinamese communities' experiences. This method helps to bridge the gap between official historical narratives and personal memories, fostering a more comprehensive representation of the past (Balkenhol, 2023), as discussed in paragraph 2.1.3 Mapping Memories: Navigating Emotional Landscapes in Museum Narratives.

The hall consists of several personal objects from the residents accompanied by scripts and a picture of each resident that tell the interrelation between the resident and the object. These objects

vary from furniture, jewellery, and musical instruments to self-made contemporary art. Some of the residents are shown with their objects through multimedia screens. Moreover, within the hall, there are videos featuring interviews with participants discussing their perspectives on the interconnection between colonialism and contemporary life. This connection is explored through various facets, such as food, language, and identity. The interviews pose a question about the significance of their colonial cultural heritage and inquire about what aspects of this heritage they wish to safeguard. The mise-en-scène of this hall diverges from the others, maintaining the red colour theme but adopting a decidedly more modern appearance. The walls are portrayed in white, featuring an outline of various buildings that represent the city of The Hague. Therefore, the mise-en-scène instantly shows that the theme of this hall revolves around the city and its residents.

Within this hall, a personal item accompanied by a touching story recounts the migration experience of Surinamese individuals, enhancing the narrative's relatability and fostering a more profound connection for visitors.

Frank Kanhai Passport

"History comes to life through walks."

This is the passport with which Frank came to the Netherlands after the independence of Suriname. His mother sold all her jewellery to pay for the trip for herself and her children. She wanted to give them a new future in the Netherlands, which she saw as her country. "People don't just leave their homes. I prefer to look at the person behind a situation. People need a good reason to flee. That is why I think it is important to talk about the colonial and slavery history during the city walks that I organise in The Hague. By sharing these stories, I believe you also get to know each other better" (Haags Historisch Museum).

In terms of memory realisation and commemoration within the narrative, particularly in the last hall featuring participation from The Hague residents, objects are accompanied by narratives formed from memories. Visitors may recognise each object through their own personal memories, fostering a sense of representation and connection with the exhibition itself through this shared experience of memory. The exhibition discusses commemoration by marking 2023 as the year of commemoration for the abolition of enslavement. In the final hall titled "A History for Today," label texts describe commemorative moments relevant to decolonisation and colonialism. The chronological order of the dates engages visitors, culminating in a thought-provoking question at the end.

Commemorative moments

January 10: Liberation Day of the Indigenous Peoples

April 25: Commemoration of declaration of Republik Maluku Selatan

June 5: Commemoration of Hindustani Immigration

July 1: Ketu Koti, the abolition of slavery

August 9: Commemoration of Javanese Immigration, Day of the Indigenous Peoples

August 15: Commemoration of the end of World War II in Asia

August 17: Commemoration of the uprising on Curaçao led by Tula

August 17: Independence Day Indonesia
October 10: Day of the Maroons
October 20: Chinese Immigration
November 25: Strefidensi Dey
December 1: Commemoration Day of the Morning Star
When do you commemorate and celebrate? (Haags Historisch Museum).

The exhibition delves into the ongoing recognition of colonialism, including Dutch colonisation and enslavement, exploring why many individuals maintain a connection to colonial history and how different people understand and acknowledge this connection. This theme is particularly explored in the lifestyle section of the "History of Today" hall. Recognition plays a crucial role in acknowledging these historical narratives. Thus, the exhibition also addresses how these events are commemorated and their significance for people, as outlined in this thematic label text.

STORIES ABOUT LIFE

Throughout each year, events from colonial and slavery history are commemorated in The Hague. During these moments, descendants and relatives commemorate the suffering and resistance of ancestors and celebrate freedom.

These commemorations are constantly evolving: different speakers share, rituals change, monuments arise or disappear. New generations demand a voice.

For many people, remembering alone is not enough. Education is important, too. That is why many are committed to researching, collecting, recording, presenting and teaching this history: in books, walks, documentaries and theatre plays, for example. This creates awareness about the consequences of this past. It also contributes to the healing of intergenerational trauma and to breaking through inequality of opportunity and institutional racism (Haags Historisch Museum).



Bink, M. (n.d.). Studio Wendy Rommers. photograph, The Hague. Retrieved January 18, 2024, from <https://wendyrommers.nl/haags-historisch-museum-koloniaal-den-haag/>.

The museum's commitment to inclusivity is powerfully demonstrated through its use of inclusive language. This is exemplified by the interviews with curators, who discuss the impactful 'Words Matter' booklet published by Wereld Museum Amsterdam. The museum's adherence to the guidelines set out in this publication in their representation of marginalised groups is a clear testament to their commitment to inclusivity.

Engaging in societal debates on colonialism and collaborating with marginalised and stakeholder groups to determine what should be represented in the exhibition underscores the museum's commitment to inclusivity, as discussed in 2.1.2 The Rise of Museum Ethics.

Before creating the exhibition, extensive fieldwork involved consulting with these groups and experts to select objects worthy of inclusion, fostering inclusivity. Additionally, the museum facilitated presentations by the curator, providing insight into the exhibition's creation process and ideology. Attendees had the opportunity to pose critical questions and engage in discussions with the curator during and after the presentation, showcasing the museum's transparency and commitment to visitor engagement. Visitors were also encouraged to provide feedback in a guest book at the end of the exhibition, further enhancing the museum's social engagement and transparency.

While the exhibition primarily features objects borrowed from The Hague residents or other

museums, it does not provide insight into the representation approach of the museum's standard collection. Nonetheless, the selection of objects for this exhibition reflects the curators' approach. Notably, the exhibition's impact extends beyond traditional museum-goers, attracting visitors interested not only in The Hague but also in exploring themes of colonialism and the representation of marginalised groups.

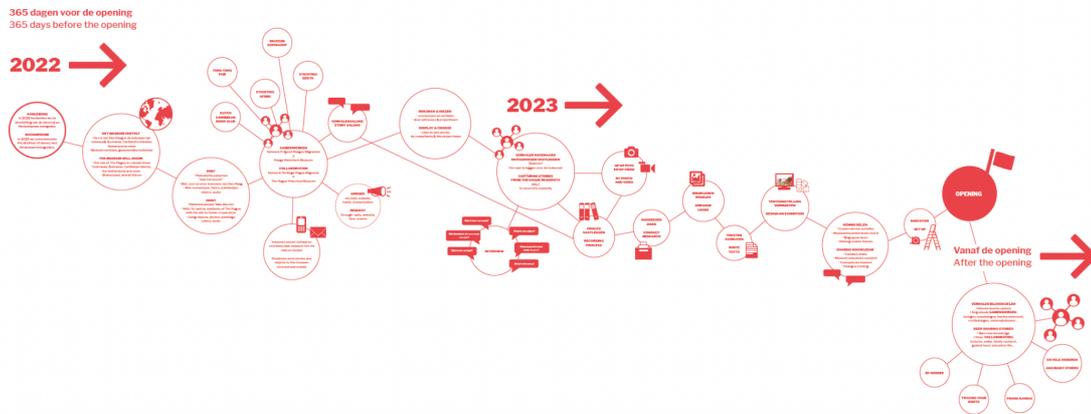
Regarding the public, at Haags Historisch Museum, there are many activities and interactions for visitors, such as lectures by the curator where visitors can participate in a discussion directly with the museum and get a deeper look at the exhibition. As well as city walks that continue the exhibition's theme and bring it down to the streets of The Hague to show the visitor the connection between the city and colonialism. As part of the exhibition, visitors can actively participate by sharing their thoughts on decolonisation in a guest book. Furthermore, what is interesting is that when the timeline of the exhibition ends, it allows visitors to write down their ideas of connecting the past of colonialism to the present and hang them on the wall using ribbons, thereby contributing to the enhancement of the future through the interactive art piece "The Past Influences the Present" found in the sixth hall.



Photo of the interactive art piece “the past influences the present.” in the Hague Historical Museum (2023). photograph.

Upon exiting the exhibition, visitors encounter a figure providing insights into the creation of the exhibition (Haags Historisch Museum, 2023), accompanied by an interactive medium showcasing the exhibition's development through film. This film includes interviews with participants who explain their motivations for participating and articulate the significance of their involvement. It also emphasises the process of collecting all the objects and what aspects and demands are considered when selecting the objects for the exhibition. Furthermore, it accentuates personal narratives and their link to colonial history during the collection of objects.

CO-CREATIE MET DE STAD | COCREATION WITH THE CITY



Haags Historisch Museum. (2023). *Co-creation with the city*.

According to the curator's opinion, the intention behind the exhibition can be ascertained from the interview conducted with the curator of the Haags Historisch Museum. The curator has a background in academic history, which can be observed from the historical perspective of the exhibition. The exhibition is structured into two sections, encompassing historical and contemporary perspectives around the city of The Hague and its role in colonialism. The content is derived from research published on the involvement of civil servants in The Hague in colonialism, drawing from the municipal archives and their colonial connections.

“(.) but the historical museum of The Hague naturally has quite a unique position because we tell the story of the city, but that is also the city of government. So, we tell both a uh local and a national story and that makes it quite uh yes, special I think” (Interview curator Haags Historisch Museum).

Its particular emphasis lies on the colonial history of Indonesia, Suriname, and the Caribbean islands, as they possess the most extensive and enduring colonisation experience, extending into the 20th century in contrast to other colonised regions.

“(...) we have therefore chosen to focus on those other - on those three areas eh. Because um they were indeed colonial areas until the 20th century. So actually, having the most recent shared history with the Netherlands in that regard. And also, because you are in a temporary exhibition, unfortunately you have to make hard choices” (Interview curator Haags Historisch Museum).

The exhibition fosters historical awareness and knowledge by presenting a comprehensive history that includes the forgotten narrative of the oppressed. In doing so, the exhibition can emphasise a multi-layered perspective of the colonial administrative system and narrate the story of resistance and resilience. The main goal within this perspective is to create an intermix between an academic historical and a personal narrative within the script.

“I think a multi-perspective approach to your collection is also very important. And it's not just about breaking through a collection item. With what words you hang on to it, what the real background of the piece is, there research to do. Eh, but it is also about active viewing, for example, which stories my collection does not yet tell. So, what kind of objects should we have in the collection that don't tell us now. Ehm because such a collection is indeed formed from a certain perspective um, but it goes further than that. It's not just that you look at that current collection from a kind of decolonial lens, but it's also about your own flaws, so what does that mean that we have a certain collection and that we don't have some pieces? I think that is also very important” (Interview curator Haags Historisch Museum).

The methods employed in creating this exhibition incorporated the ongoing discourse on colonisations within museums, along with the utilisation of postcolonial theories and the aforementioned prior research. This is evident in carefully curating objects, including selecting personal objects that can be interlinked with colonialism.

Furthermore, the choice of narratives encompasses personal experiences and the perspective of the oppressed while simultaneously showing the viewpoint of the coloniser, all presented with a more objective and decolonial lens. By including the personal narrative within the exhibition, the museum engages in a form of self-reflection, acknowledging the underrepresentation of individuals connected to (post)colonialism within its academic discipline and collection. Gathering personal narratives involves the participation of diverse groups and plays a role in shaping future perspectives on decolonisation. Additionally, it fosters social cohesion by highlighting collaborative narratives from a diverse range of population groups, thereby promoting inclusivity. In this way, the museum successfully breaks away from the traditional pattern by presenting a more comprehensive narrative through community engagement. This involvement includes working with experts and collaborating with foundations like Eekta, Afimo, and Tonton Fair. The community was actively consulted to understand their expectations for the exhibition and what aspects should be represented.

“(…) we tell the story of the city of The Hague and that is also of everyone who feels connected to it whether they live there or not. (...) How to organise things like this so that people also feel that the museum actually represents their story or can also contribute to it (...) so we organised different story zones.(...) with those different ones, for example with the Eekta foundation, Afimo, TonTon Fair and with those story zones, we talked to those different foundations, (...) we want to make this exhibition. What do you expect from that. What would you like to see in it? What really needs to come back? And then as follow-up questions, we also asked

them more broadly (..) Are there objects or stories and for your family that are linked and to an object that we would be allowed to show. Which we can accommodate that way (..)" (Interview curator Haags Historisch Museum).

Additionally, there are challenges as the museum's collection lacks colonial or personal objects that can interrelate with the narrative of the oppressed. To address this gap, the museum seeks to overcome it by borrowing objects from other museums or using the script to make visitors aware of the absence of certain objects. In this way, the museum can break through the ideology of colonial structures since, traditionally, most items found in museums were originally donated or collected by the colonisers themselves. The curator argues that this imparts a colonial perspective to the objects.

"So indeed, that the collection should actually be decolonised, and with that the stories it tells. Ehm that you bring more perspective to that, and I think that is very important, but I also think that it goes further than just collection. (...) decolonisation is also very much about (..) showing and discussing how colonisation (...) structures that date back to the colonial era actually or certain ideas, how that still exists today work through. (..) it is a very essential part of society, and I think (...) we also have a very important role to play in that as well. showing those kinds of structures, so that it's a little bigger than just collection. (...) The historical part is very much built up with museum collection pieces. But in general, those collections are quite limited, because they do indeed mainly tell the story of the coloniser. And if you're talking about objects that tell a different side or perspective on that story, they are often just not well represented in museum collections. (..) we also look at (...). (...) How can you tell that uh multi-perspective. No, but also which means that we do have this object and other stories are not in the collection and what could we do about it?" (Interview curator Haags Historisch Museum).

Moreover, given the museum's current awareness and commitment to decolonisation, the institution must adhere to behavioural guidelines outlined by organisations like ICOFOM and "Netwerkmuseum beken kleur." These guidelines underscore the importance of museums incorporating multiple perspectives into their narratives. Additionally, the museum is encouraged to participate in anti-racism courses to promote inclusion.

Furthermore, a greater emphasis is placed on identifying what is absent in the collection and exploring ways to narrate the story of the oppressed through themes of empowerment, resilience, and resistance. This contrasts with the stigmatised colonial discourse that tends to glorify the colonial past while simultaneously presenting a victimised image of its oppressors. Therefore, incorporating personal narratives contributes to dispelling the flawed image people have of colonialism. Another form of tackling the issue of the colonised flawed image is curating what images and objects are shown interrelating to these individuals. Additionally, attention is paid to the "inclusive language use", aligning with the guidelines set forth by the Foundation of the National Museum of World Cultures, as outlined in its booklet "Words Matter."

“(..) we are very conscious about that. Which images do you use, which language do you use, and what does that tell you? Because there are indeed certain clichéd images that you just always see coming back, so the same as when it comes to Indonesia, that you very often talk about "tempo doeloe" or those idealistic ehm palm tree paintings ehm, but you don't want to always. You don't want to keep repeating those existing narratives. You also want to break through that and also question it. And we do that internally, of course we have done that” (Interview curator Haags Historisch Museum).

Nevertheless, there are limitations in developing the exhibition. As it is a contemporary exhibition, various limitations exist in selecting objects, including considerations such as lease duration. Choosing personal narratives also poses challenges due to the abundance of options and the space constraints for presenting these stories. To curate personal narratives aligned with the exhibition's theme, a team of experts was enlisted to make a focused selection.

Discussions surrounding the exhibition theme of colonialism and decolonisation reveal that numerous museums have curated exhibitions exploring this theme in 2023. Conversations with the curator of The Hague Historical Museum asserted that the museum could now undertake an exhibition on the theme of colonialism due to shifts in societal norms.

“I think the general trend there is erm are a lot of erm people who have been working very hard for decades for more awareness about the colonial past and its impact. And, above all, more recognition for it. And um I think that finally, with a larger audience I think there is more time for it, more mature to be open to it. And that many years of lobbying by many people has finally paid off, so to speak” (Interview curator Haags Historisch Museum).

External factors such as lobbying and commemorations, exemplified by Rutte's apology and the commemoration of the abolition of slavery and colonialism in 2023, play a crucial role in advancing these efforts, as can be seen in the label text of the Haags Historisch Museum.

WHAT IS OUR FOCUS IN 2023?

In 2023, we are focusing on the Dutch slavery history. Slavery was officially abolished in Suriname and the Caribbean islands in 1863; it had been abolished three years earlier in the Dutch East Indies. However, actual abolition took place later. In Suriname, many of the enslaved are forced to continue to work for another decade, until 1873. As such, in 2023 it will be 150 years since slavery ended. 1873 is also the year in which the first Hindustani indentured labourers were brought to Suriname to take over the work on the plantations under difficult conditions. Later, Javanese people were also brought to Suriname for this work. In 2023, these events are remembered throughout the Netherlands. To remember, discuss and celebrate (Haags Historisch Museum).

The museum is now positioned to play a role in this dialogue, given its position to present a more comprehensive narrative and perspective that can contribute to the public understanding and discussion of colonialism. It also aims to acknowledge the community and engage a broader audience. By taking this approach, particularly by including personal narratives from residents of The Hague that provide proper representation and acknowledgement to minorities, the museum observes a shift in the demographic of new visitors attracted to the exhibition. Hence, the exhibition has a direct impact, not only in terms of visitor engagement but also in the positive feedback it has garnered from various stakeholders and collaborative partners.

“We want to encourage, so we want to spread knowledge among people. That is of course extremely important, but we also want to highlight that story from many sides, so that reflection is actually possible. So that you may understand yourself or your position within society better and that you can place discussions, eh, that are going on, eh, topics that are going on, um, better” (Interview curator Haags Historisch Museum).

Sophiahof Museum's "Ons Land: Dekolonisatie, generaties, verhalen"

The "Ons Land: Dekolonisatie, generaties, verhalen" exhibition at Museum Sophiahof delves deeply into the history of Dutch colonialism in Southeast Asia and its lasting effects. The exhibition offers a platform for individuals and their descendants who have had similar experiences to share their personal stories through the narratives of eight families. These diverse and individual stories deeply resonate with visitors, illuminating the intricate nature of postcolonial history and its various interpretations. It emphasises that Dutch colonial history is far from being a neutral subject, and the narrative it presents is an ongoing and evolving endeavour. The exhibition's primary objective is to spark dialogues, actively involving visitors to contribute to the ongoing process of decolonisation and its comprehension. "Ons Land" is dedicated to establishing an inclusive and accessible presentation, recognising the potential emotional impact of the personal content and images on display and committed to respecting the feelings of all individuals involved (ONS LAND, Wall Text, Museum Sophiahof).

The Sophiahof Museum emphasises the experiences of the Indonesian diaspora, involving these communities in curating exhibitions. This participatory approach not only enhances the authenticity of the exhibitions but also empowers the communities by giving them a voice in the narrative construction. This method aligns with postcolonial theory's emphasis on inclusivity and representation (Ashcroft et al., 1998), as discussed in paragraph 2.2.1 Unveiling Layers: Postcolonial Theory's Role in Decolonising Institutions and Challenging Eurocentrism.

The Sophiahof Museum's focus on the Indonesian archipelago can be explained since the Sophiahof Museum is a museum that was created for and by the Eurasian and Indonesian populations

that have migrated to the Netherlands. The Sophiahof Museum is a museum that opened recently and mostly gave a personal perspective. It focuses on personal memories, colonialism, and colonialism by telling the storyline through actual stories represented by eight families that appeal to a majority through recognisable stories and the general history that is told.

Furthermore, it highlights the traumatic experiences of Indonesian repatriates and the challenges they faced integrating into Dutch society. This recognition of their history and struggles is essential for fostering a sense of belonging and equality. The museum's exhibitions contribute to the process of transformative justice by systematically addressing historical injustices and empowering marginalised groups. By creating a space where these stories are told and acknowledged, the museum helps reshape power dynamics and promote social justice (Immler, 2023), as discussed in paragraph 2.1.2, Navigating Power Dynamics: The Role of Recognition in Promoting Equality and Justice.

The exhibition follows a chronological storyline, starting in the present and then delving into the colonial past before returning to reflections on the contemporary context. The visitor is led through the exhibition through an audio tour. With this, the scripted audio represents a new use of technology that enables a complete view of the object and the intended representation behind it. Hence, the technology enables the audience to hear the storyteller's voice, symbolising personalised stories. As a result, personal stories carry the exhibition, while the objects contribute in favour of the storyline told to the audience by the audio tour. Therefore, the objects contain almost no written script; the written script that can most easily be found is the interactive media and wall texts. Since the written script is in Dutch, it limits accessibility for international visitors.

The exhibition thoroughly addresses the Euro-Indonesian community and the colonial and postcolonial periods of the Dutch Indies by highlighting the community's struggles and raising awareness among visitors. It fosters a more nuanced understanding of the colonial impact by showcasing personal stories and lesser-known aspects of colonial history. This approach underscores the ethical obligation to maintain transparency and societal trust, ensuring that diverse cultures are accurately represented and understood (Besterman, 2006), as discussed in paragraph 2.1.2 The Rise of Museum Ethics.

The Sophiahof Museum's exhibition emphasises the identity politics surrounding the integration of postcolonial migrants. The museum focuses on the Indo-European community's efforts to preserve their cultural heritage while integrating into Dutch society. The museum explores the narrative of invisibility imposed by the Dutch assimilation policies and the long-term impacts on the community's identity and heritage, as discussed in paragraph 2.2.2 The Indo-European Diaspora: Challenges of Identity, Migration, and Integration.

Furthermore, Identity Politics Theory is used to showcase the collective identity of the Indo-European community. The museum, created by and for the Indo-European community and those interested in it, fosters a sense of belonging. The museum provides diverse interpretations that

challenge traditional narratives by focusing on autobiographical documents and personal testimonies, ensuring that the emotional mapping of visitors aligns with the lived experiences of those represented in the exhibitions. This approach acknowledges the subjective nature of memory and the importance of including marginalised voices in the historical discourse (Beier-de-Haan, 2006, p. 187). The Sophiahof Museum emphasises the importance of oral history in preserving collective memory. By engaging with the oral traditions of the Indonesian community, the museum provides a platform for marginalised voices. This approach challenges the Eurocentric perspective often found in traditional museum exhibitions (Ashcroft et al., 1998), as discussed in paragraph 2.1.3 Mapping Memories: Navigating Emotional Landscapes in Museum Narratives.

The museum provides diverse interpretations that challenge traditional narratives by focusing on autobiographical documents and personal testimonies, ensuring that the emotional mapping of visitors aligns with the lived experiences of those represented in the exhibitions. This approach acknowledges the subjective nature of memory and the importance of including marginalised voices in the historical discourse (Beier-de-Haan, 2006, p. 187). The Sophiahof Museum emphasises the importance of oral history in preserving collective memory. By engaging with the oral traditions of the Indonesian community, the museum provides a platform for marginalised voices. This approach challenges the Eurocentric perspective often found in traditional museum exhibitions (Ashcroft et al., 1998), as discussed in paragraph 2.1.3 Mapping Memories: Navigating Emotional Landscapes in Museum Narratives.

Additionally, the exhibition challenges societal discourse by extensively discussing the Indo-European struggles and their clashes within Dutch society. Through commemoration, the exhibition demonstrates that there has been some recognition and awareness in the Netherlands regarding the struggles of postcolonial immigrants. However, it is notable that none of the labels within the exhibition mention a public apology.

Upon entering the museum, the introductory wall text explicitly conveys the enduring consequences of the colonial past. It elucidates the need for awareness and recognition of colonialism's interconnectedness with the Dutch Indies and Indo-European communities.

Wall Text Our Land, and What Now?

The past is an almost inexhaustible source of inspiration for them. Old pain is converted into new energy, which shows the emancipation of different 'communities' and initiates a dialogue. The conversation about (de)colonization is difficult. Dormant racism continues to painfully rear its ugly head. That is precisely why it is important to continue to have this conversation.



Photo of the first hall "Caleidoscopisch Nederland" in the Sophiahof Museum (2023). photograph.

In the first hall, "Caleidoscopisch Nederland" (Kaleidoscopic Netherlands) presents the visitor with a room with a graphic design of tiny humans embodied on mirrored walls. These may represent the enormous number of people that can be linked or involved in the colonial heritage presented in the exhibition in the literal embodiment of a kaleidoscope, as the title of the first hall suggests. The room is accompanied by several multimedia screens depicting different images related to the topic and the names of exhibition visitors.

Moreover, the wall text in the first hall expands upon the significance of the past, emphasising the continued relevance and interconnectedness of much of the Dutch population and society with the colonial past. This underscores the critical need for recognition, awareness, and amplification of the

voices of the Indo-European community, which can be seen as a form of advocacy related to colonialism.

KALEIDOSCOPIIC NETHERLANDS

Many Dutch people are directly or indirectly connected to the Dutch East Indies, each with their own and unique (family) history. These diverse stories give color to the Netherlands today. Our country is like a kaleidoscope: through which the colonial past shines through everywhere, in Indonesia, Suriname and the Caribbean Netherlands. How you see this depends on your perspective.

The consequences of 350 years of colonialism in the Indonesian archipelago are noticeable in many areas; cultural, social, economic, political, social. Sometimes this is clear, sometimes not. There are many sides to the story, often with sharp edges. Tensions from the past still play a role, and emotions can run high. There is anger, sadness and misunderstanding, but also pride, joy and brotherhood (Sophiahof Museum).

The museum facilitates the display of personal objects alongside personal narratives, crafting thematic and general scripts around these elements. By primarily relying on unaltered personal narratives derived from primary interviews, the museum upholds its commitment to ethnic standards and avoids manipulating the showcased narratives. Additionally, the museum demonstrates inclusivity by actively engaging visitors and encouraging them to connect with the topic, as exemplified by the following audio fragment.

Audio KALEIDOSCOPIIC NETHERLANDS

There may be many reasons why you came to Museum Sophiahof today. Maybe you have family that has roots in the former Dutch East Indies. Maybe you have your roots there, or good friends of yours. Or maybe you're just interested, even though you still think it doesn't concern you personally. Whatever your reasons, it's nice to have you here. Because it actually concerns us all (Sophiahof Museum).

The second hall, "Gedwongen Ontmoeting" (Forced Encounter), features a large wall map of the Netherlands, illustrating the distribution of migrants and the number of families that migrated to each province. The wall text accompanies scripts, providing in-depth insights into the migration system. Across from it, another wall features the big title "Golven van Aankomst" (the waves of arrival), which showcases a chronological representation of different waves of arrival, depicting the ethnicities of migrants and detailing how they were treated regarding equality, the housing provided, and the integration measures they had to undergo.



Photo of the table of the “waves of arrival” in the Sophiahof Muuseum (2023). Photograph

The hall's centre displays a collection of four distinct architectural styles of Dutch houses. The famous "Zaanse Huisje" showcases green wooden architecture, representing one of the

Netherlands' famous heritage sites. The other side shows the dominant architectural style in many 16th-century buildings, resembling the canal houses in Amsterdam. Another side resembles a hotel, while the last mirrors a typical flat house. Multimedia screens within the upper windows of the houses display video interviews of the integration of the families upon their arrival in the Netherlands. While explaining the difficulties they faced regarding cultural differences, their marginalised position within society and the sacrifices made leaving behind their lives in Indonesia, while discussing how their wartime experiences were disregarded or overlooked by Dutch society. Meanwhile, the lower-level windows showcase objects that accompany these stories.



Photo of the second hall “Gedwongen

Ontmoeting” in the Sophiahof Museum (2023). photograph.

Furthermore, multimedia elements allow visitors to interact with the exhibition by clicking on the waves of immigration and departure, providing access to more in-depth information on migration. The text displayed within the multimedia below demonstrates this interactive feature.



Photo of the Interactive Multimedia "Six Waves of Departure" in the Sophiahof Museum (2023). Photograph.

The audio fragment below contributes to the discussion by exploring the causes of migration resulting from Indonesia's independence and its subsequent consequences.

Audiofragment forced encounter

The transfer of sovereignty in 1949, and all the conflict situations surrounding it, will eventually make the crossing permanent for many. Many Moluccans wait long after their arrival in the Netherlands until they can return to their home country. But that won't happen either. People are cared for by relatives or housed in so-called residential areas: workers' camps, barracks, monasteries and country houses. But also the former concentration camps Westerbork and Vught. For many Indian Dutch people, it is their first introduction to a country that turns out to be very different from what they expected. Others are reunited with long-missed family and friends, but discover how five years of German occupation have changed them. There is mutual misunderstanding - everyone has been affected by war and violence, there and here. The suffering of the other is often not seen. It's also difficult to make room for other people's pain when you're still overwhelmed by your own. These people have their say in this room. You can meet them here, in their home of arrival (Sophiahof Museum).

The museum addresses Eurocentrism and "Othering", as discussed in 2.1.1 Unveiling Layers: Postcolonial Theory's Role in Decolonising Institutions and Challenging Eurocentrism, by challenging the dominant commemorative memory in Dutch society, which often focuses primarily on the hardships the Netherlands endured during the Second World War. The traumatic experiences of Indo-European postcolonial immigrants have historically been considered less important than those of the Dutch. Within the exhibition, the museum emphasises the perspective of postcolonial immigrants and their descendants, highlighting their experiences of racism and discrimination. The wall text also illustrates how the hierarchy affecting postcolonial immigrants remained intact upon their arrival in

the Netherlands. Additionally, the Euro-Indonesian population is perceived differently from the Dutch population.

FORCED ENCOUNTER

In the colony there was an idealised image of the Netherlands, created and maintained by the colonial rulers. When during the crossing these two worlds collide, there is a predominant feeling of disappointment, doubt and bewilderment by those who arrive. The country and its reception are colder than are colder than what the people imagined. They arrive in a Netherlands that gets back on track after the Second World War and, despite colonial ruling for centuries, not or hardly have any experience with a large amount of people of colour. This leads to incomprehensions and misunderstandings, and it even leads to public racism and discrimination. Moreover, the old colonial hierarchy of ranks and positions has also made the crossing and will continue to determine the relationships within the very diverse group that came to the Netherlands for decades to come. Homesickness and frustration color this time, but underneath there is enormous resilience and a strong will to shape the future ourselves (Sophiahof Museum).

At the third hall, the visitor is introduced to the theme of "De Overtocht" (the crossover). All the objects in the hall are spread through the room and divided by curtains to represent the ocean's waves. This effect is maximised by the sound of waves playing softly within the hall. Each object stands by itself on a glass display between each curtain. Above, it casts black-and-white videos, evoking a dreamy and nostalgic ambience that complements the objects that centre around the memories of the spoken audio of interviews recounting memories of the journey to the Netherlands and life in Indonesia. Hence, the central theme primarily revolves around the outbreak of war and the independence of Indonesia, resulting in waves of migration. Towards the end of the hall, visitors encounter a multimedia interactive screen displaying a chronological timeline from 1945 to 1969, depicting the waves of migration alongside the historical context of the Japanese occupation, Indonesia's independence, sovereignty transfer, and the migration to the Netherlands.



Photo of the object “6 Lucas The” and its presentation in the Sophiahof Museum (2023). photograph.

Some narratives accompanying the objects extensively discuss the wartime period and personal experiences from the Second World War. This is evident in the display of drawings depicting daily camp life embroidered on a piece of cloth. By showcasing this object alongside an interview, the museum employs not only traditional academic history sources but also incorporates oral history and tangible artefacts. Consequently, the museum utilises autobiographical documents and personal testimonies as historical sources, enabling diverse interpretations.

2. Ruud van Liefland:

My mother Nel received this rug from fellow residents of the Japanese camp Poeloe Brayan. It tells the story of daily camp life in embroidered drawings (Sophiahof Museum).

Additionally, the museum's gift shop features tokens representing the August 15 commemoration. While the exhibition itself does not provide extensive information about the annual commemorations of the Second World War and the Pacific War, the accompanying booklet highlights important historical dates related to these events, as shown below.

15 August 1988

Unveiling of the Indo-European Monument in The Hague, erected in memory of all citizens and soldiers who fell victim to the Japanese occupation of the Dutch East Indies (1942-1945) (Sophiahof Museum).

1998-2006

The first Indo-European Remembrance Center opened in 1998 and closed in 2001. The second Indo-European Remembrance Center, the Indisch Huis, opened at the end of 2001 and closed in 2006 (Sophiahof Museum).

The exhibition also illuminates Indonesia's Declaration of Independence, as discussed in 2.2.1 Struggles for Sovereignty: From Dutch Colonialism to National Independence in Indonesia, and its profound impact on families and their personal lives. These aspects are primarily showcased through multimedia presentations, as seen below. Rather than having a dedicated hall, the theme of independence is seamlessly integrated into the entire exhibition, given its pivotal role in the experiences of those who migrated from the Dutch Indies to the Netherlands. Moreover, the exhibition addresses the political actions that transpired after the Netherlands declined to recognise Indonesia's declaration of independence, as depicted in the following fragment.

Multimedia: Six waves of departure: the first wave

On August 15, 1945, Japan capitulated and on August 17, Sukarno and Hatta proclaimed the Republic of Indonesia. British Indian troops arrive in Java in mid-September. They temporarily have military power until the Dutch East Indies government returns. A power vacuum is created. The Republic and other pro-independence groups resisted. The violence that arises is directed against everyone who is connected or is loyal to the Dutch colonial government. But there is also a lot of violence among themselves. This period, which peaked in the autumn of 1945, is called the 'Bersiap' period by the Dutch. Officially there are 3,500 Dutch victims. 16,000 people would later be reported missing. On the Indonesian side are the multiple amount of victims (Sophiahof Museum).



Photo of the fourth hall “Nederlands Indië: Beeld en Tegenbeeld” in the Sophiahof Museum (2023). photograph.

The fourth hall, “Nederlands-Indië: Beeld en Tegenbeeld” (Dutch-Indies: Images and Counternarrative), goes back to the timeframe of colonised Indonesia and the lives that were lived in the colonial society. The hall is relatively small compared to the others and only displays a video installation. The visitor can turn the spotlight on one of the cut-outs in front of the big screen to activate the story behind it, displayed in the form of *wayang*, a classical Indonesian form of shadow puppet theatre. Each cut-out features a distinct personal story from one of the eight families, illustrating their lives and the hardships endured under colonialism in Indonesia.

When exploring the topic of the Dutch Indies under colonial rule, the museum primarily highlights aspects of this history within the Beeld en Tegenlicht hall, where the stories of six different families are discussed before delving into the postcolonial era—however, the majority of the exhibition centres on the postcolonial period and the enduring consequences of colonialism. The colonial period is introduced through an audio fragment. However, the focus remains on personal

perspectives and family histories rather than providing a comprehensive historical explanation of the origins of the Dutch Indies. Notably, the exhibition does not emphasise the Dutch "golden period," a deliberate choice that avoids engaging in colonial discourse.

Audio fragment Dutch-Indies: Image and Counterimage

Life must be lived forward and understood backward. Only if you can look back, see where you come from, then you can also look ahead and see where you want to go.

Here we look further back into the colonial past. How did that system shape the lives of these families? Now we enter the shadow area between narrative and history. Between legend and history. These are living stories. Most never written down, but between generations passed on.

Everything these people have experienced: The oppression and violence, but also the hope and love, the hardships and embraces - It has not only shaped them, but also everyone around them, and everyone who came after them. After all, the past always has an impact on the present. When you're ready, I'll take you to the last room. There we return to the present and look ahead to the future. But first let's look back (Sophiahof Museum).

Postcolonial Theory, as discussed in 2.1.1 Unveiling Layers: Postcolonial Theory's Role in Decolonising Institutions and Challenging Eurocentrism, within the Sophiahof museum can be found through the fact that the museum emphasises the colonialist political, linguistic and cultural ramifications and cultural exchange of the at-that-time called Dutch-Indies and the Netherlands through the explanation of the colonial history through the view of descendants of postcolonial immigrants and their personal stories. Through the personal narrative of the marginalised group within the exhibitions and the highlight of untold stories, the museum tackles colonial discourse. Furthermore, the exhibition emphasises the postcolonial timeframe of mostly the immigration of Indo-European postcolonial immigrants to the Netherlands due to the consequences of colonialism and the results it brings for the postcolonial immigrants and the Dutch society itself. It does not directly critique the colonial legislation of the Netherlands but shows the indifferences and consequences of the Dutch colonial policy.

The label below highlights how the colonial system shapes society and history and its profound consequences. It's crucial to recognise that the experiences of those affected by it are often overlooked in historical literature. Instead, oral history becomes paramount in conveying these untold stories. This postcolonial process, as exemplified by the museum, underscores the importance of oral history in amplifying the voices of the marginalised.

Audio fragment Dutch-Indies: Image and Sound

Here we look back at the colonial history. How did it shape that system shape the lives of these families? Now we are entering the shadow area between narrative and history. Between legends and history. These stories are alive. Most of them never written down, but passed on between generations (Sophiahof Museum).

In terms of commemoration and memorialisation, as discussed in 2.1.3 Mapping Memories: Navigating Emotional Landscapes in Museum Narratives, personal and family memories shape the visitor's narrative, either aligning with or contesting the site's presentation. The authenticity of these emotions enhances the overall performance aspect of the museum experience. Additionally, the exhibit addresses the Japanese Occupation. It highlights the indifference faced by the Indo-European community when they migrated to the Netherlands, particularly concerning the acknowledgement of their war traumas.

Robin Zijlstra Video installation Hall: Image and Counterimage

To be precise: on December 7, 1941. That same night, Japan attacks Pearl Harbor. The next day, a number of countries, including the Netherlands and Japan, declare war. The next day my great-grandfather was mobilized. Three months later the KNIL capitulated.

Only three months, and the oppressor has become the oppressed. My great-grandparents lose everything: their house, their belongings, their freedom. He is employed as a prisoner of war on the Burma-Siam railway. She ends up with three children in a Japanese (internment) camp in Medan. The beautiful life they built together is over (Sophiahof Museum).



Wolzak, T. (n.d.). KDJ. photograph, The Hague. Retrieved January 18, 2024, from <https://kossmanndejong.nl/nl/project/ons-land/>.

The fifth hall, "Ons Land en Nu?" (Our Country and Now?) is the last hall and concludes the exhibition. It delves into the enduring influence of colonialism in Indonesia on contemporary life, exploring its impact across generations of the featured families and their ongoing journey of rediscovering and interpreting their colonial history. The wall text is presented on a mirror, allowing visitors to see their reflections and remain aware of the present moment. This approach also integrates the visitor into the exhibit, as the entire hall showcases personal family photographs of the narrated families. Additionally, each family is represented by individual multimedia screens displaying videos of their descendants, offering insights into their family origins and their ongoing connection to them.

The museum's commitment to museum ethics and museology is evident in its dedication to social inclusion, actively engaging and acknowledging the needs of the Indo-European community. This commitment is further demonstrated by the feedback requested from visitors at the end of their museum experience.

Our Land, and What Now? Audio tour

We are also curious about you, about you. In the next room you can let us know how you experienced the exhibition. And by answering a few questions, you can become part of it yourself. Your contribution will make the story of decolonization and its processing richer (Sophiahof Museum).

Moreover, amidst the debate, the museum delves into a significant theme of colonialism and its ramifications, particularly concerning the Indo-European community. By doing so, it not only acknowledges the Indo-European community as crucial stakeholders but also highlights their unique role in the museum's organisation. The museum, organised by and for the Indo-European community, is also subsidised by the government, reflecting the government's recognition and commitment to decolonisation regarding the colonial history of the Dutch Indies and the Indo-European community.

Stakeholders play a pivotal role here, as their narratives and personal objects form the foundation of the exhibition. Unlike traditional museums with their own collections, this exhibition relies on personal belongings provided by the families, supplemented with multimedia elements such as interviews and historical images. Thus, in this context, it cannot be categorised as a conventional collection-based museum.



Photo of the fifth hall "Ons land en nu?" in the Sophiahof Museum (2023). photograph.

When observing the involvement of the museums with the audience, the Sophiahof Museum is involved with the visitor. At the end of the exhibition, the museum offers visitors a survey, which is immediately made clear through the big letters "Mogen wij u nog wat vragen? (Can we still ask you a question?). The mise-en-scène of the room reflects the same appearance as the first hall, "Kaleidoscopic Netherlands", with the same graphic design of tiny humans embodied on mirrored walls. The survey is made interactive through multimedia and consists mostly of multiple-choice questions. The survey inquires about the visitor's descendants, gender, and age, including a distinct question addressing whether the visitor possesses Indo-Dutch heritage. There were also questions regarding the exhibition, such as which family story the visitor related to the most. Additionally, participants can include their names in the exhibition, with the chosen names displayed on a screen upon entry. A guest book is also available at the reception, allowing visitors to share their experiences.



Wolzak, T. (n.d.). KDJ. photograph, The Hague. Retrieved January 18, 2024, from <https://kossmanndejong.nl/nl/project/ons-land/>.

Exploring Museum Perspectives: Comparative Analysis of Dutch Museums and their Decolonisation Effort

While all three museums incorporate multiple perspectives into their exhibitions, Wereldmuseum Amsterdam stands out for its critical perspective. The museum's colonial origins can explain this. Its critical approach serves as a reflection of the museum's self-awareness. It effectively demonstrates that the museum is evolving in its process of decolonisation, changing past actions and ideologies.

Both the Hague Historical Museum and the Sophiahof Museum provide booklets containing information about the exhibition. This approach enables visitors to revisit some of the content presented in the exhibition, potentially enhancing the exhibition's impact on the visitor. At the time of visitation in Wereldmuseum Amsterdam, the museum did not have something similar.

Regarding the scale of the exhibitions, Wereldmuseum Amsterdam has the most extensive exhibition, ranging from eight halls filled with curated objects and displays. This can be explained by the museum's enormous collection and the ability to curate and display objects from shared depots with other museums under the Foundation of the National Museum of World Cultures. Wereldmuseum Amsterdam's origins as a colonial institution before becoming a museum also contribute to the extensive scale of the collection display. In contrast, the Haags Historisch Museum, being a city-oriented museum, is much smaller in scale and contains fewer colonial objects in its collection. Consequently, it needs to borrow numerous pieces for its exhibition. The Sophiahof Museum, having recently opened with government subsidies, lacks an extensive collection compared to the other two museums.

Due to differences in scale, Wereldmuseum Amsterdam can present its exhibition for a more extended period, thanks to its larger budget and space and the fact that most of the objects on display originate from its own collection. The Hague Historical Museum, on the other hand, can only exhibit for a limited period due to the time constraints associated with borrowed objects.

This limitation may also explain why, in terms of collective representation, Wereldmuseum Amsterdam has a broader discussion of countries like South Africa and Guyana. The Haags Historisch Museum focuses mainly on the (post)colonial countries, Suriname, Indonesia, and the Caribbean region, while the Sophiahof Museum focuses only on the Indonesian archipelago. This can be explained since the Sophiahof Museum is a museum that was created for and by the Eurasian and Indonesian populations that have migrated to the Netherlands. Furthermore, the available space, borrowing of objects, and time limitations all influence the extent to which a museum can exhibit and display its content.

When examining how the decolonisation process, as discussed in 2.1.1, is applied in exhibitions within Dutch museums addressing Dutch colonial history, the Sophiahof Museum in The Hague, personal stories take a central role in the exhibition, fostering a sense of connection for

visitors. This departure from previous museum practices, which tended to overlook or downplay personal narratives, is a significant part of the new decolonisation approach. Concurrently, there is a concerted effort to intertwine this new narrative with educational initiatives supported by the Dutch government, highlighting the importance of critically examining colonial history. The once-celebrated notion of colonialism as a "Golden Age" is now being reevaluated, acknowledging its complexities and impacts. This transformation reflects a broader societal shift towards acknowledging historical injustices and fostering a more nuanced understanding of the past.

Furthermore, museums are redefining their representation and perspective, moving away from traditional identity frameworks prevalent in the 18th century. Embracing a modern viewpoint, they strive to portray cultures authentically, reflecting a shift in the museum's perception of these cultures. Additionally, museums serve as contact zones for visitors seeking to explore their identities and understand the colonial past and diverse cultures. Through decolonisation, marginalised groups find greater visibility and resonance in these narratives, contributing to their empowerment and societal growth.

In museums, identity politics, as discussed in 2.1.1 *Intersecting Identities: Exploring Identity Politics in Museums and Colonialism*, represents traditions while acknowledging their colonial origins. The combination of postcolonial theory and identity politics theory yields a nuanced narrative that breaks away from fixed identities, fostering a deeper understanding of the complex relationships between experiences, cultures, identity, and politics. The role of lobbyists in advocating for the recognition and representation of marginalised groups is also evident in this approach.

As exhibitions evolve to tell new stories, they significantly impact collective memory and societal transformation. By shedding light on previously marginalised perspectives, museums play a crucial role in reshaping societal narratives and fostering a deeper understanding of history. This commitment to inclusivity and education empowers individuals to contribute meaningfully to the ongoing process of decolonisation, ultimately enriching society as a whole.

By combining classical narratives with contemporary perspectives, museums offer visitors a nuanced view of history. This is evident in the portrayal of entities like the WIC and the VOC, as well as the depiction of slavery and other dark chapters of Dutch history. Personal narratives of those suppressed by colonialism shed light on the multifaceted impact of colonisation, exploring themes such as resistance and resilience. Through literature and exhibited objects, the museums delve into how colonised countries grappled with oppression and sought liberation.

One noteworthy example is the Hague Historical Museum, which emerged from a study on the decolonisation of governance and administration in The Hague. Focused on the city's administrative culture and street names, the museum engages residents in storytelling through various interest groups, including marginalised organisations. The museum presents a fresh, multiperspective narrative that challenges traditional colonial narratives by incorporating loaned objects and oral

history sources. This approach, rooted in postcolonial and decolonisation theories, acknowledges the limitations of past documentation, especially for oppressed groups like the enslaved.

In particular, the Hague Historical Museum's collection of colonial objects is accompanied by narratives contextualising their significance within colonial society. Emphasising the perspectives of the oppressed, the museum invites visitors to reconsider the legacy of colonialism through a critical lens. This shift in focus, echoed in the vocabulary, underscores the museum's commitment to presenting a more inclusive and accurate portrayal of history. Each thematic room in the museum serves as a platform for exploring various facets of the colonial past, ensuring comprehensive coverage while highlighting recurring themes throughout the exhibition.

Furthermore, despite its thematic approach, the exhibition maintains a chronological order, guiding visitors from the past to the present. This dual structure enriches the narrative, providing a comprehensive understanding of historical developments over time. A timeline depicted on the floor reinforces the thematic organisation, illustrating the chronological relationship between different periods.

In line with identity politics theory, the museum significantly emphasises marginalised groups, highlighting their stories and experiences. Rather than categorising countries individually, the exhibition thematically compares colonised nations, fostering connections and highlighting similarities. This thematic approach is particularly evident in the final room, which explores cultural utilisation.

The World Museum Amsterdam similarly prioritises inclusivity, amplifying the voices of marginalised individuals. A short documentary provides a transparent view of the exhibition's development process, including data collection and discussions with interest groups. This transparency enhances the museum's popularity and attracts a diverse range of visitors interested in exploring the colonial past.

Unlike other museums, the World Museum Amsterdam does not need to decolonise its collection, as it lacks artefacts directly tied to colonialism. Instead, the museum complements the exhibition with themed activities, such as city walks, allowing visitors to deepen their understanding of the decolonial narrative.

The exhibition's impact extends beyond the museum walls, influencing how visitors perceive the city and its history. Through transparent presentations by curators, visitors gain deeper insights into the exhibition's themes and stories, fostering a richer learning experience. This openness also encourages dialogue and further exploration, as visitors can ask questions and delve deeper into the exhibition's content.

The Sophiahof Museum stands out distinctly from the other two museums discussed. Its unique character stems from various factors, such as its relatively recent establishment by the government and its focus on personal narratives sourced mainly from marginalised groups' personal

archives. Unlike the other museums, the Sophiahof Museum has never adhered to a classic colonial narrative, reflecting its more contemporary perspective.

At the heart of the Sophiahof Museum's approach are personal stories, which form the foundation of its exhibitions. The displayed objects often originate from these organised individuals, providing a more intimate and collective historical perspective. This museum serves as a hub for marginalised groups, with its board representing these communities and shaping its narrative.

While the museum occasionally hosts colonial exhibitions, its primary focus lies elsewhere, particularly in exploring Indonesia's shared heritage. This constant colonial connection underscores the museum's critical viewpoint, rendering the concept of decolonisation less pertinent, as it has always maintained a critical stance.

Regarding curation, the Sophiahof Museum adopts a more personal and immersive approach. Instead of overwhelming visitors with numerous labels and texts, the narrative unfolds organically, often led by audio performances that lend a sense of immediacy and authenticity to the experience. The museum's commitment to authenticity is further reflected in its editing process, which prioritises preserving the rawness of the source material.

Moreover, the museum actively engages with visitors, allowing them to participate in surveys and contribute to the ongoing dialogue. This inclusive approach ensures that diverse perspectives are considered and valued, enriching the museum's narrative. While the Sophiahof Museum focuses on specific identity groups, it remains connected to broader themes of identity and inclusion explored in other museums, thus fostering a more holistic understanding of history and heritage.

Specifically looking at each element of the performance model across the three case studies, it becomes evident regarding the social circumstances that the thematic focus of the exhibition is shaped by political agendas and the involvement of agents with vested interests lobbying for recognition regarding colonialism and slavery. The museums serve as educational instruments that impact the ongoing discourse surrounding colonialism. In terms of the public element of the performance method analysis, it can be said that Wereldmuseum Amsterdam shows that it has critical self-reflection through the means of its presented script. However, it also shows a city perspective through the means of the first multimedia interview video the exhibition presents, which generally only interviews residents of Amsterdam to ask for their perspective regarding colonialism and decolonisation. Meanwhile, the Haags Historisch Museum comes from a more historical narration with a clear representation and focus at the end of its exhibition of the residents of the Hague. In the case of the Sophiahof Museum, the narrative does not solely revolve around a city perspective or specific families. However, given that the families' stories resonate with others who have experienced similar events, they can be considered more interconnected.

Regarding the script element, when comparing the three case studies, there were similarities between Wereldmuseum Amsterdam and the Haags Historisch Museum since some scripts are almost

identical. Nevertheless, the approach has a clear difference when comparing the two label texts. Whereby Wereldmuseum Amsterdam takes an ethnological perspective, the Haags Historisch Museum has a more historical perspective. Another distinction observed is how Wereldmuseum Amsterdam employs capital letters when referring to the term white people and incorporates quotation marks around the term "owner," imbuing it with a more critical tone than the Hague Historical Museum. In this case, the former showcases a more neutral position in its script.

Government document on release

The Dutch government printed this document with rules for formerly enslaved people. Many of the rules are about showing respect to White people. One provision states that a free person must care for his former "owner" and their family if they fall into poverty.

Dutch; Suriname; 4-21761, ink, paper; acquisition unknown; TM-0-459 (Wereldmuseum Amsterdam)

Printed provisions of the Dutch government on the freeing of slaves (reproduction), Wigbold Crommelin, 4 February 1761, National Museum of World Cultures

In 1761, Governor Crommelin drafted rules for the release of people from slavery. This document shows that even if someone is freed (manumitted), they must adhere to many strict rules. Many are about how to show respect to white people. The fifth provision is striking: it states that if the former slave owner falls into poverty, those who have been freed from slavery must still take care of him or her.

(Haags Historisch Museum)

Furthermore, what is noticeable in the script as well as the objects displayed, especially with Wereldmuseum Amsterdam and the Haags Historisch Museum, is that a clear guideline is being followed while assembling the objects and the script, which are called "Words Matter" and "Image Matter". These guidelines have been attributed to the Foundation of the National Museum of World Cultures, whereby "Words Matter" was published several years ago. Both clearly show the decolonisation of the institutions since these tools break the decolonial discourse through the awareness of language and image use. Because of this, the audience and its inclusion are considered more in the assembly of objects and scripts for display. This means that stigmatising or stereotypical imagery and words are avoided. This stigmatisation is being broken by displaying a more elaborate story. A great example of this is the word "slave". Which has now been transformed into "being slave made", which enables the display of the identity and humanity of the person discussed instead of being degraded to an oppressive role being forced on.

Both museums also take a more neutral stance regarding the storytelling of enslaved people, showing their humanity and exploring their personal stories, beliefs, and lifestyles. This is a transparent form of decolonisation since a new image is being represented, in which the audience can even find similarities, recognition, and representation.

Stereotypical images

Stereotypes are overly simplified and commonly held images or ideas of a person or thing. These images or ideas may circulate widely in our visual culture, for example about race and difference. Classroom posters, paintings, postcards, advertisements and films: together these form an immense visual archive that has created, reflected, supported and reinforced racist ideas, in the colonial period through to today. In the Netherlands, Zwarte Piet has long been a controversial figure in debates about racism in society.

The images shown here are stereotypes. The museum is aware that these are disturbing and violent images; and so are the language and terminology that accompany them. This display shows only a small selection from the museum collection and in the original small format.
(Wereldmuseum Amsterdam)

However, distinctions arise in script use, notably evident in the Haags Historisch Museum. It mainly relies on thematic labels; most objects are described without additional text clarifying their context, which is extensively found in Wereldmuseum Amsterdam. Nevertheless, when explaining national heroes, such as Tula, for example, Wereldmuseum Amsterdam discusses them briefly. In contrast, the Haags Historisch Museum highlights these national heroes individually and links them to the theme of opposition, resilience, and what they were fighting for.

A similarity that could be found between Wereldmuseum Amsterdam and the Haags Historisch Museum was the occasional presentation of the script without a specific accompanying object. This was often solved by adding contemporary art or everyday objects to align with the script.

Regarding the mise-en-scène of the three case studies, similarities can be found between Wereldmuseum Amsterdam and the Sophiahof Museum in portraying a journey on the sea. In Wereldmuseum Amsterdam, this can be observed in the first hall, while at the Sophiahof Museum, it is situated in the third hall. In both halls, curtains are used to portray sea waves, even though the colours and the centre of the room's theme are slightly different. A possible explanation for its similarity is that both museums used the same interior concept designer for their exhibition.

The primary distinction of the Sophiahof museum, in contrast to the other two, lies in its significantly smaller size and exclusive focus on the colonial history of the Indonesian archipelago. It predominantly relies on audio tours and multimedia as central tools for explaining the displayed objects, whereas the other two museums emphasise the objects themselves.

4.2 Comparative characterisations of the thematics

The manner in which collections are presented has evolved significantly, transitioning from a rigidly chronological arrangement to a thematic approach. This transition enables a more profound exploration of central themes and underscores the interrelation of objects within the narrative. Museum curators underscore the significance of this thematic approach, providing a more nuanced perspective on colonial history. Institutions such as the Wereldmuseum Amsterdam and the Hague Historical Museum prioritise transparency in the origin of objects, offering detailed accounts of their acquisition. This contextualisation enriches the significance of the objects, elevating them from mere artefacts to meaningful contributors to the overarching narrative and thematic structure.

By employing the performance method and QCA, this study pinpointed the most prevalent and significant themes discussed in the case studies. Consequently, this section delves into how each museum addressed these themes, emphasising which featured them most frequently. Additionally, it

delves into the importance of these themes in shaping exhibitions centred on colonialism and decolonisation.

Broadening Colonialism

The Wereldmuseum Amsterdam, The Hague Historical Museum, and Museum Sophiahof each explore Dutch colonial history through unique lenses, offering critical insights into colonialism's enduring impact. Wereldmuseum Amsterdam adopted a critical lens with an emphasis on ethnological aspects. The Haags Historisch Museum took a historical approach, focusing on the subject from a broader historical context. In contrast, the Sophiahof Museum approached the theme of colonialism and its consequences from a commemorative standpoint, emphasising the significance of remembrance and personal narratives.

The Wereldmuseum Amsterdam's "Our Colonial Heritage" exhibition critically examines Dutch colonial history in Indonesia, Suriname, Curaçao, Sint Maarten, and other regions. It emphasises the consequences of colonialism in contemporary society and continues the museum's decolonisation efforts. The exhibition showcases an extensive collection of colonial objects, some considered looted art, reflecting the museum's colonial origins. Videos and interviews present multiple perspectives, juxtaposing the romanticised benefits of colonial trade with the harsh realities of exploitation. Contemporary objects and commissioned art illustrate how colonial systems have evolved into today's globalised world. Additionally, the museum discusses migration and integration, focusing on Surinamese and Indonesian migrants in the Netherlands, highlighting the cultural fusion resulting from colonial histories.

The Hague Historical Museum's exhibition delves into The Hague's unresolved colonial history and its impact on the Netherlands and former colonies like Indonesia, Suriname, and the Caribbean islands. It underscores the importance of understanding these regions to grasp the broader colonial past and its aftermath. The museum highlights significant decisions made in The Hague that had far-reaching consequences for these colonies and illustrates how remnants of colonialism are still evident in the city's architecture, street names, restaurants, and diverse population. The museum engages visitors emotionally and informatively by showcasing personal objects and stories, fostering inclusivity. The exhibition avoids the term "Golden Age," instead critically examining this period and its glorification of colonialism. It reinterprets objects associated with the Golden Age to highlight their ties to Dutch colonialism's economic structures. The roles of the Western Union Company and the United East India Company are explored, examining why many people maintain a connection to colonial history and how this connection is understood.

Museum Sophiahof's "Ons Land: Dekolonisatie, generaties, verhalen" exhibition focuses on Dutch colonialism in Southeast Asia, particularly the Indonesian archipelago. The museum, founded

by and for the Eurasian and Indonesian communities in the Netherlands, offers a personal perspective through the stories of eight families. The exhibition follows a chronological storyline, addressing the struggles of the Euro-Indonesian community during the colonial and postcolonial periods of the Dutch Indies. It raises awareness of the enduring consequences of colonialism, emphasising the interconnectedness of Dutch society with its colonial past and the importance of recognising and amplifying the voices of the Indo-European community. The exhibition uses personal stories and objects to illustrate colonialism's continuing relevance and effects today, underscoring the need for awareness and recognition of this historical legacy.

When comparing, all three museums critically engage with Dutch colonial history from different perspectives and focuses. Wereldmuseum Amsterdam takes a broad approach, examining multiple regions and contemporary implications, integrating art to connect past and present. The Hague Historical Museum centres on The Hague's role and its tangible colonial remnants, fostering inclusivity through personal stories. Museum Sophiahof provides a deeply personal narrative focused on the Indonesian archipelago, emphasising the experiences of the Eurasian and Indonesian communities in the Netherlands. Each museum's approach highlights different aspects of colonial history, collectively offering a comprehensive understanding of its complex legacy. Moreover, we see that the notion of what traditionally was considered to be colonial is broadened by all three museums.

Exploring Oppression and Legacy in Dutch Museums

All three museums—Wereldmuseum Amsterdam, The Hague Historical Museum, and the Sophiahof Museum—highlight the oppression experienced under Dutch colonial rule. Wereldmuseum Amsterdam and The Hague Historical Museum critically examine colonialism's economic exploitation and societal impact. The museums also humanised the colonised individuals and provided their perspectives by recounting the stories of resistance fighters now revered as former colonies' heroes for their defiance against oppression. On the other hand, the Sophiahof Museum approached the theme of oppression from a distinct angle, shedding light on a different form of oppression experienced by individuals through the Dutch government system after migration, for example. Thus, it focuses on the personal struggles and enduring consequences colonised communities face. These exhibitions provide a comprehensive understanding of colonialism's oppressive legacy and lasting influence on modern society.

The Wereldmuseum Amsterdam's exhibition underscores the narrative of oppression and exploitation, focusing on colonialism's historical and contemporary impacts. It highlights the exploitation of Indigenous raw materials and extensive import-export activities linked to agriculture. By exploring overseas trade and its environmental impacts, including climate change, the exhibition draws connections to colonialism's lasting legacy.

The museum delves into the transformation of slavery and colonialism into forced and indentured labour, highlighting migration waves towards Suriname and dedicating a section to Javanese labourers. By linking the past to the present, the exhibition illustrates the enduring consequences and effects of slavery on contemporary society.

The Haags Historisch Museum presents a multi-perspective narrative that contrasts the traditional Eurocentric discourse by telling the story of the oppressed. The exhibition suggests that the Indonesian government tried to suppress political parties, highlighting the broader theme of oppression during colonial rule. This approach ensures that the voices of those who suffered under colonialism are included, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the historical and political context.

The Sophiahof Museum's exhibition challenges societal discourse by highlighting the struggles of the Indo-European community and their clashes within Dutch society. It details their marginalised position, cultural differences, and the sacrifices they made leaving Indonesia. The exhibit also addresses how Dutch society often disregarded or overlooked their wartime experiences and traumas, including those from the Japanese Occupation. This focus on the Indo-European community's oppression and the lack of acknowledgement of their hardships underscores the ongoing impact of colonialism and war on this group.

Humanising Narratives of Enslavement

In exploring the link to enslavement, the Haags Historisch Museum and Wereldmuseum Amsterdam provide nuanced narratives that humanise the historical presence of enslaved individuals. They strive to depict the culture and daily lives of those subjected to slavery, using imagery and language to convey a more humane perspective. The Haags Historisch Museum delves into the Dutch Atlantic slave trade and the government's role, reflecting on changes in historical narratives through decolonisation. Postcolonial theories and ongoing decolonisation discourse inform the approach, with external factors such as political apologies and commemorations influencing the exhibitions.

Wereldmuseum Amsterdam's exhibition is notable for its focus on enslaved people within Indonesia, a topic often overlooked in historical narratives. By shedding light on this aspect of colonial history, the museum takes a bold postcolonial stance, aiming to reshape the narrative and educate visitors about colonialism's lesser-known dimensions. The exhibition includes multimedia artworks and interactive installations that engage visitors with data on enslaved individuals, fostering a deeper connection to the presented history. Additionally, the museum employs literary and visual strategies to humanise the portrayal of enslaved individuals, emphasising the importance of showcasing their humanity alongside the abusive aspects of slavery.

While the Haags Historisch Museum and Wereldmuseum Amsterdam extensively address the theme of enslavement, the Sophiahof Museum takes a different approach by focusing on the struggles of the Indo-European community within Dutch society. Enslavement is not directly addressed in the Sophiahof Museum's exhibition. Instead, the museum explores broader themes of oppression and exploitation within Dutch colonialism, highlighting the sacrifices and marginalisation faced by the Indo-European community. Despite the absence of a direct focus on enslavement, the Sophiahof Museum contributes to a comprehensive understanding of colonialism's oppressive legacy and its lasting impact on affected communities.

Giving Agency through Resistance

All three museums, Wereldmuseum Amsterdam, The Hague Historical Museum, and Sophiahof Museum, address the theme of resistance with varying emphases and approaches.

Wereldmuseum Amsterdam incorporates resistance narratives throughout its exhibition, intertwining them with other thematic elements. It highlights resistance against colonial education and religious indoctrination, celebrating the gradual increase in societal awareness and theoretical discussions on commemoration in the Netherlands. The museum comprehensively explores resistance in various contexts, particularly within Indonesia, showcasing resistance efforts in different forms and contexts.

The Hague Historical Museum primarily focuses on resistance through a multi-perspective approach, showcasing the perspectives of those in power and the oppressed individuals. The museum extensively examines resistance movements against colonialism, such as those led by figures like Anton de Kom, and explores the violence and disparities colonised populations face. It provides critical insights into the Netherlands' colonial past and the resistance efforts that shaped its trajectory.

In contrast, resistance receives little mention in the Sophiahof Museum's exhibition. While the museum addresses broader themes of oppression and exploitation within Dutch colonialism, it does not explicitly focus on resistance movements or their significance in challenging colonial power structures. Instead, Sophiahof Museum explores the consequences of resistance and the enduring impact of colonialism on affected communities, shedding light on the struggles and sacrifices made by marginalised groups within Dutch society.

Overall, while all three museums acknowledge the theme of resistance, Wereldmuseum Amsterdam and The Hague Historical Museum provide more extensive explorations of resistance movements and their role in challenging colonial oppression and advocating for change. Sophiahof Museum, on the other hand, focuses more on the consequences of resistance and the broader societal impacts of colonialism on affected communities.

Exploring Independence through the eye of Dutch Museums

All three museums—Wereldmuseum Amsterdam, The Hague Historical Museum, and Sophiahof Museum—explore the theme of independence in-depth, highlighting its profound impact on colonised populations and its lasting influence on contemporary society. Each museum presents this theme through different lenses, providing a comprehensive understanding of the journey to independence and its aftermath and underscoring its relevance to our present-day world.

Wereldmuseum Amsterdam addresses independence in its hall "On the Road to Freedom," where the narrative of resistance naturally progresses into discussions of independence and decolonisation. The museum provides a chronological timeline of Indonesia's path to independence, illustrated through images and objects. The process of Suriname's independence is also detailed, allowing visitors to grasp the broader context of decolonisation efforts across different regions.

The Hague Historical Museum explores the theme of independence by delving into identity politics and nationalism during the fight for freedom. The exhibition provides a comprehensive look at Indonesia's struggle for independence, detailing key historical moments such as Queen Wilhelmina's speech and the opposition faced. It also thoroughly examines Suriname's journey to independence, highlighting the historical period, key figures, and the Netherlands' role in this process. The theme of independence is intricately linked with discussions on identity and citizenship, reflecting the complex choices faced by the Indonesian-Dutch population following the Declaration of Independence. This focus on the rise of community identity during the fight for independence underscores the lasting impact of these historical events on contemporary society.

The Sophiahof Museum weaves the theme of independence throughout its exhibition, highlighting its central importance to those who migrated from the Dutch Indies to the Netherlands. The museum focuses on the outbreak of war and Indonesia's Declaration of Independence, emphasising these events' profound personal and familial impacts. Through vivid multimedia presentations, the museum depicts the significant changes brought about by independence, including waves of migration and subsequent societal adjustments. This integration of the theme of independence underscores its pivotal role in shaping the experiences and identities of the Indo-European community in the post-colonial period.

While all three museums explore the theme of independence, they each offer unique perspectives and presentation methods. Wereldmuseum Amsterdam provides a structured narrative focusing on chronological timelines and the interconnectedness of resistance and independence. The Hague Historical Museum emphasises independence's political and societal aspects, delving into identity politics and the nuanced choices colonised populations face. Sophiahof Museum weaves the theme of independence into personal stories and multimedia presentations, highlighting the human impact and the migration experiences resulting from decolonisation. Together, these museums present

a multifaceted view of independence, illustrating its significance in shaping modern society and the enduring legacy of colonialism.

Postcolonial Perspectives in Dutch Museums

All three museums—Wereldmuseum Amsterdam, The Hague Historical Museum, and the Sophiahof Museum—extensively explore postcolonialism within their exhibitions, each offering unique approaches to this critical theme.

The Wereldmuseum Amsterdam adopts a postcolonial perspective to examine colonial history critically. It integrates contemporary art and regional expertise to provide context to objects and narratives. The museum humanises previously exoticised subjects by highlighting the cultural richness of colonised societies and challenging the colonial narrative of the "civilising mission." This approach is evident in portraying spiritual and ritualistic objects and resistance leaders like Tula. The museum's decolonial efforts involve rebranding and renaming stereotypical images, promoting social cohesion and equality.

The exhibition fosters broader decolonisation awareness, dismantles power structures, and connects with society through educational programs and inclusive narratives. The museum mirrors ongoing societal and political activism by implementing diversity and inclusivity policies. Postcolonial theory informs the museum's methodology, allowing for a nuanced representation of marginalised groups and a critique of imperialism. The Wereldmuseum bridges classical and decolonial viewpoints, integrating interviews and stories from marginalised communities to enrich its narrative.

The Hague Historical Museum is committed to postcolonialism, aiming to present a comprehensive and critical understanding of history that challenges dominant narratives and amplifies marginalised voices. By incorporating diverse perspectives, the museum encourages visitors to question and critically evaluate historical narratives, moving away from traditional sources that may overlook or misrepresent marginalised groups' contributions.

The museum's decolonial approach involves repurposing objects previously framed within a colonial discourse to support narratives that empower marginalised communities. It strives for equality by presenting the stories of colonisers and oppressed peoples with equal weight. The museum highlights the challenges postcolonial migrants face in the Netherlands, providing a platform for marginalised individuals to share personal stories and objects, humanising their experiences. Postcolonial theory facilitates an analysis of former European colonies and their governance structures from various perspectives, challenging colonial discourse by incorporating oral histories and reinterpreting colonial objects.

For example, the exhibition highlights resistance figures and the ownership of objects from Suriname, offering a nuanced perspective on imperialism and Eurocentrism. The

"Migration/Decolonisation" hall examines Indonesian migration and the broader postcolonial migration wave to the Netherlands. The museum's use of inclusive language and adherence to guidelines such as those in the 'Words Matter' booklet by Wereldmuseum Amsterdam further demonstrate its commitment to inclusivity and decolonisation.

The Sophiahof Museum strongly emphasises postcolonialism by presenting diverse and personal stories that deeply resonate with visitors. These stories shed light on the complex nature of postcolonial history and its various interpretations. The museum underscores that Dutch colonial history is not neutral and that its narrative is evolving.

The exhibition aims to spark dialogues, encouraging visitor engagement in the ongoing decolonisation process. A vital feature of the museum's postcolonial focus is the "Ons Land" exhibition, which strives for inclusivity and accessibility, acknowledging the emotional impact of the personal content and images displayed. Through commemoration, the exhibition demonstrates growing recognition and awareness in the Netherlands about the struggles of postcolonial immigrants. The "Gedwongen Ontmoeting" (Forced Encounter) hall features a large wall map illustrating the distribution of migrants and the number of families in each province, providing insights into the migration system. The "Golven van Aankomst" (Waves of Arrival) hall chronologically represents migrant waves, detailing their treatment, housing, and integration efforts.

The museum addresses Eurocentrism and "Othering" by challenging the dominant Dutch commemorative memory, which often prioritises the hardships endured by the Netherlands during the Second World War over the experiences of Indo-European postcolonial immigrants. The exhibition highlights these immigrants' experiences and their descendants, focusing on their encounters with racism and discrimination and illustrating the persistent hierarchy they faced upon arriving in the Netherlands. Postcolonial theory is evident throughout the museum as it explores Dutch colonialism's political, linguistic, and cultural ramifications.

The museum challenges traditional colonial discourse by presenting colonial history from the perspective of postcolonial immigrant descendants and their personal stories. It highlights the postcolonial era, particularly the migration of Indo-European immigrants to the Netherlands and the resulting societal impacts. While it does not directly critique Dutch colonial legislation, it reveals the inequalities and consequences of Dutch colonial policies. The Sophiahof Museum's approach reflects a commitment to decolonisation by humanising marginalised voices, promoting inclusive narratives, and encouraging critical reflection on colonialism's ongoing legacy in contemporary society.

Thus, all three museums contribute to a deeper understanding of postcolonialism by presenting diverse perspectives, challenging dominant narratives, and emphasising the importance of marginalised voices. Their exhibitions highlight the ongoing legacy of colonialism and encourage reflection on its impact on contemporary society, promoting a more inclusive and humanising representation of history.

From Innocence to Accountability

The primary themes explored within the exhibition at the Haags Historisch Museum revolved around the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised, emphasising government actions and policies. Conversely, Wereldmuseum Amsterdam indirectly addressed these themes through wall texts and portrayed the consequences of decolonisation from a critical standpoint. On the other hand, the exhibition at Sophiahof focused more on the ramifications of decolonisation for the Eurasian population of Indonesia, particularly their immigration to the Netherlands, and strongly emphasised personal storytelling.

The Wereldmuseum Amsterdam also delves into the Dutch government's involvement in colonialism, analysing its far-reaching consequences through a postcolonial perspective. In its examination, the Wereldmuseum draws attention to specific narratives tied to Amsterdam, further emphasising the broader implications of colonialism within the Netherlands.

One of the videos the museum features is an interview and an official apology from the mayor of Amsterdam regarding the city's historical role in colonialism and enslavement. This segment underscores the growing acknowledgement within Amsterdam of the impact of colonialism, echoing a more significant societal trend.

The museum confronts racism as a lingering legacy of colonialism, deeply entrenched within Dutch institutions such as administration, law, education, and the labour market. It underscores how this systemic discrimination reflects the biases perpetuated by colonial policies and practices.

Additionally, the museum showcases documents issued by the Dutch government detailing regulations for formerly enslaved individuals. These documents enforced deference towards White people and obligated formerly enslaved persons to care for their former owners in times of need. This illustrates the ongoing control and subjugation maintained even after the official abolition of slavery, illustrating the government's role in perpetuating racial hierarchies.

Furthermore, the museum highlights various commemorative rituals and events contributing to the postcolonial narrative, such as the National Slavery Monument in Amsterdam and the Indies Monument in The Hague. These monuments serve as essential sites for remembering and reflecting on the history of slavery and colonialism, emphasising the collective effort required to confront and reconcile with the past.

The museum also sheds light on significant historical events, such as the violent period known as the 'Bersiap,' during which the Dutch government deployed soldiers to Indonesia to suppress unrest. This segment discusses the systematic violence perpetrated by Dutch soldiers and the eventual concession to Indonesian sovereignty in 1949 following international pressure. The museum also addresses atrocities like the massacre on Banda Island in 1621, revealing the brutal enforcement of colonial policies and their enduring impact on local populations.

Moreover, the museum examines Dutch violence against Indonesians from 1945 to 1949, drawing on recent research to demonstrate that this violence was systematic rather than incidental. Through these narratives, the Wereldmuseum critically analyses the Dutch government's colonial policies and their lasting repercussions,

encouraging visitors to reflect on the complexities of colonial history and its ongoing influence on contemporary society. This aligns with broader postcolonial efforts to decolonise historical discourse and promote inclusivity.

The Hague Historical Museum's exhibition "Colonial The Hague: An Unfinished Past" critically examines the pivotal role of The Hague in the Dutch colonial system, emphasising its status as a governmental city. The exhibition explores how the city and government contributed to Dutch colonialism, presenting a multi-perspective narrative that reveals the enduring impact of the colonial past on contemporary society. This influence is evident in The Hague's architecture, cultural landscape, and diverse demographic composition, with traces of colonialism visible in buildings financed by colonial wealth and various restaurants and street names.

The exhibition highlights key individuals who held authority in Suriname and the policies they enacted, shedding light on racism within colonial administration. By focusing on The Hague's role as the seat of national leadership, the exhibition reflects on the city's identity and its significant influence on the colonial narrative of the Netherlands. The theme labels emphasise the colonial history investigated concerning the city's government and the active involvement of The Hague's residents and foundations.

One of the central elements of the exhibition is the "Decision Makers and their Decisions" hall, which originated from research on the civil servants of The Hague and their involvement in Dutch colonialism. The exhibition also delves into the Netherlands' actions during its first and second offences, highlighted in the Migration Hall, and addresses the Treaty's transfer of sovereignty.

Public apologies play a significant role in the exhibition, particularly in migration. It examines apologies issued by the Dutch government, such as those by King Willem-Alexander in 2022. It highlights 2023 as a commemoration of the abolition of slavery, marking 150 years since its abolition. The museum addresses the theme of recognition and advocacy by postcolonial migrants, with external factors like lobbying and commemorations—exemplified by Prime Minister Rutte's apology and the 2023 commemoration of the abolition of slavery—playing a crucial role in advancing these efforts.

By highlighting the ongoing influence of government policy and actions, both historical and contemporary, the exhibition underscores the relevance and significance of Dutch colonialism in shaping the narrative and recognition of our society today. It emphasises the profound and lasting influence of The Hague on the colonial history of the Netherlands.

The Sophiahof Museum also addresses Dutch governmental policies during and after the colonial period in the Dutch Indies, though it focuses more on their consequences. Key examples include the transfer of sovereignty in 1949 and dismantling the Dutch East Indies civil service and KNIL. The museum discusses how the Dutch government's policies led to the permanent migration of many Indonesians. For instance, from the early 1960s, residential areas were closed, forcing residents to move to Moluccan neighbourhoods.

Instead of focusing solely on governmental policies, the Sophiahof Museum emphasises the consequences these policies inflicted on Indonesia and Dutch society. The museum highlights the personal stories and struggles of those affected by Dutch colonial rule, offering a more humanised perspective on colonialism's legacy. This approach aligns with the broader postcolonial effort to decolonise historical discourse and promote inclusivity.

All three museums critically examine the Dutch government's role in colonialism and its enduring impact. Wereldmuseum Amsterdam focuses on systemic racism and the ongoing control and subjugation post-abolition, using specific narratives tied to Amsterdam to highlight broader themes. The Hague Historical Museum highlights the role of The Hague in colonial governance, highlighting key individuals and policies and the importance of public apologies and recognition. Sophiahof Museum examines the consequences of governmental policies on Indonesia and Dutch society, emphasising personal stories and the impact of policies like the transfer of sovereignty and residential relocations.

Together, these museums provide a comprehensive and critical examination of Dutch colonialism, encouraging reflection on its ongoing legacy and promoting a more inclusive historical narrative.

Chapter V: Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Discussion of analysis and summary

Museums play an indispensable role in presenting a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of colonialism to the public. They achieve this by blending academic historical accounts with personal narratives. However, the vast number of stories requires expert guidance in sorting and prioritising them effectively. Museum collections often fall short of representing specific narratives and voices, and that is where personal stories come into play as a means to counter such underrepresentation. By incorporating personal objects and first-hand stories from citizens, museums can vividly depict the enduring effects of colonialism on contemporary life while attracting a diverse range of museum-goers. This approach also leads to the recognition and acknowledgement of previously marginalised narratives.

While museums are making strides in presenting a more comprehensive understanding of colonial history, it's crucial to acknowledge the challenges and limitations of representation and underrepresentation. This calls for a re-evaluation of the power dynamics within museums. They must pay close attention to their use of language and image representation, avoiding stereotypes, to foster awareness, reflection, and societal transformation. A key aspect of this transformation is the need for museums to challenge Eurocentric viewpoints, promoting a more balanced and inclusive understanding of colonial history and its ongoing repercussions.

Museums have transitioned from a regional focus to more thematic and global perspectives. Decolonisation remains an ongoing endeavour within museums, encompassing the dismantling of entrenched power structures, the promotion of inclusivity, and most importantly, the challenge to Eurocentric viewpoints. Museums aim to redefine ethnology by spotlighting global cultures and advocating that we share fundamental commonalities despite our differences. This shift empowers museums to play a significant role in shaping a more inclusive and diverse narrative of our shared history.

Among the examined case studies, the predominant theme and purpose conveyed in the exhibitions revolve around colonialism, decolonisation, and post-colonialism. Wereldmuseum Amsterdam engages in a more extensive discourse encompassing countries such as South Africa and Guyana. In contrast, the primary focus of the Haags Historisch Museum revolves around (post)colonial nations, specifically Suriname, Indonesia, and the Caribbean region. At the same time, the Sophiahof Museum concentrates exclusively on the Indonesian archipelago.

Insights from interviews with the Haags Historisch Museum and the Rotterdam Museum highlight their exploration of diverse aspects of decolonisation within museum contexts, particularly concerning the portrayal and understanding of colonial history and its consequences. Moreover, the museums emphasise their pivotal role in education, fostering social cohesion, and stimulating public

discourse. The museums are dedicated to challenging colonial structures' ideologies and rectifying their collections' limitations and biases. These institutions emphasise the necessity of moving away from a Eurocentric viewpoint and adopting a more inclusive, multi-dimensional approach. It aims to empower the colonised individuals and showcase their resilience and resistance rather than perpetuating clichéd and stigmatised colonial narratives. Breaking the pattern of victimised narratives and representing a more comprehensive story requires community engagement with the support of experts (Interview Haags Historisch Museum). This transformation is achieved by utilising meaningful images, objects, and language. Key elements emphasised in crafting a comprehensive and varied narrative include collaboration, specialisation on specific themes, and incorporating personal stories.

What is noticeable about all the exhibitions is that instead of displaying objects traditionally, they primarily use written or spoken narratives complemented by multimedia elements that display different pictures, newspaper articles, footage of events, and interviews.

5.2 Discussion and Conclusion

In all three case studies, a notable shift in the interpretation of colonial museum collections is evident, prompting their selection for examination. Previously, these collections were approached from a colonial perspective, often glorifying colonialism and maintaining its discourse. However, recent years have seen a critical reevaluation, focusing on connecting visitors with a more diverse narrative. This shift is exemplified at museums like the Sophiahof Museum in The Hague, where personal stories offer visitors relatable connections to their family histories, diverging significantly from past museum narratives.

Additionally, the emphasis on colonial history as a Golden Age, previously unquestioned, is now being reevaluated, particularly by the Dutch government. This critical perspective extends beyond a mere acknowledgement to a deeper examination of colonialism's impacts, historically and in contemporary society. By re-contextualising objects and narratives, museums strive to create a more inclusive and accurate representation of history.

The active role of museums in the process of decolonisation is evident, with concerted efforts to dismantle the colonial perspective and amplify the voices of marginalised groups. This is achieved through thematic presentations that break away from traditional chronological order, instead focusing on interconnected themes. Identity politics theory is instrumental in this process, highlighting the experiences and similarities of marginalised groups across colonised nations. By adopting a more critical lens, museums strive to address power dynamics, imperialism, and the enduring impacts of colonialism on global society.

Moreover, the approach to museum curation reflects broader societal shifts towards inclusivity and recognition of marginalised voices. Museums are redefining their identities and

narratives by actively engaging with stakeholders, including marginalised groups. Through transparent processes like public presentations and city tours, museums foster dialogue and deepen understanding of colonial legacies. The emphasis on personal stories and direct engagement with communities distinguishes museums like the Sophiahof Museum, which prioritises authenticity and inclusivity.

These case studies underscore the transformative role of museums in confronting colonial legacies, challenging dominant narratives, and fostering a more inclusive understanding of history. By foregrounding marginalised voices and embracing diverse perspectives, museums are not just institutions of learning but catalysts for social change. They reshape collective memory and foster social progress, making them indispensable in our quest for a more inclusive society.

The main objective of this thesis has been to delve into the practical implications and challenges that arise throughout the process of decolonising a museum. The study specifically investigated integrating postcolonial theory into existing museum practices.

The literature review thoroughly examines the decolonisation process and its societal impacts.

Colonialism involves imposing Western ideologies on colonised societies, leading to persistent issues such as migration and racism. Decolonisation aims to dismantle these colonial structures within institutions like museums, replacing colonial narratives with Indigenous perspectives to challenge Western-centric paradigms. Historically, museums have perpetuated a Western-centric view, often glorifying Western nations and exoticising others while ignoring their contemporary cultural realities. Decolonisation seeks to recognise and validate Indigenous knowledge, challenge Western-centric paradigms, and recover marginalised knowledge.

Decolonisation is a multifaceted process that includes dismantling hegemonic control, eliminating colonial classifications, and addressing historical injustices. It promotes social cohesion, identity, and nationhood development while challenging the role of museums in perpetuating Western hegemony.

Furthermore, the origin and evolution of museum ethics are analysed, highlighting the role of institutions like ICOM and ICOM. Early museums displayed objects from other cultures to justify Western hegemony, often stereotyping colonised peoples. Decolonising museums involves changing how colonial history is represented, rearranging collections, collaborating with represented cultures, and adopting a critical perspective. This requires removing colonial categorisation and promoting inclusivity to showcase power dynamics and equality.

Historical narratives in the Netherlands have shifted from a Dutch-centric view of colonialism to a more critical, postcolonial understanding. Despite progress, ongoing debates highlight the need for continuous research, education, and dialogue about colonial history.

This research is grounded in postcolonial theory and incorporates social performance and identity politics theories to understand museums' actions and perspectives. These theories help analyse

colonial discourse in museums and the challenges of decolonisation, acknowledging colonialism's global legacy and its impact on race, ethnicity, and class.

Identity politics theory provides insights into the interplay between experience, culture, identity, politics, and power, helping analyse the ideology behind certain groups. Collective memory and national narratives are crucial to understanding the development and conflict of a nation's memory, with historians playing a key role. However, history is often used to manipulate people, and the colonial nature of archives must be acknowledged to reverse their previous authority.

However, more investigation is needed more investigation is needed into decolonisation's impact on contemporary political systems, the elimination of colonial classifications, and the history of enslavement under the VOC. Addressing these gaps is crucial for advancing identity and nationhood development.

The limitation is that most literature on Suriname and Indonesian colonisation comes from Dutch sources, focusing on Dutch colonialism's history and its former colonies. Nonetheless, the review contributes to understanding decolonisation and identifies areas for future research and action.

This thesis discusses colonialism and decolonisation in the context of museum decolonisation—the historical origins of museums and their role in perpetuating Western hegemony. Furthermore, the ongoing process of decolonising museums has been outlined, which involves challenging power structures, re-evaluating historical representation, and promoting inclusivity. Two theories, postcolonial theory and identity politics theory, have been discussed as analytical frameworks to understand these challenges. The postcolonial theory highlights the colonial discourse in museums and the ongoing global legacy of colonialism.

The study aims to answer the research by analysing exhibitions related to the colonial past in Wereldmuseum Amsterdam, Haags Historisch Museum, and Sophiahof Museum. This research is significant as decolonisation is a crucial and widely debated issue within the museum community. It contributes to the knowledge base for other museums undergoing similar transformations, offering valuable insights. This research has hereby considered the significance of museum curators' values, thoughts, and vision in contributing to the development of exhibitions. It acknowledges that a complex social network of objects and individuals, including associated communities and museum staff, influences collections. This complicated social and cultural process plays a crucial role in shaping the content and values represented in exhibitions, and these factors have far-reaching implications for their accurate interpretation.

Furthermore, the profound impact of the connection between colonialism and museums on museum representation has been explored. The research recognises that in the process of decolonising museums, specific strategies and approaches are crucial, such as that the exhibitions uniquely focus on the experiences of enslaved people. This perspective is particularly significant as it allows visitors to explore a previously unknown aspect of colonial history. By sharing this information, the museums

adopt a bold postcolonial stance, aiming to reshape the narrative and shed light on the complex and frequently neglected aspects of colonialism. This approach aligns with Delgado and Mycock's (2023) discussion on raising awareness of historical enslavement. These efforts aim to foster inclusivity, challenge existing power dynamics, and confront historical injustices. Furthermore, the museums exemplify diverse and interconnected narratives, aligning with decolonisation by moving beyond the traditional ethnographic narrative. The texts and scripts adopt a critical perspective, shifting from a colonial narrative to a postcolonial one that questions colonialism and moves away from its often glorified discourse. The chronology in the script intentionally overlaps between the past and present to highlight the ongoing consequences of colonialism in contemporary society.

Additionally, the research has delved into how the relationship between emotional and physical mapping at museums significantly shapes how the site's message is interpreted. The museums offer varied interpretations that disrupt conventional narratives, centring on autobiographical documents and personal testimonies. This strategy ensures that visitors' emotional connections resonate with the lived experiences of those portrayed in the exhibits. Such an approach recognizes the subjective aspect of memory and underscores the significance of incorporating voices that have been historically marginalized (Beier-de-Haan, 2006, p. 187).

This influence is particularly evident in the context of collective memory, national narratives, and the manner in which historians construct societal theories.

The analysis has used cultural performance theory, examining various aspects of the exhibitions such as objects, label texts, wall texts, and related materials like audio guides and exhibition books. Interviews have been conducted with curators. Qualitative Content analysis has been used, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of expressive knowledge and capturing the case study's specific characteristics, opinions, indications, and nuances. In order to analyse the data, the Atlas.ti program has been used for coding, identifying phrases and organising codes into themes. All of the data has been first transcribed from pictures to documents partially manually and with the help of the transcription program of Google Docs.

However, there were some limitations regarding the labels of Wereldmuseum Amsterdam; some label texts were photographed incorrectly and, therefore, not readable and could not be used for analysis.

The original plan was to conduct interviews with at least one person involved in each exhibition selected for the case study, preferably the curator. Unfortunately, no one from the Sophiahof Museum was approached due to time constraints. Although Wereldmuseum Amsterdam was contacted several times in different ways, they could not cooperate in the end.

However, the data sought after has been thoroughly researched and yielded meaningful results. With the societal readiness to discuss colonialism, museums have a responsibility to present a comprehensive and nuanced perspective that enhances public understanding of colonialism. Academic

history is combined with personal narratives, although the abundance of stories necessitates expert guidance in sorting and prioritising them. Personal stories provide an opportunity to counter the underrepresentation of certain narratives and voices within collections.

By incorporating personal objects and narratives from citizens, museums can illustrate the impact of colonialism on contemporary life and the future, leading to representation, acknowledgement, and attracting new types of museum visitors. By unveiling the forgotten narratives of the oppressed, museums contribute to a more accurate comprehension of colonialism, rectifying misconceptions and fostering historical awareness.

Acknowledging the challenges and limitations in representation and underrepresentation calls for re-evaluating power structures within museums. Language use, image representation, and avoiding stereotypes are emphasised, promoting awareness, reflection, and social change. Furthermore, the role of museums in decolonisation through education, collaborative initiatives with schools, and interactive art pieces. The aim is to provide a broader and more nuanced understanding of colonial history and its ongoing impact.

Museums have transitioned from a regional focus to more thematic and global perspectives. Decolonisation is an ongoing process in museums, entailing the dismantling of power structures, promoting inclusivity, and addressing Eurocentric viewpoints. The museums aim to reinvent the concept of ethnology by highlighting global cultures and promoting the notion that, despite differences, we are all fundamentally the same.

5.3 Recommendation

In essence, the decolonisation of museums is an ongoing journey that requires continuous research, reflection, and action. Through these efforts, museums can strive to better historical injustices, promote a more honest representation of diverse cultures, and encourage dialogue and understanding among all visitors. The pursuit of decolonisation should be embraced as an ongoing commitment, with research as a vital guide towards a more inclusive future for museums and society. Furthermore, additional research on topics such as enslavement in Indonesia can contribute to several aspects of the decolonisation process since this is a frequently new topic that is discussed compared to the Trans-Atlantic Enslavement history. It can highlight the colonial origins of museum collections and the experiences and perspectives of historically marginalised communities and provide insight into practical strategies for decolonising museum spaces.

Beyond the theoretical insights this study provides, we can also learn more practically from the three case studies, namely in terms of policy and/or museum practice. Postcolonial and decolonial theories often invoke notions of praxis and impact, so it seems more than logical to conclude this thesis similarly. The discussed museums could enhance their practices by adopting and adhering to ethical standards that respect all communities' cultural heritage and intellectual property rights. It also

ensures diverse representation within the museum's staff, leadership, and advisory boards so that they reflect the communities they serve. Furthermore, fostering meaningful and sustained engagement with the communities connected to the museum's collections, ensuring their input is valued and acted upon. As seen from the discussed museums, this is received positively and allows the museum to expand its normal range of visitors. By implementing these strategies, museums can become more inclusive, ethical, and reflective of the diverse histories and identities they represent.

Other museums can learn several valuable lessons from the postcolonial practices of these museums. By collaborating with marginalised communities, museums can increase their inclusive narrative by engaging with communities in curation to ensure their voices and perspectives are accurately represented. Museums can do this through advisory panels that include members of diverse and marginalised communities to guide the museum's practices and policies. Moreover, develop initiatives that empower these communities, such as collaborative exhibitions, cultural exchanges, and educational programs. Furthermore, it is essential to present the museum collection and exhibition through a multi-voice perspective, particularly those of historically marginalised groups, to provide a more nuanced and complete narrative by creating interactive and participatory exhibits, allowing visitors to explore different perspectives and contribute their experiences and viewpoints.

Another important aspect is that museums should invest in thorough provenance research to understand and disclose the origins of their collections and be transparent about the history and acquisition of artefacts, including any contentious aspects. It should also consider establishing clear policies and procedures for repatriating returns of some of the objects the collection holds that were taken in colonial times to the countries of origin.

Moreover, museums need to use respectful language in exhibits that avoid colonial connotations and interpret artefacts in ways that acknowledge their full historical and cultural contexts. While also facilitating public dialogues and educational sessions on the museum's decolonisation, the impact of colonialism, postcolonial issues, cultural sensitivity, identity politics, and the ethical responsibilities of museums.

By adopting these practices, other museums can improve their postcolonial practices, becoming more inclusive, ethical, and reflective of the diverse histories and cultures they represent.

References

- “Een Gebouw Vol Verhalen.” Wereldmuseum Amsterdam. Accessed January 21, 2024.
<https://amsterdam.wereldmuseum.nl/nl/zien-en-doen/tentoonstellingen/een-gebouw-vol-verhalen>
- “Het Geheugen van den haag. Haags” Historisch Museum. Accessed June 21, 2023.
<https://www.haagshistorischmuseum.nl/nl/over-het-museum/over-het-museum/het-geheugen-van-den-haag>
- “History Museum Volkenkunde.” History Museum Volkenkunde | Volkenkunde in Leiden. Accessed June 23, 2020. <https://www.volkenkunde.nl/en/themes/history-museum-volkenkunde>.
- “Ontdek Het haags historisch museum.” Haags Historisch Museum. Accessed June 21, 2023.
<https://www.haagshistorischmuseum.nl/nl/over-het-museum/over-het-museum/ontdek-het-museum>
- “Onze Collectie.” Accessed June 23, 2020. <https://www.volkenkunde.nl/nl/onze-collectie>.
- “Over Het Tropenmuseum.” Accessed June 21, 2023. Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam. (n.d.).
<https://www.tropenmuseum.nl/nl/over-het-tropenmuseum>
- “Over Ons.” Accessed June 21, 2023. Indisch Herinneringscentrum
<https://www.indischherinneringscentrum.nl/over-ons>.
- “Over ons - wie is museum maluku?: Museum maluku. ” Accessed June 21, 2023. Moluks Historisch Museum. (2022, December 21). <https://museum-maluku.nl/over-ons/>
- “Over Ons.” Accessed June 21, 2023. Museum SOPHIAHOF. Van Indië tot nu.
<https://www.museumsophiahof.nl/over-ons/museum-sophiahof>
- “Sociëteit van Suriname, 1683-1795.” Accessed January 12, 2024. Nationaal Archief. (n.d.).
<https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/zoekhulpen/societeit-van-suriname-1683-1795#:~:text=In%201795%2C%20aan%20het%20begin,handen%20van%20de%20Nederlandse%20Staat>.
- “Word Matter an Unfinished Guide to Word Choices in the Cultural Sector .” Volkenkunde museum . Accessed June 22, 2020. <https://www.volkenkunde.nl/nl/over-volkenkunde/words-matter-publicatie> .
- (2023). Mav Techniek. photograph, Amsterdam. Retrieved January 18, 2024, from
<https://www.mavtechniek.nl/portfolio/tropenmuseum-onze-koloniale-erfenis/>.
- Aldrich, R. (2010). Remembrances of empires past. *Portal: Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies*, 7(1), 1-19.
- Alexander, J. C. (2006). Cultural Pragmatics: Social Performance Between Ritual and Strategy.
- Allen, J.S., and R.C. Jobson. (2016). The Decolonizing Generation: (Race and) Theory in Anthropology Since the Eighties. *Current Anthropology*, 57(2), 129–148.

- Allen, R.M. (2023). Methode: orale geschiedenis. In Allen, R. M., Captain, E., Rossum, M. van, Vyent, U., Kraaijenoord, M., & Thielen, E. (Eds). *Staat & Slavernij: Het Nederlandse Koloniale Slavernijverleden en zijn Doorwerkingen*. (pp. 106-107) Athenaeum-Polak & van Genneep
- Allen, R. M., Captain, E., Rossum, M. van, Vyent, U., Kraaijenoord, M., & Thielen, E. (2023). *Staat & Slavernij: Het Nederlandse Koloniale Slavernijverleden en zijn Doorwerkingen*. Athenaeum-Polak & van Genneep
- Alofs, L., Dumasy, E., Meyers, K. & Sandie, E. (2023). Kolonialisme en slavernij in het onderwijs: de Nederlandse Cariben en Indonesië. In Allen, R. M., Captain, E., Rossum, M. van, Vyent, U., Kraaijenoord, M., & Thielen, E. (Eds). *Staat & Slavernij: Het Nederlandse Koloniale Slavernijverleden en zijn Doorwerkingen*. (pp. 65-71) Athenaeum-Polak & van Genneep
- Altbach, P.G. (2006). Education and Neocolonialism. In Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, H. (Eds.). *The post-colonial studies reader*. (pp. 452-456) Taylor & Francis.
- Anderson, B. (2020). Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism (pp. 282-288). Routledge.
- Araujo, A. L. (2013). Transnational memory of slave merchants: Making the perpetrators visible in the public space. In *Politics of Memory* (pp. 15-34). Routledge.
- Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, H. (1998). *Key concepts in post-colonial studies*. Psychology Press.
- Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, H. (Eds.). (2006). *The post-colonial studies reader*. Taylor & Francis.
- Azmat, F., Ferdous, A., Rentschler, R., & Winston, E. (2018) Arts-based initiatives in museums: creating value for sustainable development. *Journal of Business Research*, (85) 386–395. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2017.10.016>
- Bagdadli, S., & Paolino, C. (2006). Institutional change in Italian museums: does the museum director have a role to play?. *International Journal of Arts Management*, 4-18.
- Bagnall, G. (2003). Performance and performativity at heritage sites. *Museum and society*, 1(2), 87-103.
- Balkenhol, M. (2010). The Changing Aesthetics of Savagery: Slavery, Belonging, and Post-Colonial Melancholia in the Netherlands. *Etnofoor*, 22(2), 71-89.
- Balkenhol, M. (2011). Emplacing slavery: Roots, monuments and politics of belonging in the Netherlands. *African Diaspora*, 4(2), 135-162.
- Balkenhol, M. (2023). Herdenkingen en doorwerkingen van de slavernij in Nederland. In Allen, R. M., Captain, E., Rossum, M. van, Vyent, U., Kraaijenoord, M., & Thielen, E. (Eds). *Staat & Slavernij: Het Nederlandse Koloniale Slavernijverleden en zijn Doorwerkingen*. (pp. 83-91) Athenaeum-Polak & van Genneep

- Beier-de Haan (2006). Re-staging Histories and Identities. In S. Macdonald (red.), *A Companion to Museum Studies* (pp. 17-32). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Benda, H. J. (1956). The beginnings of the Japanese occupation of Java. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 15(4), 541-560.
- Bennett, T. (1995). *The birth of the museum: History, theory, politics*. Routledge.
- Bennett, T. (1988). The exhibitionary complex (pp. 413-441). Routledge.
- Bernstein, M. (2005). Identity politics. *Annu. Rev. Sociol.*, 31, 47-74.
- Besterman, T. (2006). Museum Ethics. In S. Macdonald (red.), *A Companion to Museum Studies* (pp. 17-32). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Bhatia, S. (2002). Orientalism in Euro-American and Indian psychology: historical representations of "natives" in Colonial and postcolonial contexts. *History of Psychology*, 5(4), 376-398.
- Bijl, P. (2018). Colonial memory and forgetting in the Netherlands and Indonesia. In *Colonial Counterinsurgency and Mass Violence* (pp. 261-281). Routledge.
- Bink, M. (n.d.). Studio Wendy Rommers. photograph, The Hague. Retrieved January 18, 2024, from <https://wendyrommers.nl/haags-historisch-museum-koloniaal-den-haag/>.
- Blaas, P. B. M. (2000). *Geschiedenis en nostalgie: de historiografie van een kleine natie met een groot verleden: verspreide historiografische opstellen* (Vol. 31). Uitgeverij Verloren.
- Black, G. (2018). It's the principles that matter. *Defining museums of the 21 st century: plural*, 198-205.
- Blakely, A. (1993). *Blacks in the Dutch world: the evolution of racial imagery in a modern society*. Indiana University Press.
- Blee, K. M. (2002). *Inside organized racism: Women in the hate movement*. Univ of California Press.
- Bloembergen, M. (2004). *Koloniale inspiratie: Frankrijk, Nederland en Indië en de wereldtentoonstellingen*. Brill.
- Bosello, G., & van den Haak, M. (2022). # Arttothepeople? An exploration of Instagram's unfulfilled potential for democratising museums. *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 1-18.
- Bosma, U. (2023). Gedwongen verplaatsing en illegale slavenhandel na de afschaffing. In Allen, R. M., Captain, E., Rossum, M. van, Vyent, U., Kraaijenoord, M., & Thielen, E. (Eds). *Staat & Slavernij: Het Nederlandse Koloniale Slavernijverleden en zijn Doorwerkingen*. (pp. 145-155) Athenaeum-Polak & van Genneep
- Brown, J. A. (2018) The case for an inclusive museum: a perspective from excluded groups and communities. *Defining museums of the 21 st century: plural*, 119 - 126
- Brown, K. (2018). Revisiting the ICOM Definition of a Museum through the lens of EU-LAC Museum Relations. *Defining museums of the 21 st century: plural*, 112 - 118
- Brown, K., & Mairesse, F. (2018). The definition of the museum through its social role. *Curator: The Museum Journal*, 61(4), 525-539.

- Brown, W. (2020). *States of injury: Power and freedom in late modernity*. Princeton University Press.
- Brulon Soares, B. (2021). Decolonising the museum? community experiences in the periphery of the ICOM museum definition. *Curator: The Museum Journal*, 64(3), 439–455.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/cura.12436>
- Brulon Soares, B., & Leshchenko, A. (2018). Museology in Colonial Contexts: A Call for Decolonisation of Museum Theory. *ICOFOM Study Series*, (46), 63-79.
- Brulon, B., Brown, K., & Nazor, O. (2018). Defining museums of the 21st century: plural experiences. In *ICOFOM symposia in Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro and St Andrews*
- Bryman, Alan. (2016). Social research strategies: quantitative research and qualitative research. In *Social Research Methods 5th edition*, 16-36.
- Buchheim, E. (2015). Enabling Remembrance: Japanese-Indisch Descendants Visit Japan. *History & Memory*, 27(2), 104-125.
- Burgers, H. (2010). *De garoeda en de ooievaar; Indonesië van kolonie tot nationale staat* (p. 808). Brill.
- Brandon, P. (2023). Slavernij, kolonialisme en de financiële sector. In Allen, R. M., Captain, E., Rossum, M. van, Vyent, U., Kraaijenoord, M., & Thielen, E. (Eds). *Staat & Slavernij: Het Nederlandse Koloniale Slavernijverleden en zijn Doorwerkingen*. (pp. 161-170) Athenaeum-Polak & van Genneep
- Breman, J. (2023). Koloniale onvrije arbeid in negentiende-eeuws Nederlands-Indië. In Allen, R. M., Captain, E., Rossum, M. van, Vyent, U., Kraaijenoord, M., & Thielen, E. (Eds). *Staat & Slavernij: Het Nederlandse Koloniale Slavernijverleden en zijn Doorwerkingen*. (pp. 173-183) Athenaeum-Polak & van Genneep
- Byrne, S., Clarke, A., Harrison, R., & Torrence, R. (2011). Networks, agents and objects: frameworks for unpacking museum collections. *Unpacking the collection: networks of material and social agency in the museum*, 3-26.
- Caldas-Coulthard, C. R., & Coulthard, M. (Eds.) (1996). *Texts and practices: Readings in critical discourse analysis*. Psychology Press.
- Camarero, C., & Garrido, M. J. (2008). The influence of market and product orientation on museum performance. *International Journal of Arts Management*, 14-26.
- Captain, E. (2014). Harmless identities: Representations of racial consciousness among three generations Indo-Europeans. In *Dutch racism* (pp. 53-69). Brill.
- Caris, K. (2023). *Ons Land: Dekolonisatie, Generaties, Verhalen*. Museum Sophiahof.
- Chakrabarty, D. (2006). Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History. In Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, H. (Eds.). *The post-colonial studies reader*. (pp. 383-388) Taylor & Francis.
- Chakraborty, T. (2023). Nederlandse slavernij in Zuid-Azië. In Allen, R. M., Captain, E., Rossum, M. van, Vyent, U., Kraaijenoord, M., & Thielen, E. (Eds). *Staat & Slavernij: Het Nederlandse*

- Koloniale Slavernijverleden en zijn Doorwerkingen.* (pp. 307-317) Athenaeum-Polak & van Genneep
- Chwatal, C. (2018). Decolonizing the Ethnographic Museum. Art Papers. Retrieved from <https://www.artpapers.org/decolonizing-the-ethnographic-museum>
- College voor de Rechten van de Mens. (2023). Excuses voor het slavernijverleden. *Mensenrechten*. <https://www.mensenrechten.nl/actueel/toegelicht/toegelicht/2022/excuses-voor-het-slavernijverleden>
- Connell, J. P., & Kubish, A. C. (1998). Applying a Theory of Change Approach to the Evaluation of Comprehensive Community Initiatives: Progress, Prospects, and Problems. *New Approaches to Evaluating Community Initiatives*, 2(15-44), 1-16.
- Craft, B. (2016). *Increasing the influence of LDC climate diplomacy: Developing a theory of change*. International Institute for Environment and Development.
- Cribb, R. (2011). Avoiding Clemency: The Trial and Transfer of Japanese War Criminals in Indonesia, 1946–1949. *Japanese Studies*, 31(2), 151-170.
- Crooke, E. (2006). Museums and Community. In S. Macdonald (red.), *A Companion to Museum Studies* (pp. 17-32). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Dalal-Clayton, A. (2020). Why Words Matter: The Impact of Art Museum Interpretation on the Production of Art's Histories.
- De Keizer, M., & Plomp, M. (2010). *Een Open Zenuw : Hoe Wij Ons De Tweede Wereldoorlog Herinneren*. Amsterdam: Bakker.
- Delgado, A., & Mycock, A. (Eds.). (2023). *Conflicts in History Education in Europe: Political Context, History Teaching, and National Identity*. IAP.
- Dian, M. (2015). Interpreting Japan's contested memory: Conservative and progressive traditions. *International Relations*, 29(3), 363-377.
- Dirlik, A. (1997) "The postcolonial aura: third world criticism in the age of global capitalism," in A. McClintock, A. Mufti and E. Shohat (eds)
- Drieënhuizen, C. (2023). Methode: slavernij en visuele bronnen. In Allen, R. M., Captain, E., Rossum, M. van, Vyent, U., Kraaijenoord, M., & Thielen, E. (Eds). *Staat & Slavernij: Het Nederlandse Koloniale Slavernijverleden en zijn Doorwerkingen*. (pp. 198-200) Athenaeum-Polak & van Genneep
- Elam, J. D. (2019, January 15). Postcolonial theory. Oxford Bibliographies. Retrieved November 28, 2021, from <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780190221911/obo-9780190221911-0069.xml>.
- Essed, P., Hoving, I., Baeten, I., & Abdou, A. (2014). Dutch racism (P. Essed & I. Hoving, Eds.). Rodopi.

- Fairclough, N. (2013). Critical discourse analysis. In *The Routledge handbook of discourse analysis* (pp. 9-20). Routledge
- Foley, G. (2000). The enlightenment, imperialism, and the evolution of museums.
- Fraser, N. (2014). *Justice interruptus: Critical reflections on the " postsocialist" condition*. Routledge.
- Frederick, W. H. (2012). The Killing of Dutch and Eurasians in Indonesia's National Revolution (1945-49): A 'brief Genocide' Reconsidered. In *Journal of Genocide Research*, 14(3-4), (pp. 359-380) Routledge.
- Fyfe, G. (2006). Sociology and the Social Aspects of Museums. In S. Macdonald (red.), *A Companion to Museum Studies* (pp. 17-32). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Galen, van. C. (2023). Methode: slavenregisters en onderzoek. In Allen, R. M., Captain, E., Rossum, M. van, Vyent, U., Kraaijenoord, M., & Thielen, E. (Eds). *Staat & Slavernij: Het Nederlandse Koloniale Slavernijverleden en zijn Doorwerkingen*. (pp. 156-158) Athenaeum-Polak & van Genneep
- Garlandini, A. (2018). ICOM's museum definition, Code of Ethics and policy in favour of museums and heritage. *Defining museums of the 21 st century: plural*, 169-176.
- Geeta, C., & Nair, S. (2013). *Power, postcolonialism and international relations: Reading race, gender and class*. Routledge.
- Gentry, K., & Smith, L. (2019). Critical heritage studies and the legacies of the late-twentieth century heritage canon. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 25(11), 1148-1168.
- Geugten, T. van der. (2023). Het slavernijverleden in het Nederlands onderwijs. In Allen, R. M., Captain, E., Rossum, M. van, Vyent, U., Kraaijenoord, M., & Thielen, E. (Eds). *Staat & Slavernij: Het Nederlandse Koloniale Slavernijverleden en zijn Doorwerkingen*. (pp. 53-63) Athenaeum-Polak & van Genneep
- Gezius, H. Van leed en verzet naar veerkracht: slavernij in Suriname. In Allen, R. M., Captain, E., Rossum, M. van, Vyent, U., Kraaijenoord, M., & Thielen, E. (Eds). *Staat & Slavernij: Het Nederlandse Koloniale Slavernijverleden en zijn Doorwerkingen*. (pp. 237-247) Athenaeum-Polak & van Genneep
- Goffman, E. (2006). Defining Performance. In Schechner, R. *Performance Studies. An Introduction (tweede editie)* (p. 23). New York [etc.]: Routledge.
- Gruber, J. (2019). De theologie dekoloniseren-De ontregelende werking van de cultuurwetenschappen. *Tijdschrift voor Theologie*, 59(3), 235-256.
- Gubrium, J. F., Holstein, J. A., Marvasti, A. B., & McKinney, K. D. (Eds.). (2012). *The SAGE handbook of interview research: The complexity of the craft*. Sage Publications.
- Hancock, C. (2015). Decolonising Museums. L'Internationale Online. Retrieved October 14, 2021, from <https://framerframed.nl/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Decolonising-Museums.pdf>.

- Hardon A., Hodgkin C. and Fresle D. (2004). How to Investigate the Use of Medicines by Consumers. World Health Organization and University of Amsterdam. Retrieved from <http://apps.who.int/medicinedocs/en/d/Js6169e/> on 30 September 2015.
- Harrison, R. (2013). *Heritage: Critical approaches*. Routledge.
- Harrison, R. (2011). Consuming colonialism: Curio Dealers' catalogues, souvenir objects and indigenous agency in Oceania. In *Unpacking the collection: networks of material and social agency in the museum* (pp. 55-82). New York, NY: Springer New York.
- Haq, M. (2015). The Invisible and the Visible In Hancock. C. (Eds.) *Decolonising museums*. (pp. 8-22) Ghent: L'Internationale Online.
- Hein, H. S. (2000). *The museum in transition: A philosophical perspective*. Smithsonian Institution.
- Hewett, R. (2015). Children of decolonisation: Postcolonial Indo (Eurasian) communities in Indonesia and the Netherlands. *Indonesia and the Malay world*, 43(126), 191-206.
- Hillier, B., & Tzortzi, K. (2006). Space syntax: The language of museum space. In S. Macdonald (Ed.), *A Companion to Museum Studies* (pp. 282-301). London: Blackwell
- Hoebink, D. (2016). *Erfgoed als schouwspel*.
- Hoebink, D. (2017). *Het Museum als Performance. Een conceptueel model voor onderzoekers, professionals en adviseurs*.
- Immler, N. L. (2022). The Netherlands-Indies; Rethinking post-colonial recognition from a multi-voiced perspective. *Wacana, Journal of the Humanities of Indonesia*, 23(3), 692-720
- Immler, N. (2023). Een perspectief op herstel en *transformative justice*. In Allen, R. M., Captain, E., Rossum, M. van, Vyent, U., Kraaijenoord, M., & Thielen, E. (Eds). *Staat & Slavernij: Het Nederlandse Koloniale Slavernijverleden en zijn Doorwerkingen*. (pp. 95-105) Athenaeum-Polak & van Genneep
- Janes, R. R., & Sandell, R. (2019). *Museum activism*. Routledge.
- Janmohamed, A.R. (2006). The Economy of Manichean Allegory. In Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, H. (Eds.). *The post-colonial studies reader*. (pp. 18-23) Taylor & Francis.
- Jong, W. D. (2022). Decolonizing citizenship: democracy, citizenship and education in the Netherlands, 1960–2020. *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire*, 29(6), 1002-1023.
- Jordan, P. (2023). Inheriting “Difficult Histories”: National Identities, Memory Debates and Cultural Diversity. *Indigenous Studies and Cultural Diversity*, 1(1), 6-37.
- Jouwe, N. (2023). Een misdaad tegen de menselijkheid: Nederlandse lokale politici en burgemeesters. In Allen, R. M., Captain, E., Rossum, M. van, Vyent, U., Kraaijenoord, M., & Thielen, E. (Eds). *Staat & Slavernij: Het Nederlandse Koloniale Slavernijverleden en zijn Doorwerkingen*. (pp. 39-49) Athenaeum-Polak & van Genneep

- Kamminga, M. R. (2022). De morele betwistbaarheid van nationale slavernijexcuses. *Filosofie & Praktijk*, 43(2), 4-21.
- Kaplan, F. (2006). Making and Remaking National Identities. In S. Macdonald (red.), *A Companion to Museum Studies* (pp. 431-441). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Karabinos, M. J. (2013). Displaced archives, displaced history: recovering the seized archives of Indonesia. *Bijdragen tot de taal-, land-en volkenkunde/Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia*, 169(2-3), 279-294.
- Kauffman, L. A. (2001). The anti-politics of identity. *Identity politics in the women's movement*, 20(1), 23-34.
- Klinkers, E. (2023). Het kronkelige pad van slavernij naar 'vrije' arbeid. In Allen, R. M., Captain, E., Rossum, M. van, Vyent, U., Kraaijenoord, M., & Thielen, E. (Eds). *Staat & Slavernij: Het Nederlandse Koloniale Slavernijverleden en zijn Doorwerkingen*. (pp. 111-121) Athenaeum-Polak & van Genneep
- Koloniaal Den Haag: Een onvoltooid verleden*. (2023). Haags Historisch Museum.
- Kooiman, M. (2015). The Dutch VOC mentality: Cultural policy as a business model. In Hancock, C. (Edds.) *Decolonising museums*. (pp. 41-53) Ghent: L'Internationale Online
- Kraaijenoord, M. & Thielen, E. (2023). Interviews: multiperspectiviteit in het publieke slavernijdebat. In Allen, R. M., Captain, E., Rossum, M. van, Vyent, U., Kraaijenoord, M., & Thielen, E. (Eds). *Staat & Slavernij: Het Nederlandse Koloniale Slavernijverleden en zijn Doorwerkingen*. (pp. 72-81) Athenaeum-Polak & van Genneep
- Kreps, C. F. (2008). Appropriate Museology in Theory and Practice. *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 23 (1), 23-41.
- Krzyżanowski, M. (2010). *The Discursive Construction of European identities: A Multilevel Approach to Discourse and Identity in the Transforming European Union*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- Kunst, Marijke. (2018). "Being True to the Catalogue" In *Words Matter: An Unfinished Guide to Word Choices in the Cultural Sector* (pp. 27-30). Tropenmuseum/Afrika Museum/Museum Volkenkunde/Wereldmuseum.
- Lauret, L. (2023). De Nederlandse politiek en slavernij in de negentiende eeuw. In Allen, R. M., Captain, E., Rossum, M. van, Vyent, U., Kraaijenoord, M., & Thielen, E. (Eds). *Staat & Slavernij: Het Nederlandse Koloniale Slavernijverleden en zijn Doorwerkingen*. (pp. 133-143) Athenaeum-Polak & van Genneep
- Loenen van, R. (2022). *Tropenmuseum Amsterdam* . Youtube . photograph, Amsterdam ; Youtube . Retrieved April 1, 2024, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kW-w6dJhnT4>.
- Loomba, A. (2015). *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315751245>

- Macdonald, S. (2006). Expanding Museum Studies: An Introduction. In S. Macdonald (red.), *A Companion to Museum Studies* (pp. 17-32). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Macdonald, S., Leahy, H. R., Witcomb, A., McCarthy, C., Henning, M., Coombes, A. E., & Phillips, R. B. (2015). *The International Handbooks of Museum Studies*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Macdonald, S.J. (2012). Museums, National, Postnational and Transcultural Identities. In *Museum Studies: An Anthology of Contexts*, ed. B.M. Carbonell, 273–286.
- Macleod, S., Hourston Hanks, L., & Hale, J. (2012). *Museum Making : Narratives, Architectures, Exhibitions*. Londen [etc.]: Routledge.
- Mairesse, F., & Desvallées, A. (2010). Key concepts of museology. *International Council of Museums: Armand Colin*.
- Mandoeng, R. (2022). Dutch Design Daily. photograph, Amsterdam. Retrieved January 18, 2024, from <http://dutchdesigndaily.com/nl/nieuw/onze-koloniale-erfenis/>.
- Marstine, J. (Ed.). (2011). *Routledge companion to museum ethics* (pp. 1-12). London: Routledge.
- Mason, R. (2006). Cultural Theory and Museum Studies. In S. Macdonald (red.), *A Companion to Museum Studies* (pp. 17-32). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Mayring, P. (2004). Qualitative content analysis. *A companion to qualitative research*, 1(2), 159-176.
- McCall, V., & Gray, C. (2014). Museums and the ‘new museology’: theory, practice and organisational change. *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 29(1), 19-35.
- Meel, P. (1990). Money talks, morals vex: the Netherlands and the decolonization of Suriname, 1975-1990. *Revista Europea de Estudios Latinoamericanos y del Caribe/European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, 75-98.
- Message, K., & Witcomb, A. (2013). Museum theory: An expanded field. *The international handbooks of museum studies*, xxxv-lxiii.
- Ministerie van Algemene Zaken. (2023, August 10). Collectieve erkenning Indische Gemeenschap. Tweede Wereldoorlog | Rijksoverheid.nl. <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/tweede-wereldoorlog/collectieve-erkenning-indische-gemeenschap>
- Ministerie van Algemene Zaken. (2023a, July 4). *Commissie versterking Kennis Geschiedenis Voormalig Nederlands-Indië*. Tweede Wereldoorlog | Rijksoverheid.nl. <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/tweede-wereldoorlog/collectieve-erkenning-indische-gemeenschap/commissie-versterking-kennis-geschiedenis-nederlands-indie>
- Ministerie van Algemene Zaken. (2023b, December 11). *Herdenkingsjaar Slavernijverleden*. Discriminatie en racisme | Rijksoverheid.nl. <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/discriminatie-en-racisme/slavernijverleden/herdenkingsjaar-slavernijverleden>
- Ministerie van Algemene Zaken. (2023c, November 10). *Slavernijverleden Koninkrijk der Nederlanden*. Discriminatie en racisme | Rijksoverheid.nl.

- <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/discriminatie-en-racisme/slavernijverleden/slavernijverleden-koninkrijk-der-nederlanden>
- Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, W. en S. (2022, September 27). *Projectplan Collectieve Erkenning Indische gemeenschap in Nederland*. Publicatie | Rijksoverheid.nl.
<https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/tweede-wereldoorlog/documenten/publicaties/2021/10/25/collectieve-erkenning-indische-gemeenschap-in-nederland>
- Modood, T. (2010). Difference, 'Multi' and Equality. In Seymour, M. (Eds.), *The plural states of recognition*. (pp. 152-171) Springer.
- Morais, S. D. B. R., & de Souza Reis, M. A. G. (2018) Inclusion vs. Exclusion in Museums: the invisibility of people with disability. *Defining museums of the 21 st century: plural*, 146 - 152.
- Morales, T., & Camarena, C. (2018). Why is the definition of a community museum important?. *Defining museums of the 21st century: Plural experiences*, 222-227.
- Museum definition*. Museum Definition - ICOM Nederland. (n.d.). Retrieved May 26, 2022, from <https://icom.nl/en/activities/museum-definition#:~:text='A%20museum%20is%20a%20non,'>
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. J. (2019). Discourses of decolonisation/decoloniality. *Papers on Language and Literature*, 55(3), 201-226.
- Nimako, K., Abdou, A., & Willemsen, G. (2014). Chattel slavery and racism: A reflection on the Dutch experience. In *Dutch Racism* (pp. 31-51). Brill.
- Nimako, K. (2023). Afschaffing zonder emancipatie. In Allen, R. M., Captain, E., Rossum, M. van, Vyent, U., Kraaijenoord, M., & Thielen, E. (Eds). *Staat & Slavernij: Het Nederlandse Koloniale Slavernijverleden en zijn Doorwerkingen*. (pp. 125-131) Athenaeum-Polak & van Gennep
- NTR Caribisch Netwerk. (2022, June 27). *Antwoorden over Koloniale Erfenis bij Het Tropenmuseum*. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RxFyh5MEEU>
- Ocasio, W., Mauskapf, M., & Steele, C. W. (2016). History, society, and institutions: The role of collective memory in the emergence and evolution of societal logics. *Academy of Management Review*, 41(4), 676-699.
- Onze Koloniale Erfenis*. Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam. (n.d.). Retrieved April 24, 2022, from <https://www.tropenmuseum.nl/nl/zien-en-doen/tentoonstellingen/onze-koloniale-erfenis>
- Oostindie, G.J. (2003). Squaring the circle: Commemorating the VOC after 400 years. *Bijdragen tot de taal-, land- en volkenkunde*, 159(1), 135-161.
- Oostindie, G. (2005). The slippery paths of commemoration and heritage tourism: the Netherlands, Ghana, and the rediscovery of Atlantic slavery. *New West Indian Guide/Nieuwe West-Indische Gids*, 79(1-2), 55-77.

- Oostindie, G. (2011). *Postcolonial Netherlands: Sixty-five years of forgetting, commemorating, silencing* (pp. 1-290). Amsterdam University Press.
- Painter, D. (2015). 38 Postcolonial theory Towards a worlding of critical psychology. *Handbook of critical psychology*.
- Parry, B. (2006). Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse. In Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, H. (Eds.). *The post-colonial studies reader*. (pp. 36-44) Taylor & Francis/
- Photo of the circular area screens in Wereldmuseum Amsterdam* (2023). Photograph.
- Photo of the fifth hall "Ons land en nu?" in the Sophiahof Museum* (2023). photograph.
- Photo of the first hall "Caleidoscopisch Nederland" in the Sophiahof Museum* (2023). Photograph.
- Photo of the fourth hall "Nederlands Indië: Beeld en Tegenbeeld" in the Sophiahof Museum* (2023). photograph.
- Photo of the interactive art piece "the past influences the present." in the Hague Historical Museum* (2023). Photograph.
- Photo of the interactive art piece "The Privilege Pyramid" in Wereldmuseum Amsterdam* (2023). photograph.
- Photo of the Interactive Multimedia "Six Waves of Departure" in the Sophiahof Museum* (2023). Photograph.
- Photo of the multimedia object "Video Installation" in the Sophiahof Museum* (2023). photograph.
- Photo of the object "6 Lucas The" and its presentation in the Sophiahof Museum* (2023). photograph.
- Photo of the Object and Wall Text of "Slavery on the plantation: exploitation and dehumanization" in Wereldmuseum Amsterdam* (2023). photograph.
- Photo of the objects shown with the label text "Salt." in Wereldmuseum Amsterdam* (2023). photograph.
- Photo of the second hall "Gedwongen Ontmoeting" in the Sophiahof Museum* (2023). Photograph.
- Photo of the table of the "Waves of Arrival" in the Sophiahof Muasseum* (2023). Photograph
- Photo of the timeline in the Hague Historical Museum* (2023). photograph.
- Photo of the Wall Text "Christianity and Slavery" in the Haags Historisch Museum* (2023). Photograph.
- Plomp, M. (2010). Het Indisch verzet. In De Keizer, M., & Plomp, M. (Eds.), *Een Open Zenuw : Hoe Wij Ons De Tweede Wereldoorlog Herinneren*. (pp. 284-293) Amsterdam: Bakker.
- Plomp, M. (2010). Het Jappenkamp. In De Keizer, M., & Plomp, M. (Eds.), *Een Open Zenuw : Hoe Wij Ons De Tweede Wereldoorlog Herinneren*. (pp. 296-304) Amsterdam: Bakker.
- Protschky, S. (2011). Dutch still lifes and colonial visual culture in the Netherlands Indies, 1800-1949.
- Rectanus, M. (2006). Globalization: Incorporating the Museum. In S. Macdonald (red.), *A Companion to Museum Studies* (pp. 17-32). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Rijksoverheid. (2021). (rep.). *Projectplan Collectieve Erkenning Indische gemeenschap in Nederland een extra impuls 2021-2024* (pp. 2-7).

- Roque, M. I. (2020). Decolonising the museum: exhibition and mediation of African collections in European museums. *Lusophone Journal of Cultural Studies*, 7(2), 53-71.
- Rossum, M. van. (2023). De economische en sociale impact van het Nederlandse koloniale slavernijverleden. In Allen, R. M., Captain, E., Rossum, M. van, Vyent, U., Kraaijenoord, M., & Thielen, E. (Eds). *Staat & Slavernij: Het Nederlandse Koloniale Slavernijverleden en zijn Doorwerkingen*. (pp. 393-403) Athenaeum-Polak & van Gennep
- Rutte biedt excuses aan voor nederlands slavernijverleden, “geen punt, maar een komma.” (2022, December 19). NOS. Retrieved December 1, 2023, from <https://nos.nl/collectie/13918/artikel/2457031-rutte-biedt-excuses-aan-voor-nederlands-slavernijverleden-geen-punt-maar-een-komma>.
- Rydell, R. W. (2006). World fairs and museums. *A companion to museum studies*, 135-151.
- Said, E. (1978). 1995. Orientalism. *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader (New York and London: Harvester Wheatsheaf)*, 132-49.
- Said, E.W. (2006). Orientalism. In Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, H. (Eds.). *The post-colonial studies reader*. (pp. 87-91) Taylor & Francis.
- Sandell, R. (2007). *Museums, prejudice and the reframing of difference*. Routledge.
- Sarah-Dona. (n.d.). Kloosterboer de verbeelding uitgebeeld. photograph, The Hague . Retrieved January 18, 2024, from <https://www.kloosterboer-decor.nl/project/ons-land-dekolonisatie-generaties-verhalen/>.
- Sauvage, A. (2010). To be or not to be colonial: Museums facing their exhibitions. *Culturales*, 6(12), 97-116.
- Scagliola, S. (2007). The Silences and Myths of a ‘Dirty War’: Coming to Terms with the Dutch–Indonesian Decolonisation War (1945–1949). *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire*, 14(2), 235-262.
- Schechner, R. (2006). *Performance Studies. An Introduction (tweede editie)*. New York [etc.]: Routledge.
- Schrikker, A. (2023). Slavernij in koloniaal Indonesië. In Allen, R. M., Captain, E., Rossum, M. van, Vyent, U., Kraaijenoord, M., & Thielen, E. (Eds). *Staat & Slavernij: Het Nederlandse Koloniale Slavernijverleden en zijn Doorwerkingen*. (pp. 319-329) Athenaeum-Polak & van Gennep
- Schubert, K. (2002). *The Curator's Egg. The evolution of the museum concept from the French Revolution to the present day*. London: One-Off Press.
- Scott, C. (2014). Sharing the divisions of the colonial past: an assessment of the Netherlands–Indonesia shared cultural heritage project, 2003–2006. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 20(2), 181-195.
- Seymour, M. (2010). *The plural states of recognition*. Springer.

- Shelton, A. (2006). Museums and Anthropologies: Practices and Narratives. In S. Macdonald (red.), *A Companion to Museum Studies* (pp. 17-32). Malden, MA: Blackwell
- Smeulders, V. (2023). ‘Soms tijds een Moor bij maegdekens’: de koloniale wereldorde in de Nederlandse kunst. In Allen, R. M., Captain, E., Rossum, M. van, Vyent, U., Kraaijenoord, M., & Thielen, E. (Eds). *Staat & Slavernij: Het Nederlandse Koloniale Slavernijverleden en zijn Doorwerkingen*. (pp. 203-217) Athenaeum-Polak & van Gennep
- Smith, L. (2006). *Uses of heritage*. Routledge.
- Soares, B. B. (2018). Museum in colonial contexts: the politics of defining an imported definition. *Defining museums of the 21 st century: plural*, 163.
- Solomos, J. (1998). Beyond racism and multiculturalism. *Patterns of prejudice*, 32(4), 45-62.
- Steinmetz, C. H. (2021). The Dutch Slavery and Colonization DNA: A call to Engage in Self-Examination. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, 8(11), 111-136.
- Steijlen, F. (2009). To the memory of comrades: Personal remembrance of Dutch war dead in southeast Asia, 1942-45. *Public History Review*, 16, 64-77.
- Steijlen, F. (2010). De Birmaspoorweg. In De Keizer, M., & Plomp, M. (Eds.), *Een Open Zenuw : Hoe Wij Ons De Tweede Wereldoorlog Herinneren*. (pp. 96-104) Amsterdam: Bakker.
- Ter Keurs, P. (2009). COLLECTING IN THE COLONY: Hybridity, power and prestige in the Netherlands East Indies. *Indonesia and the Malay World*, 37(108), 147-161.
- Tiffin, H. (2006). Post-colonial Literatures and Counter-discourse. In Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, H. (Eds.). *The post-colonial studies reader*. (pp. 95-98) Taylor & Francis.
- Tol, J. van den. (2023). Particuliere belangen bij slavernijpolitiek en koloniale expansiepolitiek. In Allen, R. M., Captain, E., Rossum, M. van, Vyent, U., Kraaijenoord, M., & Thielen, E. (Eds). *Staat & Slavernij: Het Nederlandse Koloniale Slavernijverleden en zijn Doorwerkingen*. (pp. 359-365) Athenaeum-Polak & van Gennep
- Touwen-Bouwsma, E. (1996). The Indonesian nationalists and the Japanese “liberation” of Indonesia: visions and reactions. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 27(1), 1-18.
- Touwens-Bouwsma, E. (2010). Het Bronbeekpark. In De Keizer, M., & Plomp, M. (Eds.), *Een Open Zenuw: Hoe Wij Ons De Tweede Wereldoorlog Herinneren*. (pp. 106-114) Amsterdam: Bakker.
- Turunen, J. (2019). Decolonising European minds through heritage. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 26(10), 1013-1028.
- United Nations. (2019). *UN human rights expert calls on States to make reparations for colonialism and slavery*. OHCHR. Retrieved from <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2019/10/un-human-rights-expert-calls-states-make-reparations-colonialism-and-slavery>

- United Nations Development Group (n.d.). *Theory of Change: UNDAF Companion Guidance*. Retrieved from <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/UNDG-UNDAF-Companion-Pieces-7-Theory-of-Change.pdf>
- Van Beurden, J. (2018). Decolonisation and Colonial Collections: An Unresolved Conflict. *BMGN: Low Countries Historical Review*, 133(2).
- Van der Laan, A. (2019). *How to design a Theory of Change*. Retrieved from <https://datajourney.akvo.org/blog/how-to-design-a-theory-of-change>
- Van Dijk T. (2001). "Critical discourse analysis." In *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, edited by Schiffrin D, Tannen D and Hamilton I.E. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers. 466-485.
- Van Ginkel, R. (2010). 4 en 5 mei. In De Keizer, M., & Plomp, M. (Eds.), *Een Open Zenuw : Hoe Wij Ons De Tweede Wereldoorlog Herinneren*. (pp. 28-38) Amsterdam: Bakker.
- Van Huis, I. (2019). Contesting cultural heritage: Decolonizing the Tropenmuseum as an intervention in the Dutch/European memory complex. *Dissonant heritages and memories in contemporary Europe*, 215-248.
- Van Imhoff, E., & Beets, G. (2004). A demographic history of the Indo-Dutch population, 1930–2001. *Journal of Population Research*, 21, 47-72.
- Van Leeuwen, L. (2010). Het Indisch Huis. In De Keizer, M., & Plomp, M. (Eds.), *Een Open Zenuw : Hoe Wij Ons De Tweede Wereldoorlog Herinneren*. (pp. 276-282) Amsterdam: Bakker.
- Van Stipriaan, A. (2023). De Nederlandse wetenschap en overheid over het slavernijverleden en zijn doorwerkingen. In Allen, R. M., Captain, E., Rossum, M. van, Vyent, U., Kraaijenoord, M., & Thielen, E. (Eds.). *Staat & Slavernij: Het Nederlandse Koloniale Slavernijverleden en zijn Doorwerkingen*. (pp. 25-37) Athenaeum-Polak & van Genneep
- Vázquez, R. (2020). Vistas of modernity: decolonial aesthetics and the end of the contemporary.
- Velden, D. (1977). *De Japanse interneringskampen voor burgers gedurende de Tweede Wereldoorlog*. Wever.
- Waterton, E., & Watson, S. (2013). Framing theory: Towards a critical imagination in heritage studies. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 19(6), 546-561.
- Wereldmuseum Amsterdam (voorheen Tropenmuseum). (2022a, September 8). *Nieuwe Verhalen en perspectieven*. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LvKYe_CCCm0
- Wereldmuseum Amsterdam (voorheen Tropenmuseum). (2022b, October 5). *Nieuwe Verhalen en perspectieven - deel 2*. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ey98rs9S-AA>
- Wereldmuseum Amsterdam (voorheen Tropenmuseum). (2022c, October 31). *Nieuwe Verhalen en perspectieven - deel 3*. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wH9vd1PLWKA>
- Weststeijn, A. (2023). Slavernij van overheidswege: de Staten-Generaal tussen 1581 en 1796. In Allen, R. M., Captain, E., Rossum, M. van, Vyent, U., Kraaijenoord, M., & Thielen, E.

- (Eds). *Staat & Slavernij: Het Nederlandse Koloniale Slavernijverleden en zijn Doorwerkingen*. (pp. 333-343) Athenaeum-Polak & van Genneep
- Wijaya, D. (2019). Public Apology as a Form of Reparation. *International Journal of Global Community*, 2(2-July), 179-194.
- Williams, R. H. (2004). The cultural contexts of collective action: Constraints, opportunities, and the symbolic life of social movements. *The Blackwell companion to social movements*, 91-115.
- Winter, T. (2013). Clarifying the critical in critical heritage studies. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 19(6), 532-545.
- Wodak, R., & Reisigl, M. (2015). Discourse and racism. *The handbook of discourse analysis*, 576-596.
- Wolzak, T. (n.d.). KDJ. photograph, The Hague. Retrieved January 18, 2024, from <https://kossmanndejong.nl/nl/project/ons-land/>.
- Xypolia, I. (2016). Eurocentrism and Orientalism. *The Encyclopedia of Postcolonial Studies*, 1-6.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview guide

Before the interview is conducted, the interviewee will be informed through e-mail. Underneath is an example of what that e-mail will look like:

Dear,

I would like to

approach you regarding my thesis research, whereby I conduct research on a thorough understanding of how a postcolonial theory is applied to decolonialize a museum.

Therefore, I would like to invite you for an interview. During this interview, questions will be asked regarding central themes revolving around setting up an exhibition and in-depth questions about the exhibition “Onze koloniale erfenis”. The conversation will take place in real life or through ZOOM and will last around 40 minutes . This conversation is possible in both Dutch and English.

Privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. No personally identifiable information will be reported in any research product. Moreover, only trained research staff will have access to your responses. This research project involves making audio recordings of the interviews. Transcribed segments from the audio recordings may be used in published forms (e.g., journal articles and book chapters). In the case of publication, pseudonyms will be used.

After the interviewee has agreed to be interviewed, the content of the e-mail will once again be discussed, and there will be a request to record the interview and ask for any clarifications.

The interviews will delve into various themes, encompassing the process of creating exhibitions focusing on decolonisation, identifying successful elements within the process, exploring museum ethics, and addressing other pertinent topics. The questions formulated for the interviews have considered prior research and the underlying theoretical framework. These questions have been tailored to align with specific themes, as indicated in the topic list provided below. The topic list outlines the research question, thematic divisions, general topics, and brief descriptions of each theme. This comprehensive approach ensures that the interview questions cover a wide range of relevant areas besides the general background information questions found in the interview guide.

Schedule

<p>Introduction (5-10 min)</p>	<p>Before beginning the interview, the participant will be asked to read and sign an informed consent form. The option will be to use an alias if they wish to participate anonymously in the research.</p> <p>The introduction will first welcome the participant. Then the general terms that are being focused on within the research. This means that specific definitions of decolonisation will be made clear to avoid miscommunication and get a clearer view of the participant’s thoughts about these topics. Also, assurance will be given about how the interview information will be used, and privacy and other important ground rules will be discussed.</p>
<p>The interview itself (25-30 min)</p>	<p>The background information questions will be asked to get a clearer view of the participant's involvement with the Exhibition.</p> <p>Then more research-focused questions will be asked, which are derived from the topic list, which presents each topic from the previous research and theoretical framework. These</p>

	<p>questions represent the research question.</p> <p>From these questions, there might become clear information, which can lead to spontaneous improvised follow-up questions to dive deeper into the topic.</p>
Debriefing & closure (5-10 min)	<p>The main points of the discussion that stood out will be summarised by closing the interview. At the same time, the participant will be able to make additional comments and ask questions.</p>

Introduction

Hello, nice to meet you and thank you for taking the time to do this interview.

My name is Victor Rosa Molewijk. I am doing a master's degree in Arts, Culture, and Society at Erasmus University Rotterdam. This interview is part of my master's thesis, *The Process of Decolonising the Dutch Indies through Exhibitions*. This specifically focuses on the exhibition "Our Colonial Heritage" currently running in the Tropenmuseum, and as I have understood, will be transported to the Wereldmuseum.

Our topic of discussion will be concerning the process of decolonisation - specifically by looking at this exhibition - while researching the intentions of the curators/creators behind the exhibition.

The results of this interview will be used exclusively for the purposes of this study, and your personal information will remain confidential. Do you agree with recording this session for transcript and analysis purposes? Of course, but I want to emphasise that your names won't be used in the study; you will remain anonymous. I also want to ensure you are only obligated to answer questions if you are willing to. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you can stop at any moment.

The discussion will last about 40 minutes.

Do I have your permission to interview, record this session, and quote you anonymously in the research? Are there any questions before we start?

The Interview

Background Information

- Can you tell me some background information?
- What is your name?
- What is your working background?

- What is your relationship with the Foundation of the National Museums of Worldcultures?
- How have you come to know the Foundation?
- How long have you been connected to the Foundation?
- What is the role and purpose of the Foundation towards society in your opinion?
- In what way were/are you involved in the process of the exhibition “Ons koloniaal erfgoed”?
- Further introduction participant -
- What does the NMVW stand for in your words?

Before proceeding further with this interview, I would like to clarify the definition of decolonisation that is used within this research.

Decolonisation refers to the process of dismantling the colonial power structure that has been established through various institutions and practices, including museums, which categorise collections through a colonial discourse and perpetuate Western-centric thinking (Turunen, 2019, p. 1017). This Eurocentric approach glorifies Western countries and exoticizes other countries, often without acknowledging their current cultural situation (Volkenkunde Museum, 2020, p. 81-82). Decolonisation aims to acknowledge and validate Indigenous knowledge, epistemologies and ontologies, recover marginalized and repressed knowledge, and challenge current paradigms of Western knowledge (Waterton & Watson, 2013; Rydell, 2006; Turunen, 2019). It involves removing the hegemony over resources and human capital in former colonies, removing colonial categorisations and racial justifications of objects, and confronting the wrongdoings of the country's colonial history. It is an essential step towards establishing social cohesion and promoting identity and nationhood (Allen & Jobson, 2016; Van Beurden, 2018).

Do you agree or disagree with this definition? Why? Is there something you would like to add to this definition?

Topic List & Questions

Research Question: *To what extent and in what ways are postcolonial and decolonial museum theories translated into actual museum practices within Dutch museums dealing with the Dutch colonial legacy in their exhibitions?*

Main Theme	Topic	Summary of Topic	Interview Question
<p>The Background: Postcolonial criticism</p>	<p>Colonialism and Decolonisation</p>	<p>The concept of colonialism is defined by various scholars in different ways, but it generally involves the imposition of Western ideologies and taxonomies on colonised societies, resulting in ongoing political and social issues such as migration and racism. Decolonisation, on the other hand, is about acknowledging and valuing indigenous knowledge and epistemologies to challenge Western paradigms and imagine alternative futures, as well as increasing inclusivity and representation. The process of decolonisation is ongoing and requires continual effort to challenge established power structures and re-examine historical and cultural domains.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are, according to you, the most important things to take into account in the decolonisation process or debate today?
	<p>Postcolonial Theory</p>	<p>Postcolonial theory focuses on individuals and institutions that were impacted by the colonial process, including those who were relocated due to colonialism. It also acknowledges the ongoing global legacy of colonialism and its impact on international relations. It also notes the intertwining of race-ethnicity and class within colonialism, with race being a socially constructed concept linked to economic and cultural hierarchy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How does Postcolonial Theory play a role within the way the institution acts? - To what extent has postcolonial theory informed or influenced the creation of this exhibition? <p>Titles for post-colonial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Brulon Soares, B., & Leshchenko, A. (2018). <i>Museology in Colonial Contexts: A Call for Decolonisation of Museum Theory. ICOFOM Study Series</i>, (46), 63-79. ● Loomba, Ania. <i>Colonialism/Postcolonialism . The New Critical Idiom</i>. London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2015
	<p>Identity Politics Theory</p>	<p>Identity politics is a phenomenon that focuses on cultural, psychological, or symbolic aspects, rather than challenging power relations. It provides a comprehensive view of the interplay between experience, culture, identity, politics, and power and can help analyse the ideology behind certain groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - While creating the exhibition, was there any consultation with historically marginalised groups that are being

		<p>However, critics argue that it creates a strict division between the cultural politics of recognition and the social politics of justice and equality, ignoring their interdependence. Despite its limitations, identity politics can challenge dominant representations and maintain collective identity by defining and analysing interests through political consciousness.</p>	<p>represented in the exhibition?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - And if so, how did their contributions influence the form and content of the exhibition?
<p>The Regulations regarding Decolonising in Practice</p>	<p>Decolonisation of the Museum</p>	<p>The topic concerns the connection between colonialism and museums, and how this influences museum representation with a Eurocentric perspective. Decolonising museums involves changing how colonial history is represented, rearranging collections, collaborating with represented cultures, and adopting a critical perspective in representing history. This requires removing colonial categorisation and justification and promoting inclusivity to showcase power dynamics and promote equality. The 2002 Declaration of the Importance and Value of Universal Museums aims to remove any form of racism by adapting collections in prominent European museums.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does the exhibition have impact on the decolonisation process of the institution/museum itself? - Would you say that the NMVW is currently in a process of decolonisation? If so, what steps have already been taken, and what steps still need to be taken in this process according to you? - Are there any improvements that still can be made in the matter of decolonising the institution, and what should these be? - Why do you think that this exhibition - and this trend of decolonisation is happening currently compared to 5 or 10 years ago? - Has the audience perspective changed in the matter of decolonisation? For example, feedback from the audience for the

			<p>museum to give this topic more attention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does the Foundation train its employees in terms of (de)colonising?
	<p>The Rise of Museum Ethics</p>	<p>The role of museums in society is debated, with Sandell (2007) arguing that museums must embrace "moral activism" to promote social inclusion and human rights. Soares (2018) views museums as culturally determined institutions that can serve as mediators for different communities. The International Community of Museums (ICOM) defines museums as non-profit, permanent institutions that serve society and its development through acquiring, conserving, researching, communicating, and exhibiting the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Next to the process of decolonisation currently influencing many cultural organisations today, we see a broader movement of museums taking a more activist stance in societal debates. Do you think this development is also taking place in the museum? That the museum has become more politically or morally explicit in general? - Does the Foundation value the inclusivity of its visitors and employees? - And how does this relate to issues of inclusivity, another term widely used these days? Does the museum have any concrete policies or practices with the aim to stimulate inclusivity towards its visitors and employees? if so, what are these? - Do you think that your museum, and museums in general, have a role to play in promoting societal

			change (inclusivity, human rights)
The museum as an Organisation and Institution theory	The Origin of the Museum	The modern museum originated in Europe during the 18th and 19th centuries and primarily served to preserve heritage and culture, present knowledge about objects, and represent national identity. However, the first museums displayed objects from other cultures, aestheticizing them and taking them out of their original context to justify Western hegemony and imperialism. The modern museum originated from World Fairs, which focused on modernism and technological advancements through a utopian ideology, often stereotyping the colonised inhabitants through ethnic and racial categories. The effects of the World Fairs can still be seen in modern museums, which identify with the nation and showcase its development through artworks and objects, influencing visitors to feel a sense of national unity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To what extent is what you said above different, or similar to the educational roles that museum had set for themselves in the 20th century? Museums always have had educational roles, trying to improve our understanding of society? Are things different now, and if so, how?
	Theory of Museology	The concept of museology is defined as the philosophical territory of knowledge-forming within political and power structures, drawing from various disciplines and influenced by postcolonial studies and anthropology. Museology has evolved through different stages and has been criticised for its Eurocentric approach, but efforts have been made to incorporate different epistemic frameworks and increase diversity in authors, geography, and culture. The International Committee for Museology and the International Council of Museums have played significant roles in the discipline's development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does the NMVW consult organisations as ICOFOM in creating exhibitions or adjusting its policies? - And how does this relate to the international context? How does the current direction of the NMVW fit in the activities of similar museums worldwide, and organisations like ICOFOM?
The exhibition as the carrier of meaning	Commemoration and Memorialising	This topic concerns the relationship between emotional and physical mapping at museums, which can lead to a confirmatory or rejective reading of the site's message. Collective memory and national narratives play a crucial role in the consumption experience at heritage sites, which are social constructions that	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Let's take a closer look at the exhibition itself. How, would you say, do the topics and ideas we just discuss manifest themselves in the exhibition itself? In other words, how does the

		benefit the nation but can also be a shared trauma. The analysis of collective memory helps in understanding the development and conflict of a nation's memory, and historians play a decisive role in constructing societal theories. However, history is often used to indoctrinate and manipulate people, and the colonial nature of archives must be acknowledged to reverse their previous archival authority.	<p>visitor encounter ideas like (repeat and repeat) when looking at the object, reading the texts and experiencing the exhibition in general?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - So, to what extent, would you say, does the exhibition change the general audience's perception of the colonial history and heritage of the Netherlands?
	<p>Social Impact Measurement: Theory of Change</p>	<p>Cultural organizations, such as museums, aim to demonstrate their social purpose and impact on society. Social impact measurements can help organizations understand their influence on society, stakeholders, and themselves, and identify areas for improvement. However, measuring social impact can face challenges such as contradictory recommendations from stakeholders and difficulty in measuring long-term effects. A theory of change (ToC) is a way of thinking about how change occurs and can be used to develop a clear understanding of an organization's mission, inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and intended impact.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does the exhibition result into a certain impact? What is the impact that is aimed for? - What other form of impact do you think or hope that the exhibition has? - What is the general reaction from the audience and other stakeholders on this exhibition? - Is there any feedback from the audience, if so, how is this feedback taken by the museum?
<p>The exhibition “Our Colonial Heritage”</p>		<p>Specific questions about the process of the exhibition will be asked in this section</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How has the exhibition come into its final form? - What was the process of creating the exhibition? - What other tools have been used to properly represent the vision that the creator/curator has been aiming for?

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How does this exhibition differ from other exhibitions? - What can we learn from the process of this exhibition?
--	--	--	---

The Debriefing & Closure

The main points that we have discussed are (see topic list)

Do you have any remarks or questions about the following that we have discussed? Is there something you want to add to this interview?

Thank you so much for your participation and time. Please let me know if there are other people you know that might be open for a similar interview that could contribute to this research.

I really appreciate it.

Appendix 2: Interview summaries

The interviews followed the questions that can be consulted in the interview guide and discussed various aspects of decolonisation in museums, particularly concerning the representation and interpretation of colonial history and its impact. The full interviews that are transcribed in Dutch can be found in a separate document that consists of all primary sources that were used for this research.

Interview Valerie Veenliet - curator Haags Historisch Museum

Valerie Veenliet, a historian and curator, specialises in making academic history accessible to the public through the museum. She has been working as a curator at the Haags Historisch Museum for the past two years, managing the museum's collection, conducting research, and collaborating with the museum's management and project teams. The museum aims to narrate The Hague's local and national history while encouraging reflection and comprehension of societal structures and discussions.

In the context of decolonisation, Valerie recognises the importance of decolonising museum collections and addressing the narratives they convey. She advocates for multiple perspectives,

challenging Eurocentric glorification and exoticification and acknowledging the lingering impact of colonial structures. Valerie observes a growing awareness and acknowledgement of the colonial past and its consequences, fuelled by the efforts of advocates for change. She hopes that the Haags Historisch Museum and other museums will become more inclusive and representative of diverse stories and perspectives.

The museum actively engages in discussions on representation, employs inclusive language, and seeks collaborative input. Valerie underscores the significance of deliberate choices in language, imagery, and narratives to challenge existing notions, highlight resistance and resilience, and encourage critical engagement with history. The museum relies on research, expert guidance, and community contributions to create exhibitions that break from established patterns and offer broader perspectives. While focusing on Dutch colonies in Indonesia, Suriname, and the Caribbean, the museum also acknowledges other colonial histories. Valerie believes museums, including the Haags Historisch Museum, play a crucial role in decolonisation efforts by fostering inclusivity and promoting a comprehensive understanding of history.

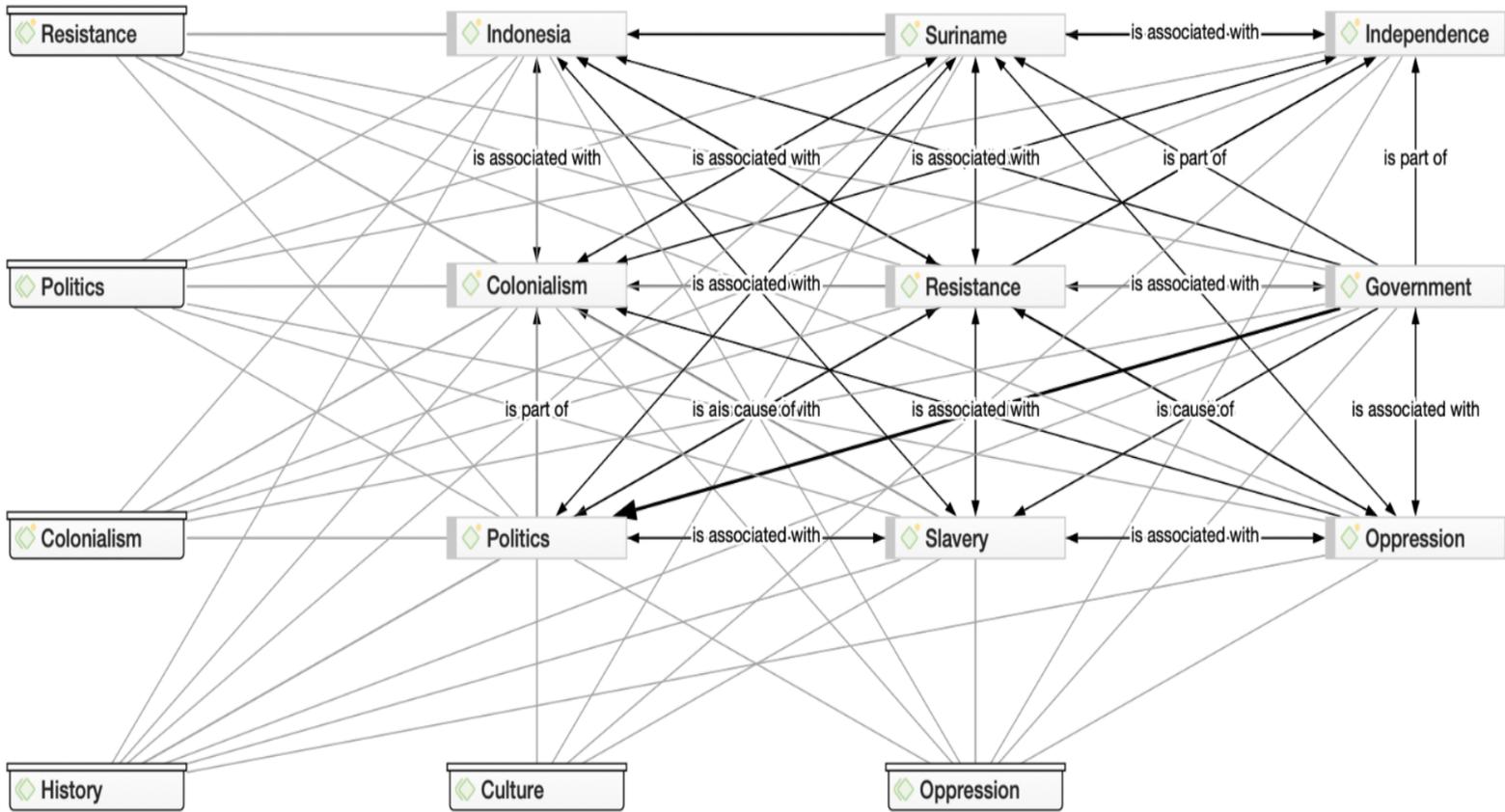
Interview Maria Rey-Lamslag - Curator Wereldmuseum Rotterdam

Maria works as an exhibition maker at the Wereldmuseum, a part of the National Museum for World Cultures. The organisation comprises four ethnological museums that have merged and share resources. Ethnological museums have transformed their exhibition curation approach from a regional focus to a more thematic and globalised approach. Curators specialise in specific regions or themes.

This shift moves away from the practice of "othering" cultures. Therefore, shifting away from a Eurocentric perspective towards a more inclusive and multi-perspective approach is emphasised. It adopts a more globalised and inclusive perspective, highlighting our fundamental similarities despite differences, fostering cultural exchange and presenting objects with diverse contextual stories. The museums aim to avoid exoticizing cultures and prioritise human experiences and cultural exchange.

Although measuring it is challenging, the museum aims to have a social impact. Collaboration with stakeholders and thematic specialisation in exhibition creation is crucial for a comprehensive and diverse narrative. Decolonisation is an ongoing process that challenges power structures, encourages inclusive language, and incorporates diverse perspectives. Maria emphasises the importance of giving space to different voices and working with the community. Language use, image representation, and avoiding stereotypes are highlighted to promote awareness, reflection, and social change. Museums' roles in education, social cohesion, and public debate are emphasised, along with recognising challenges and underrepresentation in representation.

The Wereldmuseum is preparing for an exhibition called "Colonial Past Rotterdam," which examines the city's involvement in colonial slavery.



Appendix 3: Codetree results into the main thematic codes

Appendix 4: Document Groups of Atlas.TI

Document Category	Amount of Documents
Book exhibition	102
Carribbean Islands	127
Haags Historisch Museum	283
Indonesia/New Guinea	445
Interactive	14
Label Texts	473
Multimedia	103
Objects	148
QR Codes	18
Quotation	24
Sophiahof Museum	103
Suriname	229
Theme Label	172
Timeline	51
Tropenmuseum	496
Wall Texts	59
Zaal 1: A profitable business for whom? (Tropenmuseum)	86
Zaal 1: Caleidoscopisch Nederland (Sophiahof Museum)	9
Zaal 1: Ridderzaal (Haags Historisch Museum)	5
Zaal 2: Gedwongen Ontmoeting (Sophiahof Museum)	28
Zaal 2: Video Kolonialisme (Haags Historisch Museum)	1
Zaal 2: Wealth from Overseas (Tropenmuseum)	61
Zaal 3: Decision Makers and their Decisions (Haags Historisch Museum)	40
Zaal 3: De Overtocht (Sophiahof Museum)	37
Zaal 3: Slavery, resistance and resilience (Tropenmuseum)	88
Zaal 4: Nederlands Indië: Beeld en Tegenbeeld (Sophiahof Museum)	14
Zaal 4: Racism exists, not race (Tropenmuseum)	53
Zaal 4: Resistance and Revolt (Haags Historisch Museum)	58
Zaal 5: Migration and Decolonization (Haags Historisch Museum)	57
Zaal 5: On the Road to Freedom (Tropenmuseum)	69
Zaal 5: Ons land en nu? (Sophiahof Museum)	5
Zaal 6: A History for today (Haags Historisch Museum)	82
Zaal 6: The Power of Language (Tropenmuseum)	31
Zaal 7: The Power of Religion (Tropenmuseum)	44
Zaal 8: This is my home (Tropenmuseum)	62

Appendix 5: Code Groups of Atlas.TI

Code groups	Amount of codes
Africa	40
Art	29
Caribbean	74
Colonialism	331
Commemoration	73
Culture	190
Decolonisation	171
Discrimination	76
Education	118
Family	41
History	163
Identity	131
Indentured Labour	45
Independence	122
Indonesia	159
Inequality	87
Migration	92
Nationalism	103
Object	101
Oppression	187
Plantation	68
Politics	291
Racism	64
Religion	56
Representation	120
Resistance	132
Slavery	117
Suriname	111
Trade	67
War	85