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From indentured labourers to a fractured community

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ARIFAH ARUM CANDRA HAYUNINGSIH



THE JAVANESE DIASPORA IN NEW CALEDONIA

From Indentured Labourers to a Fractured Community

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From Indentured Labourers to a Fractured Community

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*For Mami and Hendra.
Also for my father in heaven.*

Table of Contents

Table of Figures__ix

List of Tables__xi

List of Abbreviation and Acronyms__xii

Acknowledgments__xiii

INTRODUCTION__1

*L’Affire des fruits*__1

Main argument and research questions__4

Copceptual framework__4

Diaspora__5

Memories and the myth of origin__7

In search of homeland__9

Religion in diaspora__10

Diaspora politics and state influence__11

Diaspora identity as a process and fractured community__12

Methodology__13

Fieldwork__14

In-depth interviews and gathering data through gossip__16

Archival studies__19

Autobiographical novel analysis__20

Overview of the chapters__21

Chapter 2. Locating new caledonia: the history of the javanese indentured labour diaspora__23

Historical Context__24

*Indentured labour*__24

*From penal colony to indentured labour destination*__25

*Javanese indentured labour recruitment and life in new caledonia*__27

The Emergence of the Javanese Community in New Caledonia__43

Conclusion__44

Chapter 3. Memories and uprooted identities__47

Introduction__47

The *wong kontrak* and memories of the recruitment process__48

*The presence of a werk*__48

*Name changes*__50

The *kawane*: journey through the sea and arriving in the dream land__53

<i>Fictive kinship forged through hardship during travel</i>	__53
<i>The hardship of indentured life in new caledonia</i>	__55
<i>The wong balen and repatriation to a new homeland in Indonesia</i>	__60
<i>The post-indentured memory</i>	__64
<i>Monument and the commemoration of the presence of the javanese community</i>	__64
<i>Autobiographical novels and the memories that bind</i>	__68
<i>Conclusion</i>	__72

Chapter 4. In search of homeland __75

<i>Introduction</i>	__74
<i>Language hybridity</i>	__77
<i>The Taste of Java</i>	__80
<i>Food in the diaspora community: between memory, authenticity and hybridity</i>	__81
<i>The dinner box incident and 'secret' recipes from java</i>	__84
<i>The Sounds of Java</i>	__88
<i>Music and performance</i>	__89
<i>The Visualisation of Java</i>	__96
<i>Javanese landscape painting</i>	__96
<i>Calendar and time</i>	__98
<i>Conclusion</i>	__101

Chapter 5. Religion and beliefs in the community __103

<i>Introduction</i>	__103
<i>A Brief History of Islamic Belief in New Caledonia</i>	__104
<i>Croyants and Islam Kejawen</i>	__106
<i>Death rituals</i>	__106
<i>Banquet and offerings for religious and traditional ceremonies</i>	__108
<i>The presence of a shaman</i>	__112
<i>Pratiquants and the notion of a good Muslim</i>	__116
<i>L'association des musulmans de nouvelle calédonie (amnc)</i>	__118
<i>Puimik (association of indonesian muslims of new caledonia)</i>	__122
<i>Tablighi jamaat</i>	__122
<i>Navigating religious life under secularism and laïcité</i>	__124
<i>Conclusion</i>	__126

Chapter 6. Politics and the future of community __128

<i>Introduction</i>	__128
<i>Indonesian State Hegemony Towards the Diaspora Community</i>	__131

<i>Dharma wanita persatuan (dwp)</i>	__132
<i>The different trajectories and missions of the indonesian consul general in new caledonia</i>	__136
<i>Town twinning</i>	__141
The referendum and the cleavage in the community	__144
<i>The javanese in la brousse: imaginary lines between the javanese in the south and north province</i>	__145
<i>Towards the future of new caledonia</i>	__148
The geopolitical situation	__150
<i>Gathering the scattered bones (ngumpulke balung pisah)</i>	__150
Melanesian and the Papuan issues in Indonesia	__152
Conclusion	__154

Chapter 7. Conclusion __156

Becoming Javanese or being Javanese (in diaspora)?	__157
Patchy memories	__159
Imagining communities in between fraternities and fractures	__160
From memory to history: present-day relevance	__164

Appendix 154 __168

Press release from KJRI Noumea concerning the pro-Papua demonstration	__1168
Petition from FLNKS concerning the support for Papua	__170
Lyrics to songs by Ardi Panatte and Anton Sisal	__172
References	__176
Summary	__195
Samenvatting	__199

Table of Figures

Figure 1.	Penal establishment in New Caledonia	28
Figure 2.	Indentured labour's medical examination	32
Figure 3.	Ship Saint Louis in 1898 which used to bring the Javanese indentured labourers to New Caledonia	33
Figure 4.	Working contract between an indentured labourer and his patron (page 1)	36
Figure 5.	Working contract between an indentured labourer and his patron (page 2)	37
Figure 6.	Indentured labour's salary record	38
Figure 7.	A postcard with picture of Javanese indentured labourers on a coffee plantation	41
Figure 8.	Living conditions on one of a plantation area in New Caledonia, date unknown	53
Figure 9.	Javanese indentured labourers in a plantation area owned by Lietard in Hienghene, North Province, date unknown.....	54
Figure 10.	A representative from the South Province pays her respects in front of the monument in Noumea during the commemoration of the Javanese presence in New Caledonia on 16 February 2021	62
Figure 11.	Javanese female descendants wearing kebaya, and Javanese male descendants wearing surjan at the signature of MoU of town twinning between Yogyakarta and Montdore in 2019	70
Figure 12.	The Javanese language course in AINC held every Thursday from 18.00 – 19.30	74
Figure 13.	Members of AINC's Atelier Di Dapur prepare food for the Omah Cangkem group (the cultural delegation of town twinning from Yogyakarta) in October 2019	80
Figure 14.	Javanese indentured labourers perform wayang wong in Voh region, circa 1920	82
Figure 15.	Angklung Caledonia (KJRI) performance in New Caledonia, 2021	85
Figure 16.	AINC angklung vibration performance in New Caledonia, 2019	86
Figure 17.	Javanese landscape painting in interlocutor's house.....	88
Figure 18.	Calendar 2020 from store Niaouli Import	91
Figure 19.	Calendar 2020 from store Stone Fish	91
Figure 20.	Tumpeng made for the naming ceremony for AINC's new gamelan instrument, AINC Foyer, October 2019.....	101

Figure 21.	Ingkung made for the naming ceremony for AINC's new gamelan instrument, AINC Foyer, October 2019.....	101
Figure 22.	Offerings as an important part of the naming ceremony of gamelan	102
Figure 23.	The naming ceremony for the gamelan in AINC, 21 October 2019	104
Figure 24.	Calendar with prayer times issued by AMNC	106
Figure 25.	PUIMIK activities in 1986	108
Figure 26.	Mawlid performance by a female congregation at the Indonesian Consulate General's office in 2018	109
Figure 27.	Quranic teaching in the Indonesian Consulate General Office in Noumea	110
Figure 28.	Sonia Lagarde, Mayor of Noumea (middle) with Jean Wasman's widow and the Javanese community at the unveiling of the Jean Wasman Street sign	117
Figure 29.	Patrick Djiram street in Noumea	118
Figure 30.	DWP anniversary at the Indonesian Consulate's office on 7 December 2018	121
Figure 31.	DWP gathering in the KJRI Noumea in 1997	122
Figure 32.	Coconut shell souvenir workshop in Ouvea organized by KJRI	126
Figure 33.	Ahmad Gozali (red hat, centre) with the organiser of the gazebo-making workshop	127
Figure 34.	The signature and MoU exchange for town twinning between Yogyakarta and Montdore in New Caledonia, 25 October 2019.....	129
Figure 35.	Malaysian delegation at the closing ceremony of Ngumpulke Balung Pisah, 2019.....	137

List of Tables

Table 1.	Main phase of arrivals and departures of the Javanese indentured labourers in New Caledonia from 1896–1955....	30
Table 2.	Food allowance for Javanese indentured labourers (in grams) 1896–1949	34
Table 3.	Javanese indentured labourers’ salaries 1896–1949.....	35
Table 4.	Javanese indentured labourers’ clothing allowances 1920–1949	35
Table 5.	The total population of New Caledonia according to the community of affiliation 2009–2019	43
Table 6.	Name variation	50
Table 7.	The Javanese-Indonesian repatriation 1948–1955.....	57
Table 8.	Example of language hybridity	73
Table 9.	Results of 2018 and 2020 referenda	131

List of Abbreviation and Acronyms

AMNC	: L'Association des Musulmans de Nouvelle-Calédonie (Muslim Association of New Caledonia)
AINC	: Association Indonésien de Nouvelle Calédonie (Indonesian Association of New Caledonia)
DWP	: Dharma Wanita Persatuan (Organization for the spouses of Indonesian civil servants)
KJRI	: Konsulat Jendral Republik Indonesia (Indonesian Consulate Office)
KMILIN	: Kartu Masyarakat Indonesia di Luar Negeri (Indonesian Society Card Living in Abroad)
PKK	: Pemberdayaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga (Family Welfare Movement)
PUIMIK	: Persatuan Umat Islam Muslim Indonesia di Kaledonia (Association of Indonesian Muslims of New Caledonia)
OCM	: Omah Cangkem Yogyakarta
OWIN	: Organisasi Wanita Indonesia (Indonesian Women Organization)

Acknowledgments

Crossing the IJ River by ferry during the Covid-19 pandemic on 13 June 2020 was quite an experience for me. At noon, I arrived at the ferry dock at the back of Amsterdam Central Station, but only a few other people were waiting. Everyone was wearing masks, adhering to the social distancing guidelines. As we boarded the ferry, the rain was pouring down, making walking across the wet and slippery deck difficult. People were keeping their distance, afraid of bumping into each other. The grim faces on the ferry were filled with fear of the pandemic. My journey to NDSM, which took less than 15 minutes, suddenly felt very long because of the heavy rain and strong winds that buffeted the ferry. At the time, I was writing chapter two about the lengthy journey of Javanese labourers to New Caledonia. Most were forcibly recruited by Dutch recruitment agents and transported to New Caledonia on vessels with meagre facilities. It was a nightmare for them because, for the Javanese, the sea is perilous.

The ferry I travelled on and the vessels that carried the Javanese labourers do not readily lend themselves to comparison. But at that time, I couldn't help but compare the situation I was experiencing with the chapter I was working on. The ferry I travelled on was more modern, the distance from dock to dock was less than 15 minutes, and after arriving at the NDSM dock, I only had to walk for 5 minutes to reach my cosy apartment. In their time in history, the Javanese labourers had only themselves and their faith in God for the long journey to New Caledonia. No one could guarantee they would return to Java alive or be buried in New Caledonia. This dissertation is for: the Javanese labourers who are part of the history of indentured labour in New Caledonia; those who returned to their 'homeland' in Java after their indenture ended; those who decided to stay in New Caledonia and build a 'foundation' for a better life for their descendants, thus making New Caledonia their 'homeland'; and those who died and whose bodies rest in the waters separating Java and New Caledonia. I want to express my deepest gratitude to my interlocutors, whose invaluable contributions have made this thesis possible. Their willingness to share stories and gruesome experiences have enriched my understanding of this topic and provided a unique perspective on the history of the indentured labour community. I am grateful to each of them for their willingness to engage with me and share their valuable experiences.

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Introduction

L’Affaire des fruits

My first period of fieldwork among people from Javanese descent in New Caledonia, a French territory in the Southwest Pacific, was conducted in 2018, during the hot season, characterised by high humidity and rainfall. This season was also the harvest period for lychees and other tropical fruits. During the months of November and December, lychee trees bear fruit in New Caledonia. Not all houses of the Javanese community have lychee trees in their gardens and even if a house does have one, the fruit is not always sweet; furthermore, not all lychee trees bear fruit every year. At Sardi’s house, the lychee tree fruits every year. His thin-skinned lychees are famous for their sweetness, and also it is well known that he will not give them to just anyone. After the harvest, he distributes them to his children and his inner circle of friends, neighbours, and relatives. Many consider receiving lychees from Sardi to be special, because it means that they are part of his close circle of friends.

The Saut family is famous instead for their mangoes, which are sweet, soft, and juicy, with a fibrous texture and a sweet fragrance. Saut brought the mango seeds from Indonesia by hiding them in his pocket. Luckily, he was not picked for a random check when he passed through immigration at Tountouta airport. I am a mango lover, and I was fortunate enough to live in Saut’s house and thus could eat lots of mangoes and other fruit from his garden. However, on one occasion, when I mentioned that I wanted to take a mango to Yanto, one of my interlocutors, Saut’s wife Eka would not allow it. She did not specify her reason for forbidding me, but I later learned that, like Sardi’s lychees, Saut’s mangoes are a marker for whether you belong to their inner circle. I also learned how things such as choosing friends, sharing fruit, and joining social activities offer subtle entry points into understanding social circles and hidden conflicts in the Javanese community in New Caledonia. Joining daily activities and following small talk and details such as lychees and mangoes opened my eyes for the fracturedness of the Javanese community in New Caledonia.

Sardi and Eka are descendants of Javanese indentured labourers in New Caledonia. Sardi belongs to the third generation of a Javanese family; he grew up in the Hienghene plantation area, North Province, and later worked and lived in Noumea, South Province. Eka is the second generation of a Javanese family and was born and raised in Noumea, South Province. She is married to Saut, an Indonesian citizen who came to New Caledonia in the 1970s during New Caledonia’s nickel boom. Sardi and Eka were key interlocutors during my

fieldwork in New Caledonia. They are very different with regard to their political, cultural, and religious views, but the differences are not always apparent and are rarely openly discussed. Like most Javanese in New Caledonia, Sardi and Eka rather express themselves through ‘symbols’. They do not openly express dislike for a particular person or group, but rather express their social attachments symbolically such as by showing intimacy to their inner circle through giving fruit and other foods.

For the two families, lychees and mangoes also represent different interpretations of the concept of homeland and migration success. For Sardi, born and raised in the North Province of New Caledonia, the lychee symbolises his intergenerational attachment to his homeland as well as his social-economic success as a third-generation migrant. His palate probably cannot judge which mangoes are ripe and delicious like Saut can. However, he knows how to distinguish lychees that are tasty from those that are not. For Saut, the mango seeds brought from Indonesia to New Caledonia via Australia are a symbol of his deep connection with his original homeland, Java. When Saut brought his mango seeds, he had no guarantee that the plants would bear fruit in New Caledonia’s soil. However, Saut made the attempt and took the sweetness of the fruit as a sign he would be able to live in New Caledonia as a Javanese. Ultimately, he has become certain that his garden brings good luck to all his fruits, and takes this as a symbol of success. One thing Saut and Sardi have in common is how they emphasise that not everyone in New Caledonia has a similar attachment to Java while being able to reap the fruits of migration. While they won’t boast openly of their successes in front of people, they also don’t reject compliments.

Traditionally, Javanese social life is characterised by community spirit and by strong group principles. These principles include social harmony (*rukun*), the avoidance of conflict, and respect for others. Living in harmony in the group is ingrained in Javanese values. The expression of this harmony is found in many subgroups, including between neighbours and fellow villagers. The practice of social harmony – marked by cooperation, unity, and group peace – requires each group member’s full participation. From an early age, Javanese are taught to avoid externalising their emotions and generating conflict, to put aside individual interests for the sake of the group’s interests, and to provide help to those in need. Another important principle is that of mutual respect. Every Javanese is aware that their existence is valued by their degree of integration into the group. These principles are cultural values tightly held by many Javanese, including those in New Caledonia. On the surface, their values seem unshakeable, but as the stories of the lychees and the mangoes illustrate, tensions are looming below.

The Javanese in New Caledonia pride themselves on Javanese values that distinguish them from other ethnic communities. The presence of the Javanese community has indeed been recognised as a significant part of New Caledonia’s history. As noted by prominent New Caledonia officials, Javanese

people are known as hard workers who have contributed a great deal to New Caledonia's development (see Chapter 6). Moreover, Javanese people have never been involved in harmful or criminal activities that bring disrepute to their communities. However, the stereotype of a 'model ethnic minority' that upholds the harmony and places the community's interests above an individual's interests does come at a price. *L'affaire des fruits* (the story of the fruits) related above not only expresses Javanese values such as never openly confronting others, it also indicates that there are cracks in relationships caused by fractured experiences and memories within the diaspora. While keeping up the appearances of social harmony as a marker of Javanese identity and 'good ethnic citizenship', from within the Javanese diaspora in New Caledonia is a fractured community.

The case of the Javanese diaspora in New Caledonia provides a new perspective on what is currently known about 'the diasporic condition'. While classical diasporic scholars put an emphasis on collective history, collective identity, shared memory, and return myths (Safran 1991; Tölölyan 1996; Brubaker 2005; Cohen 2008), postmodern scholars highlight hybridity, creolisation, and syncretism (Kalra, Kaur, and Hutnyk 2005). According to Avtar Brah, diasporic identities are those that 'transcend and displace national borders, fostering new types of belonging and questioning the anchoring of identities to place' (Brah 1996, 192). Scholars furthermore emphasize that diasporic identities do not emerge from the specific contexts of a particular space, but rather draw on and challenge national identities (Yeoh, Willis, and Fakhri 2003). These conceptualizations of diasporic collective identity are unquestionably beneficial for comprehending the diaspora's national and global context. However, the frequent emphasis on collective identity (whether hybrid or not) carries the risk of homogenizing diasporic groups, and thus overlooking the diverse dynamics of various groups and significant differences within diasporas, especially in terms of ethnicity, religion, gender, and class. Such homogenising classifications are often inadequate because the identities of the people they are trying to describe may change over time, and they neglect the political structure upon which they depend. Dismayed by these results, several authors argue for a shift to a more constructivist approach. Stéphane Dufoix, for example, explores social and political representations of diasporas by examining how people think about the relationships between their home countries and the places in which they live (Dufoix 2008, 55)

Most studies on the Javanese diaspora in New Caledonia tend to depict this community also as a homogeneous community (Roosman 1971; Muljono-Larue 1996; Maurer 2006; 2010a; Adi 2014; Subiyantoro 2014; P. Allen 2018). This view of homogeneity is rooted in older concepts of diaspora, which assume that all diasporas have a strong relationship to the homeland. A new approach which challenges these assumptions lies at the heart of this dissertation. This dissertation underlines the importance of not looking at diasporic communities as

homogeneous entities. As with the Javanese diaspora in New Caledonia, diasporic identities have been constructed and reconstructed historically and socially and developed in a rather complex way. As a result, any sense of communal identity is fluid, fractured, and constantly changing.

Main Argument and Research Questions

My argument focuses on diaspora as a multifaceted process that disrupts common notions of diaspora as a cohesive ethnic entity. Rather, it illuminates the formation and existence of fractured communities as an inherent aspect of the diasporic condition. My study revolves around four key ‘areas of tension’ where this fracturedness becomes visible. Subsequently, I describe the concept of homeland and belonging, memories, belief, and politics in the Javanese diaspora community in New Caledonia. My central research question is: How do the paradoxes and practices of diasporic identity construction create tensions and contribute to both fracturedness and cohesion within the Javanese community in New Caledonia?

My research questions extend from this concern with practices of identity construction among the members of the New Caledonian Javanese diaspora:

1. Memories and history: How do Javanese descendants imagine and construct collective memories and histories of their diasporic community in New Caledonian society and negotiate historical collective memory and individual memory in the process?
2. Belonging: How do they perform homeland-connection-making practices in the context of their everyday lives in New Caledonian society, and how do tensions reveal themselves within the community?
3. Belief: To what extent does religion sustain as well as disrupt the Javanese community identity?
4. Politics: To what extent does the political situation in New Caledonia, France and Indonesia render fractured diasporic identities visible?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework used in this dissertation includes the concept of diaspora, memories, homeland, religion in diaspora, diasporic politics, and fractures within the diaspora community.

Diaspora

Diaspora is ‘possibly one of the most over-theorised yet most tricky terms in both academic and social discourse.’ This concept, ‘once a concept for depicting Jewish, Greek and Armenian dispersion, now shares meanings with a larger semantic domain that includes terms like an immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest worker, exile community, overseas community, ethnic communities’ (Tölölyan 1996, 5). As a result, the diaspora has been defined as a ‘traveling term’, a single signifier for significantly complex and diverse experiences (Clifford 1994, 302).

The Greeks coined the term diaspora to refer to exiled Hellenistic Jews in Alexandria, and it was later used to refer to Jews living outside of Palestine. As a result, most discussion about diasporas had focused on the Jewish people’s dispersion (Safran 1991; Braziel and Mannur 2003). Additionally, the concept of diaspora was established within a conceptual ‘homeland’ associated with examples from the Armenian diaspora, the Jewish diaspora, the African diaspora, and the Greek diaspora (Brubaker 2005). Today, this term has evolved to the point where it is frequently used to refer to any territorially scattered community considered to have a homeland (Braziel and Mannur 2003, 2; Dufoix 2003; Brubaker 2005).

Robin Cohen expanded on previously recognised core characteristics of a diaspora by creating five categories of diasporas relating to the different cause of dispersal: victim, labour, trade, imperial, and cultural diasporas (Cohen 2008). However, a discussion of the term diaspora, as defined and applied by classical diaspora scholars, reveals three distinct characteristics that set it apart from similar phenomena: a history of dispersion; strong ties to the homeland; and a shared identity (Tölölyan 2019, 22; see also Sheffer 2003; Brubaker 2005; Cohen 2008).

In contrast, the postmodern concept of diaspora tends to emphasise hybridity, deterritorialised identities, and multiple attachments, rather than ethnicity or a homeland. James Clifford (1994) asserts that the concept of homeland does not have to be central to the conceptualisation of transnational communities. Clifford highlights the importance of a shared and ongoing history of displacement, adaptation, and resistance. Nevertheless, diasporic characteristics continue to ‘oscillate around the concept of homeland’ (Kalra, Kaur, and Hutnyk 2005, 12), and excludes groups with no connection to their homeland.

Robin Cohen delves into the meaning of homeland in defining diasporas and the ways in which theories have questioned traditional concepts of homeland and community, resulting in an elastic term that can be described as ‘solid’, ‘ductile’, and ‘liquid’ (Cohen 2008). The developing discipline of diasporic studies has attempted to reassert the ‘solid’ concept of homeland by seeking to explain the diasporas’ role as actors of social, cultural, and economic change in their home countries. Cohen refers to the ‘ductile homeland’ as a result of a

diminished concept of homeland. For example, throughout their productive years living outside Israel, European and American Jews have circumscribed their links to Israel by establishing ‘virtual homes’ in the diaspora. Meanwhile, the ‘liquid’ concept of homeland emerges as a result of migrants’ effective transformation into nomadic and multi-located cultures with uncertain homes after losing their traditional territorial reference points.

According to Gabriel Sheffer, the term ‘diaspora’ is a misnomer when applied to non-ethnic transnational entities such as global religions, political and ideological dispersal, transnational linguistic groups, and global youth culture (Sheffer 2003a, 11). Religious diasporas get their identities and source of value from the ‘transcendental domain’ (Pasura 2008,14). Whereas Sheffer argues that ethnic diasporic identities are founded on cultural values, subjective stances, and functional concerns. He uses the term ‘ethnonational diasporas’ to distinguish them from the ‘deterritorialized identities’ (Sheffer 2003b, 11). Based in this discussion of the concept of ‘diaspora’, it is apparent that this concept is not limited to any specific historical event, such as indentured labour. Rather it encapsulates a theoretical idea and a multifaceted analytic discourse, inviting a particular kind of theorising that is always founded in rich histories (Clifford 1994).

The history of indentured labour adds a different dimension to the dynamics of diaspora and our understanding of it. Although using different terminology, indentured labour is considered as being close to slavery (see Chapter 2). Contrary to identities based on enslavement history, indentured labour histories are seldomly discussed and receive relatively little attention. Diasporic identities that emerge from indentured labour are often associated with the desire to forget the past as descendants of indentured labour. For example, this is the case with many descendants of the Indian labour diaspora (Goffe 2014). Meanwhile, Pam Allen shows how the Javanese indentured labour diaspora in Suriname maintains connections and imaginaries of the homeland through cultivating memories of the indentured labour history. Through her work, she shows how certain customs and traditions are actively selected, revived, and then legitimised by institutions or individuals as important markers of ‘homeland’ culture (Allen 2015). Along the way, in this process remembering and forgetting turns out to be selective. Hence, this study adds to the understanding of indentured labour, diaspora, and identity by using a processual approach (see Chapter 3). It explores the displacement of the labourers from their ‘roots’ and reveals the myth of origin, which is part of the imagination about the community today.

Memories and the myth of origin

We need a compelling story in order to keep millions of people together in a diaspora community. These kinds of stories are also known as the myths of origin (Safran 1991; Clifford 1994). They have the power to bring people together under the same sentiments of ‘shared grief’. The best myths are the ones that manage to explain a complex world in a clear and convincing way. This can be seen, for example, from the particular stories circulating in different diasporic communities about how they arrived in a given place and established their new homes. Repeated within the story will be a struggle between the good and the wicked. The victim, which in the case of the diasporic community is the diaspora itself, is good. The colonial powers or the patron are wicked. This kind of discourse is reproduced in most stories, repeated generation after generation, until it becomes a shared memory and the myth of origin of the community.

According to Maurice Halbwachs (1992), in addition to individual memory, there are two other sorts of memories that are critical in the formation of diasporic communities. First, the collective memory, which refers to the internal memory of a group with the memories that characterise it; second, historical memory, which refers to the external memory that collects many memories in circulation and uniquely compiles them. Collective memory is linked to the physical presence of the members of a particular group. In contrast, historical memory is independent and tends to appear when the living tradition of group memory has disappeared. The importance of Halbwachs’ theory lies in highlighting the ‘socio-constructivist’ character of the collective memory. This does not mean, of course, that some groups have more memory than others.

Maurice Halbwachs observes that, ‘belonging to that group is thus a result of remembering. The belonging constructed in the process can take on different modes, and the groups imagined can vary in form, size, and, crucially, in their types of relationship’ (Halbwachs 1992, 48). Halbwachs highlights that although collective memories are formed within a group and gain strength from a particular body of people, ‘it is individuals as group members who remember’ (ibid., 48). Halbwachs also stresses that although collective memories provide the script that guides individual memories, the relationship between collective memory and individual memory is not one-dimensional but rather dialectic.

The depiction of Halbwachs relies on two ideas: the completeness of collective memory and the autonomy of personal memory. Collective memory turns into an ideological instrument via which past beliefs are utilized to frame present-day experiences (Halbwachs 1992 cited in Choi 2012, 64). An example is collective memory of the recruitment process of the Javanese indentured labourers, which is examined in Chapter 3. However, arguably collective memory’s essential feature remains its conflict with individual memory. Consequentially, following Suhi Choi’s argument, the autonomy of personal memories may make the

collective memory less stable as well as more dynamic than other social entities (Choi 2012, 64). In this research, personal memories in the Javanese community in New Caledonia contribute to the fracturedness because they ‘question’ the collective memories, especially with regard to the indentured labour history.

The discussion of inherited memory and shared narratives formed by families is also critical in this section. As Jason Tebbe writes, ‘[we] have yet to fully engage in the dynamics of family and personal memory’ (Tebbe 2008, 197). To address this gap, Nelson contends that personal (autobiographical) memory plays a ‘cultural role, via shared narratives, by constructing mythic frameworks that have served as the cohesive glue of cultural groupings’ (Nelson 2003, 127). Collective and individual memories are ‘held within a fusion of cultural myths’ (Booth 2008, 299); narratives, in this capacity, can function as collective adhesive. As a sort of ‘narrative inheritance’ (Goodall 2005, 497), these memories serve as ‘intersubjective remembrances’ and ‘imaginative geographies’ for family myths (Booth 2008, 23). It is the ‘intermingling of myth and memory that sustains every family’ (Safran 1991, 83–84) and, in turn, defines the person (Figs 2008, 123). Thus, personal memory is ‘subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing’ (Rothberg 2009, 3).

Memory entails both a reconstruction and an instrumentalisation of the past. The study of collective memory would acquire greater heuristic value if it distinguished between politicised collective memory and in-group-centred collective memory (Gueye 2011, 81). The concept of politicised communal memory is an act of recall designed to initiate a predetermined trend and construct a new or updated social contract. In this way, politicised collective memory is a transformative, performative discourse that seeks to influence the inner life of the group that carries it and the configuration of the larger community, be it the national or international community. The concept of in-group-focused collective memory has a narrower scope. It refers to a remembering act whose primary purpose is to ensure the presence of the past in the present to benefit social cohesion. The objective of the discourse that embodies politicised collective memory is to reach the public arena. The individual who represents in-group-focused collective memory specifically targets individuals of the in-group. In this research, in-group-centred collective memory is related to reconstructing the history and memory of indentured labour in the Javanese diaspora in New Caledonia. There are many versions of memory and history from each side. In contrast, politicised collective memory is the instrumentalisation of the past. An example is how the French created a memory of New Caledonia limited to the history of the penal colony rather than indentured labour.

In search of homeland

Diasporas must be viewed as ‘rooted and routed’ at the same time. According to James Clifford, the ‘term diaspora is a signifier not simply of transnationality and movement but of political struggles to define the local, as a distinctive community, in historical contexts of displacement’ (Clifford 1994, 308). However, whereas academic discourse on diaspora emphasises attachments to imagined homelands, it overemphasises paths at the expense of roots (Tölölyan 2007).

The concept of homeland in a diaspora community is inextricably related to personal encounters with processes of inclusion or exclusion. It is fundamentally concerned with political and personal disputes over the social convention of ‘belonging.’ It is, as Paul Gilroy (1993) implies, both about roots and routes. Thus, the concept of diaspora has an inherent tension between the discourses of home and dispersion, with its yearning for home while simultaneously criticising debates of fixed and singular origins.

However, the homing desire is distinct from the need for a ‘homeland.’ Contrary to popular opinion, not all diasporas adhere to a return ideology. Furthermore, the diasporic imaginary’s multi-placedness does not imply that diasporic subjectivity is ‘rootless’. I distinguish between the concept of ‘feeling at home’ and designating a place to be one’s home. Additionally, it is critical to recognise that the concept of ‘homeland’ is distinct from the concept of ‘home’. However, in academic literature, the terms ‘home’ and ‘country’ are sometimes used interchangeably. Both locations are not always associated with the diasporic community. The term homeland refers to a location to which an individual has a strong emotional tie, whereas home refers to a location that to an individual feels secure, comfortable, and familiar (Tsuda 2013, 186).

Additionally, William Safran emphasises the ‘authoritative source of value, identity, and loyalty’ inspired in immigrant communities by the concept of home. In diasporic literature, the term ‘home’ is commonly used to refer to both a physical location and an imagined space. Safran asserts that ‘diaspora communities perceive their homeland as their real home’ (Safran 1991, 83). They and their descendants wish to return and remain devoted to the country’s security and development. Avtar Brah on the other hand sees a ‘mythic location of yearning in the diasporic imagination’. Hence, home does not always refer to one’s place of origin, and diasporic consciousness does not necessitate a deep bond with one’s native nation. Thus, the concrete homeland is displaced in Brah’s understanding of diaspora by an essentially ‘homing desire’ (Brah 1996, 192).

The question of home is also intertwined with how practices of inclusion or exclusion operate and are experienced individually in particular situations. This is particularly pertinent to political and personal debates over the discourse of ‘belonging’, highlighting Gilroy’s (1993) explanation of roots and routes. As such, the concept of diaspora juxtaposes discourses of ‘home’ and ‘dispersal’,

instilling a desire to return home in their hearts while criticising fixed and singular discourses of origin.

Diasporic identities can combine parts of both the homeland and the host community, rather than remaining exclusively devoted to the homeland, which is why a connection to the homeland or a desire to get back should not be regarded as the primary measure of diasporic identity (Levy and Weingrod 2004). On the contrary, how migrants feel about their home country is also influenced by the processes of social inclusion and exclusion that are taking place in their new home (Tsagarousianou 2004).

Religion in diaspora

Most literature on diaspora has ‘marginalised the factor of religion and relegated it to second place in favour of ethnicity and nationality’ (Baumann 1998, 95). Recent studies show that religious diasporas, once a phenomenon within some countries, now exist in almost every country (Connor and Tucker 2011, 986; Johnson and Bellofatto 2012; Pasura 2019, 113). Religions change in the way they are practised as well as in their structure and priorities. New locations impose new requirements, and religions provide mechanisms for adapting to new circumstances – and even new obstacles. Sandra Hausner and Jane Garnett observe that ‘diasporic lives are necessarily marked by spatial rupture and upheaval, while religious narratives are often constructed in terms of consistency across place, in lived reality, and in practices that often shift in accordance with practitioners’ movements’ (Hausner and Garnett 2016, 2). As a result of new belonging, religious practices may change. Religious concepts evolve when people emigrate – and singular beliefs must take on various forms in order to function in multiple locations (Pasura 2019).

Rather than attempting to pinpoint and describe the religious elements of a diaspora, Rogers Brubaker’s method is adopted in this research. In Brubaker’s perspective, diasporas are a ‘category of practise’. As a category of practise, diaspora is utilised to assert claims, explain objectives, construct expectations, and solicit allegiances. It is frequently a category with a significant normative shift and does not so much strive to describe the world as to reconstruct it. This method is consistent with the conceptual shifts occurring in religion studies away from texts and ideas and toward religious activities and how religion is lived. Here, then, diaspora and religious conceptualisations are seen as ‘a process, practice, claim, idiom, stance’ (Brubaker 2005, 12). And, it is essential to study the practices of people in the diaspora community that create senses of belonging (Liberatore and Fesenmeyer 2019, 235).

According to Jonathan Boyarin, diasporic religious practices are those ‘that are not directed toward the homeland but rather create new forms of

territorialization in the host country' (Boyarin 2015, 17). This demonstrates that in terms of their faith, the diasporic community can engage between countries in the new environment with the territorial context in the process of re-making their home in the host country. Simultaneously, they may facilitate the establishment of diasporic ties across space and the emigration of diasporic members from the homeland to the host country (Tweed 1997, 94). The way in which the Javanese community practises religion and belief in New Caledonia shows their adaptation to the local context: for most Javanese descendants in New Caledonia, it means observing a syncretistic form of Islam: Islam mixed with Javanese rituals in a context of French secularism (*laïcité*), but also conforming more closely to Islamic practices from Indonesia.

Diaspora politics and state influence

Diaspora politics can be characterised as a type of transnational political participation structured across a specific identity category and an actual or mythical homeland. As a result, political activists can actively construct the concept of the homeland (Adamson 2012, 26). Numerous actors can use the concept of diaspora to advance their political objectives, ranging from diasporic elites and political entrepreneurs to host nations, international institutions, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (Ragazzi 2014; Adamson 2019).

While national politics and international relations are concerned with how institutions define the state and earn legitimacy by their affiliation with these institutions, diaspora politics are concerned with transnational actions. A diaspora approach to politics aids in the understanding of the establishment of links between diaspora and host society politics, diaspora and home-country politics, and diasporic communities in different locations. It demonstrates how transnational participation affects all of these factors and contributes to the diaspora's integration into the receiving nation (Laguerre 2006, 3). Diaspora politics of the host state are supposed to aid integration into the home country, but politics often act as a separating factor, fracturing the diasporic group. Moreover, the nation of the (imagined) homeland can also try to influence or manipulate diasporic communities, leading to more fracture. These fractures, which epitomise opposite political orientations among segments of the community, may also be singled out as an intrinsic component of diaspora politics (Laguerre 2006, 4).

States with a long history of the external movement of its people are increasingly attempting to engage their diasporas in politics through so-called 'diaspora management policies' (Gamlen 2008; Collyer 2013; Naujoks 2013; Adamson 2019). These policies differ according to the location of the diaspora and the state's political, economic, and cultural interests. These strategies may include elevating the status of diasporic people, encouraging investment,

supporting dual citizenship, and utilising diasporic groups as a form of public diplomacy (Gamlen 2014; Tsourapas 2015).

The state's system of government is important for assessing the nature of state-citizen relations. The kind of regime that governs each country will determine how the diaspora's role will be structured. Diasporas are expected to contribute positively to the development of diplomatic cooperation in democratic countries, particularly when the countries of origin and residence are democratic (Mirilovic 2016). Emigrants can be used as a tool in foreign policy, to boost state reputation, or to achieve a geographical advantage. Additionally, comparable policy regimes may promote disparate objectives for a variety of reasons. For example, while democratic countries urge voting abroad as a means of promoting democratic participation, authoritarian regimes may advocate for it more for the purpose of controlling emigrants (Adamson 2019, 153). In this research, diaspora politics plays a role in explaining community fracturedness. The Javanese diaspora community is subject to the interests of the Indonesian State, France, and the future of a New Caledonia State. These three states all have their own agendas concerning this community. I will discuss this topic further in Chapter 6.

Diaspora identity as a process and fractured community

Traditional diaspora perspectives have been criticised for depicting 'closed' ethnic and religious communities throughout the world (Werbner 1998), which may reflect more conservative notions of defined community, identity, and culture. As Yasemin Nuhoglu Soysal points out, traditional conceptions of a diaspora presuppose the formation of strong bonds and loyalties (based on shared cultural and ethnic references) between places of origin and arrival (Soysal 2000, 2).

Despite its flexibility, the idea of diaspora has been criticised for overlooking its internal differences (Kalra, Kaur, and Hutnyk 2005; Brubaker 2005; Amelina and Barglowski 2019). As Marko Kananen puts it, diaspora communities do not exist as a single entity with common aims and interests, but rather as various groups with diverse viewpoints and objectives. This is particularly true for various migrant and migrant-descended generations (Kananen 2019). While researchers disagree on whether participation in the diaspora is necessary only for the immigrant (Kasinitz, Mollenkopf, and Waters 2004), or whether the parents' native country is also essential for their children (Purkayastha 2005), there is an understanding that 'home' is more problematic for younger generations. While the immigrants' 'homeland' function is founded on prior relationships and experiences, the second generation's link is more abstract and indirect (Kelly 2015).

According to Sherin Houston and Richard Wright, diaspora can be understood as a 'condition' that emphasises 'structural features of an exile

population' and thus promote a 'static rendition of diaspora and identity' (Houston and Wright 2003, 218). This is why, they believe, it is vital to view diaspora as a process that is 'always in the making'. While structural characteristics can be dissected and investigated, identifying them as 'structural' is not always beneficial. They can be manifested independently of everyday materialities, and they are typically absent from standard descriptions of diaspora. As Pnina Werbner notes:

Diasporic communities create arenas for debate and celebration. As mobilized groups, they are cultural, economic, political and social formations in the process. This means that diasporas are culturally and politically reflexive and experimental; they encompass internal arguments of identity about who 'we' are and where we are going. Diasporas are full of division and dissent. At the same time, they recognize collective responsibilities, not only to the home country but to co-ethnics in far-flung places. (Werbner 2004, 896)

Following on from the preceding discussion, the concept of the diaspora must consider how people are engaged in diasporic formation processes. The place, space, and time must be acknowledged and examined within this context (Mavroudi 2007, 473). Diasporic identification affects already complex linkages between nation-state, community, and (national) identity. This leads to a problem about the nature of borders, boundaries, and authenticity, all of which appear to be bolstered and weakened by diasporic concepts (Mavroudi 2007; Cohen 2017).

In this dissertation, I highlight how diaspora is not a fixed term that can be grasped and formulated definitively. Diaspora is rather a fluid process that is ingrained in the social sphere and is continually evolving and being challenged. The contestation takes place mostly inside the diaspora community itself; for example, in their memories, homeland rituals, beliefs, and politics. Multiple contestations frequently result in a diaspora community that is fragmented and changing over time.

Methodology

In this research, I use the extended case method developed by Michael Burawoy. The extended case method 'applies reflexive science to ethnography across the scale, from general to unique, from the micro to the macro, from past to present, all by building on pre-existing theory' (Burawoy 1998, 5). The extended case method illustrates any differences between the theory and what 'really' happens in the field. These distinctions are then utilised to 'reconstruct' the theory. The method enables us to investigate how the everyday 'micro' world of face-to-face interaction within communities forms and conditions a 'macro' world. In this

research, the extended case method is used to see how history, memory, and the present condition of the Javanese diaspora in New Caledonia are intertwined. As a diaspora that emerged from indentured labour, many aspects of their trajectories and experiences differ from those in non-indentured labour diaspora communities. I used in-depth interviews and participant observation to examine this diaspora's interpersonal relationships and micro-level experiences. As part of the extended case method, I use various sources such as archival data, autobiographical novels, newspaper news, and historical documents to contextualise the interviews and observations within a macro-level structure. The combination of the micro and macro analysis enables the examination of complicated global issues through the lens of their everyday manifestations on the ground.

Fieldwork

Information and data in this dissertation are based on my ethnographic fieldwork, archival studies, and analyses of autobiographical novels carried out between 2017 and 2020. Although I officially started my PhD research in 2017, my involvement with this topic started in 2015. In that year I started translating Fidayanti Moeljono-Larue's book, *L'immigration Javanaise en Nouvelle-Calédonie de 1896-1950*, from French into Indonesian. Moeljono-Larue is the first anthropologist to have researched the history of Javanese immigration in New Caledonia. I continued my research with archival studies and analyses of autobiographical novels in 2017. This work was important for this study because the presence of the Javanese diaspora community in New Caledonia cannot be separated from its indentured labourer history.

I did my fieldwork in Indonesia and New Caledonia in two phases, the first from July 2018 to February 2019 and the second from June to December 2019. In my first fieldwork visit to New Caledonia in 2018 the biggest obstacle was obtaining a visa. I submitted my visa application through the French Embassy in Indonesia because at that time I was already in Indonesia doing archival study and research at Totokaton, Lampung. In Lampung, my focus was on second-generation Javanese repatriates who had followed their parents for repatriation to Indonesia in 1953–1955. The long waiting period for a visa to New Caledonia was influenced by the political situation leading up to the 2018 referendum on New Caledonia's independence. The day after the referendum result came out (to retain the status quo), my visa was issued by the French Embassy. In the end, I understood that the visa restriction policy was the French government's attempt to reduce the risks associated with the referendum. Accepting this delay to my fieldwork to New Caledonia was part of what Malcolm James calls 'embracing messiness' in research (James 2016, 228). Accepting the unpredictability of unanticipated twists and turns was a critical lesson learned in moving away

from the certainty of the scientific approach and toward the disorder of ordinary life. Additionally, embracing messiness entails growing accustomed to the uncertainties and setbacks inherent in ethnographic research and daily living.

The delayed fieldwork in New Caledonia, which forced me to remain a little longer in Indonesia, turned out to be a blessing in disguise. I had the opportunity to participate in meetings and receptions for the exchange of the 'Letter of Intent' of the town twinning between Montdore (New Caledonia) and Yogyakarta (Indonesia). I had not initially included the state's involvement in the diaspora community in my research plan, but this twinning of the cities turned out to be valuable input for one of my chapters on the state's role in diaspora politics.

Another important event I attended during my second fieldwork trip in Indonesia was the Global Javanese Diaspora 'Ngumpulke Balung Pisah' (literal translation: gathering the scattered bones) event in Solo, which was also attended by many of my interlocutors from New Caledonia. The event's relevance to this study is that it highlights the transnational mobility of persons of Javanese descent in New Caledonia and their relationship with the global Javanese diaspora. This event took place simultaneously with the 'Angklung Vibration' performance in Yogyakarta, a collaboration between the AINC (Association Indonésien de Nouvelle Calédonie, Indonesian Association of New Caledonia) and the OCM (Omah Cangkem Yogyakarta), an art community based in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The performance tells a story about the homeland practices of the third- and fourth generations, which are different from those of previous generations.

Once in New Caledonia I conducted fieldwork in the South Province, mainly in Noumea and Montdore. I chose those cities as my primary research setting because both are home to the majority of Javanese in New Caledonia. However, although this research focuses on interlocutors living in the South Province, I also had the opportunity to visit other interlocutors in Koné, Poindimié, and Hienghene in the North Province. Interviews with this group in the North Province proved to be important for this study in terms of the political diaspora, especially given the stereotype of the North Province as being the centre of the pro-independence movement. An important site for my fieldwork in New Caledonia was the AINC's premises, a building located in Montdore that was built gradually in the 1980s. During my fieldwork, I joined the AINC's weekly activities and gatherings. Besides participating in AINC activities I was also present at Javanese community activities such as religious gatherings, social gatherings, and other activities held by the KJRI (Konsulat Jendral Republik Indonesia, Indonesian Consulate Office).

In-depth interviews and gathering data through gossip

At first, it was difficult to gain access to the Javanese community in New Caledonia because I had never been there before. I received valuable assistance from the anthropologist Fidayanti Moeljono-Larue, who is the author of a book about the history of Javanese indentured labour in New Caledonia, and whom I first met in Indonesia while waiting for my visa to New Caledonia in 2018. I introduced myself as the translator of her book and a PhD student from Amsterdam aiming to research the Javanese diaspora in New Caledonia. At that time, she had just returned from New Caledonia, where she had been with three '*mamies de Totokaton*' (the grandmothers of Totokaton) at the invitation of the AINC. The *mamies de Totokaton* are the Javanese-Caledonians who followed their parents' repatriation to Totokaton, Lampung, Indonesia in 1953–1955. Moeljono-Larue's visit revived her relations with her old interlocutors and friends, and I was able to use her contacts and network to enter the community.

In New Caledonia, I initially planned to commute and live between the two cities of Noumea and Montdore, where most of the Javanese descendants live. However, I revised this plan partly because of transportation issues: although Noumea and Montdore are not far apart, only about 20 minutes by car, I did not have a car and public transport between the two cities was only available at certain hours. In addition, there were frequent blockades, riots and road closures interrupting movement between Noumea and Montdore. I therefore rented a room in Noumea because it was safer than living in Montdore, but as I grew closer to my interlocutors, I was often able to stay at their homes.

In New Caledonia I lived with three different families. The first was Yanto's family. He is a second-generation Javanese whose wife, Parti, is an Indonesian. The second family was Sardi's, a third-generation Javanese married to Narti, an Indonesian woman who is a naturalised French citizen. The last was Saut's family. He is an Indonesian married to Eka, a second-generation Javanese. The three families had different circles of friendships, which helped me get to know other interlocutors; furthermore, they held different views about Javanese culture and society in New Caledonia. By being a part of the rhythm of their daily lives, I absorbed a wide range of vibrant stories and accessed important data.

Apart from these three families, the interlocutors I chose for this study were from different generations. My primary criteria for choosing key interlocutors were generation, nationality, gender, and occupation. Most of my interlocutors were second generation, born and raised in New Caledonia, and ranged in age from 50 to 70 years. The third and fourth generations I interviewed consisted of people between the ages of 20 and 60. During the research period of June 2018 to February 2019, I interviewed nineteen key interlocutors in Indonesia and New Caledonia. In Indonesia, I had three key interlocutors. The first was Wiyanto, a second-generation Javanese man born and raised in New Caledonia

until his parents' repatriation to Lampung, Indonesia, in 1953. The second was Rose, a third-generation Javanese woman, born and raised in New Caledonia. In 1953, she and her siblings were repatriated with their father to Lampung, Indonesia. Both Wiyanto and Rose have lived in Lampung ever since. The last key interlocutor in Indonesia was the anthropologist Fidayanti mentioned above.

In New Caledonia, I had seventeen key interlocutors. The first was Josephine, a second-generation Javanese woman born and raised in New Caledonia. She had Indonesian citizenship until she asked for naturalisation to French citizenship in the 1990s. My second and third interlocutors were a couple, Saut and Eka. Saut is an Indonesian man who came to New Caledonia in the 1970s under a working contract with a French company to build infrastructure in New Caledonia. He married Eka, a second-generation Javanese woman born and raised in New Caledonia. The next married couple I interviewed were Thierry and Sherly. Thierry is a second-generation Javanese man born and raised in New Caledonia. He met his wife, Sherly, an Indonesian singer based in Yogyakarta, when Sherly was invited to New Caledonia by a Javanese youth organisation in the mid-2000s. After their marriage in Yogyakarta, Sherly moved to New Caledonia. The last couple I interviewed were Yanto and Parti. Yanto is a second-generation Javanese man born and raised in New Caledonia. He met his wife, Parti, an Indonesian woman, when he went to Java in 1970, and Parti moved to New Caledonia after their marriage. Ardi, a New Caledonia-born artist, and Marto, a retired New Caledonia-born engineer, were the final two second-generation Javanese interlocutors for this research.

The next group of interlocutors were third-generation Javanese: Ama, Sardi, and Éloise. Ama is a female writer, and one of her novels was used as a secondary source for this research. Sardi is a retired third-generation Javanese man, married to an Indonesian woman from Central Java. Éloise is also retired and is married to a second-generation Javanese man from New Caledonia. The three of them all still live in New Caledonia. I have also included one fourth-generation interlocutor, Mickey. He works for the Poindimié City Council, North Province of New Caledonia.

Aside from the descendants of Javanese indentured labourers in New Caledonia, I also interviewed Indonesian citizens living in New Caledonia. The first was Juminten, who came to New Caledonia on his family's invitation in the 1970s. There were also Sherly and Parti, mentioned earlier, both of whom married second-generation Javanese men in New Caledonia. To complete my data, I interviewed Ghozali, the Indonesian Consul General, and Asep, a consular officer. Both of them worked in the Indonesian Consulate General in New Caledonia from 2017 to 2019.

I use pseudonyms for my interlocutors, except for the consul general and consular officer, because the community in question is small, prone to conflict, and feels very sensitive about certain identity issues. I was also careful to receive

informed consent from my interlocutors. I noted at least two different reactions to when I pulled out the recorder: some did not want the interview to be recorded for fear that it would become a problem for them in the future, while others only wanted certain parts of our conversations to be recorded (asking for the recorder to be turned off when they discussed things that they considered sensitive). In some of these situations, I made handwritten notes with the approval of the interviewee. If they were similarly uneasy with note taking, I quickly wrote a summary of the interview after leaving the room.

Another fascinating point when researching the Javanese diaspora community in New Caledonia is language hybridity. I am fluent in the three main languages used within this society: Javanese, French and Indonesian. Given my proficiency in these three languages, I had imagined that I would have no communication problems, but the reality proved quite different. Most of my interlocutors (especially the second and third generation) could only speak Javanese *ngoko* (the lowest level), while I am accustomed to speaking Javanese *krama inggil* (the highest level) to my elders¹; as a result, I often had difficulties in talking to them, not because of my lack of vocabulary but rather because I felt awkward using less respectful *ngoko* to people older than me. Moreover, many of the second and third generation speak French with a Javanese accent. After living with this community for about a week I grew to understand the language codes and learned to speak what might be termed *Javanofrançais à la Javanese Caledonian* or the French-Javanese language in the style of the Javanese community in New Caledonia.

Learning these language codes was also important to understand community gossip. During my fieldwork, gossip was an important source of information. Gossip is a significant marker of the inner and outer groups, friends and foes (Besnier 1996). I approach gossip in the same way as Kristina van Vleet, which is as a ‘social activity and a form of personal narrative. Through gossip, people make meaning of their relationships and events, bringing order and structure to the intricate and unpredictable occurrences of daily life’ (Vleet 2003, 493). Additionally, gossip serves as evidence for ethnography and, more widely ‘for how we understand the process of knowledge production in anthropology: the politics and power relationships that shape how an ethnographer comes to know certain things, what an ethnographer is permitted to know, and how these are incorporated or excluded from an ethnography’ (ibid.).

My interlocutors in New Caledonia often started the cycle of gossip with a phone call at 8am, and sometimes even earlier than that. The conversation typically began by asking the interlocutor, their fellow Javanese descendants, what activities would be carried out during that day, and then continued with the

¹The Javanese language is known for its three distinct speech levels: *ngoko* (low); *krama* (high); and *krama inggil* (highest level), which enable its speakers to convey feelings of closeness, respect, and hierarchy. The current Javanese community’s use of *ngoko* also reflects the lower-class status of their ancestors, who arrived in New Caledonia as indentured labourers.

telling of stories, opinions and rumours. Gossip exchanged through this telephone line spread quickly to other interlocutors and eventually spread throughout Noumea and even further. It is as if a pin dropped in Noumea (in the southern part of New Caledonia) at dawn could be heard in Poum (in the northern part of New Caledonia) at dusk.

Gossip appears to be an anthropologically evocative subject. Not only is gossip crucial to ethnographers' fieldwork, but it also embodies what anthropologists have come to regard as the discipline's core: 'an interest in the mundane, the overlooked, and the small, from which the anthropologist derives not-so-mundane insights on how people organise their lives in communities' (Besnier 2009, 2). A universally valid definition of gossip is difficult to formulate, as the term is context dependent and its meaning unsettled even within the same community. Indeed, any examination of gossip 'must take into account the category's dynamic nature, as well as its relationship to other forms of discursive and social action' (ibid., 14).

Naturally, gossip does not 'do things' on its own; rather, and along with all other types of discourse, gossip works in concert with other ways to communicate and participate in social engagement. Moreover, it travels in certain social circles and excludes others. Gossip may only be regarded seriously in the context of more significant social ties and symbolic processes (Drotbohm 2010)"properties": {"formattedCitation": "(Drotbohm 2010. For most of my interlocutors, gossip serves to 'control' the in-group community and becomes a highly effective mechanism for bonding among group members. By gossiping, the community strengthens internal bonds and draws a boundary between 'us' and 'them'. Looking back at the collective memories and histories, this type of communication is not new within the Javanese community. Most of my second-generation interlocutors remembered how their parents, who were indentured labourers, enjoyed leisure time spent chatting (*omong-omong*) and gossiping (*rasan-rasan*).

Archival studies

Aside from ethnographic research I also conducted archival studies, firstly at the Republic of Indonesia's National Archives in Jakarta. There I managed to find crucial documents regarding the repatriation periods of Javanese contract workers from New Caledonia and their relocation process to the transmigration area of Totokaton, Central Lampung. The report from the Indonesian Land Opening Service from 1955 to 1956 confirmed information I had acquired from one of my interlocutors regarding the process of relocation and repatriation from New Caledonia. I also examined Dutch newspaper archival sources available online about New Caledonia and Javanese indentured labour.² I looked at the years

²From the website <https://www.delpher.nl>.

1850 to 1947, spanning the era from when New Caledonia first became a penal colony in the 1850s to the year when the last Javanese labourers were recruited shortly after the Second World War. This newspaper archive proved particularly valuable, both because it revealed new information, never discussed in previous studies of the Javanese diaspora in New Caledonia, and also because it provided information that complemented the historical accounts from my interlocutors.

Autobiographical novel analysis

Previous studies of Javanese diasporic communities in New Caledonia mainly focus on their histories and rarely touch on the narrative side and their present social conditions. Besides the new insights gained from the ethnographic fieldwork, my research also sheds new light on the narrative production of diasporic communities as expressed in autobiographical novels. These texts construct particular narratives about migrants' diasporic identity and belonging—for example, narratives about their arrival, process of adaptation into new societies, successes, and failures—which are closely connected with wider narratives within the Javanese diasporic community.

I selected three autobiographical novels written by second-generation Javanese descendants. Those novels are *L'écharpe et le kriss* [*The Scarf and The Kris*] (2003) written by Marc Bouan; *Le rêve accompli de Bandung à Nouméa* [*The Accomplished Dream from Bandung to Noumea*] (2008) by Ama Bastien; and *La Bayou de Djakarta à Nouméa* [*The Bayou³ from Jakarta to Noumea*] (2016) by Liliane Saintomer.⁴ These three books recount the life of the Javanese descendants in New Caledonia, as well as the memories of their grandparents and great-grandparents of life as indentured labourers. These books describe not only the family but also community histories, especially the Javanese as the descendants of indentured labour in New Caledonia.

In this research, the story of indenture in a hybrid diasporic community such as New Caledonia is hard to reproduce due to its distance in time and the lack of available evidence apart from the official documents or family archives, both of which can prove to be partial and indeed scanty. It therefore raises questions about the reliability of these fictional accounts, given that the authors have not experienced indenture themselves. Apart from these constraints, however, the narrative of indenture as retold by the indentured labourers' offspring is important

³The *Bayou* in this title has a double meaning. Literally, it was a Javanese word for elder sister, but the French settlers used that word to address Javanese maids and household servants.

⁴Elsewhere I show that the novels *Le rêve accompli de Bandung à Nouméa* by Ama Bastien and *L'écharpe et le kriss* by Marc Bouan illustrate the formation of identity among the Javanese diaspora in New Caledonia (Hayuningsih 2022). This research fills in the gap of my previous research by showing that literary works in diaspora communities can be a medium for forging shared memories and identity while fracturing the diaspora communities.

—not only for their family and communities but also for broader society—as it offers an alternative gaze through which to reconsider their ancestors’ experience.

In this research, there is a process of intertextuality involving historical documents and diverse chronicles in the novelists’ works. Intertextuality is a notion that allows us to examine the relationship of a story to a preceding narrative, especially a culturally privileged story. As Charlotte Linde states, ‘no text can ever be individual or univocal: that is, the impossibility of complete originality or absence of influence by prior texts’ (Linde 2009, 168). Flashbacks are also a central feature of indenture novels. They serve as a reminder of ancestral struggle and the protagonists’ progress toward communal unity and cultural preservation. Numerous narratives in indentured novels are about upward mobility, about personal and collective empowerment through financial benefit, educational access, career advancement, and cultural sovereignty (Pirbhai 2009, 24).

By combining literature studies with ethnography to analyse the relationship between different ways of articulating diasporic subjectivity—through the medium of autobiographical novels and narratives retold in personal, collective, and official performance, rituals, and custom—this study contributes to the discussion of how diasporic subjectivities formed and further transformed in practices of homeland anchorage. This study examines the creation of narratives of the Javanese diaspora in New Caledonia as narrated by their descendants. The few novels describing the lived experiences of Asian indentured labour focus mainly on South Asia.⁵ Considering the lack of discussion on the Southeast Asian indentured labour history narrative, this research adds to this narrative and the discussion of the narrative aspect of Asian indentured labour, and links it to a broader discussion of transnational diasporic communities.

Overview of the chapters

This dissertation is divided into seven chapters. Chapter 1 has outlined the key concepts, research questions, arguments, and the methodology used in this study. Chapter 2 will turn to the historical setting, background, and context of my research, providing a brief history of indentured labour, the beginning of indentured labour recruitment in New Caledonia, and the analysis of the autobiographical novels.

In the third chapter, I focus on how Javanese descendants imagine and construct collective memories of their diasporic community in New Caledonian society. For more than 100 years after their earliest arrival in New Caledonia, there was almost no version of indentured labour history told from the Javanese

⁵Among them are: stories about Indian labourers in Mauritius by V.S Naipaul with his book *A House for Mr. Biswas* (1961) and Deepchand C. Beeharry’s book *That Others Might Live* (1998); Amitav Ghosh’ trilogy *The Glass Palace* (2000), *The Hungry Tide* (2005), and *Sea of Poppies* (2008), which are about Indian labourers working on plantations in South East Asia; and Gaiutra Bahadur’s novel *Coolie Woman: The Odyssey of Indenture* (2013) about an Indian labourer in British Guiana.

point of view. Instead of an official history, the Javanese indentured labourers' story was made up of multiple family stories.

The fourth chapter examines how the Javanese community today engages in homeland-making activities within the context of New Caledonian society. This chapter demonstrates the critical role of homeland anchorage in the formation of the community's narrative. While the Javanese community engages in homeland-making practices on a daily basis in New Caledonian society, homeland has a varied meaning for various generations. The difference arises because the homeland is partially imagined, existing only in the imagination of the deterritorialised communities, and often provides the fuel for new conflicts and fractures in community.

Chapter 5 discusses the role of religion and belief in sustaining and disrupting the Javanese community identity. I found that Islamic practices in Java, the Arab Peninsula, and Indonesia have evolved on different trajectories, with the three pathways becoming parallel within the Javanese community in New Caledonia to such a degree that it leads to dispute.

In the sixth and last empirical chapter I focus on diasporic politics and its role as a dividing factor that fractures the diasporic community. I found that in diaspora originating through indentured labour, such as the Javanese in New Caledonia, the relationship between homeland and hostland becomes vague and tends to be ambivalent. It is not easy for its members to choose to side with either the hostland or the homeland, especially for the second generation. The difference in political views among Javanese people is a factor that widens cleavages and fractures in the community.

In the final concluding chapter, I look back on the arguments made throughout this dissertation and suggest directions for further research, highlighting its main contributions. Paramount among these is the discussion of fractured communities as an inherent aspect of the diasporic condition for a deterritorialised diaspora.

Chapter 2.

Locating New Caledonia: The History of the Javanese Indentured Labour Diaspora

New Caledonia is famous today largely for its tourist destinations and nickel mining. With a barrier reef surrounding its main island, New Caledonia has the world's largest tropical lagoon. It also has a reputation for being an expensive tourist destination. Even so, according to the Statistical Institute and Economic Studies of New Caledonia, 12,399 tourists visited the country in 2019 – a high number in comparison to neighbouring countries in the Pacific, despite its size.⁶ As for the nickel industry, New Caledonia is the world's fourth-largest nickel producer after Indonesia, the Philippines, and Canada.⁷ However, as Reuillard Michel writes, 200 years ago New Caledonia was not as '*bleu*' (blue) as it is now; it was a '*noir*' (black) area because of its penal colony and plantations using indentured labour (Michel 1995, 250).

This chapter sketches out the history of New Caledonia's indentured labour scheme that laid the foundation of the current Javanese diaspora community. New Caledonia was 'discovered' by Western colonial powers through a mission led by Captain Cook in 1774. The archipelago became a French colony in 1853 and was used as a penal colony from 1864 to 1894. The French indentured labour scheme in New Caledonia was in effect from 1896 to 1949. Until this day, New Caledonia remains French overseas territory.

The past sketched in this chapter is important for understanding the Javanese diaspora in New Caledonia today. The history of the Javanese community as descendants of indentured labour is not widely discussed in French or Indonesian history. Many Javanese descendants in New Caledonia do not know their family histories because much of the information was hidden by their grandparents or parents due to the shame of being a descendant of indentured labourers. In addition, in the existing historical narratives individual and family histories have been lost. This chapter aims to reconstruct some of the historical facts, but it shows how the history of Javanese society as a diaspora community, emerging from indentured labour, remains patchy and fragmented.

⁶<https://www.worlddata.info/oceania/new-caledonia/tourism.php> and <https://www.isee.nc/economie-entreprises/entreprises-secteurs-d-activites/tourisme>

⁷<https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/top-nickel-producing-countries.html>

Historical context

Indentured labour

Indentured labour had a long history in the British empire. David Northrup writes that ‘more than half of all European migrants to British colonies in the 17th and 18th centuries are estimated to have been indentured’ (Northrup 1995, 4). As elaborated by Alessandro Stanziani, ‘in the French colonies, the indentured labour system was initially intended for white settlers whose transport expenses were advanced by employers in exchange for a commitment to work for several years’ (Stanziani 2013, 65). On the other hand, before this indentured system was introduced, the French had tested it with the repurchase of enslaved people in Senegal from 1839 to 1840 to meet the need for labourers in that colony (Maurer 2010).

The indentured labour system replaced the slave system after the British government passed the Slavery Abolition Act in 1833, followed by the French in 1848 and the Dutch in 1863 (Nimako and Willemsen 2011, 37). In contrast to slave owners, plantation owners did not officially ‘possess’ indentured labourers. However, the control they had over indentured labourers was greater than that over free labourers. The most apparent method of controlling the indentured workers was through the conditions of labour contracts, which comprised the isolation of labourers on plantations with the use of a pass system. The labourers could only leave the plantations where they worked with the approval of the director (Hoeft 1987, 4).

Considering the similarity of this indentured process to slavery, indentured labour served not just as a replacement of slavery but as a hidden continuation of it (Schuler 1986, 125; Allen 2003, 57; 2014, 330). There are resemblances between the two, mainly in the beginning of the trade, when countless labourers were employed through abduction and force. The labourers were also misinformed by dishonest recruitment agencies about their destinations, working conditions, and payment. Upon reaching their destinations indentured labourers lived in lodgings, and suffered severe disciplinary procedures that in many cases were effectively equivalent to those of the slavery system they replaced (Northrup 1995, 10; Allen 2003, 37).

Indentured labour from Asia started to replace the enslavement of African people at different moments in the 19th century. It was started by the British government, who brought indentured labourers from India to British Guiana, Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, and Fiji from 1838 onwards (Lai 1993, 107; Jung 2005; Mohanty 2006; Veracini 2008, 194)194. Meanwhile, the French transported labourers from their colonies in India and Africa to meet the labour scarcity in French Réunion, Mauritius, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Caribbia, Vanuatu and Tahiti (Shineberg 1984, 5; Schuler 1986, 137; Toullelan 1986; Bonnemaïson

1986; Schmidt 1989; Northrup 1995, 26; 2000). As the Dutch East Indies handled an excess of labour, the Dutch authorities sent Javanese to Suriname starting in 1890 as cheap plantation workers (Kopijn 2002, 111). The colonial government soon preferred the Javanese to other labourers from Asia, not so much for their physical abilities but because of their obedience, uniformity, and eagerness to accept the terms of their bond. The Dutch East Indies had already labelled the Javanese as good-mannered, submissive, and unconcerned about their financial future (Hoefte 1998a, 25).

Indentured labour is an example of colonial ‘service’, which contributed to the emergence of diasporic communities throughout the world. As highlighted by Lily Cho, ‘While black slavery is assumed as foundational to the construction of black diasporic communities, Asian indentured work occupies a very different position within Asian diaspora studies. Indenture tends to be conversed as an episode in the past which is disconnected from the construction of contemporary Asian diasporic communities’ (Cho 2007, 22). Hence, in this dissertation, by contrast, I add to the debate the role of indenture as a determinative event for the Asian diaspora, particularly in New Caledonia.

From penal colony to indentured labour destination

Convict transportation had been part of imperial history for centuries from the early 15th century onwards, concerning multifaceted movements between empires and colonies (C. Anderson and Maxwell-Stewart 2014, 102; Bergantz 2018, 150). Following the penal colonisation set up by Britain in Australia, from 1852 to 1953 more than 100,000 convicts from France and the French colonial empire were sent to penal colonies in French Guiana and New Caledonia (Neilson 2015, 205). As Briony Neilson points out, the French government sought to use imprisoned criminals to develop the empire while contributing to the development of the metropolis. Supporters of penal colonisation claimed that transporting convicts to a colonial environment made it easier for them to be released and reintegrated into society. They would be free of the stigma of being convicted if they were removed from their homeland’s judgmental society (Merle 1995, 207).

French viewpoints on the Pacific were solidified with ideas of ideals on three stages: the paradise island; the ideal penal colony; and the ideal place for a new colony. New Caledonia was made to fulfil this tripartite utopianism especially through the policy of Charles Guillain, who became its first governor in late 1859. Governor Guillain articulated his plan for New Caledonia through his *Essai de colonisation pénale à la Nouvelle-Calédonie* published in 1861. This document specified every phase of his design, including general observations of Melanesian populations, and plans for the social and commercial structure and justice service (Dutton 2013, 272).

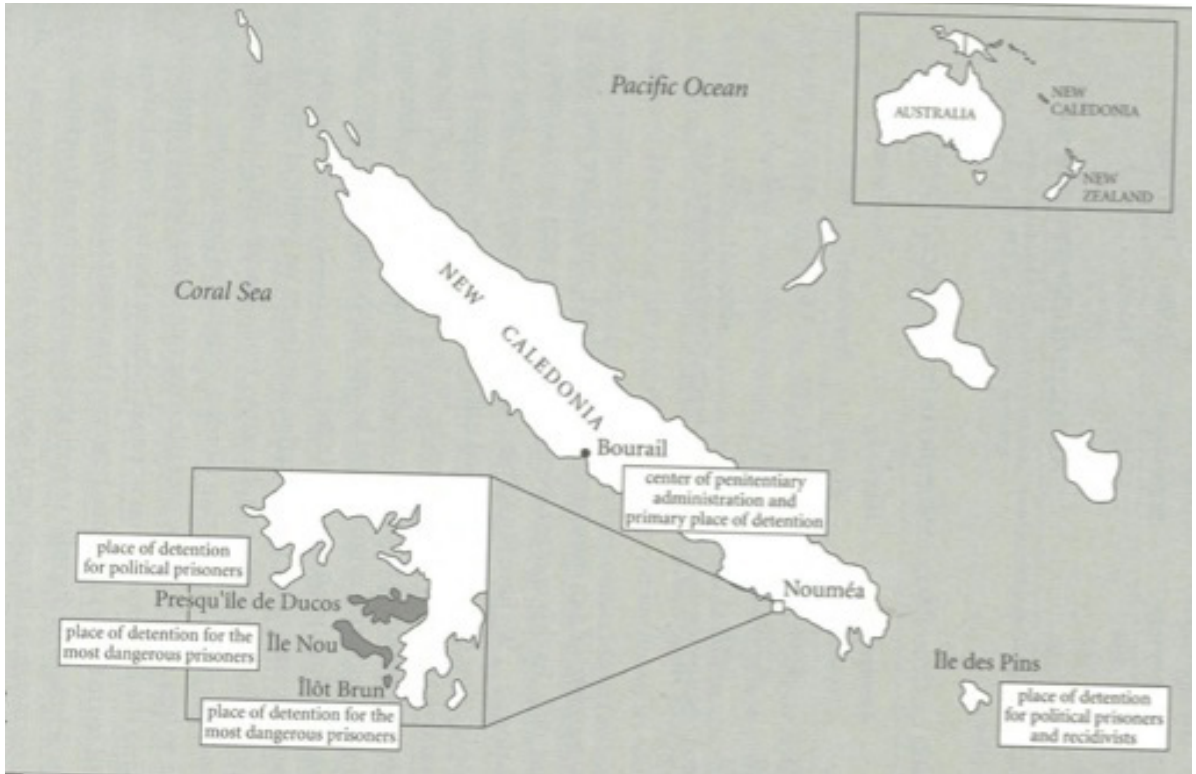


Figure 1. Penal establishment in New Caledonia.

Source: (Toth 2006, 19).

The majority of the convicts sent to New Caledonia were punished under the 1854 Act. Most were political exiles from the Kabyle insurrection in 1871 in Algeria and the Commune of Paris in 1870, and arrived in New Caledonia in 1872 and 1873. The majority left the colony in 1881 and 1895 after attaining a pardon. The ex-convicts who chose to stay in New Caledonia had to find work. Those who were not granted the land concession had to look for work by themselves in the rural areas outside Noumea, the capital of New Caledonia (Merle and Coquet 2019, 256).

The penal colony regulation gradually turned into a means of obtaining cheap labour to assist colonial expansion. According to Clare Anderson and Hamish Maxwell-Stewart, 'the forms of labour service that convicts performed were diverse and could encompass: land clearance; infrastructural work, including the building of barracks, forts, roads and bridges; agriculture and the cultivation of rubber, silk, and salt; tin and coal mining; working as personal servants or grooms; or maritime or military service' (C. Anderson and Maxwell-Stewart 2014, 105). However, this began to lessen with the end of penal transportation (Feuer 1946, 237).

In 1894, Governor-General Feillet assumed that the penal colony was the key cause of why New Caledonia failed to develop under his administration. His way of solving the problem was ‘to turn off the “tap of dirty water” that brought convicts and to replace them with “honest people” from the new working classes of the French Republic’ (Merle 1995, 278). Feillet’s economic goals were to change New Caledonia into a nickel and coffee producer. However, French farmers and settlers could not do it by themselves. They needed mining and agricultural workers, and the indigenous Kanak were seen as ‘neither willing nor able to do such jobs’ (Maurer 2010, 871). The first labourers who arrived on this island were Indians from Réunion, followed by Melanesians from Vanuatu (Speedy 2009, 123). However, they were insufficient to fulfil the demand for labour in agriculture and mining. Feillet thus launched another massive recruitment programme aimed at attracting labourers from overpopulated areas of Asia. His first targets were Chinese, Indian, and Japanese people. However, this did not go according to plan. Japanese labourers were disparaged as lazy, always asking for a wage raise, and often on strike, even staging a large-scale demonstration around Noumea. In addition, Chinese labourers were labelled as dishonest and lazy, and were accused of making many attempts to kill their employers by poisoning them (Muljono-Larue 1996, 27). With those considerations in mind Governor Feillet turned his attention to the Vietnamese in French Indochina and the Javanese in the Dutch East Indies.

Recruiting Vietnamese proved easier because Vietnam was a French colony. The first Vietnamese group of 800 labourers disembarked in New Caledonia in 1891. Most were political convicts from the colonial penitentiary in Paulo Condor (Angleviel 1997). As for the Javanese, after long negotiations between the Dutch government in Batavia and the French government in Noumea the first convoy of 170 labourers arrived in 1896 (Maurer 2002, 68).

Javanese indentured labour recruitment and life in New Caledonia

The history of Javanese indentured labourers sent to New Caledonia from 1896 until 1949 was one painful experience after another. Most of the Javanese joined indentured labour schemes with hopes for a better future, but the reality was to be treated as tantamount to slaves. Between 1896 and 1949 about 20.000 Javanese came to New Caledonia to work as indentured labourers (Maurer 2010, 867–72). Table 1 shows the main phase of arrivals and departures of the Javanese indentured labourers in New Caledonia 1896–1955. The vast majority was recruited by private companies hired by the Dutch government in the Dutch East Indies.

Number of persons and convoys		Arrivals				Departures				Number of persons and convoys	
Main phases of arrivals	Number of persons				Number of convoys	Number of persons				Number of convoys	Main phases of departures
	Men	Women	Total adults	Children		Men	Women	Total adults	Children		
1. 1896–1929			11,141		58			1,431		114	1. 1902–1921
– 1896–1909		(70)	1,271	(15)	5			76		1	– 1902
– 1911–1919			2,282	(1)	37			1,331	(100)	112	– 1907–1919
– 1922–1929	5,485	2,103	7,588	(136)	16			24	3	1	– 1921
2. 1933–1939	5,821	1,988	7,809	(35)	28			5,299		32	2. 1924–1941
								4,797	(735)	30	– 1924–1939
								502		2	– 1941
3. 1949	329	121	450	44	1	3,810	1,460	5,270	2,188	6	3. 1948–1955
T. 1896–1949			19,400		87			12,000		152	T. 1902–1955

Table 1. Main phase of arrivals and departures of the Javanese indentured labourers in New Caledonia from 1896–1955.

Source: (Maurer 2010, 873)

Although the Dutch colonial authorities in the 19th century strictly controlled and restricted the mobility of Javanese throughout the archipelago, traditional labour recruitment systems survived and even strengthened after the economic liberalisation in 1870. Labour recruitment was primarily in the hands of organisers of pilgrimages to Mecca. The organising of pilgrimage as a business rapidly expanded at the turn of the century due to tremendous advancements in transportation, and this enabled recruiter networks to be developed throughout Java (Maurer 2006, 52). Responding to an increasing demand for labour in the region's booming industrial plantations, these companies did not hesitate to expand their operations from couriers specialising in the organisation of trips between Java and Mecca to the organisation of Javanese workers' transportation to the Peninsular Malaysia plantation area. These workers passed through Singapore, which had already established itself as a regional transportation and commerce hub (Houben 1999, 27). However, these established networks proved insufficient to meet Sumatra's plantation and mining labour demands. As a result, the colonial administration of the Dutch East Indies decided in 1880, under the *koolie ordonantie*, to subcontract recruitment of these workers to private recruiter firms that expanded their operations throughout Java's most promising regions (Breman 1989).

Between 1870 and 1930, the recruitment system for Javanese labourers, both those destined for the archipelago's outer islands and for foreign colonies, underwent significant changes. Around 1900, private commercial firms carried out the work: Soesman, Falkenberg & De Hass, Harland, A.F. Hillebrand, D. Maccoll's Anglo-Dutch Labour Bureau and A.P.A. Macht, all of which had their headquarters in Batavia or Semarang (Muljono-Larue 1996; Houben 1999;

Adi 2014). Each controlled a recruitment channel and employed three types of personnel: recruiters (often Europeans); henchmen (*handlangers*); and overseers (*mandur*). The henchmen and overseers were tasked with approaching potential Javanese recruits in the villages and towns. They also acted as interpreters and spoke to job-seekers near factories, town markets, and at places of leisure (Houben 1999, 30).

The recruitment agencies were required to keep recruitment depots in a good condition in areas designated by the administration, to keep a detailed annual register of commitments, and to enforce them. Additionally, they were responsible for submitting a weekly report to the administration, ensuring the proper treatment of recruited workers, and for providing adequate transportation to the coastal depot. Finally, they were required to schedule a medical examination, which resulted in a certificate in triplicate. Each is signed by the physician and included the recruited person's thumbprint alongside their photograph. The employment contract was declared void unless these procedures were adhered to, and boarding could only occur if the recruitment agencies strictly adhered to all of these procedures. All of this had to be monitored by Labour Inspectorate recruiting officers stationed near the coastal depots (Muljono-Larue 1996; Houben 1999; Maurer 2010). The actual recruitment itself was marked by all sorts of irregularities. In December 1907, labour inspector D.G. Stibbe wrote:

Recruitment in the interior is nowadays in the hands of a gang of unscrupulous extortioners (excluding, of course, the recruitment agencies), who, wholly under false pretexts and promises, persuade the naïve village man to emigrate; by duplicity lure women away from their husbands; and children from their parents. When the illicit recruitment, which through lack of Government regulations has attained very high levels, is added to this it is essential that the present situation should be brought to an end as soon as possible, both in the interests of the population and of migration itself, and in the interests of our reputation as a civilized nation. (Houben 1999, 30)

Recruiting agencies engaged in various manipulations to falsify their records and meet their clients' demands. The persons enlisted were transported by land to the central warehouse in Batavia after they had signed their contracts. They were compensated in advance and then were required to wait until their numbers grew large enough to embark on a ship. It was frequently only after the future labourers boarded that they were informed of their destination, which could be Sumatra, Borneo, Suriname, or New Caledonia. Numerous witnesses testified that they were unaware of the consequences of their choice until the boat departed from the dock (Maurer 2010, 874).

Another contentious issue was the minimum age of workers. While it

was prohibited to enlist a labourer under the age of 16 in the Dutch East Indies, a 1903 decree in New Caledonia set the minimum age at 14, a regulation that would result in numerous contract falsifications with the age of the emigrating labourer frequently being inflated. Women were primarily the victims in a country in which they were traditionally promised at a very young age to an arranged marriage, and many fled precisely by enlisting themselves. As several testimonies demonstrate, being a young woman sometimes entailed evading an arranged marriage, a practice that was still prevalent in the Javanese countryside at the time; at other times, the decision was made impulsively to avoid parental authority (Adi 2014, 19). Men, on the other hand, mostly left to escape the disastrous economic conditions of Java. Additionally, the registers indicate that the labourers recruited were concentrated in the island's poorest and most densely populated areas: Yogyakarta, Surakarta, Purworejo, Kutoarjo, Karanganyar, Jombang, Pare, Blitar, Brantas, and Surabaya (Houben 1999, 30).

Below is an example of the falsification of age in the medical examination card issued by the Dutch recruitment agency. It is clear that this boy was younger than the 20 years old he claims to be.

Emigratie-Kantoor A. F. Hillebrand.

Reg. No. 177/1927

GENEESKUNDIG CERTIFICAAT

bedoeld bij § 7 van de voorschriften tot uitvoering der Wervingsordonnantie. (Staatsblad 1914, No. 613).

G. & v. O. 871

CERTIFICAAT

Naam van de(n) persoon Mardj

baatstelijk woonachtig in de desa Dakon

district Modjokerto

afdeeling Soerabaya

gewest Java

bestemd voor WELW C.

akte No. 1127 (?) dienstjaar 1927 (?) Contract No. 132

De verklaring is afgegeven te Soerabaya

Verkl. No. 132

DR. E. J. BOK

KENMERKEN.

a. litteken.

b. pigmentvlek (nodus melanoticus)

c. gezwellen

d. pigmentwrat (nodus verrucosus).

Leeftijd naar schatting 23 jaar

Na 1107 23 jaar

Lengte 1.58 m.

Gevaccineerd

Gevaccineerd

RAPATRIE 11-11-55

per Skaubryn

Periode 28-11-57

per Qantas

Geneeskundig geschikt bevonden voor velderheid

Geneeskundig afgekeurd wegens fabriekarbeid

Afdruk van den linkerduim van SEMARANG, den 1927

De Geneesheer,

(1) Bij Verklaringen, meldende

(2) In te vullen bij het verlijden der akte, wanneer deze eerst nog niet verlijden is.

(3) Te stellen in tegenwoordigheid van den met het onderzoek belasten geneesheer.

Z. O. Z.

Figure 2. Indentured labourer's medical examination
Source (Muljono-Larue 1996, 91)

The medical examination above also functioned as a means to track the number of Javanese indentured labourers in New Caledonia. Aside from the medical examination, we can also gain additional information here about the labourer's movements, such as his repatriation date to Indonesia with the ship *Skaubryn* in 1955 and his return date to New Caledonia on 28 November 1957 with Qantas airline.

To stop the abuse, the Dutch colonial administration decided to assert control over recruitment in 1907 by establishing a labour inspectorate, and the

Dutch colonial government in the Dutch East Indies issued Recruitment Ordinances in 1909 and 1914. The latter stipulated that recruiting agents had to possess a licence, which had to be renewed annually. Moreover, no work agreements were allowed with minors (persons younger than 16 years) or with married women without the consent of their husbands (Hoefte 1998b, 51; Houben 1999, 51). The ordinances adopted in 1909 and 1914 in Java affected the recruitment process in New Caledonia. As a result, the upstream recruitment was entirely delegated to local private agencies, even though the Dutch colonial administration supervised contract signing before boarding. The French consulate was no longer directly involved (Maurer 2006, 59). On paper, the ordinances aimed to protect the future labourers and ensure their rights. However, in reality the conditions were far from the ideal. The recruiting agencies violated the ordinances, taking labourers from elsewhere, and including minors and those who had been refused work overseas.

The journey by ship from Batavia to Noumea took between three and four weeks, depending on whether the ship sailed directly or via Semarang, Surabaya, Makassar, Ambon, Dutch New Guinea, or even Port-Vila (Vanuatu). Except for two English ships that transported large contingents early in the process, the Messageries Maritimes were responsible for transportation in small groups until 1918. From 1919 until 1939 transport was provided by Dutch ships of the KPM (Koninglijke Paketvaart Maatschappij) or Royal Packet Shipping Company, which transited through Sydney or another Australian port. Only the final convoy of 1949 was carried out by a French ship (Maurer 2006, 60).



Figure 3. Ship *Saint Louis* in 1898 which used to bring the Javanese indentured labourers to New Caledonia.

Source: Picture from New Caledonian Archives Service (reproduced in Adi 2014, n.p.)

According to Jean Luc Maurer, the indentured labour scheme in New Caledonia was based on a synallagmatic contract, in which each party is bound to provide something to the other party (Maurer 2010, 874). In Java, the future labourers signed contracts twice, first with the French consulate and then with the recruitment agency. The contracts were five years in duration and administered by the Dutch labour inspectorate. These contracts were detailed and aimed to cover practically everything, from working hours to salary levels, housing conditions, daily food allocations, and clothing provided, as well as what would happen in the event of death or repatriation. The future employer in New Caledonia paid all the initial costs, such as the financial advance to attract the candidates, clothes for travelling, medical check-ups, transport, living costs before embarkation, the food allowance on board, the quarantine, and the administrative registration (Muljono-Larue 1996; Maurer 2002; 2006; 2010). After the labourer arrived in New Caledonia, the employer provided them with accommodations, food, and clothing. Tables 2–4 below document the food allowance, salaries, and clothing allowances for Javanese indentured labourers 1896–1949:

Food / Beverage	1896	1913	1924	1933	1938	1949
Rice	800	800	800	500	500	500
Bread	682	682	682	250	250	250
Meat	250	226	225	225	225	225
Fish	200	185	185	174	450	300
Vegetables	-	-	-	-	-	300
Salt	24	21	21	21	21	20
Sugar	50	50	42	40	40	50
Tea	3	2	3	5	5	5
Margarine	-	-	-	10	10	20

Table 2. Food allowance for Javanese indentured labourers (in grams) 1896–1949.

Source: (Adi 2014, 68)

Year	Male	Female
1896	17 francs	12 francs
1899	24 francs	(unknown)
1901	30 francs	20 francs
1903	24 francs	12 francs
1911	Year 1–3: 24 francs Year 4–5: 25.2 francs	Year 1–3: 12 francs Year 4–5: 12.6 francs
1913–1918	Year 1–3: 24 francs Year 4: 28.80 francs Year 5: 33.60 francs	Year 1–3: 12 francs Year 4: 14.40 francs Year 5: 16.80 francs
1919–1923	25 francs	12.50 francs
1924	98.4 francs	73.8 francs
1925–1929	81 francs	54 francs
1933	Year 1–2: 80 francs Year 3: 95 francs Year 4–5: 110 francs	Year 1–2: 65 francs Year 3: 72.50 francs Year 4–5: 80 francs
1938	Year 1–2: 95 francs Year 3: 110 francs Year 4–5: 125 francs	Year 1–2: 77.50 francs Year 3: 85 francs Year 4–5: 92.50 francs
1949	600 francs	500 francs

Table 3. Javanese indentured labourers' salaries 1896–1949.

Source: (Adi 2014, 61–62)

Year	Male	Female	Note
1920	Clothes and hat	Clothes and hat	Annually given
1924	1 wool blanket; 1 woolen shirt; 2 cotton shirts; 2 pants; 2 hats	1 wool blanket; 2 sarongs; 2 pants; 2 blouses	Annually given
1933–1949	1 blanket; 1 fleece shirt; 1 cotton shirt; 1 pants; 1 hat	1 blanket; 1 casaquin; 1 pants; 1 shirt; 1 blouse	For 6 months and renew except for the couverture (renewal after 18 months)

Table 4. Javanese indentured labourers' clothing allowances 1920–1949.

Source: (Adi 2014, 66–67)

For the worker's part, they signed a five-year contract (changed in 1920 to three years but with the option of extending it to five years) with a given employer for a fixed monthly salary. Figures 3 and 4 show an example of a representative 'engagement' contract from 1943. The contract could be extended according to requests from both parties after the end of the contract. The employee was wholly dependent on his employer for the duration and was considerably limited in his or her travel opportunities and individual freedoms (Muljono-Larue 1996, 57).

Upon arrival in New Caledonia, the labourers were quarantined for three days on the island of Freycinet. Doctors re-examined them for health problems, and an Immigration Service officer reviewed their administrative files following the contract signed before departure. Following that, the officer escorted the newly arrived labourers to a warehouse on Orphanage Bay, where they were housed and fed while awaiting the arrival of their patrons. Patrons', plantation owners/bosses, who had 'ordered a "coolie"', through this demeaning process, and had paid for all costs, including transportation and transit, could then take them directly from the warehouse. Saintomer's novel depicts the scene of the labourers' arrival in Noumea in this extract below:

Nadiem and the two hundred and sixty-nine workers from Batavia crossed a beautiful white vault and met at the Hospital. This hospital served as a quarantine place — the big building located in front of the sea. Your future boss, your 'patron' as he's officially called here, will pick you up at the end of your quarantine. They are afraid of the introduction of various diseases, that is why we are in this hospital. (Saintomer 2016, 40)

The officer required to accompany labourers to the Immigration Service. There, the official responsible drafted an act of engagement outlining the new boss's responsibilities, with or without the assistance of an interpreter. Additionally,

they provided the labourer with an ‘engagement’ booklet that detailed all aspects of their contract, including wages, advances on balances or withdrawals for fines, medical care leave, employer changes, faults or misconduct, and punishments (Muljono-Larue 1996; Maurer 2002; Adi 2014). Even though the labourers were mostly illiterate, they had to keep the ‘engagement’ booklet in hand. The booklet also functioned as a kind of identity card. Without the booklet, they could neither go back to Java nor extend their contract in New Caledonia. Below is an example of the ‘engagement’ booklet of the Javanese labourer.

**PAIEMENT INTEGRAL
TOUS RISQUES**
NOUVELLE-CALÉDONIE
ET
DÉPENDANCES
IMMIGRATION
N° 106
d'enregistrement
CIRCONSCRIPTION
DE

ACTE D'ENGAGEMENT

Le 22 SEPT 1943 19
Entre le Capitaine de Gendarmerie Chef du Service de l'Immigration, d'une part
et Monsieur M. Ballaude
habitant à Nume, d'autre part,
il a été arrêté et convenu ce qui suit :

Le Service de l'Immigration confie l'Immigrant Boedjan
N° M. 1013 à Monsieur M. Ballaude
qui l'accepte pour la durée de son contrat initial telle qu'elle reste à
accomplir à ce jour.
Monsieur M. Ballaude reconnaît avoir
pris connaissance des dispositions du dernier contrat en vigueur et
s'engage à les respecter.
Monsieur M. Ballaude s'engage, en
outre à verser trimestriellement au Service de l'Immigration les rede-
vances fixées par les arrêtés en vigueur et le pécule du travailleur.
Monsieur M. Ballaude ayant versé
le montant des frais d'introduction et bénéficiant de ce fait, de
mensualités réduites, reconnaît l'obligation de supporter exclusivement
les risques résultant du décès ou du rapatriement anticipé du travail-
leur et de sa famille à compter de ce jour.
Le présent acte aura son effet à compter du
15 SEPT 1943 19

L'employeur,
[Signature]

LE CAPITAINE DE GENDARMERIE
CHEF DU SERVICE DE L'IMMIGRATION
[Signature]

*Lequel de la prime
pour les 15-1-1946*

Imp. Mission de Nouvelle-Calédonie 41 1-39

Les mensualités partent du 1^{er} ou du 16 de chaque mois, toute période de 8 jours accomplie par le travailleur compte pour la quinzaine entière.

Figure 4. Working contract between an indentured labourer and his patron (page 1).

Source: (Muljono-Larue 1996, 89)

The 'engagement' booklet above shows the employment contract of a Javanese labourer working at Société Le Nickel in Voh in 1943. The employer paid 200 francs per month for their labour. The contract also shows the important role of an interpreter who helped translate the contents of the contract to Javanese workers who did not speak French. As a form of approval, the workers affixed their thumbprints. The contract is signed by an employer representative and authorised by the Head of the Immigration Office.

RENGAGEMENT
NOUVELLE-CALÉDONIE
ET
Dépendances
IMMIGRATION
N° (1) 9180
d'enregistrement
Circonscription
de
Voh

ACTE D'ENGAGEMENT

Le 19 juil 1943, par devant nous Lubet Jean
Syndic de l'Immigration soussigné, assisté d'un interprète, se sont présentes :
Monsieur Société "Le Nickel" demeurant à Voh
et l'immigrant Soebandi N° Mle A 5745
lesquels nous ont priés d'enregistrer la déclaration suivante :
l'immigrant Soebandi N° Mle A 5745 loue ses
services à Monsieur Société "Le Nickel" à Voh qui accepte
en qualité de :
aux conditions du dernier contrat en vigueur pour une durée de deux ans
révisable en cas de départ.
sous réserve de l'approbation du Chef du Service de l'Immigration.
Monsieur Société "Le Nickel" s'engage à payer mensuellement
à l'ouvrier contractant la somme nette de 200 fr et au Service de l'Immi-
gration, les redevances fixées par arrêté, pendant la durée du présent contrat
qui aura son effet à compter du 16 Août 1943 et supplémentaire-
ment le pécule de l'immigrant.
Il déclare, en outre avoir pris connaissance des dispositions du dernier contrat
en vigueur.
Et après lecture faite ont signé avec nous,
L'Interprète, L'Engagé, A 5745
LE NICKEL
L'Employeur, La Syndic
Vu et Approuvé :
Le Chef du Service de l'Immigration

A faire en deux exemplaires qui doivent être adressés au Bureau de l'Immigration.
(1) Ne pas porter de N° sur le présent acte.
Les engagements partent du 1^{er} au du 15 de chaque mois.
Pécule de 40 francs pour les hommes et de 30 francs pour les femmes payé exclusivement par l'employeur.

Figure 5. Working contract between an indentured labourer and his patron (page 2).

Source: (Muljono-Larue 1996, 90)

Figure 5 above is a page that the employer must sign with the approval of the Head of the Immigration Office. The page shows that the employer has the right to deduct the monthly salary as they have already paid for the departure fee and other necessities upon arrival. This page includes a clause that the employer is aware of the risk of additional costs in the event of the death of the workers.

Labourers' salaries were calculated using a system in which the cost of recruitment and transportation was repaid to the employer, and the amount of money which had been advanced to the labourer before commencing work was also reimbursed by monthly deductions from the worker's salary. The aim of such a contract was that the labourer could not leave his employer during the first three years (Maurer 2010, 874). Figure 5 shows the salary record of the mother of one of my interlocutors who went to New Caledonia in 1939 and passed away in 1970.

RÈGLEMENT DES SALAIRES																
CENTRES	DATES	PÉRIODE DE TEMPS	NOMBRE DE LITRES	SALAIRES	PAGES	ABSENCES		PÉCUL	AVANCES	Pensions	Virements	TITRES ALLOCÉS	VERSÉ POUR			
						Jours	Moins						Messur-	Pécule	Pensions	Div.
Pleuveil	16.3.39	an 12.0 au 31.3.39	91524	123.50				1474				1050	20.50	14.15		
"	6.11.39	2 ^e trimestre 39	91083	104.50				8752	80			95	15.00	84.00		
"	"	3 ^e trimestre 39	"	"								B				
"	5.12.39	3 ^e trimestre 39	91080	388.50				115				1075	16.00	92.50		
"	19.2.40	4 ^e trimestre 39	91271	232.50				115				1175	16.50	93.85		
"	"	1 ^{er} trimestre 40	"	"								R				
"	3.4.40	1 ^{er} trimestre 40	91236	232.50				115	125			52.50	16.50	93.20		
Pleuveil	2.5.40	"	"	"												
"	10.1.40	2 ^e trimestre 40	91576	388.50				51				1075	16.50	93.20		
"	"	3 ^e trimestre 40	"	"								R				
"	11.12.40	4 ^e trimestre 40	91700	232.50				51	110			111.00	16.50	93		
"	"	1.10.40 au 30.11.40	"	"				34	120			1	110	62		
"	5.3.41	1.12.40 au 31.1.41	91716	232.50				51				111.35	16.50	93		
"	14.6.41	1.3.41 au 31.5.41	91719	245				51				111.35	16.50	93		
"	13.9.41	1.4.41 au 31.6.41	91719	255				51				111.35	16.50	93		
"	6.12.41	1.9.41 au 31.11.41	91719	255				51	120			111.35	16.50	93		
"	10.5.42	1.12.41 au 31.1.42	91719	255				51	120			111.35	16.50	93		
"	8.8.42	1.5.42 au 31.7.42	91719	255				51	80			111.35	16.50	93		
"	16.10.42	1.8.42 au 31.10.42	91719	255				51				111.35	16.50	93		
"	13.2.43	1.11.42 au 31.1.43	91719	255				51	150			111.35	16.50	93		
"	15.6.43	1.2.43 au 31.4.43	91719	272.50				51				111.35	16.50	93		
"	7.8.43	1.6.43 au 31.8.43	91719	272.50				51				111.35	16.50	93		
"	20.11.43	1.9.43 au 31.10.43	91719	272.50				51				111.35	16.50	93		
"	12.2.44	1.11.43 au 31.1.44	91719	272.50				51	100			111.35	16.50	93		
"	12.5.44	1.2.44 au 31.4.44	91719	272.50				51				111.35	16.50	93		
"	1.3.45	1.1.45 au 31.3.45	91719	272.50				51				111.35	16.50	93		
Pleuveil	9.9.44	1.5.44 au 31.8.44	91719	272.50				51				111.35	16.50	93		
"	16.11.44	1.9.44 au 31.11.44	91719	272.50				51				111.35	16.50	93		
"	24.5.45	1.3.45 au 31.5.45	91719	272.50				51				111.35	16.50	93		
"	6.1.45	1.11.44 au 31.1.45	91719	272.50				51				111.35	16.50	93		
"	14.11.45	1.1.45 au 31.3.45	91719	272.50				51				111.35	16.50	93		
"	13.7.45	1.4.45 au 31.6.45	91719	272.50				51				111.35	16.50	93		
Total Pleuveil														503.55	25.12	
Total Pleuveil														503.55	25.12	

Figure 6. Indentured labourer's salary record.

Source: interlocutor's personal archive

In the initial period of indentured labour, some members of the council in New Caledonia wanted to employ workers at a salary of 9 francs per month. The wages were raised again during the second arrival period at the request of the Dutch East Indies Government. Wage rates also varied according to workers' gender, age, and marital status. A woman received half the salary of a man, and married women lower salaries than unmarried women. A lot of married women therefore did not declare their marriage to their patron for fear of losing out on wages (Muljono-Larue 1996, 57).

Aside from the low wages that Javanese workers received compared to other workers in New Caledonia, Javanese workers also had limited rights compared to other migrants. Until 1928, they had to obey local laws that prohibited them from walking outside their barracks near the workplace premises after 8pm without their employers' permission. In 1933, a regulation was issued which allowed immigrants to walk outdoors until midnight on Wednesdays, Saturdays and days on which films were screened, if they had a permit signed by their employer (Muljono-Larue 1996, 62).

Another challenge faced by the Javanese indentured labourer was the language barrier. They were mostly illiterate and could not speak Dutch or French, only Javanese. As language became a significant problem faced by indentured labourers, the Dutch government provided one interpreter on each ship departing from the port of Batavia (Saintomer 2016, 84). The interpreter worked for the Immigration Officer, translating the contents of the agreements for the mostly illiterate Javanese people, before they affixed their thumbprints. During the immigration process, the translator worked as a liaison between the Javanese community and the Immigration Office (Muljono-Larue 1996, 57).

The translator is important to 'bridge' the language barrier between the worker, the employer, and the immigration officer. Their presence is even recognised in the working contract, as in the example in Figure 3. However, their work does not stop when after the worker has secured a contract. When workers settled in their workplaces, these workers relied on their own. This inability to speak French was often the cause of their problems with their employers, which often led to punishment by the employer. These workers eventually learnt French independently through their interactions with other Javanese workers who were already there. This hybridity of Javanese and French characterises the Javanese diaspora community in New Caledonia and will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

My research in the archives of Dutch East Indies newspapers indicates that there existed different views regarding the Javanese indentured labour scheme. While some newspapers highlighted the success of the French-Dutch 'agreement' on indentured labour, others voiced more critical opinions. In 1901, one critic wrote in the *Soerabaijasch Handelsblad* (28 January 1901) that the Dutch government should doubt the report from 1900 from the French Colonial

Government in New Caledonia concerning the living conditions of the Javanese indentured labourers. Instead, this critic called on the Dutch government to send a labour inspector there to write a public report. The Dutch government took almost twenty years to put this recommendation into action. In 1920, two newspapers, *Het Nieuws Van Den Dag Voor Nederlandsch-Indië* and *Het Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad* reported on the trip of Labour Inspector Van Ardenne to New Caledonia. He reported that Javanese labourers were doing fine and were treated well by their patrons, and that the Javanese labourers were happy to be in New Caledonia. This was in stark contrast to a later report made by the Australian Press, which described Javanese labourers in New Caledonia as abused and living in misery (*Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad* 1925). The periodic visitations of the Dutch labour inspector were ineffectual because the Javanese workers feared reprisals and were afraid to voice their complaints in the presence of the French mining managers, since punishment in the form of imprisonment was a matter of course (Feuer 1946, 267; Maurer 2010, 874).

The press criticised the Dutch colonial government for their lean approach to the indentured labour situation in New Caledonia. They made a scathing criticism in the newspaper *Het Nieuws Van Den Dag Voor Nederlandsch-Indië* in 1934 of the Dutch Labour Inspector Marijn's report on report on the inhabitants of New Caledonia and their geographical and cultural situation. In addition, scathing criticism was also voiced by Mohammad Husni Thamrin and Abdul Firman Gelar Maharadja Soangkoepo⁸ from the Volksraad⁸ regarding the policy of sending indentured labourers to New Caledonia. They demanded that the labour inspector sent to New Caledonia should not cover up the fact that Javanese indentured labourers were suffering under a French patron.

However, despite the hardship they had to endure, the Javanese labourers in New Caledonia were nonetheless known for their enthusiasm, work ethic, sense of discipline, and calm and docile manner, which, unlike the Vietnamese, did not lead to strikes (Muljono-Larue 1996, 30; Maurer 2002, 73). They quickly became vital to the local economy, primarily because of their 'innate qualities', making them the main sources of the development of the booming coffee culture at the commencement of the century in New Caledonia. As a result of being a 'model minority' (Muljono-Larue 1996, 30), very little is known about Javanese labourers in this crucial period of colonial economic growth. This group was rendered more or less invisible.

⁸Volksraad or The People's Council was the legislative institution established by Dutch East Indies on 18 May 1918.



Figure 7. A postcard with a picture of Javanese indentured labourers on a coffee plantation.

Source: Picture from New Caledonian Archives Service (reproduced in Adi 2014, n.p.)

We can find information about this period in the colonial archives at the Archives de la Nouvelle Calédonie. However, it only concerns administrative records of the workers' identity and copies of their labour contracts. In French history books, there is hardly any section on indentured labour, which was the 'backbone' of New Caledonia's economy between the late 19th and the mid 20th century. At best, the existence of these labourers in blossoming plantations could be regarded as a souvenir, colonial exotica, that could be 'sold' to residents in France. For example, as shown in Figure 6 above, the emphasis of the postcard is on the flowering coffee plantation rather than the two Javanese workers working the land. This historical invisibility results in diasporic communities being ignorant of their history. As I will explain in the next chapter, awareness of having a collective history as indentured labourers only fully materialised in 1996, one hundred years after the Dutch sent the first convoy in 1896.

The emergence of the Javanese community in New Caledonia

While Javanese indentured labourers (and their descendants) remained largely ‘invisible’, New Caledonia’s indigenous population refused to be ignored. Colonisation significantly displaced the Kanak, the indigenous population of New Caledonia, on the main island (Grand-Terre) and the three Loyalty Islands (Maré, Lifou, Ouvéa). The colonial administration then implemented a policy of *cantonment*⁹ in 1859 for the Kanak, who were concentrated in reserved areas, supplemented with the system of *indigenat*¹⁰, which prohibited free movement outside the reserved area. These policies ignited tension and conflict between the Kanak and the French settler population (*Caldoche*) afterwards. Moreover, the Javanese were seen as part of the problem, being servants of and loyal to the French state working on lands which previously belonged to the Kanak.

The 1980s in New Caledonia were marked by a prolonged period of severe violent disorder, with approximately 200 violent deaths, as Kanaks fought for their independence. This violence climaxed in a protracted hostage crisis in 1988, during which opposing sides killed 19 independentists and six police officers and soldiers. None of the Javanese became victim of the violence. The violence shocked Kanaks, Europeans, and the French state alike, urging the various pro- and anti-independence parties to sign the 1988 Matignon Accord (Chappell 2003).

The Matignon Accord¹¹ was superseded in 1998 by the Noumea Accord, which sought consensus by promising all New Caledonian citizens a common destiny that would enable New Caledonia to achieve full emancipation. The two accords’ objective were to achieve this ‘common destiny’ by bringing together diverse and divided communities over 30 years of struggle preceding a 2018 referendum on independence. However, as discussed in Chapter 6, the 2018 referendum – which was followed by a second and third referendum in 2020 and 2021 – only made the divided views over New Caledonia’s future more visible, rather than creating a shared sense of common destiny. Within the Javanese community, too, opinions on New Caledonian independence differed, reflecting some of the fractures within this community as discussed in the following chapters. The Javanese had an ambivalent attitude to the referenda which also reflected their ambivalent position in New Caledonian society; following their invisible history, they long remained a forgotten, small group.

⁹The area outside was made accessible for European colonisation because it was thought that the confinement of Melanesians on reserves would be enough to sustain their subsistence culture (Blay 1988, 866).

¹⁰A limitation on the rights of the indigenous population that was prevalent in French colonies before to World War II and limited free movement outside the defined territory. In addition, it required the natives to undertake unpaid labour in the public works area and pay taxes to finance the administrative expenses of the colony (Blay 1988, 867).

¹¹The Matignon Accord signed on 26 June 1988 between Jean-Marie Tjibaou from the pro-independence movement and Jacques Lafleur from the anti-independence movement (Chauchat 2019).

In terms of numbers, according to the latest census in 2019, the total population of New Caledonia consists of 271,407 people, including the Indonesian community of 3,786 people. The overview can be seen in Table 5 below.

Community	2009		2014		2019	
	Numbers	Percentage	Numbers	Percentage	Numbers	Percentage
Kanak	99,078	40.3	104,958	3.1	111,856	41.2
European	71,721	29.2	73,199	27.2	65,488	24.1
Various communities	20,398	8.3	23,007	8.6	30,758	11.3
Wallis and Futuna	21,262	8.7	21,926	8.2	22,520	8.3
Other communities (Indonesian, Ni-Vanuatu, Tahiti, Vietnamese)	18,077	7.4	19,146	7.1	20,486	7.5
Undeclared	15,044	6.1	26,531	9.9	20,299	7.5
Total	245,580	100.0	268,767	100.0	271,407	100.0

Table 5. The total population of New Caledonia according to the community of affiliation 2009–2019.

Source: <https://www.isee.nc/population/recensement/communautes>.

As shown in Table 5, the population of New Caledonia is registered based on ethnic self-identification and classified in communities of affiliation, but there is no exact information on the number of residents of Javanese descent in the country. Javanese descendants may write their community affiliation as ‘Indonesian’, ‘various communities’, or ‘undeclared’. Accurate information about the size of the Javanese-descent population in New Caledonia is therefore lacking.

Conclusion

In 2008, the historian André Kaspi presented a report commissioned by the State on colonial memorials. The assessment revealed the report’s underlying conclusion that the French society was experiencing “commemorative inflation”. Kaspi’s conclusion identified an ongoing tendency in post-war French society to commemorate all kinds of historical events (Kaspi 2008, 26). However, the French government paid less attention to the commemoration of the history of slavery in the French colonies. In French history, the commemoration of slavery

had to go a long way until it was finally recognised throughout France in the 1990s through the Taubira Law (Gueye 2011, 87). The passing of the Taubira Law in May 2001 was the outcome of the effort of ‘black’ voice within the French National Assembly and mobilisation for the 150th anniversary of the end of slavery.

Although the commemoration of the end of slavery in French territory has become a national commemoration, its echo did not reach New Caledonia and the descendants of indentured labourers. The French’s recognition of New Caledonia limited itself to the history of the penal colony and its role for the Empire as a nickel producer. This reflects historical colonial preoccupations, as Robert Aldrich said: “colonies should serve France” (Aldrich 1996, 91). After being forgotten for so long, the attention of the French public again turned to New Caledonia when they carried out a referendum to demand independence from France in 2018. In addition, the public begins to think about this region’s importance when the 150th anniversary of the Paris Commune was celebrated. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, the city government of Paris carried out a simple commemoration of the Paris Commune, which occurred in 1871 when a total of 500 men and women were deported to New Caledonia. As part of the commemoration, Anne Hidalgo inaugurated the new alley of the Isle of Pines in the square Louise Michel. It pays tribute to the many insurgents deported to New Caledonia during the Paris Commune.¹² Also, Hidalgo planted an araucaria tree, native to New Caledonia, in Montmartre, the site of the beginning of the revolt, as part of the commemoration.¹³

The choice of the French government to highlight the deportation after the Paris Commune as a symbol to ‘remember’ Caledonia is a political choice that shows a tendency to glorify the history of colonialism. Caledonia and its labourers are not remembered as an essential part of the Empire, which contributed nickel and coffee, but rather from its history as a penal colony. Until today, the dark history of labour exploitation and the commodification of workers under a scheme which brought labourers from Java to the island, is not mentioned much as part of French history. And it is certainly not part of collective memory. The indentured labourer scheme, a vital part of the history of the Empire, is not discussed as much as the history of slavery in other French colonies. Until today, the lack of attention and discussion on the history of indentured labour in the French colonies contributes to fractures in the community of descendants of indentured labourers. Due to the lack of an ‘official version’, the vernacular collective memory of the Javanese community in New Caledonia is constantly reshaped and contested and many of the descents still long for recognition. In

¹²<https://impacteuropean.fr/commune-de-paris-1871-2021/>

¹³<https://www.newstatesman.com/world/2021/03/after-150-years-legacy-paris-commune-continues-divide-france>

the next chapter, I will discuss this contestation of collective and individual memories in New Caledonia in more depth, especially from the point of view of the descendants of indentured labourers.

Chapter 3.

Memories and Uprooted Identities

Introduction

The voyage to commence my fieldwork in New Caledonia in 2018 and 2019 took the form of a long-haul flight. Despite the tiredness from a ten-hour flight and eight hours of transit in Bali and Sydney, it was a pleasant journey. I managed to cross two continents and three countries in less than a day – a very comfortable journey compared to the experience of the Javanese communities at the end of the 19th century, when they travelled from Java to New Caledonia under indentured labour schemes.

During the recruitment process, most Javanese indentured labourers did not know that they would be embarking upon a lengthy journey lasting over 25 days across two oceans and two continents to the Island of Stones, as New Caledonia was also known. As soon as they arrived at the Port of Noumea, everything changed for them. Their bodies and identities were no longer theirs. Their bodies were in the hands of the Dutch, those involved in the shipping of labourers, and the French government. Their name was no longer a combination of letters given to them by their Javanese parents. Instead, their given name was changed into a series of registration numbers or *matricule*. For the next few years, their ties with the island of Java were entirely severed. There was no means of communication, not even by letter, as most of them were illiterate.

For the people who stayed behind in Java the only source of information concerning the whereabouts of those who had left was the Dutch newspapers, written in a language that few Javanese were able either to speak or to read. Like most of the stories about slavery and indentured labour, the version of events narrated by the newspapers was through the eyes of the coloniser. Regarding the Javanese diaspora in New Caledonia there was almost no version of history told from the Javanese perspective written by Javanese authors for nearly 100 years. Rather than an official history, the story of the Javanese indentured labourers comprised multiple family stories. Each family had its own version. Some families were proud of their history, while others concealed and stored the shameful episode in a sealed box in the attic.

The plot twists, ruptures, cracks, and fragments in the history of the community made me realise that it is impossible to write the history of the Javanese diaspora as a continuous development and from a single perspective. In this chapter, I point out the grey area that haunts Javanese descent: specifically, memories of indentured labour life. I call it a grey area because there has never

been a solid memory of these particular times. Among the recognised shared narratives is the one that life during indentured labour was burdensome and difficult, and therefore the indentured labourer keeps silent about those times.

An important category in this chapter for describing Javanese interlocutors and communities in New Caledonia is the appellation of people based on their arrival in the country. I learned about this appellation from two sources: a book written by Jean-Luc Maurer (Maurer 2006, 196) and information from Saut and Josephine. The first appellation is the *wong kontrak* (translation: indentured labourers), who come as indentured labourers. Then there are the *kawane* (translation: friends), their shipmates. The next category is the *wong balen* (translation: returnee), which refers to the Javanese in New Caledonia who returned to Indonesia after being repatriated in 1953–1955.

No one knows for certain when or how these categories emerged in New Caledonia's Javanese community. Although few in number, some of my interlocutors still use these categories to differentiate between insiders and outsiders, particularly between those who are descendants from indentured labourers and those who are not. These categories and references will appear in several sections of this thesis to describe community fragments and fractures.

The discussion in this chapter is divided into several sections based on how the Javanese people in New Caledonia classify themselves. I will discuss the collective and individual memory of the Javanese indentured laborers in New Caledonia, the repatriation to Indonesia, and the post-indentured memory in each section. This chapter also explains the different forms of memory in the Javanese diaspora community, memories that are formed from the fragmented history described in the previous chapter. Most of the memories presented in this chapter are inherited from previous generations; some have undergone a 'modification' process and are finally believed to be a collective memory by the community.

The wong kontrak and memories of the recruitment process

The presence of a *werk*

To start with the process of indentured labour recruitment, one of the strongest memories embedded in the collective memory of the Javanese community is the existence of *werk* from the recruitment agency. *Werk* is a term that often appeared in my interviews with interlocutors, especially when I asked them about their own or their parents' or grandparents' recollections of the indentured labour recruitment process. There are several definitions of '*werk*' as defined by my interlocutors. Some said that '*werk*' were Dutch recruitment agents. For others, '*werk*' referred to Dutch military personnel who accompanied the Dutch recruitment agent. The word '*werk*' itself was probably derived from the

Dutch word '*werk*', meaning work. Below is a quote from Wiyanto, one of my interlocutors, about the recruitment process. His story was based on the memory passed down from his father.

The *werk* came from one kampong to another. They were Dutch, for sure. Sometimes they walked around the market. My dad told me stories of his friend, a boy, who was kidnapped by *werk* when he went to the market. My dad also fell into their trap with their offer, when they showed him a picture of a cowboy riding a horse. Yes. Just like in the movies. They suggested that if my dad joined, he would be the next cowboy. Who didn't want to be a cowboy? Years later he realised that he was not working as a cowboy but as a stockman. I don't know how to express it in the Javanese language. Stockman or cowboy, I guess it was the same for him. (Wiyanto, 9 November 2018)

Wiyanto is part of a group of second-generation Javanese born on a ranch in Poindimie. He never saw the *werk* described by his parents so vividly. The *werk* travelled from village to village looking for new workers to be sent to New Caledonia under the Dutch-French indenture scheme. The story of the tall *werk* dressed as army officers, speaking in raucous tones, and carrying guns on their shoulders was still very sharp in Wiyanto's memory. His eyes shone with nostalgia when he recalled stories about the Dutch *werk* who came to his father's village in western Yogyakarta.

Aside from the door-to-door recruitment by Dutch *werk*, the recruiters used word-of-mouth marketing, usually via *retournées* from New Caledonia who had made money with their previous contracts. The new direct recruitment system, using word-of-mouth marketing, was initiated by D.G. Stibbe in 1909, who sought to put an end to commercial agency abuses. He argued that the abuses perpetrated during recruitment would be reduced in a situation in which the individuals knew each other and could be called to account (Houben 1999, 35).

Making money was the biggest attraction for Javanese villagers, who were only occasionally able to make money during the yearly agricultural cycle. *Retournées* came back to Java to get married and often took siblings and fellow villagers back to New Caledonia. Liliane Saintomer's novel depicts how money served as the main incentive for Javanese people to migrate to New Caledonia (Saintomer 2016, 22). This is unsurprising, given that Java in the early 20th century was in a dreadful state due to wars and famine. What is also significant in this book is that a Javanese man ('Konjo') followed a white male, or what my interlocutor calls a '*werk*', and became a translator. Regarding the history of Javanese immigration to New Caledonia between 1896 and 1950, Fidajanti Muljono-Larue wrote that the private companies tasked with recruiting these workers earned money according to the number of labourers recruited (Muljono-

Larue 1996, 30). An interpreter would therefore have been needed as without one the recruitment process would have taken much longer, which would definitely have impacted the payments they received.

Aside from the lure of money and the promise of an exciting new life as presented by the *werk*, Javanese memories of the indentured labour recruitment process were also filled with stories of malpractices. As mentioned in Chapter 2, age falsification was common practice. My interlocutors Josephine and Fida remembered a story from an old Javanese man who had been recruited by *werk* when he was 13. To make him pass the conditions of the administration process, the *werk* in the port of Batavia changed his age from 13 to 16. The problem of age falsification is also depicted in Saintomer's and Bouan's novels (Bouan 2003, 27; Saintomer 2016, 21).

The memory of the Dutch *werk* ignites a collective feeling of colonial fear. The *werk* became a representation of colonial power that could uproot Javanese people from their roots and families to be sent to an island in the middle of nowhere in the Pacific. For Wiyanto and Rose, the *werk* lived on and represented a haunting ghost who could kidnap small children who were outside after sunset. The *werk* story is also an important part of the 'story of origin' in that their decision to work in New Caledonia was not of their own free will but rather a result of coercion and deceit by the colonial power. While their decision to leave the homeland of Java for unknown futures was thus largely attributed to the role of the Dutch *werk*, more profound uprooting of their identity could be attributed to the role of French policy, starting with the French politics of renaming.

Name changes

Name changes serve as an example of identity changes. Legal scholars' research on name changes focuses on issues of individual legal identity in light of the state's growing control over identification (Heymann 2012). In France, the process is referred to as francization (Lapierre 2006; Masure 2008). In contemporary France, changing one's name is a personal choice. To legally change one's given name, one must convince a judge that there is a compelling reason to be addressed by a given name not specified on one's official birth certificate. By contrast, changing one's family name requires a more involved and centralised administrative procedure at a Ministry of Justice office in Paris (Lapierre 2006). This means that changing a given name is much easier than changing a surname, as court rulings have become increasingly liberal, whereas administrative rules remain restrictive (Coulmont 2014, 139). However, during the indentured period in New Caledonia, the labourers' names were changed for administrative reasons.

There were three situations in which indentured labourers changed their names. First, before their journey to New Caledonia, as described in Saintomer's

novel (Saintomer 2016, 21). The name change is usually followed by an age falsification of the prospective worker. The second situation arises when these workers face immigration officials upon arrival in New Caledonia. In Bastien's novel, she recounts her grandfather's story of how the immigration officers changed his name. Because he could not read and write, the immigration officers decided how to write his name, based on their phonetic interpretation of the name's sound (Bastien 2008, 287). The last situation occurs when Javanese workers naturalise or change their citizenship into French citizenship, as depicted in another novel by Marc Bouan (Bouan 2003, 32). These three situations were also encountered by Fidayanti when she did her research in New Caledonia more than 25 years ago. Fidayanti told me:

There are cases where the indentured labourers have to come up with a family name. The odd-sounding names in general came up because the officer at the arrival port in Noumea, who had to input the labourers' data into the system, misheard the name. You speak French and Javanese, so I think that you know how distant French is from Javanese. When I was en brousse (outside Noumea), an elder informed me he had his name because the officer gave it to him. The officer misheard it several times until he decided that he would give him another name. Perhaps, if only the Javanese labourers had learned how to write the Roman alphabet, things would have been easier for them. (Fidayanti, 2 September 2018)

Another example comes from Ama Bastien. She is second-generation, born into a Javanese-Sundanese family in the North Province of New Caledonia. As the oldest daughter she had to take care of her siblings while her older brother went to Noumea to find work. Her dream was to become an author, and this came true about ten years ago when she won a writing competition sponsored by the South Province, and received a sum of money to publish her first book. Her book is a fiction mix of the life history of a descendant of the indentured labourer and Javanese communities in New Caledonia. However, although her novels recount the family history, she does not use real names:

I did not use real names in my novels, although I feel like any readers who know my family will figure it out the moment they read it. I use an alias for my characters. Take, for example, my dad's character in the story: I switched the order of syllables in his name. But his last name, which came from my ancestor's name, was not his true name. Simply put, we got our family name from my grandpa's last name, which in fact is not the original name given to him by his parents. He changed it before disappearing to New Caledonia because of personal issues. (Ama, 6 November 2019)

Ama's tale of her grandfather changing his name before moving to New Caledonia resonates with Sardi's recollection. Sardi remembers how his father, who came to New Caledonia in the 1930s, had to find another name to add to his one-word name because he didn't have a surname – he took another Javanese name as his new surname. However, creating a surname is not always as simple as Sardi's story. Ardi, my interlocutor, learned from his grandfather that their surname, which sounds like a French name, was 'invented.' A French officer had created it because he misheard the name spelled by Ardi's grandfather.

To figure out how the naming system affected the labourers' identities, we must look first at the difference between the French and Javanese naming systems. For the Javanese, a last name is not always their family name. They can identify Javanese names by the first name (forename) and second name (*asma sepuh* or adults' name) in the old days. The first name, a one-word element, is their given name. Javanese receive a second name (*asma sepuh*) after they get married – for a Javanese female, this will be her husband's *asma sepuh*. However, it is not obligatory to have an *asma sepuh* (Uhlenbeck 1969; de Grave 2011).

The Javanese naming system leads to problems with Western bureaucracy, which requires persons to have a separate first (given) and last (family/sur-) name. When someone only has a one-word-element name, they have to repeat this name; hence, their first name will also be their last name. The last name in Western society also serves as a family name or surname. Below is the variation of Javanese names I found during my fieldwork in New Caledonia;

No	Variation	Example
1	Baptism-Catholic (First Name) + Javanese (second name) + Javanese (last name)	Alphonse Sunarto Bujari
2	Arabic (first name) + French (second name) + Javanese (last name)	Mohammad Patrice Poniman
3	Javanese (first name) + French modified from Javanese name (last name)	Ardi Panatte (the original of Panatte is 'Pangat')
4	Javanese (first name) + Javanese (last name)	Satiman Kasman
5	French (first name) + Javanese (last name)	Thierry Timan
6	French (first name) + French (last name)	Paul Fiac
7	French (first name) + French modified from Javanese name (last name)	Evelyne Vaquijot (the original of Vaquijot is 'Wakijo')

Table 6. Name variation

Source: author

There are two situations in which Catholic or Islamic names show up on the list (numbers 1&2, 3&4). Either the person comes from a Muslim or Catholic family, so they have an Arabic or Baptismal name as their first name from the beginning, or they have converted to Islam or Catholicism and added Arabic or baptismal names in front of their name in later life. For the first and second generation whose parents are Javanese and came to New Caledonia before 1960 (numbers 1,6, and 7), choosing a French surname was an assimilation strategy: they hoped it would help their children blend in with their surroundings. For Sardi and Saut, whose surnames are Javanese, the simple reason for choosing French-given names for their children was to avoid the administrative difficulties their grandparents experienced with their Javanese names. In addition, giving their children French names proves that they have successfully assimilated into New Caledonian society.

The example of the name changes I mentioned above shows that the politics of naming is an activity that significantly impacts power relations within families, communities, regions and nations (Alia 2007, 457). The choice of immigrant parents to give their child a first name commonly used in the host society indicates a high degree of acculturation (Gerhards and Hans 2009, 1111). Saut and Sardi's choice to give their children French names shows the degree as well as the wish of assimilation of the Javanese community into the host society.

The kawane: journey through the sea and arriving in the dream land

Fictive kinship forged through hardship during travel

The passengers were frightened by the sudden force of the winds-many of them had never been to sea-they took shelter in the cabins, their stomachs knotted (Saintomer 2016, 30).

Throughout history, Javanese were not an ethnic group who travelled a lot. They were very attached to the fertile volcanic soil of their ancestors and the harmonious social organisation of their villages. Since their ideal was generally to live and prosper where they were born, they left their region only under duress or to settle elsewhere in the Indonesian archipelago, but rarely went beyond its boundaries. In particular, for Javanese people at that time the sea was considered dangerous. According to Javanese cosmology, the sea is full of evil powers and thus it should be respected but avoided. A sea journey of more than thirty days was therefore profoundly difficult and destabilising for the Javanese indentured labourers. Therefore, most of my interlocutors shared the same story passed down from their elders, about the frightening experience of a long sea journey towards unknown futures.

Most of the recruited people who embarked on a ship to New Caledonia did not know that life in New Caledonia would be more bitter than the life they had had in Java. They had escaped a miserable life in Java, but arrived on an unknown island where they had to start from scratch. They had lost their freedom in exchange for a monthly wage. One thing that helped them cope with the hardship were the bonds formed with shipmates during the long and scary journey from Java to New Caledonia. This relationship with shipmates, addressed as *kawane*, was kept up until long after they arrived in New Caledonia. Even until today, people remember the name of the ship with which their first parents came.

Walter Hawthorne discussed shipmate bonding aboard a slave ship sailing from Lagos to Brazil in the 19th century. The captives, like others before them, formed a community of shipmates during their oceanic journey. When enslaved in the Americas, their bonds grew stronger, with the shipmate community becoming the focal point of their lives. The bonding between shipmates occurred due to the captives sharing the prolonged agony of their oceanic journey, and sitting together in a warehouse for months. Though forged in a novel environment, this community was conceptualised in an entirely conventional manner (Hawthorne 2008, 54).

The *kawane* became a new family for the Javanese indentured laborers forced to live far away from their kin in Java. This fictive kinship somehow lasted longer than real kinship for the Javanese community in New Caledonia. Individuals classified as fictive (or pseudo- and para-) kin are not related by blood or marriage but view one another as kin and use a standard cultural typology to describe these non-kin associations (i.e., kinship analogous to blood ties, sociolegal or marriage ties, and parenthood) (Chatters, Taylor, and Jayakody 1994, 299). Thus, Javanese indentured labourers came to relate to the *kawane* that they met during the sea journey as family. They see each other as “brothers” and “sisters”, and their children address their (grand)parent’s *kawane* as “uncles” and “aunts”. The second generation still uses Javanese terms for these family calls, but the next generation already uses French terms like “*tantine*” (aunty) and “*tonton*” (uncle).

During fieldwork in 2019, Eka took me shopping at a supermarket in Noumea. She told me that before it became a supermarket, the area contained of residential barracks for Société Kaori workers. Eka tells me how close the kinship between her parents and their *kawane* was. Women who were not working would take care of their neighbours’ children. Eka also told me she learned to cook from her aunt next door. She even felt she knew the neighbouring aunts and uncles better than her parents’ relatives in Java. After the neighbourhood was demolished, their relationship remained close through regular meetings and social saving and credit group meetings, *arisan*. More details about *arisan* will be discussed in Chapter 5.

The *kawane* or shipmate network was also a necessity for finding a spouse

in the community of enslaved people and indentured labourers. Alex Borucki (2013) documented the importance of shipmate networks for finding spouses within the enslaved community in Montevideo from 1768–1803. In North and South America, there were three major influences on the formation of social networks and Black identities. One is their shared African ancestry; another is their shared experiences as enslaved people, and third is the development of new social ties in the New World. Montevideo's marriage records document bonds formed between free and enslaved Africans due to the transatlantic and, more specifically, intra-American slave trades. Slave trade experiences were critical in forging social ties among the Africans who testified in these files. When asked how they met the groom, half of all witnesses in slave marriage files stated that they met as shipmates on slave vessels or other slave ports before arriving in Montevideo (Borucki 2013, 207).

The shipmate network is also a way to find a partner for Javanese workers. As written in Saintomer's novel, many female workers became acquainted with male workers while on the ship to New Caledonia; unfortunately, different work placements separated them (Saintomer 2016, 48). As a result, they had to find new partners in their workplace. When there were no female workers in the workplace, another way to find a partner is to wait until there is a festive party. Saintomer describes in her novel that Javanese workers always waited for a traditional party to reunite with their shipmates (*ibid.*, 66) .

The hardship of indentured life in New Caledonia

Javanese workers' suffering did not end when they arrived in New Caledonia. After getting a contract and arriving in the plantation, mining and other employment sectors, they encountered various problems. The first problem relates to the lack of Javanese women labourers. In New Caledonia, the lack of Javanese female labourers posed a problem within the Javanese community. From 1896–1929 there were only 70 Javanese female workers in New Caledonia, while the Javanese male workers totalled 1,201. Due to this unbalanced ratio of male and female labourers, many Javanese male labourers married very late. Those who were lucky could marry a single Javanese woman they had met on the ship or during the 'waiting' period in the departure or arrival port. Married couples would often declare themselves unmarried because it was easier to find a patron if they were single. Those men who had not had the chance to find a Javanese wife had to wait for the arrival of another convoy. Their only other options were staying single or cohabitation with a woman of another ethnicity, Rose, my interlocutor pointed out.



Figure 8. Living conditions on one of the plantation areas in New Caledonia, date unknown.

Source: Picture from New Caledonian Archives Service (reproduced in Adi 2014, n.p.)

The picture above shows the condition in one of the plantation areas in New Caledonia, where there is only one female worker among male workers. The tents are used as temporary housing on the plantation while waiting for the construction of permanent barracks.



Figure 9. Javanese indentured labourers in a plantation area owned by Lietard in Hienghene, North Province, date unknown.

Source: Picture from New Caledonian Archives Service (reproduced in Adi 2014, n.p.)

Figure 9 also shows the unbalanced ratio of female to male workers in a plantation area in New Caledonia. There are only four women among seven men. The two small children in the figure were probably born on the plantation because recruitment regulations did not allow the recruitment of mothers with children or pregnant women.

The presence of small children on the plantation is not an excuse to reduce the workload for the women. They had to keep working while looking after the children. To do both, they brought their children into the plantation area. The women put their children to sleep under the niaouli tree (*Melaleuca quinquenervia*), an endemic New Caledonian tree. From this custom, the term “niaouli” was born to name the second generation born in New Caledonia.

The lack of Javanese female labourers had another consequence for the community. As Jean-Luc Maurer states, ‘The unmarried Javanese males frequently indulged in gambling during the little free time they had and often became even more indebted as a result. It was basically through this indebtedness

that employers, who desperately needed their workers, could ensure that they would sign up for another five-year term at the expiration of their first contract' (Maurer 2010, 875). Below is an excerpt from my interview about gambling in the Javanese communities in New Caledonia:

My father, may God forgive his sins, was a famous person here [in New Caledonia] and there [in Lampung, after the repatriation and resettlement programme]. Not for being a nice or kind person. His nickname was *Penthung* (a club) because he liked to gamble, and would then beat up someone if he lost. (Josephine, 21 November 2018)

Gambling was a significant problem in the community, resulting in the abuse of women and children, the use of alcohol and drugs to forget about losses, and theft. Many men played all night and lost their wages, which meant that they could not buy food, despite the additional food and clothing allowances (see Table 2, page 34; and Table 4, page 35). The combination of undernourishment and lack of sleep had a negative effect on their labour productivity and thus on the wages earned, and sometimes even led to hospitalisation.¹⁴ On the other hand, some of my interlocutors remembered gambling as a positive event and as an integral part of the community. Eka reminisced that at most Javanese wedding parties the host would invite a group of professional gamblers to play during the party. The presence of these gamblers attracted people to come and join the celebration. The host provided a room and meal during the play, and in return the gamblers would donate a share of their winnings to the married couple.

Aside from gambling, the main problem for the Javanese labourers was their debt acquired during departure. The salary they received (see Table 3, page 28) was not sufficient for them to live decently, let alone put a sum aside for savings. As a result, they mainly bought on credit and contracted increasing debts at the local shop, which usually belonged to their employer. Thus, even if they did not have debts before departing, almost all labourers became indebted over time. They not only found it difficult to reimburse the initial amount of money given to them before departure but to repay the mounting debt they accrued while working. Even if they were not indebted they could neither save money nor ask for credit from the bank during the indentured period, simply because they were not French citizens (Saintomer 2016, 175). The only way of keeping their money and belongings was in their houses. As Josephine recalled, based on her parents'

¹⁴Gambling was also a problem for the Javanese labourers in Surinam, particularly in the Mariënborg area. At Mariënborg, attempts were made to alleviate these problems by paying part of workers' wages in rice, but players used this, too, as a stake. To curb this, the managers provided ready-cooked food. The Mariënborg management in 1903 urged the governor to take steps against gambling. The *Koloniale Staten* passed a law prohibiting the activity, but it was virtually impossible to enforce. The police did not have enough manpower, and raids on Javanese *kampungs* to stop gambling were too dangerous. Thus, police often were reduced to the status of fascinated spectators. Plantation authorities did not clamp down on gambling either for fear of an exodus of Javanese workers (Hoeft 1998a).

recollections, most of them kept their money in a box under their bed or buried in the backyard.

From Bouan and Saintomer's novels, it is clear that one of the causes of misery for the Javanese indentured labourers who stayed was that they did not speak French (Bouan 2003, 252; Saintomer 2016, 51,80). Indentured labourers therefore forced their children, (the 'second generation'), to learn French and 'forget' their mother tongue (Bouan 2003, 252; Saintomer 2016, 107). Their goal was for their children to have easier access to New Caledonian society (Saintomer 2016, 107). The main character in Bouan's autobiographical novel 'defends' the younger generation of Javanese descent who are considered to no longer able to speak Javanese, because mastering French has been the survival strategy for the minorities in New Caledonia (Bouan 2003, 254).

On top of the everyday hardships of indentured life, the labourers faced the constant threat of severe disciplining and punishment by their patrons. Memories of such punishment were vividly passed on to the younger generations. Sometimes, according to Sardi and based on his grandparents' stories, the simplest way of punishing the labourers was to decrease the daily food ration so that the food did not match the number of calories burned in a day. According to their contracts, Javanese workers worked 8 hours a day, with one day off a week, but in reality, they often worked up to 10 hours a day. If more severe disciplining was deemed necessary, the French patron would send the Javanese labourers into *l'atelier de discipline* ('the workshop for discipline'), a euphemism for prison (Muljono-Larue 1996). According to a decree issued on 11 July 1893, the Immigration Office had to bear their living costs (food, clothes, transportation) during imprisonment. However, in reality, the Javanese labourers were charged 2 francs. As for the more extreme forms of punishment, memories were often retold indirectly, from hearsay. Rose, for example, recalled a story she had heard about Wiyanto's childhood experience:

He [Wiyanto] might not remember it anymore, or he might [remember] but hesitate to recall the memories. It was a nightmare for them. Monsieur D, their patron, was crazy. I heard bad stories about him, and how he treated his employees. They suffered a lot back then. I heard this story from my aunt who happened to know his mother. I think it was when he was less than three years old, and his mother had just given birth to her last child: suddenly their patron went mad and dragged them off to the police. They were sent to the jail for no reason! But luckily, the police were on their side and released them as soon as the crazy patron went home. Their patron was famous for his temper, and I guess that was not the first time he had taken a worker to the police. (Rose, 9 October 2018)

Wiyanto was no more than four years old when the traumatic event happened

in the late 1940s. He did not clearly remember the event. However, because of constant reminders from his neighbours and relatives, the memory was kept alive into his old age in Lampung, the place where he and his extended family have resided since the repatriation in 1955.

The wong balen and repatriation to a new homeland in Indonesia

The political conditions in the mid-20th century supported the repatriation process for Indonesians and their descendants in New Caledonia, especially after the end of the war between Japan and America in the Pacific. Among its effects was the abolition of the *code d'indigenat* for all foreign workers in New Caledonia, thanks to the Brazzaville Declaration in 1944, which had established the principles of the new French policy towards its colonies and overseas populations.¹⁵

In July 1948, the Indonesian ship the *Tabian* repatriated the first contingent of 2,000 Javanese workers. In February 1950, the Indonesian ship *Volondan* came especially to Nouméa to repatriate a second large contingent of indentured labourers and their families. *Volondan* had on board Soesetio, an inspector of the Ministry of Labour who would become independent Indonesia's first official representative in New Caledonia when the consulate of the Republic opened in Noumea on May 15, 1951 (Muljono-Larue 1996, 73). However, it would take until 1952 before the authorities in Jakarta organised the next convoy. In the meantime, 60 people returned by plane at their own expense (Brou 1982, 79). The following table shows the list of the Javanese-Indonesian repatriation:

Date of departure	Ship	Men	Women	Children	Total
23 July 1948	<i>Tabian</i>	1,104	413	483	2,000
5 February 1950	<i>Volondan</i>	861	300	325	1,486
18 September 1952	<i>Skaubryn</i>	452	220	609	1,281
17 July 1953	<i>Laura Surriento</i>	376	216	157	749
27 August 1953	<i>Skaubryn</i>	633	272	395	1,300
9 July 1955	<i>Skaubryn</i>	424	103	64	591
Total	6	3,474	1,308	1,876	7,458

Table 7. The Javanese-Indonesian repatriation 1948–1955.

Source: (Adi 2014, 271)

¹⁵The Brazzaville Declaration states that: ‘the French Empire would remain united; semi-autonomous assemblies would be established in each colony; citizens of France’s colonies would share equal rights with French citizens; citizens of French colonies would have the right to vote for the French parliament; the native population would be employed in public service positions within the colonies; economic reforms would be made to diminish the exploitative nature of the relationship between France and its colonies’ (Surkis 2019, 453).

Repatriates from New Caledonia who no longer had family or who had lost all their savings when they arrived in Java, and thus did not know what to do, were sent to Lampung on the island of Sumatra as part of this transmigration programme. Transmigration in Indonesia could be traced back as part of planned settlement schemes (known formerly as *kolonisatie*) which became a feature of Dutch colonial activity at the beginning of the 20th century to counter land fragmentation and poverty in Java, as endorsed in the Ethical Policy of the Dutch East Indies colonial government. Between 1905 and 1941, around 168,500 settlers were brought from Java to Lampung, including repatriated labourers from plantations in India and Suriname (Elmhirst 2018, 31).

After Indonesia's independence, one of Sukarno's foreign policies was repatriation for people of Dutch descent to the Netherlands, and repatriation of people of Indonesian descent from abroad. It took quite a long time for the repatriation process of Indonesian descendants abroad, especially in New Caledonia. The obstacle faced by the Indonesian government at that time was the great distance between Indonesia and New Caledonia, the high cost the process entailed, and the lack of knowledge among the Javanese there regarding Indonesia as a nation-state. Rose, who repatriated to Indonesia on 17 July 1953, claimed to be well acquainted with Soesetio, the first Indonesian consul in New Caledonia, particularly when Soesetio toured New Caledonia to campaign for Javanese repatriation to Indonesia. As someone who had been born and raised in New Caledonia, the concept of *pulang* (return) to Indonesia seemed absurd to her. She knew that she was Javanese but never realised that being Javanese at that time meant being Indonesian as well.

Eventually Rose and her family were repatriated to Indonesia on the ship *Laura Surriento*. Wiyanto and his family boarded the *Skaubryn* on 27 August 1953. For five-year-old Wiyanto, his trip to Indonesia was purely a fun adventure; the only time he had ever boarded on a ship. He played all day long on the ship's deck with other kids. At mealtimes, they had to queue in front of the dining room, hand over a meal coupon to be marked by the ship's clerk, and sit at the same table. Whether they liked it or not, they had to eat the food provided. If they were still hungry, they just had to wait until the next meal, although this was not a problem for Wiyanto, as he was usually given food by other passengers and crew. On the *Laura Surriento*, however, according to Rose, there was no strict meal arrangement because the ship had been a cruise ship before being turned into a repatriation ship. They were free to sit at any table as long as it suited their class in which they were travelling, and if there were leftovers, the officers allowed the children to have them. Wiyanto reminisces about how the air inside his cabin was very humid and hot. The waves felt very strong against the *Skaubryn*, which was smaller than the *Laura Surriento*. Wiyanto recalls how the Javanese-Caledonian people, who had never been on board a ship before, started crying when asked to wear life jackets during dangerous weather in the Pacific.

In addition to the stories of those who managed to return to Indonesia, there were also sad stories about those who were victims of repatriation fraud. Fidayanti remembered clearly that when she was doing research in New Caledonia in the 1990s many interlocutors told stories about a con man working at the Indonesian Consulate in Noumea. Old Javanese who wanted to return to Indonesia were asked to pay an amount of money for the cost of repatriation, but years later they had yet to return to Java. She said that she knows the identity of the con man but she has kept it to herself. Rose recalls a similar story:

My brother-in-law was a victim of repatriation fraud. He wanted to go back to Indonesia, but the ship never arrived in Java. He and his friends did not take part in the Indonesian government repatriation. My husband said they joined a repatriation arranged by a private company in Noumea. We thought that maybe their ship had had an accident and that they were all dead. But a few years ago, a friend who told me that their ship had disembarked in Papua, not in Java. (Rose, 7 October 2018)

During my research in Lampung, I was also able to record some of the experiences of Javanese Caledonians who repatriated to Indonesia in 1953. A number of those repatriates are still alive today, although those that can still remember the voyage from New Caledonia and the establishment of a new community in Totokaton, Lampung Province, Indonesia are now in their 70s or older.

After disembarking at the Tanjung Priok port in Jakarta, the repatriates were placed in the Tanjung Harapan bunkhouse, where they had to live for the next three months. The situation in the bunkhouse was bad. The only pleasant memories of the bunkhouse for my interlocutors were the cheap food and delicacies. For their families and hundreds of other people from New Caledonia, food in Indonesia was cheaper than in New Caledonia. They were able to exchange their money into Rupiah through money exchange services available outside their bunkhouse. These low food prices meant that many of them felt contented and did not regret their repatriation to Indonesia. Unfortunately, when they arrived in Lampung, food and other necessities turned out to be twice as expensive as in Java. It was only after living there for a while that Javanese transmigrants learned to always bargain on the price.

At that time, the Indonesian government started the resettlement and transmigration programme to several areas in Indonesia. They offered the repatriates who arrived from New Caledonia the opportunity to participate in the transmigration programme: a quick solution both for the Indonesian government, who needed settlers in the new area outside Java, and also for repatriates without a family and house in Java. Around 153 families (about 600 to 700 people) resettled in Lampung as part of the transmigration programme in 1953 (Maurer

2006, 121). They were relocated to the village of Totokaton in the sub-district of Punggur. According to Rose, the name Totokaton derived from *di toto katon* or *di tata kelihatan*, which means ‘the village now has been organised’. This area was also known as *Blok Kaledoni* (referring to the majority origin of its people). Unfortunately, however, the government had done nothing to prepare for the transmigration process. There was absolutely nothing upon their arrival, as Rose recalled: ‘There were only bushes and animals everywhere. Nobody lives there. Only snakes and monkeys’ (Rose, 7 October 2018).

Transmigrants received 2 hectares per family, including a 1-hectare irrigable rice field (*sawah*), a 0.75-hectare dry field (*tegal*), and a 0.25-hectare plot on which to build their house and plant a fruit and vegetable garden (*pekarangan*). Besides land, they also received a ration of building tools, agricultural tools, and food. As Rose recalled, though, upon their arrival there was nothing there. There were no schools, and the nearest market was in Metro, almost six kilometres away. They had to build a common bunkhouse for temporary accommodation until the private houses were completed. Wiyanto remembers how all the men would work together to build a house, taking turns until each house was completed – not perfect, but good enough to live in. After this, their next job was to make wells for their homes and prepare rice fields so that they could be planted immediately. For those fortunate enough to live near the river, water was not a problem, but for those whose homes and rice fields were far away from a river (such as Rose’s and Wiyanto’s families), collecting water in the river several times in a day became a daily routine.

During the transition period of repatriation, members of the second generation who repatriated to Indonesia with their parents seemed to have suffered the most. Firstly, they had a language barrier, as they did not speak Indonesian. Secondly, they had not had to work before they left New Caledonia because most of them were at school on weekdays and so they were not used to manual labour. Rose recalled that the hardest part of leaving New Caledonia was leaving their school behind. She had been a bright student back in her school in New Caledonia, often praised by her teachers.

The New-Caledonian-born children of Javanese in Lampung also suffered because they had to adjust everything to the conditions and norms of their new country. For example, they had to speak Indonesian, as not all transmigrants in Lampung spoke Javanese or French. Rose remembers how she was excluded from her peers at school because she couldn’t speak Indonesian at her new school in Lampung. In addition, the New-Caledonian-born children of Javanese in Lampung had to work on the prepared farmland. For Rose, this was very tiring because she had never had to deal with manual labour on the farm in Caledonia.

In addition, adaptation to the new environment in Lampung is also related to the issue of names. Most of the New-Caledonian-born children of Javanese in Lampung have French-given names that are difficult for Indonesians to

pronounce. Therefore, some documents' names are written differently depending on how people hear them. As a result, many of them often experience difficulties when dealing with Indonesian and French government administrations. For example, Rose, Yesi and Joie received an invitation from AINC to visit New Caledonia in August 2018. Joie had difficulty applying for a visa because her name was written differently on some documents and identification papers. In the end, she had to apply for a replacement birth certificate at the French Embassy in Jakarta to facilitate the visa process. For Rose, it felt like a repetition of the bad experience of the Javanese indentured labourers in New Caledonia. They had to change their names and identities because the French immigration officers could not pronounce them. I will discuss this further in the next chapter.

Besides the difficulties of adaptation, most of the female teenagers had to marry older Javanese repatriates, who were sometimes as old as their fathers. This pattern of marriage to fellow repatriates was common because of their limited choices in the very remote environment of Totokaton. This type of marriage also enabled them to adapt to the new environment, particularly with regard to the issues of daily life such as language, food, and customs. Furthermore, it also helped to facilitate social control, because each family knew the profile of the bride and groom. In addition, there was a hesitation to marry local people in Lampung, due to various negative stereotypes about them: for instance, that they were lazy or prone to stealing the property of others.

In 1955, it became apparent that one-third of Javanese had chosen not to repatriate to independent Indonesia but to stay in New Caledonia, where they then 'invented' their own history and traditions. In the next chapter I will discuss the post-indentured politics of identity the Javanese community in New Caledonia.

The post-indentured memory

Monument and the commemoration of the presence of the Javanese community

In 1996, a celebration was held to commemorate 100 years of the presence of Javanese communities in New Caledonia. One of the things that triggered a strong desire to hold this celebration was that the Vietnamese community had held a similar commemoration five years earlier. The preparation for the centenary was time-consuming and expensive. Two years previously, in 1994, a preparatory committee had been formed consisting of a combination of the older and the younger generation of Javanese descendants, one of the members of CCPINC (*Comité du Centenaire de la Présence Indonésienne en Nouvelle-Calédonie* or Centenary Committee of the Indonesian Presence in New Caledonia) told me. Among the events on the programme of the Centenary there were two highlights:

the inauguration of a monument to mark the presence of Javanese in New Caledonia and a cultural festival at the Cultural Centre Ko We Kara in Noumea on July 17–29, 1996.

The monument was placed at Valon du Gaz, the port where the ship transporting Javanese indentured labour anchored. The French government's permission to the Javanese community to place the monument at this strategic location was recognised as an acknowledgment and recognition of Javanese people and their descendants in New Caledonia. A competition was organised for the realisation of this commemorative monument. The jury was composed of members representing several generations of Javanese descent from different educational backgrounds. The winning design depicted an eagle flapping its wings crowning the monument. According to Saut this choice was at first strongly criticised by community elders, for whom the monument failed to evoke Javanese culture. For the committee, the democratic vote of the jury embodied the wishes of the entire community, composed as it was of members of all generations. The monument also revealed a considerable gap between the old and young generations of Javanese descent. For Fidayanti, who was in New Caledonia doing her research on the Javanese community during the centenary, the monument serves as an important reminder for the community. According to her, if the goal of the centenary was to honour the old, the choice of this monument shows that the 'children' have grown and it is time to let them fly on their own.

In the end, it was the eagle design that was inaugurated at the centenary in 1996. For the Javanese community, having a monument and an inauguration ceremony officiated by higher-ranking officials of the French and Indonesian governments marked the recognition and acknowledgment of the two countries of the existence of the Javanese diaspora in New Caledonia. For the second and third generation, the presence of the monument has also revived and inflamed the memory of Javanese indentured labour history. Maurice – a second-generation who was also part of the Centenary Committee – elaborates that the monument's presence is important for the community's future generations. Every February, the young Javanese descendants in New Caledonia can learn about their 'roots' through this monument and the annual commemoration service. Furthermore, the young generation will learn that the good life they have in New Caledonia right now should not be taken for granted, but all stems from the sweat, tears, and hardship of their ancestors who paved the way in New Caledonia.



Figure 10. A representative from the South Province pays her respects in front of the monument in Noumea during the commemoration of the Javanese presence in New Caledonia on 16 February 2021.

Source: <https://sudmag.nc/2021/02/17/125-ans-de-presence-javanaise-en-nouvelle-caledonie/>

There are two replicas of the monument in New Caledonia. The first is in the Museum of Bourail, but no information about this replica was available, either in the museum booklet or from the guide – it seems to be there only as an addition to the museum collection relating to the multiculturalism of Bourail and New Caledonia. The second replica can be found in the AINC building in Montdore. The first replica is only half the size of the monument in the Valon du Gaz, and lacks the bird statue above it, but the second replica is of the same proportions as and includes the eagle of the original. The replica at the Indonesian Foyer was inaugurated in 2016 to mark 120 years of the presence of the Javanese communities in New Caledonia. Whereas the inauguration in Valon du Gaz was carried out by representatives of the French and Indonesian countries and served as a symbol of political recognition of the history of Javanese indentured labour, the inauguration at the Indonesian Foyer was carried out by Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono X (the Sultan of Yogyakarta and incumbent Governor of Yogyakarta Special Region) and served as a cultural symbol of acknowledgment by the current Javanese King.

The monument's presence as a memorial for Javanese descendants cannot be separated from the effort to commemorate the history of Javanese indentured labour. Given the lack of discussion of the history of indentured labour in the curriculum in New Caledonia, the presence of this monument serves at least as a kind of out-of-class historical education for the young generation of Javanese descent. The educational system of New Caledonia is consistent with that of the rest of France. This French school curriculum provides poor information regarding the colonial system's foundations of slavery, indentured labour, and other forms of human trafficking. Most school textbooks do little more than mention the transatlantic slave trade, provide a description of the conditions for an enslaved person in Suriname using Voltaire's *Candide*, and note the initial abolition of slavery in 1794 and in 1848. No chapter in the curriculum's textbooks is devoted in any specific way to the subject of the suffering and injustices related to the indentured labour system (Schmidt 2012, 116).

On the contrary, the French colonial government was particularly proud of the level of its education throughout the empire. Most schools focused on the fundamentals: reading and writing French, arithmetic, and giving introductory courses in science, history, geography, and other subjects. Textbooks from France were often written for a metropolitan audience and had little direct resonance in the colonies. Javanese and other ethnic communities in New Caledonia studied and memorised lists of significant events in European history, and studied flora and fauna of the Metropole's regions. The acquisition of French provided access to further knowledge, an opening to the outside world, and career opportunities, which were critical for the educated in the colonies. Mastery of the complicated rules of French grammar, proper articulation of French speech, and knowledge of the classics of French literature formed the greatest accomplishment of education in the empire, providing colonialists with further evidence of the *mission civilisatrice*'s success¹⁶ (Aldrich 1996, 225).

Around the year 2000, some adaptations to the curriculum were made relating to the cultural, historical, and geographical specificities of each French overseas territory. Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guiana, and La Réunion have had a school curriculum adapted to local contexts since 2000 (Schmidt 2012, 116). However, these adaptations were mostly superficial, if not symbolic. Christine Reinhardt, for example, points to the inadequacy of teaching methods concerning the history of slavery in Guadeloupe, and shows that this mainly results in cultural appropriations of slave memory in Guadeloupe (Reinhardt 2021, 59).

In New Caledonia, the adaptation particularly consisted of greater attention for Kanak history, culture, and language. The decision was made after

¹⁶As one of the reasons for overseas expansion, Prime Minister Jules Ferry coined the term *mission civilisatrice* in 1885. Superior races, according to Ferry, have a right over and duty towards inferior races. They must bring civilisation to other peoples and, in doing so, limit the uncontrolled activities of traders and other foreigners (Aldrich 1996, 98)

the signature of the Noumea Accord on 5 May 1998 between the government of France, the FLNKS (Kanak and Socialist National Liberation Front) and RPCR (Rally for Caledonia in the Republic). One of the key elements of the Accord is that measures were to be taken to recognise and protect indigenous Kanak culture and identity ('Accord Nouméa' 1998, 2). This is in accordance with Point 3 in the Accord's preamble, which stresses that 'the time has come to recognise the shadows of the colonial period, even if it was not devoid of light'. The following excerpt highlights the issue of teaching Kanak language and culture:

The Kanak languages, together with French, are languages of education and culture in New Caledonia. Their place in school curricula and in the media should therefore be increased and extensive consideration should be given to how to achieve this. ('Accord Nouméa' 1998, 4)

Although the Noumea Accord has created a new space for the teaching of Kanak language and culture, there is no room for the history of New Caledonia's other ethnic minorities, particularly those who came to the country through the indentured labour scheme. More than once, my interlocutors hinted at the absence of historical markers pertaining to indentured labour in the school curriculum. The monument commemorating the centenary of the Javanese presence in New Caledonia was the only visible reminder of the past. Nonetheless, the visible manifestation of memory is only meaningful when the community can place it within a meaningful historical context taught in school. Without context, community members may wonder what the monuments means.

Autobiographical novels and the memories that bind

Three aspects contribute to the formation of a collective identity: a sense of continuity, shared memories of particular people and events and the idea of a shared destiny (Anderson 1983 and S. Hall 1993 in Feldner 2019, 20). The importance of narratives in forming collective imaginaries cannot be overstated. As the past is always formed via memory, fiction, narrative, and myth, narratives construct identities by allowing history to be arranged consecutively and events, people, and artefacts to be given significance (S. Hall 1993, 395). Benedict Anderson contends that, the novel as a kind of imagination was essential to the emergence of the imagined community as it gave the practical means for 'representing' the imagined community (Anderson 1983, 25).

Literary works produced by peoples whose migration history dates back to the era of indentured labour express strong awareness of the 'imperial century', the period of European imperial expansion throughout the world. This kind of work is a loosely connected body of writing bound together by repeated evocations of a collective consciousness rooted in colonial and indenture history

(Pirbhai 2009, 20). The literary works include the semiotic and ‘mythical’ element of indenture history as a shared experience of travel and resettlement on the plantation, the quotidian rites and rituals of cultural and material survival within the plantation economy’s restrictive boundaries, and the poetics of survival embedded in ‘immigrant sui generis.’

Novels and stories about indentured labourers are used in this thesis as data sources to learn about the lives of labourers and the social, cultural, and political situations in a certain region. One example is Boeka’s novel *Een koffieopziener* [*A Coffee Overseer*] published in 1901, which depicts how ‘crimps’, or military officers who engaged in the slave trade, impacted the labour supply on a Java coffee estate. Additionally, in the novel *Koelie* [*Coolie*], published by Madelon Székely-Lulofs in 1932, a young man flees his village in West Java after being seduced by promises of money, easy women, and the legality of gambling in Sumatra. He works diligently, but gambles away his earnings, falls into debt, and signs new contracts until he reaches retirement age (Houben 1999, 28). These two stories depict abuses and also feature women who embarked upon long journeys, sometimes having been kidnapped by recruiters’ agencies. Unverifiable stories implying that some people were forcibly abducted against their will or after being drugged continue to resurface in the collective memory, particularly in the form of specific testimonies (Maurer 2006, 53).

Despite the novel’s importance as an important historical community record in postcolonial studies, francophone novels in New Caledonia have received less attention than in other regions. According to Caribbean and South Pacific scholar Elizabeth Deloughrey, the general lack of scholarly interest in the contribution of island cultures to a postcolonial debate takes on specific dimensions within Francophone postcolonial studies (DeLoughrey 2001, 22). While Caribbean authors have sparked considerable interest in the francophone world, the Mascarenes and the South Pacific literature remains primarily excluded from Francophone research in Europe, North America, and Anglophone postcolonial discussions of regional identity (De Souza 2009, 238). As a result, the region remains in a state of imposed silence (Mateata-Allain 2005, 270). The study of multiethnicity in New Caledonian and French Polynesian socio-literary discourses echoes Gilroy’s desire to transcend the constraints of ethnicity and national particularity (Gilroy 1993, 19).

Writers of Asian descent have been emerging among francophone writers in New Caledonia since the beginning of the 1980s. Jean Vanmai, an author of Vietnamese descent, started this movement with his novel *Chân Dang, les Tonkinois de Calédonie au temps colonial* or [*Chân Dang, the Tonkinese of Caledonia in colonial times*] (Vanmai 1980). Almost 20 years later, writers of Javanese and Japanese descent followed Vanmai’s path. They used novels to articulate their position as the descendants of Asian indentured labour and as part of contemporary New Caledonian society. By writing autobiographical

novels, they show that ‘memories are rarely “raw,” but shaped in and by social and historical narratives, reflected in, but also living beyond, the literature it has inspired’ (Chamberlain and Thompson 2002, xiv).

To date there are three novels written by Javanese descendants. Those novels are *L'écharpe et le Kriss* [*The Scarf and the Kris*] (2003) written by Marc Bouan, a Javanese descendant born in 1946 ; *Le rêve accompli de Bandung à Nouméa* [*The Accomplished Dream from Bandung to Noumea*] (2008) written by Ama Bastien, a Javanese descendant born in 1940; and *La Bayou de Djakarta à Nouméa* [*The Bayou¹⁷ from Jakarta to Noumea*] (2016) written by Liliane Saintomer, a Javanese descendant born in 1960. The narrative of indentured labourers presented in their books becomes the means of transmitting the memory of minorities and of affirming their identity (Soula 2014, 174).

Memory is important in diasporic writing. Jasbir Jain states that ‘memory seeks narration in multiple ways: vivid recollections, silent references cloaked in something else, metaphors, symbols, parallel events, or by working with consequences of a particular event, which sends the listener back to his own memories or perceptions of the same’ (Jain 2017, 6). It is also embedded with its relationship to the present and its potential impact on the future. And, even after living in New Caledonia for several generations, the Javanese bury the sad history of migration beneath layers of dust and distance. Still, the past tends to resurface as the stories of the indentured workers’ descendants are recorded. It is still there, whether the community choose to acknowledge it or not.

Le Rêve accompli de Bandung à Nouméa is Ama Bastien’s first work, which tells the history of her father, Wiriata Moeljadi. Marc Bouan’s book is based more on the integration of descendants of Indonesian immigrants than on the history of engagement itself. Bouan emphasises the double culture of the New Caledonians of Javanese origin during the 1960s when the novel is set. By contrast, Liliane Saintomer’s work explicitly depicts the life of Javanese indentured labourers in the 1930s. Her stories cover the recruitment process in Java, the voyage to New Caledonia, and conflicts with the French patrons, within Javanese communities, and with other communities.

The three novels written by Bastien, Bouan, and Saintomer have several resemblances. Firstly, the stories start in the present and continue with the history of their ancestor as an indentured labourer; they all end with the death of their grandparent. Secondly, the writers create fictional names for the characters in their book. Thirdly, the three authors are second- and third-generation Javanese in New Caledonia, meaning that they have not themselves experienced life as indentured labourers. What they have created is a blend of memory inherited within the family and historical references to indentured labour life and the political situation in New Caledonia at that time.

¹⁷As explained in Chapter 1, ‘Bayou’ is both the literal Javanese word for elder sister and also the word used by French settlers to address Javanese household servants.

Intertextuality occurs in the writing process because the writers have not experienced at first hand the indentured labour portrayed in their books. This finding further strengthens the research of Lisa Park on the autobiographical narratives of second-generation Asian-Americans. She presents two fundamental components of their immigration history. Firstly, they have been told almost nothing about the reason for their parents' decision to migrate or their struggles upon arrival. Secondly, these second generations lack sufficient knowledge or memory themselves (Park 2008). These examples of intertextuality can be seen in Saintomer's work. She includes an image of her grandparents as indentured labourers. By showing this image, she can convince the reader of the authenticity of the indentured labour narrative presented in her book. Aside from using the portrait of her grandparents, Saintomer also uses information from historical books concerning the lives of Javanese indentured labourers. Examples include her reference to the hospital in Noumea where labourers were quarantined after disembarkation from the ship (Saintomer 2016, 41), the labourers' rights (*ibid.*, 51), and the history of the penal colony in New Caledonia (*ibid.*, 44–45).

In this research, I consider that the lack of books on the Javanese community in New Caledonia is also related to the commercial conditions of the publishing industry. Moreover, there is a lack of demand for books about the Javanese community in New Caledonia. If a draft is considered profitable enough, and demand deemed high enough, a publishing house is more likely to accept it, and vice versa. When the writer cannot find a sponsor to publish their book, the only choice is to print at their own expense – printing and publication fees are costly in New Caledonia, so only small numbers are printed. Ama Bastien stated this in our interview:

I received a book award from Province du Sud. They had a public competition every year for every kind of book. Although I won second place, I was the first novelist of Javanese descent ever to achieve this competition. It means that they recognise my skills. If I hadn't got that award, it would have been impossible to print my book. It's costly to publish a book here. I'm retired, I don't have sufficient cash to print my book. (Ama, 6 November 2019)

It was hard to find interlocutors who had read books about Javanese society and its history in New Caledonia, especially novels or life stories. Most of them admitted that they knew about the books from the internet and social gatherings but had never personally read them. Some have certain books on their shelves, but others had simply never gone as far as purchasing copies in the first place. Interestingly, when I asked the reason for their 'rejection' of these books, the same reason always came out: 'It is their family story, not mine, so why should I read the story of another family?'. Furthermore, when I asked my interlocutors about the possibility of writing their own family history, they swiftly rejected

the idea, giving two reasons. Firstly, that they do not have a time to write such a history. Secondly, they do not have sufficient information because their parents or grandparents have refused to share this shameful episode of their lives as indentured labourers. Their answers show the way memory works at the personal level. It is founded on a personal viewpoint. Regardless of how private, “memory acquires a double layer, similar to a camera lens” (Jain 2017, 13). As it captures or attempts to capture the emotion of a moment in the past, there is an inevitable intersection of two lines of vision: remembering and forgetting.

As illustrated by Paul Ricoeur, memory narratives exist between forgetting, remembering, and imagination (2000). Thomas Lacroix and Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh elaborate on this by stating that collective memories redefine the borders ‘between sameness and otherness, between the self and the other, by including or excluding individuals and establishing social group hierarchies. Accepting a collective memory regulates the relationship between individuals and groups by defining the distinction between “us” and “them” (Lacroix and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2013, 689). Autobiographical novels written by authors of Javanese descent are a bridge between individual and collective memory. Regardless of the pros and cons of claiming the truth of the story or how the story presented is part of the collective memory of a particular family, its importance will continue to be present as an effort to write history from the community perspective. This movement echoes Chantal Spitz, a Tahitian author and activist, who sees it as ‘an opportunity to break the colonizer’s silence’ (Spitz 2002, 110).

Conclusion

Edward Said argues that one should view the disparate experiences of colonisers and colonised subjects with the knowledge that narrative histories are a result of imperial histories; and that there is an inequity in the ways colonial history is viewed in the center and the periphery (Said 1993, 32). Although it can be said that many people in today’s Javanese-descended communities in New Caledonia are aware of their history as indentured labourers’ descendants, in my research I observed a duality in addressing that history. Some are proud to be descendants of indentured labourers, while others do not want to admit it, and feel ashamed of it. Some part of the family history is kept unsaid because its memory has been suppressed by trauma or because the conditions for its expression no longer (or do not yet) exist. Or, in other words, there is a value put upon silence concerning the family history.

The centenary of the Javanese presence in New Caledonia in 1996 marked a turning point for most community members, who are starting to acknowledge and embrace their roots and history. Aside from the cultural celebration, the Centenary in 1996 was followed by the publication of Fidayanti’s book about

the history of Javanese immigration in New Caledonia and the opening of archival services about Javanese indentured labour. The act of remembrance of the indentured labour history for the Javanese descendants in New Caledonia resonates with the notion of 'homeland'. For some, finding the traces of their parents in Java is an obligation that needs fulfilling. This is in accordance with Aleida Assmann's concept of 'culture of remembrance', where we automatically assume that remembering is a beneficial obligation that we must fulfil (Assmann 2012, 53). Remembering thus appears to be a significant social and cultural resource.

This chapter has explored the discontinuities in the history of the Javanese indentured labour in New Caledonia that led to fractured collective memories. Memories from the first generation came from a single root which then, like a taproot, became dominant. Meanwhile, for the second generation and after, their memories are like a fibrous root, where the primary root is short-lived and replaced by a large number of small roots. In line with Jennifer Cole, I demonstrate that memory intricately links the private with the public. Thus, 'memory remains a key site at which one can witness the multiple ways in which individual subjectivity is tied to larger projects of political struggle and historical transformation' (Cole 2005, 104). The messiness of this taproot vs fibrous root in the community history leads to a complex and contradictory concept of homeland, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

This chapter also highlights that in the diaspora, we see the dislocation of the traditional family and the reconfiguration of new forms of social relations. In the homeland, individuals could turn to kin in crisis; in the hostland, the diaspora community creates a different kind of kin. As I explain, the *kawane* or shipmate is the equivalent of an extended family, providing social and emotional support during difficult times. The relationships in this extended kinship also have an impact on the formation of narratives about the homeland, particularly for the second generation born and raised in New Caledonia. In the following chapter, I will go into greater detail about the generational differences in everyday homeland practices.

Chapter 4.

In Search of Homeland

Introduction

Friday 25 October 2019 marked an important date for the Javanese community in New Caledonia: the sister cities signing ceremony between the City of Yogyakarta, Indonesia, and the City of Montdore, New Caledonia. The long negotiation process for the town twinning and the lobbying between the two governments started in 2017, and ultimately paid off with the signing and exchange of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that night.

Almost everyone in the Javanese community in New Caledonia wanted to attend the ceremony. Saut and Eka started preparing their clothes the night before. They wanted to wear traditional Javanese clothing for the official event, a *surjan*¹⁸ for Saut, and a modern *kebaya*¹⁹ for Eka. Amidst the hustle of the preparations, Saut told me that it had been two years since he had worn his *surjan*, and that he was not sure whether it would still fit. Luckily, it fitted perfectly, though the handle of his *kris*²⁰ had been broken and he had to find a quick way to repair it; it would be odd to wear a *surjan* without a *kris*. After he had mended it, another problem arose: he had forgotten the proper way to position his *kris*. I looked it up on the internet and we resolved the issue.

The town twinning signing ceremony was held at the Cultural Centre of Montdore. We arrived at the lobby an hour before the ceremony. There were already six men of Javanese descent wearing *surjan* and three women of Javanese descent wearing *kebaya* waiting for us in the lobby. They said that they were showing their respect to their ancestors by wearing traditional clothing to the ceremony.

¹⁸A *surjan* is a traditional Javanese dress for men, made from sheer floral-patterned material or striped cotton material. This style of clothing is mostly worn in Yogyakarta.

¹⁹A *kebaya* is a blouse and part of traditional Javanese clothing for women made from sheer material or semi-transparent polyester adorned with brocade or embroidery. It is usually worn with a sarong or a long *batik* skirt.

²⁰A *kris* is a dagger with an unique blade pattern using iron and nickel laminations. For Javanese people, one's *kris* is considered a sacred weapon and a heirloom (*pusaka*) and they believe that a *kris* may be a vessel of a spirit (either good or bad). The *kris* I referred to here is a fake one, made from aluminum instead of iron.



Figure 11. Javanese female descendants wearing *kebaya*, and Javanese male descendants wearing *surjan* at the signature of MoU of town twinning between Yogyakarta and Montdore in 2019.

Photo credit: author, 2019.

Despite the stated importance of showing dignity and respect for their Javanese roots, I noticed that not all of my male interlocutors who were wearing a *surjan* that night had positioned their *kris* correctly. Their only knowledge about the *kris* was that it should be on the back of the *surjan*. All of them, including Saut, had bought their *surjan* and accessories at the Second Javanese Diaspora Congress in Yogyakarta. Before that, none of them had owned a *surjan* or a *kris*. Previously, owning these items had not determined their degree of Javaneseness. Moreover, they could not wear a *surjan* and *kris* in daily life in New Caledonia, and hence it would have been a waste of money in the absence of a proper reason to wear them. They had purchased their *surjan* and *kris* in Yogyakarta, however, because they could be certain about the items' authenticity, and they had worn them at the Yogyakarta Royal Palace when they had met the Sultan of Yogyakarta, and thus the items had a special meaning for them.

Although my interlocutors acknowledged that before their trip to Yogyakarta in 2017 they had not thought about how the *surjan* and *kris* related

to the expression of homeland, the night of the signing of the town twinning told a different story. On that night, they felt more Javanese than others who came to the ceremony wearing their ordinary clothes. Java, a place they described as their ancestors' homeland, was manifested that night through the *surjan* and the *kris*.

The Javanese diaspora in New Caledonia is an example of a cultural or deterritorialised diaspora. It arose through an indentured labour scheme introduced by the French Empire in collaboration with the Dutch colonial government, and now constitutes itself culturally²¹. An important thread that ties the deterritorialised diaspora together is the shared memory and myths of a homeland (Cohen 2008, 165). However, while homeland is central to all diasporas, the true meaning of homeland differs from one community to another.

Javanese descendants in New Caledonia and Javanese on the island of Java are separated by geographical distance and time. The arrival of the first Javanese indentured labourers in New Caledonia occurred more than 124 years ago. It is therefore not surprising that the concept of homeland for many has evolved over the years. In this research, I found that different generations interpret the notion of homeland in different ways, and the mixture of Javanese culture and local culture has changed this notion further. As a result, their diasporic experience is defined not by purity but by recognising necessary heterogeneity and diversity. Hence, their diasporic identities are always in process and are constituted within representation (S. Hall 1990, 222).

This chapter focuses on how the Javanese community performs homeland-making practices in the context of their everyday lives in New Caledonian society. In this chapter, I argue that the process of homeland anchorage points to the formation of a kind of myth of a homogenous community. Furthermore, although the Javanese community performs homeland anchorage in their everyday lives, it carries a different value for different generations, which leads to a sense of a fractured homeland for the diaspora community. The different interpretations of homeland are also due to the fact that, as Arjun Appadurai phrases it, 'the homeland is partly invented, existing only in the imagination of the deterritorialised groups, and it can sometimes become so fantastic and one-sided that it provides the fuel for new conflicts' (Appadurai 1996, 49). The account of the *kris* and *surjan* that I have presented above serves as an example of different interpretations of homeland-making within the Javanese community in New Caledonia, though fractures are also visible in others aspects such as language, food, music, language, names, and images.

²¹Robin Cohen adopted the expression 'deterritorialised diasporas' to replace 'cultural diasporas' used in his book. According to him, the term 'cultural diaspora' was insufficiently precise and led to some confusion (Cohen 2008, 194).

Language hybridity

The Javanese language in New Caledonia is evolving, creating a new and hybrid form of the Javanese language. Although some might consider this language hybridity detrimental to the preservation of a 'pure' Javanese language, in practice it ensures that the Javanese language is not completely supplanted by the dominant French language. Nonetheless, this hybridity creates a Javanese language that sounds 'noisy' to Javanese outside New Caledonia – as time goes by, this hybridity will also hinder communication with other Javanese people. The concept of hybridity refers to new transcultural forms within the cultural contact zone due to colonialism. In Homi Bhabha's view, the term hybridity is used to show the transcultural form that results from mixing two different cultures, as a form of rejection of the concept of binarisms such as West-East coloniser-colonised, majority-minority, and others (Bhabha 1994).

New Caledonia's status as French Overseas Territory has also affected its culture and language. In the French constitution article 2, which was revised in 1992, it was stated that *la langue de la République est le français*, 'the French Republic's state language is French'. Because New Caledonia is part of France's territory, the language policy applied in the region follows the French constitution (Vernaudo 2015, 445). Beginning in the 1950s, the French government endeavoured to address the disparity between local Overseas Territory and metropolitan standards for the education system, teaching methods, and school curricula. The French language was no longer connected with the 'civilising mission' but with the 'equality of opportunity idea. Henri Lavondès, as cited by Jacques Vernaudo (ibid., 441), characterised the French language hegemony in schools and administration in the late 1960s in Overseas Territory. According to Lavondès, education at all levels (primary and secondary) and in all forms was the principal tool of francisation politics (in public and private). All education following elementary school was delivered in French. Teachers and students were barred from speaking vernacular in the classroom, even during breaks. This policy aimed to equip students with a practical understanding of French. French continues to have a strong position outside of the school. The vernacular languages are tacitly neglected whenever the need for communication does not necessitate the use of the vernacular (ibid., 441).

France did not reposition its linguistic strategy 'until the late 1970s in French Polynesia and the 1980s in New Caledonia' (Vernaudo 2015, 442). The language policy was modified slightly when the ban on teaching regional languages in New Caledonia was lifted in 1992. A decree allowed the teaching of four regional Kanaky languages at schools. As a continuation of the restoration of autochthonous cultural rights, on 5 May 1998 the representatives of autochthonous residents and the French government signed the Noumea Agreement. One of the agreements is for Kanak languages and French to become the language of schools

and culture in New Caledonia; as a realisation of the Noumea Agreement, the Kanaky language is now taught in schools (*ibid.*, 444).

The languages that do not get an opportunity in education or government administration are grouped into non-territorial languages or languages of minority migrants, including Javanese. In facing language hegemony, the regional languages (Kanak languages) and minority migrant languages have almost the same fate, namely being seen as second-class languages. The two language groups have similarities in the lack of recognition of their existence. However, regional languages have been more fortunate, as some languages are starting to have the opportunity to be included in the curriculum in several schools.

Most second-generation Javanese use the Javanese language in daily life or informal communication within the family or the community. The presence and dominance of French in New Caledonia has contributed to the marginalisation of the Javanese language over time. Under these circumstances, the Javanese language has been unable to give its speakers a sense of pride: its value has been seen as inversely proportional to the dominant language. By speaking French, access to the world of education, media, trade, and industry becomes more open. Thus, French has a higher value than other regional languages or immigrant languages.

The mixing of Javanese and French languages has created a unique Javanese language. We can see Javanese's language hybridity in New Caledonian in various ways, such as French loanwords, shifted meaning, and local speech (Subiyantoro 2014). The language hybridity of the Javanese community in New Caledonia is fascinating for several reasons. Firstly, the two languages come from distant groups (French is part of the Indo-European family, and Javanese is in the Austronesian family), so they have distinct language structures. Secondly, the distance between France (as the paramount area of use of the French language) and the island of Java (as the key area of use of the Javanese language) is very great, so the probability of mutual influence is minimal. Lastly, Java and France do not have direct colonial historical connections.

The following is an example of the language hybridity in the Javanese community in New Caledonia:

Javanese New Caledonian	Meaning	Note
<i>bayou</i>	sister	Syncope process from the original Javanese word ‘mbakyu’
<i>bami</i>	noodle	Syncope process from the original Javanese word ‘bakmi’
<i>diferme</i>	closed	Modification process by adding putting Javanese prefix ‘di’ + french word ‘ferme’ (original verb ‘fermer’)
<i>posong</i>	fish	Transformation from French word ‘poisson’
<i>mbiro</i>	office	Transformation from French word ‘bureau’
<i>nggato</i>	cake	Transformation from French word ‘gateau’
<i>lotone</i>	car	Modification process by putting Javanese suffix ‘-e’ + french word ‘l’auto’
<i>clene</i>	key	Modification process by putting Javanese suffix ‘-ne’ + french word ‘cle’

Table 8. Example of language hybridity.

Source: author

Almost all Javanese in New Caledonia regard the Javanese language as the language of their ancestors – they see learning Javanese as a waste of time, as it is no longer required. In contrast, Caroline, a second-generation Javanese politician in the North Province, disagrees, maintaining that learning about Javanese culture and traditions is vital. Her mother forbids her from learning Javanese because she believes that learning Javanese will not benefit her future, just waste her time.

In most diaspora communities, the condition depicted above occurs. As I wrote elsewhere, ‘as migrants bring their languages across borders, diasporic families and communities frequently disagree on which languages to use and when’ (Pérez Báez 2013; Hua and Wei 2019 in Hayuningsih 2022, 7). Those who seek to preserve their homeland’s traditional values and customs and keep close relationships with family and friends also wish to preserve their local languages. On the other hand, ‘those who accept their new home’s ideals and mode of living aim to assimilate into the local language and culture’ (Hayuningsih 2022, 7). However, migrants increasingly find themselves in a transnational space where both their ancestral language and the host community’s new language are necessary and significant in their daily lives.

To address the decline in the number of active Javanese speakers, in 2020 the AINC started a Javanese language course. The instructor is Sherly, a

Javanese-Indonesian, the wife of Thierry, the president of AINC.

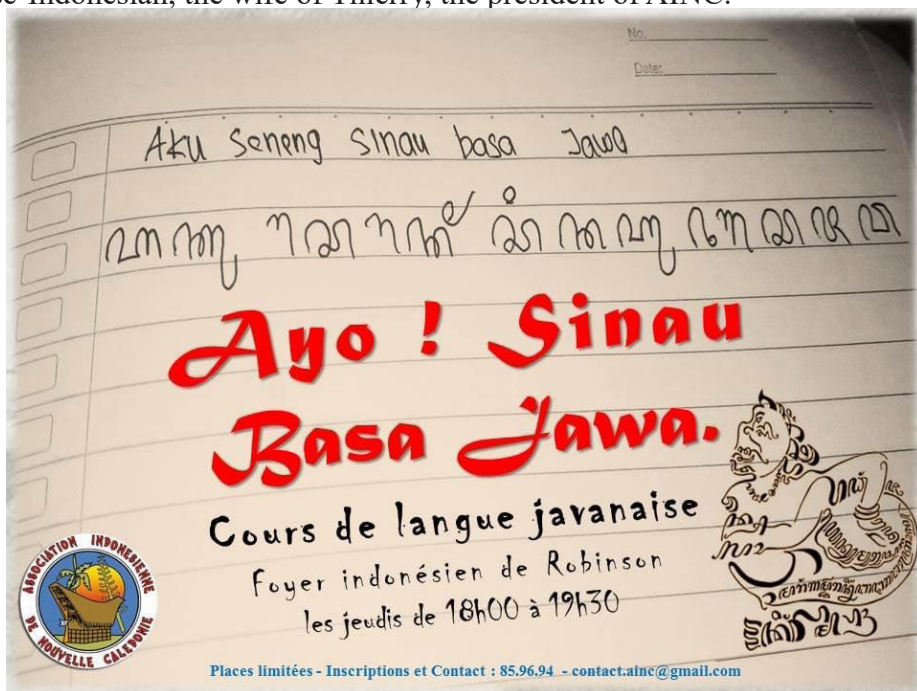


Figure 12. The Javanese language course in AINC held every Thursday 18.00–19.30.

Source: Facebook page AINC (public page)

The Javanese language course is held at the AINC once a week, free of charge. This enthusiasm among the Javanese community, especially the youngsters, to learn Javanese, probably emerged after the Omah Cangkem Yogyakarta (OCM) cultural delegation's visit in October 2019. The OCM group, primarily consisting of teenagers aged 13-19 years, stayed in the AINC foyer for almost a week and interacted with people of Javanese descent in New Caledonia. The biggest obstacle in these interactions was language—the OCM members could only speak Javanese and Indonesian, while the people of Javanese descent could only speak French and a little Javanese; and moreover, the Javanese language they use is a hybrid because of the influence of French.

The Taste of Java

Jon D. Holtzman views food as a fertile ground for delving into the intricacies of memory. In his own usages of the term memory, he views the concept of experience or meaning in the past as central to its definition. This working definition encompasses a diverse range of processes, including the occurrences

that subjects remember or emotionally re-experience, the subjects' unconscious (possibly embodied) memories, and 'how a sense of historicity shapes social processes and meanings, nostalgia for a real or imagined past, and invented traditions.' (Holtzman 2006, 363). This section reflects upon the role of food in the Javanese diasporic community in New Caledonia and how it contributes to fractures within the community.

Food in the diaspora community: between memory, authenticity and hybridity

I met Rose for the first time in Lampung in 2018. At that time, she was almost 79 years old, a petite lady with Melanesian facial features who spoke French fluently, despite having left New Caledonia more than 65 years ago. I met her a few days after she had returned from her short trip to New Caledonia in 2018. At that time, AINC had financed a trip to New Caledonia for three second-generation Javanese who had followed their parents' repatriation to Lampung in 1953. On their journey, they were accompanied by Fidayanti Moeljono-Larue, the first Indonesian researcher to conduct research into the Javanese community in New Caledonia. Rose remembered her trip to New Caledonia with bright-eyed enthusiasm. She recounted her rendezvous with her younger siblings and a visit to her mother's grave. Rose's family was one of the families who had experienced the 'dark' side of repatriation: Rose and four of her siblings had followed their father's repatriation to Lampung, while her three other siblings had stayed with their mother in New Caledonia.

For Rose, New Caledonia in 2018 was different from the New Caledonia from which she had departed by ship in 1953. However, according to her, one thing that had not changed was the 'liveliness' of Javanese community gatherings and the variety of food they served. Rose acknowledged that she had gained weight during her two-week visit to New Caledonia. Every day she had attended lunch or dinner invitations. The liveliness reminded her of a feast held by Javanese in the plantation area where her father had formerly worked. The front garden of their house in the plantation area in Pouembout had been filled with long tables laid out with various Javanese traditional foods. The back garden had been used as an additional kitchen, with Javanese women as chefs. For her and her younger siblings, such parties were important to help them get to know Javanese foods; in everyday life, Rose and her family had been more familiar with Melanesian food, as her mother was Melanesian.

Most of my repatriated interlocutors in Indonesia remembered such liveliness and feasts in New Caledonia. According to them, the Javanese diasporic community was very communal and could not live alone and apart from each other. Whenever there was a gathering, therefore, people would come, no matter how far away they lived. However, the main reason was that

there were many traditional foods that people rarely ate every day. During the indentured period, there was not much leisure time for the Javanese labourers, especially those living on plantations and in mining areas outside Noumea. Most of the Javanese workers who came under the indentured labour scheme suffered from malnutrition, because they could not adjust to the new environment. They worked hard from dawn until dusk with a low carbohydrate intake. Their only way to survive was to adjust to their new situation, which included changing their basic diet from rice to bread. The rice given to them by their French patrons on the plantations and mining sites was not as ‘delicious and sweet as Javanese rice’. As Rose recalled, her father had to cycle over 20km to the nearest Chinese shop to buy delicious rice, and it was expensive, as in New Caledonia at that time rice was imported from Asia. It was easier and cheaper to put bread on the table, and that was the main reason why Javanese workers during the indentured period always looked forward to parties or gatherings held by fellow workers: such events were the only times at which they could gather and eat Javanese dishes.

To this day, food is an inextricable element of every gathering within the Javanese community in New Caledonia. At most events held by KJRI or AINC, the question of food comes first. Before the events had even started, I often heard questions such as ‘Will there be any food or not?’ and ‘Is the food delicious?’ If food is provided, large numbers of guests will come. KJRI and AINC know this very well, and indeed also provide plastic or Styrofoam boxes for guests who want to take home leftovers from an event. For my interlocutors, bringing home a portion of leftover Javanese food from a gathering is like having a ‘souvenir’ from Java.

Culinary practices within the Javanese diaspora community are influenced by the past and by the hybridity of their new circumstances, resulting from both internal dynamics and incorporating external elements. As a result, meanings attributed to traditional food are constantly negotiated and transformed through representations, practices, and discourse. As my interlocutor Josephine put it,

At the beginning of the indenture period, they could not find the exact ingredients for their cuisine, but after a few years, they brought ingredients from Java and planted them in their gardens, such as galangal, bay leaves, lime leaves, turmeric, ginger, and other spices that they could not easily find in New Caledonia. (Josephine, 21 November 2018)

Josephine was an eighty-year-old member of the second generation born in New Caledonia to Javanese parents, and a famous figure within both Javanese and New Caledonian society. She published a book of Javanese recipes in 2010. This book was her way of preserving the memory of her homeland. In our interview, she recalled that people still argued about the authenticity of a recipe, even though every family has its own version of a recipe. For Josephine, there was no need to

debate which version is the best, because each person's gustatory experience is different.

The gustatory experience is connected to memory and nostalgia. Javanese indentured labourers' palates were not accustomed to the flavour of bread. After long hours working in the sun, they found that cold meals made their stomachs full but were not as comforting as a serving of warm *jangan lodeh* (a dish made from various vegetables). However, the next generation, who were born and raised in New Caledonia, had a different gustatory experience from their parents. They no longer longed for rice for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and their concept of homeland was no longer about eating rice and Javanese dishes three times a day. I call this a 'reverse gustatory experience'.

In this research, I found two types of reverse gustatory experience. The first occurred in the short-term when people visited Java and other parts of Indonesia for a short period of time. Their shift towards Javanese eating habits would thus be only temporary, and would shift back again once they returned to New Caledonia. Most of my interlocutors admitted that they could not stand having rice three times a day and not having bread for breakfast. Sardi had to ask the guesthouse owner to provide bread with jam and butter for their breakfast. Manto had to stock up on bread and croissants from a supermarket every time he stayed at his cousin's house in Indonesia. And Swasti, a third-generation Javanese, dreamt of eating a juicy medium-rare entrecôte with piles of French fries after her fifth day in Indonesia.

The second type was a long-term reverse gustatory experience. This occurred among those who had lived in New Caledonia for a long period and then moved to Indonesia. An obvious example of this was Rose:

My mother was Melanesian. She was not used to cooking Javanese dishes. We tasted those foods at parties, and that was only once in a while. Upon arriving in Lampung, I had to act as a mother for my siblings. My mother stayed in New Caledonia. She was not a Javanese, so she could not join the repatriation programme to Indonesia. I had to learn to prepare rice from the field for the table. It was a hard time for me. And now, after over 50 years here, I still miss New Caledonia deeply. I miss my old home. I miss having a croissant, *bougna*, *igname*, poingo banana... oh... I can taste it on the tip of my tongue now! (Rose, 7 October 2018)

Another example of the hybridity of the culinary practices of Javanese Caledonians is the adaptation of their food habits to local customs. The most obvious example was when I tasted *bougna* during my fieldwork. *Bougna* is a traditional Melanesian dish with no French influence. It is made of chicken, fish, lobster, and prawns mixed with root vegetables (yam, sweet potato, cassava) and coconut milk, then wrapped up in banana leaves. Instead of serving the original *bougna*, however,

Kina (a second-generation who has always lived in New Caledonia) made her *bougna* out of chicken with yams, poingo banana, and coconut milk cooked in a ‘marmite’ (cooking pot). She had learned the recipe from her mother and had adjusted it to Javanese taste.

Another example is breakfast à la française, with croissants or pain au chocolat and coffee. Most of the Javanese households I visited during my fieldwork in New Caledonia had a similar menu. Josephine explained that her parents did not like bread. The bread was not good enough for their taste buds, as they were more familiar with the sweetness of rice or cassava. However, since her parents had moved to New Caledonia, they had had to change from having cassava and rice to bread for breakfast. Breakfast time was different in every house, because it was also related to the residents’ activities, and whether they were retired or still working. Interestingly, however, even though the time at which breakfast was eaten varied, every house said that they ate breakfast at *mbonor* (from the French *bonne heure*, or before sunrise). *Mbonor* comes from a labourer habit developed during the indentured period of eating breakfast before sunrise.

French culture has clearly affected the culinary experience within the Javanese diasporic community. The following is an example of a typical dinner invitation I received during my fieldwork. The sequence started with the *entrée* served with a drink (coke, wine, tea, juice, or water) and Javanese crackers (*emping*²², *rengginang*²³, peanut). Next was the *plat principal* or main course, which started with a salad or soup, depending on the season. After that came carbohydrates (rice, potatoes, or pasta) with protein (vegetables, processed meat). Finally, the host would serve dessert. According to Eka, dessert, in the form of cake or ice cream, is important to ‘lock’ the taste buds with something sweet, which prevents people wanting to eat again afterwards.

This whole sequence could take a long time to complete – up to four hours, depending on the number of guests. Interestingly, one should not arrive on time. If one receives an invitation to lunch at 12:00 from their inner circle, then one is expected to arrive 30–45 minutes in advance. The host would be offended if one arrived on time, or even worse, late, since this would mean that they would have to serve their guests, instead of sitting together as friends or family.

The dinner box incident and ‘secret’ recipes from Java

Food plays a vital role in the lives of immigrants and diaspora communities (Mankekar 2002; Sutton 2010). For immigrants who have just arrived in a new environment, food is not only a basic necessity for survival but also a key tool for overcoming homesickness. Food connects those who share it, confirming the

²²Chips made from *melinjo* (*Gnetum gnemon*) seeds.

²³Rice crackers made from cooked sticky glutinous rice.

eaters' identities as individuals and as part of a collective. However, food does not only bring joy to the diaspora community: at times, it can also reveal fractures in a community. As explained in the previous section, if the food served in a gathering is good, guests will ask to take home the leftovers. On the other hand, if the food served is not delicious or even makes the guests sick, as happened at the Indonesian Consulate General's election socialisation event in 2018, then the bad news will immediately spread to all community members.

Parti and I attended the Indonesian general election socialisation event without Yanto, Parti's husband, a second-generation Javanese with French citizenship. On that night, the election committee at the Indonesian Consulate provided a dinner box with several side dishes in it. The event ended before 9 pm, after which all the participants took the dinner box home. When I asked a member of one of the Indonesian Consulate General committees why they had to provide food for the guests, they answered that it is almost impossible to hold an event with people of Indonesian and Javanese descent without food. Moreover, the central election committee in Jakarta had provided a budget for election socialisation. For that particular event, the KJRI election committee had provided a dinner box with considerations of practicality and efficiency in mind.

After returning from the Indonesian Consulate, the three of us ate the dinner box at home without experiencing any problems. In the morning, however, Parti started receiving calls from several people asking whether the three of us had been sick after eating the food the night before. It seemed that many of the participants had had stomach aches and vomiting after eating the grilled chicken in the dinner box. Luckily, none of the three of us had eaten the chicken. News about this dinner box incident circulated via the phone and then blew up on social media, including tags and testimonials from those who had become sick after consuming the chicken.

At the time, the public did not blame the Indonesian Consulate for the incident. Many attacks were aimed at the catering lady, who was an Indonesian citizen in New Caledonia. News about the incident even reached Eka, my interlocutor of Javanese descent who had not attended the event because she was not an Indonesian citizen. Those who had not eaten the dinner box and who did not even have social media nevertheless gave their opinion as if they were the ones who had become sick. One of the discourses that later circulated was about the caterer's incompetence and how she was running a 'dark' business that did not conform to government health protocols.

Later, I talked to Watik, an Indonesian citizen working as a culinary entrepreneur in New Caledonia, about the dinner box incident. She said that the victims could potentially have brought the incident to the authorities. However, in such a case everyone involved would have been in trouble, especially since the caterer did not have a catering business licence. According to Watik, the phenomenon of Javanese people becoming illegal culinary entrepreneurs was

common: their prices were often cheaper than the legal caterers because they did not pay taxes.

As a second dimension, the dinner box incident also brought up issues of social jealousy, which arose over the notion of a ‘secret’ recipe from Java. After the incident, I heard many people complain about the caterer’s cooking: that there was nothing special about her dishes. Her sole advantage was that she had given a lower price, and had an ‘inside connection’ to the Consulate General. Shortly after the incident, several of my female interlocutors claimed that their cooking was better than the caterer’s, because they had a ‘secret’ recipe from their family.

As in most diaspora communities, the central figures behind the preparation and presentation of food are women (Meyers 2001; Counihan 2004; Alfonso 2012; Nettles-Barcelón et al. 2015; Parveen 2016). It is also through women that recipes are inherited; women tend to be in charge of cultural reproduction via food, ensuring that specific dishes and meals adhere to pre-existing traditions. One example of this is the preparation of *tumpeng*²⁴ for a banquet and ceremonial feast called *kenduren* or *selametan*. Today, only a few women in New Caledonia have mastered making *tumpeng*. According to Josephine, many years ago, most Javanese teenage girls were taught by their mothers to make *tumpeng* in order to preserve Javanese culture. Sadly, making *tumpeng* has gradually been lost from the Javanese community, because only a few women still know the process, and even those who do know it do not pass on this knowledge to their daughters. I further explain about *tumpeng*, *kenduren*, and *selametan* in the next chapter.

Women also enjoy showcasing regional cuisine at family and other social gatherings, in order to demonstrate their cooking talents. Each woman has her own specialty, accompanied by the claim that she has ‘the secret recipe originally from Java’. There is a vague competitive swirl behind the secret recipes and claims of authenticity among Javanese women in New Caledonia. These recipes enable the imagining and maintenance of a utopian past in a diasporic setting, as the act of food production can elicit nostalgia for remembered or passed-on homeland memories. Women as chefs who follow specific or ‘secret’ recipe traditions thus foster narratives of continuity that become ingrained in the lives of the diaspora community (Parveen 2016, 52).

The question of the originality of a secret recipe from Java is common in New Caledonia. Some interlocutors said that they would not give their recipes to women outside their circle. They treated their recipes as family heirlooms. On the other hand, there was also a part of the community that made their recipes for Javanese dishes accessible to outsiders, namely other ethnic groups, such

²⁴The *tumpeng* is a cone-shaped rice dish with various side dishes of meat, egg, and vegetables, which is typically featured in traditional ceremonies. There are usually seven side dishes, as the word ‘seven’ in Javanese means ‘assistance’. There are no established guidelines for the types of side dishes that may accompany *tumpeng*, though they should include three elements: land animals, aquatic animals, and vegetables. There is no definitive date for the origin of the *tumpeng* tradition, but it is believed to have begun between the 5th and 15th century, when Hinduism influenced the Javanese kingdoms (Jati 2014, 1).

as Melanesians, Vietnamese, and French. AINC, through one of its subgroups, Atelier Di Dapur (Atelier in the Kitchen), started this movement several years ago.



Figure 13. Members of AINC's Atelier Di Dapur prepare food for the Omah Cangkem group (the cultural delegation of town twinning from Yogyakarta) in October 2019.

Photo credit: author, 2019.

Every Friday, AINC opens its kitchen to everyone who wants to learn how to cook Javanese and Indonesian dishes, for a monetary contribution. Once the food is ready, the participants eat it together and take the leftovers home to their families. Sherly, one of the instructors, said that AINC rejected the traditional view of the old Javanese in New Caledonia, who believe that they should keep their recipes a secret because they are the community's heirloom:

For a few days each year we open this foyer for everyone. Each guest who comes knows that they will find a delicious meal here. We have always sold our food. Why should we be afraid that they [non-Javanese] will steal our recipes and use them for their own businesses? That's an outmoded way of thinking. Do you want to take your recipe with you to your grave? Or will the angel up there ask you about your secret recipe? I hope they [the old members of the Javanese community] understand that nowadays

everyone can find anything on the internet. Even recipes. We, in AINC, believe that the only way to preserve our ethnic food is by sharing it with the world. That's why we also printed out the recipe and handed it out to the guests at our last *Journée Recréative*. (Sherly, 25 October 2019)

The quotation above demonstrates a generational gap within the Javanese community in terms of culinary culture preservation. According to the younger generation, as represented by Sherly and AINC, the only way to preserve the culture is to spread it among all people, including those who are not Javanese. As can be seen in the picture above, several members of AINC's Atelier Di Dapur are not Javanese. They come from different ethnicities in New Caledonia, and they join the atelier because they love Javanese and Indonesian food. Interestingly, most of the non-Javanese participants who are active in AINC have never been to Java, yet they actively engage in many AINC activities such as preparing food for the AINC general assembly, as well as the Christmas and New Year dinner.

Meanwhile, for the older generation, a food recipe is a 'treasure' and also part of the homeland anchorage that should be kept hidden and private. They are afraid that outsiders will change the recipe and commercialise it, and thus the food will no longer be 'authentic'. A similar situation is also explained by Elizabeth Buettner in her analysis of South Asian dishes in Britain, where the changes made to South Asian cuisine by members of the diaspora settled in the United Kingdom, in order to generate and retain new business by appealing to local tastes, represented a historical shift, one that concerned and offended members of, and also those outside, the diverse community of South Asian origin (Buettner 2008, 883). In New Caledonia, the older generation hinted that AINC no longer belonged to the Javanese and Indonesian community because the 'foreigners' there outnumbered the Javanese.

To end this section, I want to re-emphasise that the authenticity of food recipes is a significant issue, contributing to the community's fractured nature. Ultimately, the level of detail required to ensure an 'authentic' dish can border on the absurd, and has become a subject of contestation. For instance, to be considered 'authentic', should a dish's ingredients be sourced from the homeland, or is it sufficient to simply use an authentic recipe but local ingredients (Mannur 2007, 27).

The Sounds of Java

Sounds are an ordinary part of our daily life experience. Sound as a supplementary element to visual input provides further knowledge about experiences in a complex world. Sounds can highlight these dynamic processes in more subtle forms, explaining relationships among places and political fields through

language or music (Smith 2000; Revill 2016). Sound moves as an affect, not merely mechanically as an auditory vibration or physically as the recording's circulation. Furthermore, sound moves people to perceive how they relate to other people and places (Henriques 2008, 215). In this study, I highlight that sound is vital to the practice and expression of the diaspora community's identities. It complicates the static boundaries between national identities and serves as a tool for the analysis of cultural views (Devadoss 2017). This section discusses sound as an element of the Javanese diaspora community's homeland practices.

Music and performance

As underlined by Sarah Daynes, music and food are preserved in all diasporas (Daynes 2004, 25). Music serves as a connection to the past, recalling things to which people are warmly connected, and hence provides a private and comforting zone for diaspora communities. Music is also a medium for transferring a group's cultural memories to new generations and creating new memories. Furthermore, as Philip V. Bohlman put it, musical experiences can inform an 'ethnic community's knowledge of itself' (Bohlman 2002, 131).

Most of the information I have obtained on music and performance during the indentured labour period comes from novels, primarily Liliane Saintomer's novel *La Bayou de Djakarta à Nouméa* (2016). In the period of indenture, the Javanese brought their culture to New Caledonia through *wayang kulit* (puppet theatre), *wayang wong* (traditional performance), and *ketoprak* (theatre with actors in costumes) (Saintomer 2016, 26–28). The music of the gamelan, a Javanese orchestra essentially comprising percussion instruments, accompanied these various performances.



Figure 14. Javanese indentured labourers perform *wayang wong* in Voh region, circa 1920.

Source: Picture from New Caledonian Archives Service (reproduced in Adi 2014, n.p.)

In the Voh region in North Province, Javanese recruits made the first puppets from ox skin before the 1930s. Indentured labourers made the musical instruments from bamboo because there were no other suitable materials with which to make gamelan (Saintomer 2016, 64). In the Voh region, from the 1920s until the 1930s, traditional Javanese entertainment took place every Saturday evening. Javanese from throughout the region came en masse to attend these performances (Adi 2008, 59).

In 1949, Javanese labourers created the first group of Indonesian *keroncong* (a modern orchestra), but most of the musicians returned to Java via repatriation between 1953 and 1955. Meanwhile, the musical tastes of the second and third generations in the period 1940–1960 were influenced by French and North American music. Almost 20 years later, after the nickel boom in New Caledonia in 1967–1972, which brought many Indonesian workers to the island, the Javanese community in New Caledonia slowly started to recognise Javanese

and Indonesian songs through cassette tapes brought by the Indonesian workers. Around 1956–1968, The Play-Boys, The Out Love, The Shadows Kasim, The Rovers, and Les Rôdeurs all made English songs, and from the 1970s to the present day, there are many popular Javanese and Indonesian musicians such as Jean Wasman, John Carso, Joséphine, Sidéral, Ardi Panatte, Jimmy Oedin, Jean-Paul Wongsokarto, Bibi Soediman, Billi Joe, Jean Badjoel, Cream Coffee, Sherly Timan, and many others (Adi 2008, 60).

During my fieldwork, I noticed the desire by elders in the Javanese community to create cultural transmission through music, which could later form musical memories. In the third week of my fieldwork in 2018, I went to a local gathering. Among the male guests, some had brought guitars and songbooks. Most of the songs they sang were Javanese and Indonesian from 1970 to 1980, a period that I only recognised from my father's cassette tape collection. Saut explained that among the influences brought to the Javanese community in New Caledonia by the new migration wave of Indonesian workers in the 1970s was music. Therefore, the Javanese and Indonesian music period of 1970–1980 became very memorable for the second and third generations.

Music contributes to a sense of nostalgia (Rivera 2012; Richards-Greaves 2015). People recollect memories to build a space that is familiar to them and to which they belong (Allen 2002; Koh and Baek 2020). Another dynamic is that the act of remembering works better with music. An example comes from the lyrics of *Cent Ans Déjà*, a song created in 1996 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Javanese presence in New Caledonia. As part of the centenary, the Centenary Board organised a song competition, the winning song of which would be performed as the official song of the celebrations. The winner of the competition was Ardi Panatte, a musician of Javanese descent. His song *Cent Ans Déjà* presented a powerful memory of the elders' suffering in New Caledonia as indentured labourers, the hope and dreams of their move, their intentions for and gift to future generations. Interestingly, the theme of the suffering of Javanese indentured labourers also appeared in *Matur Nuwun Simbah* by Antoon Sisal, a second-generation Javanese born in Suriname. He wrote the song to honour his grandmother, who had gone to Suriname in 1954 as an indentured labourer.²⁵

The music composed by Panatte and Sisaal expresses their diasporic view about their faraway homeland. The concept of a diasporic horizon illustrates the relationship between diasporic identity, a spatial imagination, a temporal dimension of both past and future, nostalgia, and future return. In a spatial sense, groups 'recall certain places as original reservoirs of deep and tenacious identity'; while in a temporal sense, 'a future horizon suggests "futurity and desire" and points to how diasporic identities always relate to conditions in the present.' (Axel 2004, 27). Music can also be used to transmit a group's cultural memories to following generations and to create new memories. Music leads us to create

²⁵See appendix for Panatte and Sisal's lyrics.

a space or imagine a place in which we want to be. In diasporic communities, this imagined place is used for various reasons, such as preserving culture and communication.

In diaspora communities, music, like food, serves to preserve culture. Furthermore, music also conveys a different message of ‘otherness’. Music can be experienced as both a ‘beautiful sound’ and an ‘odd noise’. An example of this juxtaposition was when Pardiman Djojonegoro – the chief of OCM Group – sang a Javanese ‘mantra’ song at the ‘baptism’ ceremony for the new sets of gamelan acquired by AINC. Although most of the guests did not understand the words, they still cried and were ‘hypnotised’ by the melodious ‘noise’. By contrast, when Ardi Panatte sang *Cent Ans Déjà* at the farewell reception of Achmad Gozali – the Indonesian Consul General – at KJRI, none of the guests sang with him. The hall was silent and cold. The French song was experienced as unpleasant sounds, as few members of the audience understood the song’s context. We link the idea of a beautiful sound to a cultural ideal of purity; this is in opposition to noise (Zittoun 2012). Noise is often depicted as the sound of ‘Others’, as Marc-Olivier Gonseth, Bernard Knodel, Yann Laville, and Grégoire Mayor have observed (2011). However, noise is a subjective notion. What we define as noise might not be so defined by others. There is no difference between sound and noise, and noise need not necessarily be loud (Schafer 1977; Colombijn 2007, 256). What we consider as noise and what as a pleasant sound varies from culture to culture.

Concerning cultural preservation, a new musical trend has emerged among Indonesian societies over the past few years. *Angklung* is a West Java-based Indonesian musical instrument comprising a number of bamboo tubes attached to a bamboo frame. The tubes are carved to produce a resonant pitch when struck and are tuned in octaves. The two *angklung* groups in New Caledonia – Angklung Caledonia of KJRI and Angklung Vibrations of AINC – are very different in style.



Figure 15. Angklung Caledonia (KJRI) performance in New Caledonia, 2021.
Source: Facebook Angklung Caledonia (public page)

Figure 15 above shows KJRI's Angklung Caledonia playing *angklung* traditionally, where each player holds several *angklung* with different tones. The songs they play are classified as 'old', and there is no collaboration with other musical instruments. During the above performance, the conductor was also the KJRI *angklung* trainer, who led by tapping his conductor's stick on the musical sheet in front of the group. Angklung Caledonia do not only appear at official KJRI events but also during events in the Melanesian community, because the group became the consulate's official partner in terms of cultural diplomacy with the Melanesian community. I will discuss this in more detail in Chapter 6.

On the other hand, Angklung Vibrations of AINC is more innovative, especially in terms of its modified *angklung* instruments, as shown in Figure 16 below. With these modifications, the players can be more expressive and can even dance to a song as they play. Angklung Vibrations play alone but are also sometimes accompanied by other musical instruments such as keyboards, drums, guitars, and bass, and there is always a singer for each of their songs. Their performances are 'livelier' than those of Angklung Caledonia, especially when it comes to playing big stages and TV shows. However, due to the many musical instruments they need to transport, the group's mobility to perform in areas outside Noumea is more limited than KJRI's *angklung* group.



Figure 16. AINC Angklung Vibrations performance in New Caledonia, 2019.
Photo credit: author, 2019.

As I point out above, these two groups are different in their performance styles, and neither believes that they are in competition with the other. Some of my interlocutors even belonged to both groups, stating that the two provided different social and networking opportunities. Sherly from AINC also emphasised ‘volunteerism’ and ‘commitment’ when talking about *angklung*. As Sherly related:

None of us are getting paid, unlike that ‘other’ group. We come to the [AINC] building to practise, to perform anywhere in New Caledonia, because of our love and dedication to our culture. Before the consulate bought their *angklung*, we already had a set from Saung Udjo in Bandung. We went to Saung Udjo²⁶ in 2016 with a group of 10 people at our own expense, and stayed there for a week to learn how to play *angklung*. It cost us a lot; as you know, the aeroplane ticket itself from here to there is very expensive. But the hard work pays off. In 2016, we received a grant from Province Sud to record Angklung Vibrations on CDs. We composed and recorded it all. And thanks to that recording, many people joined Angklung Vibrations. (Sherly, 20 October 2019)

The difference in perspective between the generations in terms of cultural preservation was clear during my research in New Caledonia. Sherly and Thierry

²⁶Saung Udjo was established in 1966 by the late Udjo Ngalagena. This place was created with the intention and passion of preserving Sundanese traditional art and culture in West Java, Indonesia.

are a young couple in the Javanese community in New Caledonia who actively promote Javanese and Indonesian culture through various activities in the foyer of AINC. Sherly and Thierry's strategy to open the AINC foyer to as wide a public as possible, without limiting it to those of Javanese descent, was, however, widely opposed by the community's elders. Although the couple had successfully established AINC's reputation at the national and international level through art performances, many within the Javanese community were not supportive. Many older generations did not appreciate AINC's achievements because they felt that *angklung* is not Javanese but Sundanese music. This different view touches on the issue of authenticity and is tied to ethnic differences in the 'homeland'. Although Sundanese and Javanese are both ethnic groups from the island of Java, their culture is different. Most of my old interlocutors emphasised that their ancestors were Javanese, and therefore that cultural preservation should be related to Javanese culture.

However, while *angklung* seems to be a current 'hype' in New Caledonia, even amongst people of Melanesian and European descent, gamelan is stuck in the middle of a 'feud' between traditional and contemporary music. In this study, I found that although gamelan courses are offered in the Indonesian Consulate and foyer, it is hard to find them elsewhere. The instruments themselves are also difficult to move from one place to another – unlike *angklung*. *Angklung* is, furthermore, easier to play than gamelan.

Fractures in the community also occur when parties compare traditional arts teaching at the Indonesian Consulate to AINC's art teaching initiatives. These commentators consider 'traditional' or 'classic' art teaching to be more appropriate than AINC's innovations to promote 'contemporary' art. The art teachers at the Indonesian Consulate are still the same people who were teaching in the 1980s, so it is possible that there has been no variation or innovation in the traditional music and dance taught at the Indonesian Consulate over the past decades. Another problem relates to financing. The Consulate General cannot immediately recruit new teaching staff to teach traditional music and dance due to the complex bureaucracy of the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. AINC, however, presents a rather different case, since its status as a non-governmental institution gives it the flexibility to regulate its own activities and finances. Some art teachers at AINC are from the third generation, and they often visit Indonesia to take courses in culture and the arts. Their repertoire of music and performances, therefore, looks more modern and attractive to the younger Javanese generation than the KJRI.

The Visualisation of Java

Visual culture is important to the formation of diasporas (Raiford and Raphael-Hernandez 2017, 3). It serves as a means of self-identification within the diaspora's unfamiliar cultural terrain (Abebe 2019, 57). This section will examine how visual forms influence diasporic imaginings of Java through landscape painting, calendar and time, and excerpts from autobiographical novels.

Javanese landscape painting

On my second fieldwork trip, I began seeing a fascinating detail in my interlocutors' houses that I had hardly noticed during my first fieldwork: landscape paintings. My interlocutors hang these works of art in their living rooms, next to family portraits. The images vary very little between one home and another. There is a consistent depiction of mountains, rice fields, and rivers. When I asked Sardi why he had hung a landscape painting in his salon, his answer was simple: the image reminded him of Java. When I pestered him with the question as to what made him believe that the landscape painting was of Java, he jauntily answered that the picture was clearly not of New Caledonia because there are no rice fields in New Caledonia, only niaouli trees, geckos, and kagu birds.



Figure 17. Javanese landscape painting in interlocutor's house.
Photo credit: author, 2018

The emergence of Javanese landscape painting cannot be separated from the Mooi Indië (Beautiful Indies) movement. Mooi Indië is a visual style widely known in the Dutch East Indies in the late 19th century. The style always features

a landscape with mountains, dense trees, rice fields, and streams (Protschky 2011, 83; Spanjaard 2016, 15; Jurriëns 2019, 452). The panoramic landscapes associated with Mooi Indië paintings effectively conveyed the strategic and commercial worth of the colonised territory while concealing the reality of its annexation, which frequently involved aggression, exploitation, and environmental damage. Also, ‘the linear perspective objectified the landscape and established the Western viewer’s centrality and stability.’ (Protschky 2011, 82).

In the Dutch colonial period, Mooi Indië helped to illustrate the exoticism of the Dutch East Indies. The Dutch colonial government wished to attract the European public to visit the Dutch East Indies. Mooi Indië’s naturalistic paintings featured tropical pre-industrial settings characterised by volcanoes and rice fields. According to Rudolf Mrazek, retiring Dutch administrators and landowners in particular enjoyed bringing ‘the lovely Indies’ home as souvenirs in the form of miniature hangable paintings and photographs depicting rice fields, coconut trees, ‘buffalo lads’, mountains, and a red brilliant sun (Mrázek 2002, 29).

One region that became famous as a centre for natural landscape painting in the 1920s is Sokaraja, Central Java. The Sokaraja painters copied the Dutch Mooi Indië style (in a cheap, popularised form). During the colonial era’s final decades, Sokaraja artists set up shop on sidewalks surrounding colonial hotels, offering their Mooi Indië landscapes to holidaying Dutch colonists. After Indonesia’s independence in 1945, the demand for natural landscape paintings did not diminish. On the contrary, it increased, because Javanese and Indonesian people began to consume these paintings as part of the ‘imitation’ of the status expression of the colonial upper class. The emergence of photo studios in various regions in Indonesia in the 1950s also generated a high demand for natural landscape photographic backdrops. During the colonial period, natural landscapes were mostly employed to show exoticised, stereotypical ‘traditional’ locals or sensual images of young women for commercial sale as postcards and memorabilia. Following independence, modern Indonesians stood in front of such scenery. They wore the latest fashions: men wore Western-style dress trousers and button-down shirts, often topped off with a nationalist *peci* (cap). Women wore *kebaya* (lengthened blouses) and beautiful *batik* (wrapped cloth) (Strassler 2008, 422).

Over time, natural landscape paintings, which initially served as a depiction of Indies exoticism for the Western public, have shifted in meaning for the Javanese people. Many local myths have become attached to the depicted scenery, especially among rural communities in Java (Himawan 2011, 20). The rice fields should always be painted a golden yellow colour to symbolise prosperity. The owner should not place landscape paintings with mountain motifs above the house’s main entrance because that would ‘burden’ the homeowner: they should be hung to the right or left of the door. Paddy terraces should be depicted in large numbers because they signify prosperity and wealth. Lastly,

landscape paintings are usually owned by the wealthy or middle-class people of the village (the head of the village, or rice field owners) (ibid., 31).

Interestingly, the Javanese community in New Caledonia uses landscape painting to create an imagination of Java. Josephine and Sardi's grandparents never uttered a word about their life in Java before they moved to New Caledonia as indentured labourers. Josephine and Sardi's image of Java came from the landscape paintings hanging on their walls. Josephine received a landscape painting as a present from a fellow Javanese friend, while Sardi received the painting from his father. He remembered his bitter disappointment when he visited Java for the first time and had such a different experience from his imagination:

My parents told me that Java was just like that (pointing to the painting). Grandfather's house is near the stream next to the rice fields. But to be fair, I do not know where. Or in which city or province it is. Maybe his kampong no longer exists ... When I visited Java for the first time, I was disappointed because there were no green rice fields. And you know what, the river of Bengawan Solo is not as appealing as in my imagination. (Sardi, 15 October 2019)

Sardi's dissatisfaction at how different the landscape in Java is from the art hanging on their wall resonates with most of my interlocutors' sentiments, especially after their first trip to Java. They expected Java to be as it was illustrated by their parents or grandparents, or at least find a place like the one depicted in the paintings they look at every day. The Bengawan Solo River, which Sardi mentioned earlier, was a visual representation of Java for my interlocutors. The river, which flows through Solo, Central Java, is well known among the Javanese diaspora because it appears in numerous paintings and songs. The Bengawan Solo River, Sardi thought, had clean water and was a source of irrigation for the rice fields and surrounding community. Unfortunately, reality did not match his expectations. When he visited Central Java about ten years ago, the Bengawan Solo River was in disrepair. The water was contaminated due to waste and garbage dumped by the surrounding community, and there were no longer any rice fields.

Calendar and time

After a few days staying at Risno's house and living à la Javanese Caledonian, I started to notice a certain habit of their household. Every morning, when we had our breakfast at a small table in the kitchen, he would mark the date on the calendar hanging next to the table using a brightly colour Stabilo pen. Afterwards, Parti, his wife, would have a look at another calendar next to the freezer to check if she had a rendezvous or not. Aside from two French calendars in their kitchen and dining room, they also have an Indonesian calendar. When I asked her

why she had an Indonesian calendar when they had two calendars already, she answered that the Indonesian calendar has Indonesian and Javanese days of the week, which the French calendar does not.

A week later, I stayed over at Sardi's house. I arrived in the afternoon, just before afternoon coffee. They don't have a calendar in the dining room; instead, in the corridor, an Indonesian and a French calendar hang side by side. When it was nearly time to pray Maghrib (evening prayer), they asked me to join them in the praying room. After performing *wudu*²⁷, I went to the praying room. We sat on our prayer mat for almost 10 minutes until Sardi stood up and checked the praying times on the Arabic calendar on his desk and said to me:

We've been using this praying time for years, and I guess it's more precise than all the praying times apps [in smartphone]. Moreover, by using this calendar and praying time, we donate. It's the least we can do. (Sardi, 21 November 2018)

From his explanation above, 'consuming' an Arabic calendar served to contribute to the Muslim community in New Caledonia. As we know, the New Caledonian state ideology is secularism, just as in France, where the State separates any religious practice from its activities. It means that religious organisations are required to fund themselves collectively and independently, as the State will not provide any financial aid.

Regarding the Indonesian calendar, I noticed three types of calendars in my interlocutors' house: Indonesian calendars using the Gregorian system, Indonesian calendars using the Gregorian system mixed with the Javanese system, and Indonesian calendars using the Gregorian system combined with the Javanese and Islamic system. Most people had bought their calendars on visits to Indonesia or had received them as souvenirs from relatives or friends from Indonesia. However, a few years ago Niaouli Import started to produce their own Indonesian calendars, which use the Gregorian system mixed with the Javanese system.

On my visit to the Rivière Sallée market in October 2019, where Sabar, a second-generation Javanese man who owns Niaouli Import opens his stall every Saturday morning, it was full of people purchasing calendars. Each person bought two or even more; I even saw one gentleman buy seven calendars for his family who lived in the North Province. One man approached me and asked how much calendars cost in Indonesia nowadays. I said that I had no idea, because my family in Indonesia never bought calendars, as we always got one free every year, from either our office, school, or store. He looked a bit annoyed with my answer and said:

²⁷Washing parts of the body in preparation for Islamic prayer.

I knew it. You don't have to buy a calendar in Indonesia. I usually get one from my family, but this year none of us travelled to Indonesia in October, November or December; so we could not get a calendar for next year. You see... in New Caledonia, everything is costly. Even for these papers, you have to pay for XPF 1000 (€9). But we don't have any choice. (Seger, 7 November 2018)

Figures 18 and 19 show pictures from 2020 calendars sold by two Javanese-Indonesian stores in Noumea, New Caledonia: Niaouli Import and Stone Fish²⁸.



Figure 18. Calendar 2020 from the Niaouli Import.

Source: Facebook Niaouli Import (public page)



Figure 19. Calendar 2020 from Stone Fish.

Source: Facebook Stone Fish Noumea (public page)

I was fascinated to witness this love-hate relationship between the consumer and the producer regarding calendars. The producer, on the one hand, knows that he is the only player in the field: regardless of how many calendars they have in their warehouse, they will always sell out because the demand is so high. On the other hand, the consumer needs the calendar, and they will put up with paying that amount because there are not many options.

²⁸To date, only two entrepreneurs have opened shops selling Indonesian goods in New Caledonia. Jean Claude Sabar, a second-generation Javanese, owns Niaouli Import, while Saminem, an Indonesian citizen who married a second-generation Javanese in Caledonia, owns Stone Fish.

Most of my interlocutors said they need to have an Indonesian calendar mixed with the Javanese or Islamic system to keep the nostalgic feeling evoked by its pictures, because the calendars depicting Indonesian and Javanese scenic views act as part of their homeland anchorage. For Yanto, Marto and Seger, buying and owning an Indonesian calendar creates a reminiscence of the homeland. Furthermore, it makes sense of temporal proximity because the calendar aligns the time at home with the homeland. For Juminten, the Indonesian calendar mixed with the Javanese system is necessary to help her count the traditional banquet's good and bad days. I will elaborate more on Javanese belief in good and bad days in the next chapter.

Based on their use of calendars with multiple systems, I postulate that time for Javanese descendants in New Caledonia does not always work in a purely linear way. For cultural reasons they use the Javanese calendar system, for their religious practices they use the Islamic system, and for their daily lives they have French or Indonesian calendars using the Gregorian system.

Conclusion

For diasporic subjects, homeland has two dimensions: their current diasporic residence and their place of origin. These dimensions are intricately intertwined and complex. Attempts by the diasporic community to establish a home in the 'host' country alter not only the host country's society and culture but also the concept of home, pointing to the emergence of what Alison Blunt and Robyn Dowling refer to as 'transnational homes' (Blunt and Dowling 2006, 196). Such ramifications are felt in the society and culture of the diasporic subjects' home country, as they relate to it. These ramifications, furthermore, change the diasporic subjects' concept of home and of host country, as some may feel securely settled in the host country's society and culture (Stierstorfer and Wilson 2018, 225).

This chapter focuses on the Javanese diaspora in New Caledonia and the dialectics of home and diaspora through the expression of homeland anchorage through food, music, and the visualisation of Java, which results in the formation of the myth of the community. However, while the Javanese community performs homeland anchorage in daily life, the concept of a fractured homeland varies according to generation, resulting in the idea of a diaspora community's fractured homeland.

This chapter also demonstrates that homeland is not a single concept for the Javanese diaspora in New Caledonia. There are multiple, sometimes conflicting, construction of home-in-diaspora as there are numerous ways of remembering home and experiencing displacement. Avtar Brah encapsulates such transformations of home as 'the homing of diaspora, the diasporising of home' (Brah 2018, 236). Brah elucidates the entire dialectic of diaspora and home by demonstrating that while a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination

is a 'home', it also manifests as a locality's lived experience. While the issue of 'home' and belonging is central to the diasporic experience, each diaspora's history determines how, when, and in what form these questions arise and how they are addressed. Not all diasporas express a desire to return home in the same way (ibid.).

As indentured labourers' relationships with Java differed from subsequent generations, this study uncovers a generational divide in the diaspora community's discussion of home, which contributes to community conflict. Memories of what was left behind, the experience of disruption and displacement associated with reorientation, the formation of new social networks, and the acquisition of the ability to negotiate new realities all serve to mediate these distinctions. The experiences of each generation also differ. Different perspectives on the homeland cause conflicts in the community, which lead to fragmentation. Furthermore, this chapter demonstrates the ambivalence of the Javanese diaspora community toward the concept of homeland. Firstly, ambivalence toward the past and present; whether it was better 'then' or 'now'. The ambivalence extends to the future as well: whether to maintain the 'myth of return' or establish a new life in the new environment. The final ambivalence is towards the 'host' society, which can include feelings of admiration, disdain, and uncertainty. In the next chapter, I will discuss the fractured beliefs that exist within the Javanese community in New Caledonia.

Chapter 5.

Religion and Beliefs in the Community

Introduction

Most studies on diaspora put religious practices and beliefs after ethnicity and nationality. Following Robin Cohen's (2008) typology, diaspora is defined as an ethnonational construct, bounded territorially to a homeland. Religions lack the 'idealisation of a homeland and a return movement' that define diasporas (Liberatore and Fesenmeyer 2019, 233). Beyond the debate over whether religions constitute diasporas, Paul C. Johnson attempts to show that diasporas are indeed made, transformed, and activated through religion. He argues that diasporic religions include 'territorial invocations made not just through residence or nostalgia, but also through imagination, ritual practice, narratives and the plotting of futures, as well as the summoning of ancestral pasts' (Johnson 2012, 108).

In this chapter I build on Pasura's work on religion and diaspora in the Routledge Handbook of Diaspora Studies. The present scope of religious diaspora is not only about human mobility, but also includes 'transnational flows of religious beliefs, practices, and symbols' (Pasura 2019, 113). It examines the migration of religious beliefs and practises, as well as individuals and communities. Religions connect diasporas, even as diasporas spread religions into new areas and contexts of practise, sometimes renewing, sometimes threatening, but always reshaping and reconstructing them (Johnson 2012, 95 cited in Pasura 2019, 113).

This chapter discusses how Javanese descendants navigate their ethnoreligious identity within the secular society of contemporary New Caledonia, and looks at the community's internal divisions. This chapter, like Rogers Brubaker, views diasporas as a process and a category of practice (Brubaker 2005 in Pasura 2019). This view is consistent with the theoretical shifts occurring in religious studies, away from texts and beliefs and toward religious practices and how religion is lived. Thus, conceptual frameworks of diaspora and religion converge here – as process, practice, assertion, idiom, stance, and orientation, to name but a few. This approach enables us to investigate how religious practices, ideas, and experiences activate and transform diasporas (D. D. Hall 1997; Tweed 2009; Liberatore and Fesenmeyer 2019, 235). The above concept will be used in this chapter to show how and to what effect the 'religious' is constituted, produced, and reproduced, and the fractures that happen as the consequence of this process.

I have explained Javanese ethnic identity as it is related to the notion of homeland and belonging in the previous chapter. The early Javanese community

in New Caledonia created a homeland through Islam Kejawen (Islamic practices mixed with Hinduism, Buddhism, and animistic rituals). And, as the community has developed into the present Javanese community, their religious practices have also evolved, particularly as a new wave of Indonesian migrants brought their own versions of Islamic practices. Moreover, the Arab community in New Caledonia also has its own interpretation of Islam. Meanwhile, the Islam Kejawen practitioners have started to decrease in number.

Through the discussion of fractured beliefs, this chapter will explain that although Islamic practices in Java, Arab states, and Indonesia have all evolved along different trajectories, the three pathways nevertheless run in parallel within the Javanese community in New Caledonia to a certain degree, which leads to an ongoing silent conflict. As Martin Baumann emphasises, boundaries are emphasised through religious symbols/elements to maintain distinct identities. Religion both strengthens cohesion and creates fragmentation. In that sense, religion reinforces the group's solidarity and spirit of togetherness while distinguishing the group from its surroundings by creating diverse boundaries (Baumann 2004, 172).

In this chapter, I will describe religious practices within the Javanese community in New Caledonia and the fractures resulting from different Islamic practices. For most of the old generation Javanese in New Caledonia, religion and beliefs are part of their culture. Thus, practising Islam in the old-fashioned way, with offerings and syncretism, is at the core of the community. For some of the new generation, however, religion is not culture. They have a different stance towards religion and interpret its relation to culture differently from the older generation.

A Brief History of Islamic Belief in New Caledonia

Islam arrived in New Caledonia long before the arrival of Javanese indentured labourers. The Kabyles deportees – prisoners who participated in the 1871 revolution in Algeria, led by Bachaga Mokrani – brought Islam to New Caledonia from 1872 onwards (Kohler 1983). Some were able to leave the colony in 1881 and 1895 upon obtaining a pardon (Merle and Coquet 2019, 256). Those who could not return to Algeria at the end of their sentence settled in New Caledonia and formed the first Arabic diaspora community in the city of Bourail (Oulahal, Guerraoui, and Denoux 2018, 375).

From 1896 onwards, Javanese indentured labourers brought syncretic forms of Javanese Islam, namely Islam Kejawen, to New Caledonia. Through these practices, one can trace the history of religion on the island of Java. Before the 15th century, the major religions in Java were Hinduism and Buddhism. Later, Islam entered Java through Arabic traders. Crucial to the rapid growth of

Islam in Java was also the influence of the Walisongo²⁹, who used the strategy of assimilating Javanese culture with Islam for the purpose of *dakwah*.³⁰ This strategy helped to make Islam widely accepted on the island.

Clifford Geertz coined the typology for Javanese Islamic culture in his book *The Religion of Java* (1970). According to Geertz, Java's Islamisation began in the 13th century and was gradual and variable. His typology began with pious Muslims, whom he referred to as *santri*, who were concentrated along the northern coast and in rural areas with traditional Islamic schools, but also included urban traders. The second was the majority peasant *abangan* culture, which, while nominally Islamic, remained rooted in indigenous Javanese 'animism' and ancestral tradition. The final group was the *priyayi*, or nobles-turned-bureaucrats who lived primarily in urban areas and practised a form of mysticism derived from the Hindu-Buddhist era preceding the arrival of Islam in Java.

The categories of *santri* and *abangan* are also used by Fidayanti Muljono-Larue (1996) and Jean Luc Maurer (2006) to describe the religious practices of the Javanese community in New Caledonia. The two authors explain that Javanese indentured labourers first introduced *abangan* culture to New Caledonia. They practiced Javanese rituals such as offerings and *kenduren*.³¹ In contrast, the *santri* category appeared later, describing those who practise orthodox Islamic teachings³² and therefore forbid the practices of offerings and *kenduren*. Even though there are other religious adherents within the Javanese Muslim community in New Caledonia, Muljono-Larue and Maurer only use these two categorisations.

The categories of *santri* and *abangan* used by Geertz in Java, and followed by Muljono-Larue and Maurer in their research, are only relevant to New Caledonia Javanese in the era of indentured labour (1896–1949), when most of the workers brought over from Java were uneducated villagers. The *santri* and *abangan* categories no longer fit the present situation. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, the categories of educated and uneducated can no longer be used because all Javanese descendants in New Caledonia are educated. Secondly, the rural versus urban distinction is no longer appropriate because residents change their location according to their work. Thirdly, the economic distinction that states that *santri* are usually more economically well-established than *abangan* does not apply in New Caledonia.

Consequently, rather than use the religious categorisations of *santri* and *abangan*, I use the categories of *croyants* (believers) and *pratiquants* (practitioners) to describe Islamic practices in the Javanese community in New Caledonia. The differences between the two categories are that the *croyants* admit that they have a religion, and they still have a strong belief in Kejawen and the offerings

²⁹The Walisongo is a group of nine Islamic saints in Indonesia who are believed to have been the first to bring Islam to Java. They are especially important on the island of Java and pilgrims visit their graves.

³⁰*Dakwah* is Islamic missionary work to invite or call people to embrace Islam.

³¹*Kenduren* is a banquet that is part of religious ceremonies.

³²These orthodox Islamic teachings were brought from the Arabian Peninsula.

and rituals as taught by their parents, but they do not practise it. In contrast, the *pratiquants* are those who practice orthodox religious teachings and forbid any mixing of it with Kejawen. Following the previous research of Muljono-Larue and Maurer, my research focuses solely on the discourse of the Islamic practices within the community, as it is part of the ethno-traditional religion. Although there are other religions such as Christianity (both Catholic and Protestant) and Hinduism in the community, I will not discuss them in this chapter. In the next sections, I will explain the polarisation between the *croyants* and *pratiquantes*, and how this has contributed to fractures within the community.

***Croyants* and Islam Kejawen**

In this section, I discuss Javanese rituals and traditions in New Caledonia. The Javanese community in New Caledonia, particularly the *croyants* (believers), do not separate religious practices from the influence of Javanese culture and rituals. Ritual in the diaspora community's religious practice serves as an important part of their identity (Shanneik 2015). Rituals are helpful for reminiscing because verbally rehearsed and physically performed events are more likely to be fully integrated in memory (Connerton 1989; Pennebaker and Gonzalez 2009, 174). Rituals create their meaning through the action itself. They include an element of performance and repetition; they tend to be scripted, and, broadly, they aim to impose order on the world and bring harmony (Sterckx 2020, 225). However, despite the function of rituals in a community—to provide a template that allows people to live in the plural without harming each other (ibid.)—rituals are the subject of dispute and conflict that may further fracture a community. Among the many rituals that exist, I will mention death rituals, banquets for religious and traditional ceremonies, offerings, and the presence of shamans.

Death rituals

Death and dying is an essential process for maintaining and forming Javanese identity. Javanese believe that there is a relation and connection between the deceased and their living family, between the spirit worlds and the physical world. Scholars who have focused on Javanese funerals have often linked the discourse of death to Javanese cultural values. These include: the notion of *iklas* or a state of letting go (Geertz 1970); the notion of *nrima* or acceptance; ancestor worship (Koentjaraningrat 1984; Hefner 1985); and the micro-/macro-cosmos of relationship cycles (de Grave 2018). Death becomes a scene through which to understand the silent conflict between *croyants* and *pratiquants* and how the Javanese diaspora community navigates through secularism.

On the second day of my first fieldwork period in 2018, after returning from reporting to the Indonesian Consulate, my host Parti told me that there was news of the deaths of two Javanese descendants on the radio. New Caledonian citizens' deaths are broadcast three times a day on the radio, at 6:30 a.m., 12:00 p.m., and 5:30 p.m. The first deceased was Wani, a Javanese man who had come to New Caledonia on the last ship carrying indentured labourers in 1949. The second was Prihatin, the widow of a Javanese labourer who had come to New Caledonia on the same ship.

I went to the mortuary with my interlocutors to pay our respects to the deceased by doing *salat jenazah*³³ and *tahlil*.³⁴ We had to arrive before 6.30 p.m., because there would be two *salat jenazah* and *tahlil* for Wani and Prihatin in two different rooms. The funeral services for both were held in the afternoon, a few days after they had passed away, because of New Caledonian funeral service regulations. The *salat jenazah* for Wani and Prihatin was led by Imam Mustafa from the Grand Mosque of Noumea. Members of Tablighi Jamaat from Malaysia (an orthodox Islamic organisation, which I discuss further later in this chapter) also attended the prayer. After completing the prayer, the members of Tablighi Jamaat and Imam Mustafa went home without reciting *tahlil*.

Tahlil is commonly practised in Java and Indonesia. It is held on the night after the burial and continues on the third day, seventh day, 40th day, 100th day, and 1000th day. Some Muslims believe that by performing *tahlil*, they will also obtain some theological benefit (because *tahlil* is part of prayer) and cultural benefit (for maintaining harmony between the spirit world and the physical world). Nevertheless, this activity is considered a sin by other Muslims, including Imam Mustafa, Tablighi Jamaat, and other Javanese Muslim *pratiquantess*, because there is no clear guidance on it in the Quran and Hadith. For this reason, the chair of PUIMIK (Association of Indonesian Muslims of New Caledonia) led the *tahlil*, with a shorter reading than the Indonesian version. When the *tahlil* was held, everyone had to stand up, including the deceased's families. Even though they were not Muslim and did not understand what was being done or recited, they were still there to pay a final tribute to the deceased.

From Parti, I learned that the funeral services held that evening for the deceased were organized by two was organised by two Javanese funeral associations. In New Caledonia, there are two Javanese funeral associations, namely KKBI (Kesatuan Kematian Bangsa Indonesia) and AD (Asosiasi Dakwah). According to my interlocutors, Fidayanti and Sardi, KKBI and AD were founded as an act of solidarity towards the old Javanese labourers in New Caledonia who did not have a family to take care of them after their death. Initially, the two associations only collected money to fund funeral services and organised the deceased's Javanese funeral rituals. Later on, in around the 1980s, these two associations started to

³³*Salat jenazah* is an Islamic funeral prayer performed in a congregation.

³⁴The *tahlil* and the Quran verse *Ya Seen* are recited in the hope that the deceased's sins will be forgiven and his/her good deeds accepted by God.

manage Javanese funeral services professionally. Nowadays, both KKBI and AD have about 600 members each. With their members' contributions, the two organisations buy coffins, *kafan*³⁵, and all necessities related to the funeral service (a hearse, daily rent for the mortuary, the announcement on the radio, an obituary in the newspaper, and arranging the Islamic religious leader).

Aside from 'investing' in the affair of death by joining a funeral association, some of my interlocutors had also bought a *caveau* (tomb) in the city's burial area. One of my interlocutors died in 2019. He was a second-generation Javanese who lived in Noumea. Before he died, he made a will requesting to be buried in a *caveau de famille*, which can hold four bodies. At his funeral, I met several of my interlocutors, both *pratiquants* and *croyants*. They held different views regarding the use of such a *caveau*. The *pratiquants* did not agree with the use of the *caveau* because it does not follow Islamic law. According to them, *caveau* are used by non-Muslims and non-Javanese ethnic groups. On the other hand, the *croyants* were interested in the *caveau*, given their practicality and cost (they can also be used to bury a spouse and two children). According to them, their investment in both was fuelled by a concern with their corpse being properly taken care of when they died, which also meant taking care of Islamic procedures. This double standard regarding religious practices raised concerns for Sardi, a second-generation Javanese *pratiquante*. For him, it was amusing that when people are alive, religion is not an important issue, but that religion suddenly matters when it comes to death and dying:

When they were alive, they ignored the religion, never once prayed. But when they die, they want to use the Islamic method of burial. There were members of the community who were Catholic, but before they died, they asked to have a Javanese and Islamic burial, enshrouded in *kafan*, and had a *kaum* [Islamic religious leader] officiate the funeral service. It is illogical. Maybe they think they can go straight to heaven that way. (Sardi, 19 November 2018)

Banquet and offerings for religious and traditional ceremonies

Another ritual considered to be at the core of Javanese beliefs in New Caledonia is the banquet for religious and traditional ceremonies, also known as *amen-amen*³⁶, *kenduri* or *slametan*³⁷. For Javanese, *kenduri* not only functions as a cultural and

³⁵The *kafan* is the Muslim burial shroud, the cloth used to wrap the deceased before the burial.

³⁶*Amen-amen* is an onomatopoeic sound of the 'chant' recited by the congregation when there is a short pause in between prayers recited by the *kaum* or Imam. Javanese in New Caledonia call the *kenduri amen-amen*. There is no clear explanation as to when the community started using this word.

³⁷There are different explanations on the origin and practice of the, syncretic, *slametan* ritual (see also *kenduren*). In Java it is usually a commemorative meal or thanksgiving event with neighbours and relatives

religious ritual but also as a communal feast. Clifford Geertz categorised *kenduri* into four groups. First is the life-cycle *kenduri*, which is given at each point of passage in an individual's life, such as pregnancy, birth, circumcision, marriage, and death (Geertz 1970, 38). The next one is the calendrical *kenduri*, which is celebrated in connection with the Muslim calendar (Geertz 1970, 77). The third is the village *kenduri*, which was associated with celebrating one of the basic administrative units of the Javanese social structure, namely the village (Geertz 1970, 81). The last one is the intermittent *kenduri* for special occasions like the change of name or residence (Geertz 1970, 83). Javanese believe that through the *slametan* and *kenduri*, harmony with the other elements of nature are achieved (Geertz 1970; Koentjaraningrat 1984; Miyazaki 1988; Pemberton 1994; Beatty 1999; Sutiono 2014).

For the *amen-amen*, which is related to the death ritual, the Javanese in New Caledonia organise the ritual as their ancestors would have done, with, of course, some modifications. Juminten, a 96-year-old second-generation Javanese lady, famous for being the last living source of knowledge on Javanese rituals in New Caledonia, explained some *kenduri* and rituals to me. After the burial, there are a number of *kenduri* that must be performed: on the third day, seventh day, 40th day, 100th day, after one year, two years, and 1,000 days. For Javanese, prolonging death commemoration – to almost three years – enables the expression and mastery of emotional and spiritual impulses. This occurs along with the custom of layering flowers on relatives' and ancestors' graves (Koentjaraningrat 1984, 396; Hefner 1985; de Grave 2018).

Amen-amen, as a Javanese ritual in New Caledonia, is also related to old Javanese divination 'science'. Old Javanese believe that there are good and bad days, and thus the host of the *amen-amen* banquet should choose the day carefully. There is a procedure to select these good or bad days, and the calculation is based on *primbon*.³⁸ Juminten is known for her ability to make *sajen* (offerings) and for selecting good or bad days for *kenduri* using the calendar and *primbon*. Each time when there is a death of a Javanese, their family will call her to ask her to calculate a good day on which to hold the *amen-amen* post-mortuary ceremony.

In the past, the calculation of the days, the preparation of the *kenduren*

in which food is shared and Islamic prayers are recited. In early anthropological discussions of Javanese culture, Geertz described *slametan* simply as an Islamic feast (1970, 11–15). Mark R. Woodward contends that the *slametan* is the result of the larger (non-Javanese) Muslim community's interpretation of Islamic texts and ways of ritual action. Additionally, the *slametan* is not exclusively or even significantly a rural ritual in Java, but is modelled on the imperial worship of the Yogyakarta palace, which he regards as Sufi in influence (Woodward 1988, 62). Another definition is that *slametan* refers to the way in which people relate to one another within the community, how they interact with their environment, and the external power that determines human life (Beatty 1999). Adherents to more modernist or strict interpretations of Islam usually reject *slametan* as proper Islamic practice.

³⁸The *primbon* is an ancient Javanese manuscript that contains predictions about a person's good or bad fortune in life. Additionally, it includes projections to determine whether something is beneficial or harmful based on a numerical calculation or the value of each day, month, or year.

(banquet) and offerings, and the leading of the prayers was carried out by a *kaum*.³⁹ Eloise, an 80-year-old second-generation Javanese woman, is the granddaughter of the first *kaum* in New Caledonia. We met in 2019 at her cousin's wedding anniversary party. I sat at the same table as her, together with her husband Arsène and a cousin of hers. She went to the dining room and then returned after about 15 minutes with a white cloth in her left hand, a sad face, and swollen eyes, and said:

I got this cloth from my cousin, Jeanelle. This cloth belongs to *pépé* [grandfather]. He brought it when he had to officiate *amen-amen*. This cloth is used to wrap the food of the banquet. We had rice, chicken, noodles, meatballs, vegetables. There would also be an additional gift. To the female guests, the host would give lipstick or powder, and as for the male guests, they would receive shavers, knives, or a comb. (Eloise, 24 October 2019)

Eloise's story illustrates the Javanese community's situation in New Caledonia in around the 1950s, when the presence of the *kaum* was significant, especially in terms of officiating rituals and prayers after a death.

On another occasion, Josephine explained that the second and third generations of Javanese in New Caledonia used to make *slametan* for life cycle rituals. However, it seems that they only repeated what had been told and done by their elders without knowing much about the meaning itself. As further explained by Josephine, two essential elements in *slametan*, apart from the prayers, are *tumpeng* and *ingkung*.⁴⁰ When she questioned her parents about their meanings, they had no idea. Their answers were vague: that these two elements are important according to their ancestors, and they were thus simply following what they had learned from them.

The ritual practice of making *tumpeng* and offerings has existed in New Caledonia since the first arrivals of Javanese indentured labourers. They brought the culture from Java, although later it was packaged differently due to limited materials and knowledge. In her novel, Liliane Saintomer (2016) explains how indentured labourers made many offerings on various occasions, including weddings (ibid., 88), when moving to a new house or place (ibid., 103), and death rituals (ibid., 181). Apart from that, Javanese indentured labourers also made regular offerings to their ancestors, consisting of several kinds of dishes with rice and eggs, flowers, and incense (ibid., 103). The aim was to always be under the protection of the ancestors. Thus, the *tumpeng* as a Kejawen practice became a central element in their spiritual connection with the homeland.

³⁹Islamic religious leader.

⁴⁰*Ingkung* is a dish of rooster cooked with turmeric and coconut milk. The word *ingkung* comes from *manengkung* or praying to God with a devoted heart (Jati 2014, 6).



Figure 20. *Tumpeng* made for the naming ceremony for AINC's new gamelan instrument, AINC Foyer, October 2019.

Photo credit: author, 2019.



Figure 21. *Inkung* made for the naming ceremony for AINC's new gamelan instrument, AINC Foyer, October 2019.

Photo credit: author, 2019.

The second generation similarly interpreted the practice of making *tumpeng* within the framework of Islam Kejawen. According to them, *tumpeng* is the representation of a mountain, a place where God resides. Thus, making *tumpeng* makes it easier for people to reach out to the Almighty. From a Javanese perspective, universal truths are attained not by acquiring external foreign-derived knowledge, but through introspection, by matching outer symbols to inner reality. In this example, *tumpeng* represents a Javanese mentality and an awareness of the importance of 'knowing one's Javanese-ness' from within. However, apart from the value of *kenduri* or *slametan*, and the offerings that most of my interlocutors believe to be an inseparable part of Javanese culture, it has also become one of the points of fracture in the community. Sardi, a Muslim *pratikant* of the third generation, told me that he and his family had not spoken to his brother in over 20 years, even though they lived nearby. The reason is that Sardi's brother still practises rituals and offerings; the same rituals that their ancestors practised. For Sardi, this act went against his belief as a pious Muslim.

Offerings are still made to this day in the Javanese community in New

Caledonia, although they are only made at particular times. One moment that required offerings was the naming ceremony for AINC's new gamelan instrument in October 2019. From early in the morning, members of Atelier Di Dapur (In the Kitchen) and other volunteers were busy preparing *tumpeng* and various offerings as an essential part of the ceremony, cooking rice and sticky rice, preparing chicken, and eggs, and frying crackers. AINC had to improvise with some of the offerings since they could not purchase all the necessary ingredients in New Caledonia; for instance, they used Cavendish bananas instead of the small bananas called *pisang mas* and used essential oils instead of incense.



Figure 22. Offerings as an important part of the naming ceremony of gamelan
Photo credit: author, 2019

An important element that cannot be separated from *slametan* and making offerings is the existence of a leader to head the ritual. The leader could be a shaman (*wong pinter*) or during the indentured labour period even a member of the Islamic religious leader (*kaum*). In the next section, I discuss shamanism and its importance for Javanese *croyants* in New Caledonia.

The presence of a shaman

Central to Javanese rituals and beliefs is the presence of a shaman or *wong pinter*. A *wong pinter* is someone who gains insight and knowledge in the field not through textbooks or other conventional forms of information, but by a metaphysical process, epiphany, led by the intentions of the spirits with whom

they interact or are in contact (Geertz 1970; Koentjaraningrat 1984; Hefner 1985; Woodward 1988; Beatty 1999). In short, *wong pinter* refers to someone blessed with magical, divine powers and recognition in society.

There is often terminological confusion concerning the *wong pinter* and *dhukun*. *Dhukun* is a term referring to a magico-religious healer or to someone endowed with magical abilities. In the anthropology of Java, this word is used by Geertz (1970) and Koentjaraningrat (1984) to describe the shamanism practised there. Both *dhukun* and *wong pinter* have been used to refer to practitioners in Javanese culture as a social designation. Most practitioners prefer the term *wong pinter*, however, because its association with those who practise ‘white magic’ is less negative than *dhukun* (Sutiono 2014, 43), which is often associated with ‘black magic’.

Javanese believe that the *wong pinter* has spiritual power (*kasekten*), which helps them to have an equal relationship with the spirits. The *wong pinter* frequently bestows magical devices on their clients, such as amulets or charms, in order to bring good fortune or ward off evil spirits (Winkelman 1990; Sutiono 2014, 47). Sometimes, they will suggest that their clients perform a pilgrimage (such as visiting an ancestral grave) or a meditation in a specific place believed to have supernatural powers. Additionally, tasks such as cleansing the house and village, ‘diverting’ the rain, dispelling evil, and healing are common practices in which the *wong pinter* must interact with spirits in a range of ways for a variety of goals.

The *wong pinter* leads ritual ceremonies and acts as the intermediary between the spirit world and the physical world. Their presence also offers certainty in periods of uncertainty. In times of rupture, shock, and emotional crisis, the *wong pinter* is the one on whom people can rely. In Saintomer’s novel, we learn about the presence of a *wong pinter* during the indentured labour period in New Caledonia – an important figure behind every Javanese life ritual (Saintomer 2016, 88), such as circumcision for boys (*ibid.*, 151), and death rituals (*ibid.*, 181).

During my first fieldwork period in New Caledonia in 2018, Juminten gave me the name of someone whom she considered a *wong pinter*: Partono, a man from Central Java, who had come to New Caledonia as an Islamic religious leader (*kaum*) in the 2000s. Although Juminten is considered to be the last Javanese in New Caledonia who knows how to read the ancient Javanese manuscript of *primbon* in its original language, this does not place her directly in the position of *wong pinter* because she does not have the power to communicate with the spirits of the ancestors. Instead, her knowledge is based on what she was taught by the previous shaman.

Partono’s name reappeared when I spoke with Ardi, who said that he had been a victim of Melanesian *bouqin* or black magic at his ex-wife’s request. For almost a year, he experienced nightmares and hysteria. His relationship with

his partner worsened and ultimately, they separated. At first, he did not believe it when his friend, who was also a second-generation Javanese, said that this unfortunate event in his life had probably been caused by witchcraft. When the nightmares would not go away, however, he consulted Javanese and Melanesian shamans. The only shaman who managed to drive away the evil spirits from his house was Partono, who conducted rituals with eggs and water.

Another example of a *wong pinter* was Pardiman, the leader of Omah Cangkem (OCM), a traditional art group from Yogyakarta, who came to New Caledonia for the signing of the sister city agreement between Yogyakarta and Mont Dore in 2019. The Mont Dore mayor gave two new sets of bronze gamelan to the AINC as part of the sister city cooperation commitment. The initial plan was that OCM would use the gamelan for the joint performance with the AINC arts team at the Franoceani Festival on 25–27 October 2019. The uncertainty of the estimated time of arrival of the gamelan caused a chaos in the preparations. Thierry from the AINC worried that the shipment might be delayed, and that they would have to prepare a backup plan. Fortunately, the gamelan arrived on time, on the same day as the Omah Cangkem. Everyone at the AINC was pleased and repeatedly said that it was a miracle, proving that the universe and the ancestors had blessed the collaboration.

On 21 October 2019, at 6.30 p.m., a naming ceremony was held for the new sets of gamelan. Pardiman was the *wong pinter* who officiated the ceremony that evening, with more than 50 Javanese people in attendance. The ceremony began with the heating of essential oils (instead of the burning of incense) by Pardiman, which was followed by the recitation of prayers in Javanese. Pardiman later announced the name he had chosen for the gamelan: Kyai Hogonoyo. He affirmed that he had communicated with New Caledonia's Javanese ancestors before picking the name. In their dialogue, he had asked for permission to introduce Kyai Hogonoyo. The ceremony then continued with the cutting of the *tumpeng* and gamelan performances from OCM.



Figure 23. The naming ceremony for the gamelan in AINC, 21 October 2019.
Photo credit: author, 2019.

A month later, I talked to Sherly, Thiery's wife. She narrated a mysterious phenomenon experienced by AINC members a week before our meeting. They were practicing gamelan in the foyer when suddenly everyone smelled a mixture of pandanus, satay, and jasmine from the kitchen. The scent became stronger by the minute. This was indeed strange, because nobody was in the kitchen, and they do not grow jasmine or pandanus. Sherly did not call or consult Pardiman as the *wong pinter*. However, two days before our meeting, Sherly got a call from Pardiman, who said that he had dreamt of an old man claiming to be Hagonoyo, the deity who 'manifested' his spirit into the gamelan. Hagonoyo told him that 'the offerings were well-received among the spirits of Javanese elders in the New Caledonia'. Sherly considered Pardiman's dream to be linked to the strange event experienced by the AINC members, and despite the obscurity of the situation, she felt that it was a good sign from the universe, a clear message that the micro-cosmos and macro-cosmos were in balance.

Regardless of the *wong pinter*'s position for the *croyants* and Islam Kejawen in New Caledonia, the *pratiquants* regard their practice of *wongpintership* as wrong. On the one hand, Javanese are aware that *wong pinter* exists as a social phenomenon. On the other hand, *pratiquants* consider that *wongpintership* violates Islamic principles. *Pratiquant* such as Sardi regard their activity as a sin that will drive believers away from God.

Pratiquants and the notion of a good Muslim

Amid the secular society of New Caledonia, the Islamic practices of people of Javanese descent are heterogeneous, influenced by various parties. This diversity has become one of the key causes of fractures in the community. In this section, I discuss three institutions that play an essential role in shaping and re-shaping the Javanese community's Islamic practices in New Caledonia: L'Association des Musulmans de Nouvelle Calédonie (AMNC); the Association of Indonesian Muslims of New Caledonia (PUIMIK); and Tablighi Jamaat. The discussion of these three organisations is essential because although they have different interpretations of how to be a good Muslim, they agree that Islam Kejawen (as practiced by the *croyants*) is a sin (the sin of polytheism).

L'Association des musulmans de Nouvelle Calédonie (AMNC)

The first organisation is L'Association des Musulmans de Nouvelle-Calédonie (Muslim Association of New Caledonia, or AMNC). It was originally founded in 1966 as the Association of Arabic and Friends of the Arabians, and was dedicated to the cultural and religious activities of Arab descendants in New Caledonia. The group aimed to build a mosque and to organise Quranic education. In practice, however, this association was more concerned with secular activities than religion (Kohler 1983). Later, in 1975, the organisation was re-named and the AMNC was created with the aim of devoting itself solely to religious practices. One of its priority objectives was to obtain land from the municipality of Noumea and build a mosque and a Quranic school. In 1978, with the support of a private Fijian fund, AMNC acquired an old colonial house in the Vallée de Colon, which they transformed into a place for meetings and prayer. After long negotiations with the French administration for permission to build a mosque, and thanks to a donation from King Fahd of Saudi Arabia and a loan from the Islamic Development Bank, the Islamic Center of Noumea was finally inaugurated in 1986. Aside from giving financial aid, Saudi Arabia also agreed to support an Islamic teacher who would run a Quranic school and provide radio broadcasts (Maurer 2006, 237).

Over time, the Grand Mosque of Noumea became the centre of religious activities and Muslim communities in New Caledonia. In addition to weekly Friday prayers, there are also seasonal activities, such as *tarawih* prayers⁴¹ during Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr celebrations. Usually, at every Eid celebration, more than 300 Muslims crowd the mosque.⁴² After the prayer, there is a celebration on the mosque veranda, which is filled with food prepared by the congregation.⁴³ In

⁴¹*Tarawih* is a night prayer performed by a Muslim congregation during the fasting month of Ramadan.

⁴²Those for whom there is no place in the mosque can attend the Eid al-Fitr prayer at the Indonesian Consulate, which is held later in the day. The difference is in the sermon: at the Grand Mosque Noumea, the sermon is delivered in French, while at the Indonesian Consulate it is delivered in Indonesian.

⁴³According to my interlocutors, such activities for Ramadan 2020 were carried out very differently due

addition to holding routine activities such as weekly Friday prayers and seasonal activities, AMNC also provides prayer-time guidelines in calendar form.

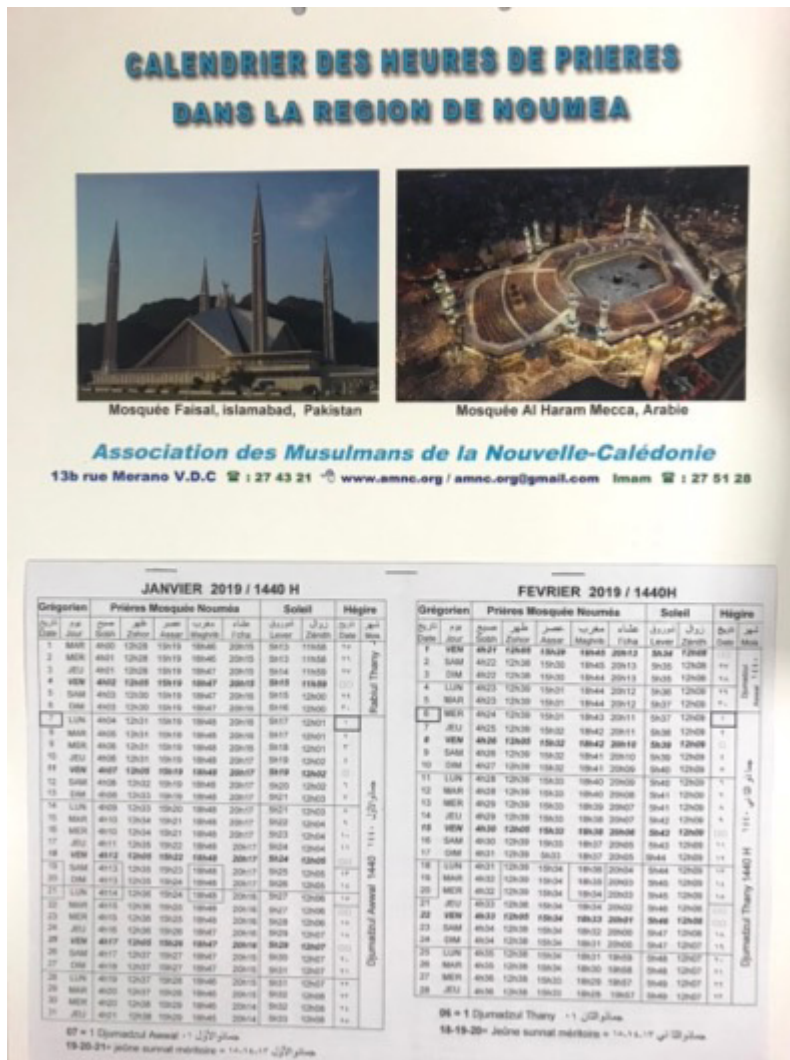


Figure 24. Calendar with prayer times issued by AMNC.
Photo credit: author, 2019

Muslims in New Caledonia must rely on alternative methods of keeping track of prayer times, as the call to prayer (*adhan*) is not broadcast from the mosque.

to public health precautions related to the coronavirus pandemic. As explained by Raymond Roubio, the secretary of AMNC, during the *tarawih* prayer, worshippers could only sit in an assembly of fewer than 50 people. They made a list with the name of each person who came in, and when they had reached 50 they closed the doors. They also put out benches to maintain the distance between worshippers (<https://la1ere.francetvinfo.fr/nouvellecaledonie/un-ramadan-sous-conditions-pour-les-musulmans-de-caledonie-826698.html>).

Many Muslims download an *adhan* application on their smartphones to receive personalised reminders. Others access information via the internet. For the most part, however, the older congregations adhere to the ‘traditional’ schedule authorised by AMNC through its calendar.

The Muslim community in the South Province has also spread to Bourail in the North Province. Muslim activities in the North Province are centralised in the Nessadiou Mosque, which is located next to the Arab cemetery. Most of the Muslims in this area are Arab descendants, but there are also other ethnic groups such as Javanese. René Kastavy is an essential figure for the Javanese Muslims in North Province. He is a second-generation Javanese born and raised in Koné. He and his wife often hold gatherings for the Muslim community in La Brousse. Kastavy and his wife are an example of a unique form of Javanese Muslim *pratiquantess*. They have been on Hajj, but do still also practice some traditional Javanese rituals. Kastavy admitted that life as a Muslim in New Caledonia is hard, hence they have to adapt, and that being a religious person does not mean that he has to erase the culture from his life. For that reason, in 2008, he became a guarantor to bring in an Islamic religious leader from Java to New Caledonia.

PUIMIK (Association of Indonesian Muslims of New Caledonia)

The Association of Indonesian Muslims of New Caledonia (PUIMIK) was founded in 1983 by the Consulate of the Republic of Indonesia. It brings together two former religious associations, the Association Amicale Islam (AAI) and the Committee of Islamic Days (PHBI) (Maurer 2006, 236). The forerunner to the establishment of PUIMIK was the Amicale Islamique Indonésienne de Nouvelle-Calédonie (AIINC), formed and registered at the Office of the French High Commissioner on 27 April 1976. This organisation was intended to provide a forum for communities of Indonesian descent to learn about Islam and participate in preserving their ancestral culture. Over time, at the suggestion of the Indonesian Consul Soetarmo Atmopawiro, the AIINC changed its name to the Association of Indonesian Muslims of New Caledonia (PUIMIK) on 8 March 1986. This change was intended to expand the organisation’s membership to both Indonesian citizens and French citizens of Indonesian descent (Ryananta 2017, 233).



Figure 25. PUIMIK activities in 1986.
Source: Collection Satiman Kasman

Since the 1980s, PUIMIK has collaborated with the Indonesian Consulate General in Noumea to organise Islamic holidays. The picture in Figure 25 is of one of PUIMIK's annual activities, the commemoration of the Isra and Mi'raj, held in the Indonesian Consulate General office in Noumea. The Isra and Mi'raj are the two components of the Islamic Night Journey that the Prophet Muhammad, according to Islam, undertook during a single night in around 621. It is used in Islam to refer to both a physical and spiritual journey. In contrast to Arabic Islamic practice, the women in the picture wore a simple scarf to cover their heads. There were also musical performances by women, accompanied by men on the guitar and tambourine.

During the fieldwork I conducted in November 2018, I had the opportunity to take part in the Mawlid, or the observance of the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad, at the Indonesian Consulate General's office. The celebration was held at night. It started with congregational prayer, continued with a short discourse from Faid, one of the Indonesian Islamic religious leaders, and closed with a musical performance from the female congregation.



Figure 26. Mawlid performance by a female congregation at the Indonesian Consulate General's office in 2018.
Photo credit: author, 2018.

Figure 26 demonstrates the evolution of Islamic values in communities of Javanese descent in New Caledonia. What is most visible is that the headscarf is no longer a simple piece of cloth placed on the head, as seen in the Isra Mi'raj commemorative image in 1986. Almost all of the Muslim female congregation are wearing a hijab à la Muslim women in Indonesia, covering the neck to the chest. The influence of the wives of the Indonesian diplomats in reshaping Islamic practices in New Caledonia is also seen in Quranic teaching at the KJRI office every Sunday afternoon.



Figure 27. Quranic teaching in the Indonesian Consulate General Office in Noumea.
Photo credit: author, 2018

In several PUIMIK gatherings in which I participated, almost all of the members were second- and third-generation Javanese over the age of 50. There were no fourth or fifth generations in attendance. This situation is of concern to Satiman Kasman, the president of PUIMIK, with regard to the organisation's future. He admitted his fears about PUIMIK's inability to attract younger generations of people of Indonesian descent to learn more about Islam. He underlined that the French education system and secularism were the factors that contributed most to the reduced interest in Islam of the younger generation of Indonesian origin.

Interestingly, I also learned that the current PUIMIK members admitted that they had never received formal Islamic religious education themselves. Sardi only studied Islam after he married his wife, who came from Indonesia, while

Flore, who was raised in a strict Catholic environment, only embraced Islam in her 30s. Among its members, only Zainin, a 90-year-old Javanese, had been born and raised in a Muslim family in Java. Zainin came to New Caledonia as part of the last indentured labour scheme in 1949. He resided in New Caledonia after finishing his two contracts and became the official Islamic religious leader in the Indonesian Consulate.

Another challenge facing Islamic practices among the Javanese Muslim community in New Caledonia, according to Kasman, were the Islam Kejawen practices. Javanese Muslims in New Caledonia hold different views regarding the acculturation of Javanese culture with Islam. Some identified themselves as Muslim, but they still practised rituals considered forbidden according to Islamic law, though regarded as culturally appropriate for Javanese. Among them is Murijem. I met her several times at the gatherings held by PUIMIK. For Sardi, many things that Murijem did were contradictory to Islamic values. Among her ‘mistakes’ was *kumpul kebo* (cohabitation) with her Javanese partner for many years. I also met her at a lotto evening organised by AINC to raise funds for their activities at the end of the year. She looked surprised to meet me there and asked me not to tell Kasman that I had seen her because she was afraid that he would lecture her about what is right and wrong and what she should and should not be doing according to Islamic teachings.

For some Muslims, a lottery is a form of gambling, and it is therefore considered a forbidden activity for Javanese Muslims. The AINC lotto cannot be categorised as gambling, according to some of my interlocutors; however, because there is no significant prize money for the winner. For Sherly, what she does by organising the lotto every year is not prohibited; rather, it is useful for raising funds to maintain the AINC buildings, to promote AINC events, and to facilitate an informal soirée for Javanese people. For other interlocutors, gambling is inseparable from the lives of Javanese people in Java and New Caledonia. The indentured labourers from Java could not often gather because of their remote work locations. Several times a year, they gathered at a life-cycle *kenduri*, such as a marriage or a death, and at every *kenduri* there would be gambling (cards, dice).

Tablighi Jamaat

Until fifteen years ago, the conflict about the ‘right’ way to practice Islam in New Caledonia was always on the axis of Islam Kejawen and Arabic Islam (AMNC version). In fact, however, there is another discourse of Islamic practice that comes from an Islamic missionary group called Tablighi Jamaat. To date, there is no literature mentioning the presence of this group in New Caledonia.⁴⁴ I never

⁴⁴In his book, Maurer mentions the presence of ‘good Muslims’ from Australia who visited Javanese Muslim

met and talked to anyone from Tablighi Jamaat; I only came across their presence in the Muslim landscape of New Caledonia by chance, learning about the group mainly from my interlocutors' descriptions.

Through gossip and whispers here and there⁴⁵, I heard about a woman whose house is used as a base camp whenever Tablighi Jamaat comes to Noumea. This lady is also the link between the Tablighi Jamaat and the Javanese and Indonesian people in Noumea. She arranges appointments between Tablighi Jamaat and some Javanese families with whom she is familiar through phone calls. Parti said that she always making up excuses to allow Tablighi Jamaat to come to her house. According to her, God will understand her white lies because they do not hurt anyone. They were lying because they were afraid of the way Tablighi Jamaat preach.

Tablighi Jamaat is distinct from other religious movements in that it attempts to convert individuals who are already members of the faith community, rather than those who are not. Its objective is to convert fellow Muslims into better, more dedicated, and devout Muslims, in accordance with Tablighi Jamaat's requirements for genuine Muslim religious practice and belief. Maulana Muhammad Ilyas Kandhalawi founded the movement in Saharanpur in the late 1920s (Noor 2010, 710). The Tablighis are supposed to participate in communal events and missionary work. They are required to spend one night a week, one month at a time, 40 days a year, and 120 days with movement members at least once in their life. This is viewed as a necessary component of their jihad (fight) for God and their beliefs (ibid., 711). Farish A. Noor highlights the hallmarks of Tablighi Jamaat as mobility, fluidity, and transnationalism. These three traits make its members feel like they are in a state of permanent Hajj or pilgrimage (ibid., 712). Their journey to New Caledonia is thus part of their mission to convert fellow Muslims into better Muslims. New Caledonia, with its vague division between the Javanese Muslim *croyants* and *pratiquants*, seemed a perfect place for this group to do its missionary work.

It is also worth noting the presence of female members of Tablighi Jamaat. Female Tablighis accompanying their spouses on their *khuruj*⁴⁶ abroad was uncommon until a few years ago (Noor 2012, 196). This is related to Metcalf's suggestion that female Tablighis are 'expected to engage in *dakwa* work among other women and family members' (Metcalf 1995, 51) and only those who have married and have a husband can participate in the *khuruj* (Nisa 2014, 488). Theoretically, they are not only meant to accompany their husband

families to 'convince them to abandon their *abangan* syncretic practices and return to Islam's authentic rites' (Maurer 2006, 238). They were not very successful, however, as the bush people received them politely, without showing (as usual) their irritation at such bad manners, but changed nothing in their religious life.

⁴⁵Although it seems rather vague, I actually received most of my confidential information in the form of gossip. I adhere to the notion that gossip is a way to reinforce community coherence from within (Besnier 1996). But, of course, it can also reveal and enhance fracturedness.

⁴⁶*Khuruj* is the practise of spending days, weeks, or months travelling throughout the world in order to spread the message of Tablighi Jamaat to other Muslims (Noor 2012, 14).

on their *khuruj*, but they also have a mission to do *dakwa* among other female Muslims. In practice, however, they are not seen much in public because they are not allowed to meet other men.

Although Tablighi Jamaat emphasises its peaceful, passive, and gradualist approach, its presence was seen as a threat by some of my interlocutors. I grasped this notion of discomfort and awkwardness towards the group when I talked to Kastavy and his wife in Solo, when they were attending the Javanese Diaspora Congress in 2019. Over coffee, they told me about their experience of hosting the group when they were on their mission in the North Province. As important figures of New Caledonian Muslims of Javanese descent, this couple's house in Koné is a meeting point for Javanese, Indonesians, New Caledonians, and Muslims. They recalled the awkwardness they experienced with this group because of the Sharia rules to which its members adhere. For instance, they asked for special hours and places to eat, wash, and dry clothes, because they did not want their female members to be seen by outsiders. Jokingly, Kastavy and his wife said that they felt as if they were the guests instead of the hosts when the group were staying at their home.

Another issue concerning this group in the religious landscape in New Caledonia is their manner of dress. As one of my interlocutors Eka put it, she felt uncomfortable seeing the female Tablighi because they wear burqa and dark coloured clothes. For Eka, who was raised in a secular society, eye contact is part of good manners and etiquette. Hence, she considered it unpleasant to talk to someone whose eyes are covered. Sardi also compared himself to the male Tablighis in terms of dressing in the Prophet's manner.⁴⁷ As a second-generation Javanese *pratiquantess*, he said he would not wear *Jubba* or *abaya* daily, both because it is impractical and because it would make him look too different from others. I believe that Eka and Sardi's views regarding the Tablighi Jamaat's manner of dress is representative of most of New Caledonian society. As a secular society that separates religious and state affairs, New Caledonians are not used to wearing or seeing religious symbols in public life. If they want to bring up religion, they will do so modestly. Wiwin, Nuning, and Sarah, for example, are second-generation Muslim women who wear a hat to cover their hair instead of a long hijab. For them, wearing a 'bonnet' is a solution to be a pious chic female Muslim in New Caledonia.

Navigating religious life under secularism and *laïcité*

The advancement of the secular state in France was not easily established, and it relates to a veritable battle for influence among two notions of the state

⁴⁷Tablighis are required to dress in a way that completely conceals their bodies and to wear some type of headgear – a skullcap or turban – that also conceal their hair. Dressing in the manner of the Prophet takes the Tablighi closer to achieving the Tablighi's goal of Muslim identity (Noor 2012, 148).

and its relationship with religion. The first is a conception in which the state promotes and protects one's religion (France of the *Ancient Régime*). The second is a conception wherein the state is not religious, does not favour any religion, and even uses its sovereign power to confine religious expression to the private domain (Republican France) (Chelini-Pont and Ferchiche 2015, 310). The secular form of the French State guaranteed that the State was neutral and did not profess any religion. It allows its citizens total freedom of conscience, citizens have the right to believe in nothing, not to practise religion, just as they have the right to believe individually and collectively. The State gives religious organisations complete freedom to organise under private law. Despite this theoretical and academic consensus, significant variables and disagreements exist at the centre of the precise scope of the fundamental principle that defines the nature of the contemporary French republican regime and its constitution. This system is known as French secularism, *laïcité* (Chelini-Pont and Ferchiche 2015, 310; Tolan 2017, 41).

Laïcité refers to the independence of the Church and the neutrality of the State in the French historical context while also recognising freedom of conscience. This practice implies that public life and places are tightly separated from religion and that the Catholic Church and clergy cannot be paid with public funds. There are two definitions of French secularism: one that is strict, close, and militant, and another that is more open and based on dialogue. According to the fundamentalist definition of secularism, any religious conviction should be kept strictly private. Secularism, on the other hand, could be defined as public tolerance and respect for religious freedom (Dinner 2008, 94).

The *laïcité* ensured the neutrality managed by the State and its services, allowing citizens' religious freedom. But *laïcité* is also a frame of reference, that of the French Enlightenment, in which the political goal is the emancipation of conscience, freedom of thought, and free will. Implicitly, it entails the idea that reason will triumph over faith. As a progressive ideology defending an ultimate value for all citizens collectively, *laïcité* transitioned from a fundamental principle of the French left to a core value of the populist right (Chelini-Pont and Ferchiche 2015, 330). In an interview with Sarah Fainberg in 2014, Jean Baubérot explained that the French idea of *laïcité* has two primary purposes. The first is to ensure, as a matter of public liberty, freedom of belief for all faiths. The second is civic equality before the law for all citizens. The objective of *laïcité* is 'to contribute to building a peaceful and democratic society where all people can enjoy the freedom to quietly express various religious and non-religious opinions and identity choices regarding religion and culture' (Fainberg 2014, 88).

Despite the fact that the principle of *laïcité* declares the state's neutrality in religious matters, there is still communication with religious representatives. When dealing with Catholics, for example, the state can seek advice from the Church hierarchy, whereas when dealing with French Jews, the state can talk

to the Jewish Consistory. As for the Muslim community, some French leaders consider the rector of the Paris Mosque to be the de facto representative of French Muslims, while others create different organisations to represent Muslims from different cultural backgrounds and with different convictions. In 2003, the French government established the *Conseil Français du Culte Musulman* (CFCM) to serve as a representative body of French Islam and a primary interlocutor with the government. The CFCM, on the other hand, has been criticised for various reasons, including claims that it promotes communalism and is unrepresentative of all French Muslims.

In the context of the Javanese society in New Caledonia, communication between the French and Indonesian governments with Muslims directly is carried out more with *pratiquants* than *croyants*. Likewise, media coverage also focuses more on *pratiquants*, for example, during Ramadan and the celebration of religious holidays, which are annually held at the KJRI. In addition, the media spotlight is also quite intense when Islam is associated with the issue of radicalism, especially after the shooting incident at the Charlie Hebdo office on 7 January 2015. In response to the incident, Muslims in Noumea gathered on 10 January 2015, led by Mustafa, the Imam of the Great Mosque of Noumea. On that occasion, Mustafa states that Islam is a religion of peace, not a religion of terror. As Mustafa stated that the actions at Charlie Hebdo did not represent all Muslims in the world.

The way French media covered the issues of Islam and terrorism is linked to the development of the concept of *laïcité*. The public debate over secularism in French society used to be about the influence and power of the Catholic Church, but since the 1980s, it has increasingly been about Islam. When Muslims demand the right to wear headscarves or eat pork-free meals in school cafeterias, their demands are frequently interpreted as *communautarisme*, a pejorative term for those who favour their sectarian community over the universal value of the Republic (Tolan 2017, 47). One of my interlocutors, Faiza, a second-generation woman, recounted her difficulties finding a job in New Caledonia as a Muslim woman wearing the hijab. She told me many companies asked her to remove her headscarf because they considered it incompatible with the Republic's secularist values.

Conclusion

As part of the French Overseas Territory, New Caledonia implements *laïcité* or secularism. *Laïcité* plays a vital role in reconfiguring religious practices within the Javanese community in New Caledonia. For the second generation and beyond, born and raised in New Caledonia, *laïcité* has shaped their way of thinking. Most of my *pratiquants* interlocutors acknowledged that they had become a pious Muslim later in their adult life, either through marriage or their surroundings.

Hence, their understanding of Islam was different from that of Indonesian citizens who came to New Caledonia later on.

The polarisation between the *croyants* and *pratiquants* can be characterised as mixed and hybridised. The *croyants* are moving in cooperative, cultural, and ethnoreligious trajectories, while the *pratiquants* are moving in more behavioural and religious trajectories. The differences between the *croyants* and the *pratiquants* have created tensions and stirred a silent conflict within the community. The *croyants* see the Arabic version of Islam and the ‘new’ wave of Islamic practices brought by Indonesians who came later to New Caledonia as a threat to Islam Kejawen. They fear that the culture that has been maintained for generations will gradually be lost because of these purists’ view on Islam. In other words, the *croyants* strive to maintain their connection with the past. On the other side, the *pratiquants* who rely on the Quran and Hadith for religious and moral guidance disagree with Islamic Kejawen practices. They believe that Islamic Kejawen is a sin and should be abandoned. For them, Islamic practices should be purified from such sin and other deviant practices.

Despite their differences, I found no evidence of violence, oppression, or overt conflict between *croyants* and *pratiquants*. Their conflict mostly manifested itself in the form of *rasan-rasan* or gossip. The *croyants* and *pratiquants* would never initiate an open dispute because the wish to maintain community harmony prevails. There are no clear lines or boundaries between right and wrong; everything is negotiable for the whole community.

Finally, for both *croyants* and *pratiquants*, outsiders, be they from Indonesia or other communities, bring unwanted radicalism to the community. As Warner and Wittner (1998) point out, internal conflicts concerning religion within a diaspora community are caused not only by generational differences, but also by new transnational influences. These transnational influences, in combination with religious and non-religious discourses, idioms, and practices, have the potential to split diasporic groups. These linkages, reconfigurations, and disconnections are flexible and dynamic in nature. They necessitate constant effort but never materialise fully on an individual level. However, religious practises, discourses, and idioms undergo transformation as rituals are changed, structures are altered, and people attempt to adjust dynamic religious practices and concepts to new contexts and situations. In the next chapter, I will discuss another aspect of fracturedness in the community that comes from politics and state intervention.

Chapter 6.

Politics and The Future of Community

Introduction

‘You’re lucky to have come to New Caledonia this month. It’s not like we have it every day. The Noumea city government has named a street after a Javanese descendant.’ Saut said this to me in the car on our way to the inauguration of Jean Wasman Street on 25 October 2019. The inauguration took place at an intersection road between Montdore and Noumea, right in front of the residential area of Rocher Gris, which used to be where Jean Wasman enjoyed his free time at dance clubs. During the speech, the wife of the late Jean Wasman read a letter written by him shortly before he died. In his letter, Jean Wasman talked about his life as a Javanese who later attained French citizenship through marriage. He wrote about his love for the football club Club Jeunesse Indonésie, which from 1970 until the 1980s was involved in taking many second-generation Javanese to visit Java for the first time. He also shared his life as the deputy mayor of Montdore from 2000–2007. Sonia Lagarde, the mayor of Noumea, said in her remarks that the Mondorians would remember Jean Wasman, who died in 2017 as an important person who held the ‘stamp’ with which every marriage in Montdore during that period was legalised.

During the reception after the event, many people of Javanese descent expressed their pride in the honour given to Wasman by the New Caledonia government, which by extension also signified recognition for others of Javanese descent. Saut and Eka also remember Wasman as a figure who was highly dedicated to the Javanese community. Even towards his final days, Wasman still came to AINC to attend events organised by the community. However, the happiness of the Javanese descendants on this occasion was not witnessed by the Indonesian Consulate General.

The absence of the Indonesian Consulate General at this special event added to the long list of ‘complaints’ by the Javanese people against the KJRI (Indonesian Consulate) in Noumea. Saut and several other interlocutors who stood nearby that afternoon thought that the diplomats at the Indonesian Consulate were too busy with their affairs to care about what was happening in the Javanese community.

A few days later, I asked Asep (Consul for Social and Cultural affairs) why none of KJRI’s diplomats were present at the inauguration ceremony of Jean Wasman Street. Asep responded that the KJRI had not received an invitation, so no representatives had been able to come. I conveyed Asep’s answer to Saut. Saut responded with scepticism, and said that even if they KJRI hadn’t received

an invitation, one of the representatives from the Indonesian Consulate should have congratulated Wasman's wife. This should have been done because, after all, even though Wasman was a French citizen with naturalised citizenship, he was a Javanese descendant.



Figure 28. Sonia Lagarde, Mayor of Noumea (middle) with Jean Wasman's widow and the Javanese community at the unveiling of the Jean Wasman Street sign.

Photo credit: author, 2019

Jean Wasman became the second Javanese descendant to have his name ‘immortalised’ as a street name in Noumea. The first one was Patrick Djiram, an important figure for the Javanese community in New Caledonia.



Figure 29. Patrick Djiram Street in Noumea.
Photo credit: author, 2019

The presence of the Javanese community has indeed been recognised as a significant part of New Caledonia’s history. As noted by prominent New Caledonia officials, Javanese people are known as hard workers who have contributed a lot to the development of New Caledonia.⁴⁸

One of the important findings of my fieldwork in 2018 was how most of my interlocutors shared a concern for New Caledonia’s future, particularly after the referendum in November 2018. In the same year, Achmad Gozali, the Indonesian Consul for New Caledonia 2017–2019, began a new policy of cultural and political diplomacy towards the Melanesian community. The diplomacy took place because, in the Indonesian State view, there could be a connection between the Melanesian community who was striving for independence from France and

⁴⁸Examples of this appreciation are the speeches of were Haut Commissaire at the farewell diplomatic reception at the Indonesian Consul General in Caledonia (25 October 2019), chairman of the Montdore Twin Cities Association at the inauguration of the twin cities of Montdore and Yogyakarta (25 October 2019), and the mayor of Noumea at the inauguration of Jean Wasman Street (25 October 2019).

West Papua's separatism. It was feared that an independent New Caledonia might inspire Papuan separatist groups in Indonesia.

This chapter examines how the policy of the Indonesian state towards its diaspora and the political situation in both Papua and New Caledonia contributes to the community's fracturing. It will also show that the Javanese diaspora identity is not merely about culture and memory but also, arguably most importantly, about political identity.

To further explain the diaspora political practices in this chapter, I use Fiona Adamson's concept of 'diaspora politics', in which a wide variety of actors can deploy the category of 'diaspora' for political purposes (Adamson 2019, 211; 2020, 151). Some of the key actors in these diaspora politics in New Caledonia are the Indonesian Consul General, the French Government, the global Javanese diaspora organisation, and the Melanesian organisation for Papuan independence.

Additionally, I would like to emphasise in this chapter that while diasporic politics is supposed to aid in community integration into the host society, diaspora politics simultaneously act as a factor that divides the diasporic community in terms of national orientation. This fracture, which encapsulates the community's diametrically opposed political orientations, may also be identified as an inherent element of diasporic politics globally (Laguerre 2006, 4). Hence, rather than focusing on diaspora as a homogenous community, this chapter will highlight yet another aspect of the need to consider fracturedness as produced within and across diasporic connections.

This chapter is divided into three sections, each of which will show the politics at play. Firstly, it explains the politics related to France: postcolonial or late colonial politics. The second part relates the story of the Indonesian state's attempts to control the Javanese. And, finally, the third section discusses ethnic politics and diaspora politics from the global perspective.

Indonesian State Hegemony Towards the Diaspora Community

Through their so-called 'diaspora management policies,' states are increasingly reaching out to and shaping politics in the diaspora (Gamlen 2008; Collyer 2013; Naujoks 2013 cited in Adamson 2020, 152). These policies include granting special status to diaspora members to encourage remittances and investment, endorsing dual citizenship and voting abroad, and using diaspora organisations as a form of diplomacy to promote the state's interests abroad (Adamson 2020, 153). Furthermore, the diaspora is expected to encourage the growth of bilateral interactions between democratic partners (*ibid.*). Meanwhile, in New Caledonia, the Indonesian government has long been involved in the diaspora community. Some of the activities conducted by the Indonesian Consulate Office in New Caledonia can even be categorised as subtle attempts to create control and establish hegemony over the diaspora.

Dharma Wanita Persatuan (DWP)

In the second week of my fieldwork in New Caledonia in 2018, Parti took me to the *arisan*⁴⁹ meeting of the DWP at the Indonesian Consul General's residence. About 20 women attended the gathering. At 11 a.m., a lady from the DWP's board opened the gathering and asked me to introduce myself to the guests. At any DWP *arisan* in Indonesia there is always a guest speaker who speaks for 15 to 30 minutes about a topic related to women and family. At the DWP *arisan* that day, the guest speaker was a beautician who offered tips on doing manicure and pedicure at home.

The case of the DWP *arisan* offers a good start to a discussion of the Indonesian state hegemony towards its diaspora for two reasons. Firstly, the Dharma Wanita organisation used to be associated with the New Order state⁵⁰ in Indonesia. DWP was founded to unify civil servants' wives under one political organisation to support the ruling party GOLKAR. Secondly, DWP membership in New Caledonia is odd because there are only four members from the Indonesian Consulate office. The rest are either Indonesian citizens or French citizens of Indonesian descent. I asked Rita, a third-generation of Javanese descent who accompanied her mother to the gathering, whether she knows the DWP's history and its relevance to Indonesian politics. She shook her head and said that to her understanding, DWP had been around for decades in New Caledonia, and it was a part of the regular meetings held in the Indonesian Consulate office. Before the gathering finished, a lady from the DWP's board reminded guests to attend the DWP anniversary to be held at the Indonesian Consulate's office on 7 December 2018. The anniversary is important to be attended by all members to show active involvement in this organization.

A week before the DWP anniversary, I interviewed Parti. We met at her house after lunch. Our conversation was interrupted by a phone call from her friend, a second-generation Javanese. When Parti returned she recounted what she

⁴⁹In Indonesian culture, an *arisan* is a rotating savings and credit association, a type of microfinance. In general, the *arisan* is an informal social network, a social gathering that occurs at a specific interval at the homes of each member in turn. The rotating *arisan* holder (chosen by lot) is compensated by other members and provides food. The money paid to other members during the *arisan* will equal the amount received when the *arisan* is held.

⁵⁰Indonesia is organised as a unitary state. In contrast to a federal system, this system lacks an overarching framework for responsibility division, and subnational governments perform activities allocated to them by the central government. Due to Indonesia's geographic location and cultural diversity, the ideal structure of governance and the level of regional autonomy have recurred as existential concerns throughout the country's modern history. It has undergone many phases of centralisation and decentralization (Hutchinson 2017, 298). Between 1966 and 1998, Soeharto's New Order consolidated administrative, fiscal, and political power. William Case compares Indonesia's political structure during the New Order to a pyramid, with President Soeharto at the top, a small elite drawn from the military, bureaucracy, and business in the middle, and a 'broad social base' at the bottom (Case 2002, 29). Hence, the New Order pushed for centralisation of all organisations.

had discussed with her friend. They had agreed not to go to the DWP anniversary because they did not want to wear the uniform. As a state-based organisation, DWP members have to wear a uniform: a peachy golden blazer and a skirt (see figure 30). They have to wear this uniform at official gatherings such as the DWP anniversary.

Three days after our conversation, Partis had a change of heart and she decided to go; hence, I attended the DWP's anniversary at the Indonesian Consulate with her. On our journey there, she could not stop telling me stories of the good old times when she was working in the Indonesian Consulate. From Parti, I learned that the DWP's chair in each state representative office was the consul's wife. If the consul or ambassador was female, the chair position would be given to the HOC's (Head of Counsuler's) wife. We arrived a bit early at the consulate office, and after 15 minutes DWP members started arriving. Watching them coming through the gate wearing their peach uniforms and black pumps, I felt like I was in Indonesia rather than in the Pacific.



Figure 30. DWP anniversary at the Indonesian Consulate's office on 7 December 2018.

Photo credit: author, 2018

The promotion of gender difference has been a hallmark of New Order policy for women, with officially sanctioned representations of femininity positioning Indonesian women as inferior to males within the household and the state.⁵¹ As citizens, women are expected to fulfil their spousal and motherly responsibilities. The inclusion of these ideals into official women's organisations has 'socialised' them as dutiful wives and mothers and true supporters of the Indonesian state. The New Order imposed restrictions due to a concern regarding

⁵¹President Soeharto developed 'state ibuism' as a gender ideology during the New Order era, which expected entire loyalty and commitment from Indonesian women in their duties as mothers (*ibu*) and wives (Suryakusuma 1996, 96).

the potential power of these village organisations. The new state-organised women's groups absorbed village women's organisations (the Family Welfare Movement or PKK). They were designed to spread the official ideology of natural patriarchal authority in the household, which entrenched women's inferior status, and were politically controlled by the Ministry of Home Affairs. Civil servants' wives around the country were expected to join Dharma Wanita, a hierarchical organisation whose structure reflects their husbands' status in the state bureaucracy (Robinson 2000, 141–42).

Dharma Wanita was officially founded on 5 August 1974, as a federation covering 19 organisations from all ministries, departments, and state institutions. The establishment of Dharma Wanita was firmly linked to the goal of unity and cohesiveness among civil servants. Initially, the organisation was informal, and membership was voluntary. It also aimed to promote its members' welfare. Funds needed to run the organisations were acquired through membership fees. In time, the informal aspect disappeared. The ministry in which the husbands worked took over the wives' organisation's management, changed its status into a functional one, and made membership mandatory. The whole structure of Dharma Wanita is arranged to support the government. It is therefore not surprising that their activities are traditionally bound to women's affairs in which the state wants to have a say such as promoting education, (maternal) health, and family planning programmes. Since the fall of the New Order in 1998, this women's organisation has gone through some fundamental changes. Officially, there is no more political content from the government flowing through the organisation. Dharma Wanita is officially now a nonpartisan, independent, and democratic social organisation. The Dharma Wanita name then changed to Dharma Wanita Persatuan. The addition of the word Persatuan ('unity') was taken from the Cabinet Persatuan name under the then President Abdurrahman Wahid's lead. In practice however, the government still tries to exert influence through DWP. In the case of the DWP in New Caledonia, the consulate organises the women to show that they hold control over the Indonesian female diaspora and could mobilise them to benefit the State.

There was already a women's organisation in New Caledonia prior to DWP, namely OWIN (*Organisasi Wanita Indonesia*, Indonesian Women's Organisation), founded in around 1970. Its members comprised not only of Indonesian citizens but also of French citizens of Indonesian descent. Before serving as the first president of AINC, Josephine was the president of OWIN. After the AINC was established in 1984, OWIN merged into this organisation. There had been a vacuum in New Caledonia's women's organisation until emergence of the DWP in the 1990s, starting with a gathering at the consulate office. The DWP gatherings were aimed to strengthen the relationship between the diplomats' wives in the Indonesian Consulate General and women from the Javanese and Indonesian communities. Since the 1990s, all members of the *artisan* DWP have automatically joined the DWP membership.



Figure 31. DWP gathering in the KJRI Noumea in 1997.

Source: private collection Piendowati Kasno

Today, overseas, DWP members are still the female employees and wives of employees in each state representative office (Indonesian Embassy or Indonesian Consulate). Uniquely in New Caledonia, DWP membership is open to all Indonesian citizens and Indonesian descendants. The Consul General Ahmad Gozali, in his remarks at the DWP anniversary, expressed his contentment about the DWP chapter of New Caledonia, which is ranked first among Indonesia's overseas representative offices and has the most members.

Ahmad Gozali's remarks shows that the State (in this case Indonesia) controls the entire ceremony protocol for all the DWP branches in Indonesia and overseas. Below is an excerpt of the DWP chairperson's speech given at the DWP anniversary on 7 December 2017 by Ahmad Gozali as the Indonesian Consul General in Noumea.

As stated in the DWP Strategic Plan for 2015-2019, the road map has been outlined in efforts to improve the welfare of its members, families, and communities. Also, it encourages Indonesian women in general and DWP members in particular, to continue to work and work in empowering themselves, being able to be economically independent, and

playing a broader role in participating in driving the wheels of National Development... Women are highly expected to have a role in nation-building politics, to overcome the challenges of in-state activities. DWP is reckoned to be one of the elements that can accelerate the success of gender equality by taking a strategic role in the Indonesian National Development.

When we look closely at this speech, we find a state-oriented view towards women. For example, the use of the words ‘empowering’, ‘gender equality’, ‘National Development’, and ‘welfare’⁵² made clear that State have specific expectations and orientations toward DWP. Most of the guests, however, were not paying attention to the speech at all—they were busy chatting to the guest sitting next to them, taking a selfie, or checking social media on their phones. Their attitude shows that most of the DWP members do not care about the big mission of Indonesia’s development. They attended the event to meet their fellow Indonesians and enjoy Indonesian food and delicacies.

The different trajectories and missions of the Indonesian Consul General in New Caledonia

By 2013, nearly 25 states had created a diaspora ministry, whilst others had merged diaspora and other policy areas into a single ministry (Gamlen 2014, S185). Certain diaspora ministries are directly involved in the design and implementation of policies, while others serve as coordinators or ‘mainstreamers’ to ensure that diaspora aspirations are considered throughout the policymaking process. Under authoritarian regimes, diaspora ministries may oversee a tightly controlled and coercive engagement process (Garding 2018, 355).

In the case of Indonesia, diaspora affairs are administered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. There are few policies and rules governing the diaspora at the moment. The first initiative to recognise the diaspora’s significance was the Diaspora Card, or KMILN (Kartu Masyarakat Indonesia di Luar Negeri, Indonesian Society Card Living Abroad). On 4 August 2017 Presidential Regulation Number 76/2017 on ‘Facilities for Indonesian Communities Abroad’ was officially launched and implemented into law. The Diaspora Card entitles Indonesians living overseas to apply for long-term, multiple-visit visas (up to five years per application) and expedited immigration processing at airports and ports

⁵²Since the 1980s, women have also been part of the discussion about Indonesian development. External factors affecting Indonesian women’s position are not limited to development initiatives. With the emergence of five-year action plan, development projects, and a development-oriented government, development (*pembangunan*) became a prominent factor in people’s daily lives, whether gender-oriented or not. Successes in development have a direct effect on women’s lives, primarily in the fields of health, family planning, education, infrastructure, and public facilities (Niehof 1998, 237).

of entry and exit from Indonesia. Additionally, it enables diaspora members who remain Indonesian citizens to open a bank account, own assets, and be involved in business enterprises in Indonesia (Setijadi 2017, 22).

Aside from the Diaspora Card, there is no centralised law or regulation concerning the diaspora. The President and Ministry of Foreign Affairs allow overseas representative offices flexibility in taking care of the diaspora community. The flexibility allows the Ambassador or Consul General to act and focus differently according to the countries' situation. In New Caledonia, the different directives carried out by the Consul General contribute to the tension in the community. In this subsection, I focus on three Consul Generals in New Caledonia and the difference in their approach to the Javanese community: Widyarka Ryananta (2014– 2017), Achmad Gozali (2017– 2019), and Hendra Pramana (2020– present).

According to my interlocutors, there is a shared understanding that the consul's position in New Caledonia is a gift and a final post from the Indonesian Government before retiring. The placement is a gift because New Caledonia is seen as 'light', the territory does not need 'serious' handling as there are few armed conflicts, nor vested business interests and mainly because the population is small. The only precarious period was in 1998, after the referendum of Timor Leste. At that time, there were acts of vandalism on the Indonesian Consulate walls and demonstrations that lasted several days by the Melanesian Solidarity Movement, which condemned the massacre and human rights violation in Timor the human rights massacre in Timor Leste.

Although the appointment as Consul in New Caledonia is a gift, a particular requirement for the Consul in New Caledonia has been to be able to speak Javanese and/or French. The chosen consuls have therefore usually been Javanese, to make it easier to connect with Javanese communities. There have not been many non-Javanese consuls except for Ahmad Gozali and the current Consul, Hendra Pramana. For some Javanese Caledonians, a non-Javanese consul is of no concern, because they visit the Indonesian Consulate so infrequently. However, some dislike having a non-Javanese Consul because of a perceived 'disregard' of the Javanese community and a focus on Melanesian society.

Previously, the decision to choose a Javanese consul was part of the Indonesian Government's cultural diplomacy towards the Javanese in New Caledonia. For Parti, Widyarka was closer to the community. He would always attend gatherings and other events to which he was invited. Sardi was impressed with the way Widyarka handled the situation with the Javanese community, his knowledge of Javanese culture and his dedication to its preservation. Towards the end of his position as the Consul General, Widyarka wrote a short memoir about his New Caledonia activities: *Jejak Orang Jawa di Kaledonia Baru* or '*The Traces of the Javanese in New Caledonia*' (Ryananta 2017). His book was the first book to be written by a former Indonesian Consul General. Most of

my interlocutors regarded his book as a gift to the community, but for others it was more controversial because Widyarka used some information and interviews without the community's consent.

Widyarka's successor, Achmad Gozali, admitted in an interview the burden that he had felt upon hearing of his posting to New Caledonia. Although New Caledonia was considered a relatively peaceful country, he spoke neither Javanese nor French. After learning about New Caledonia's situation, Gozali decided that his goal would be different from his predecessor's: rather than focusing on the cultural aspect, he would pay more attention to Melanesian society's political and cultural diplomacy.

In an excerpt of our interview below, Gozali emphasised that the approach towards people from Javanese descent was essential but not his priority: cultural diplomacy for the Melanesian society (especially from the pro-independence movement) was more significant to him.

The Javanese community is settled here. The organisation has existed for years. Everything is working well. And what the Indonesian Consulate does... for us... everything we do should be for the benefit of the Republic of Indonesia. We must understand that there are currently separatist threats from the OPM [Operasi Papua Merdeka, Free Papua Operation], which has good connections with the pro-independence movement [FLNKS]. By approaching them through cultural diplomacies, as we did with angklung, then a bamboo workshop, hopefully we can 'shield' our country from the separatist movements. (Achmad Gozali, 22 November 2018)



Figure 32. Coconut shell souvenir workshop in Ouvea organised by KJRI.
Source: Facebook KJRI Noumea (public page)

The picture in Figure 32 is from the coconut shell souvenir workshop held by the KJRI with the Hwadrilla tribe in Ouvea, Loyalty Islands Province, on 17 September 2018. Almost a year later, the KJRI initiated another workshop in Canala, North Province. This time, the workshop focused on the use of bamboo, which is widely available in Canala. Ahmad Gozali, as the Consul General, brought in gazebo artisans from Indonesia to provide workshops on 10 July 2019 for the Canala people.



Figure 33. Ahmad Gozali (red hat, centre) with the organiser of the gazebo-making workshop.

Source: Facebook KJRI Noumea (public page)

Gozali repeated his discourse on the importance of political and cultural diplomacy towards the Melanesian community on different occasions, such as at his farewell party before his departure for Indonesia. At this party, held at the Foyer AINC, in front of the Indonesian descendants association members, Gozali re-emphasised that he was the first Indonesian Consul General to initiate cultural diplomacy with the Melanesian community. That night, most of the guests were not pleased by his speech. For Saut and Eka, Gozali's speech was another proof of his ignorance of the existence and importance of the Javanese community. For my second-generation interlocutor, Arsène, the speech was a waste of time because the guests didn't need to hear Gozali reciting the United Nation's regulations and the history of the separatism movement in Papua and its relation to Melanesian society in New Caledonia.

Gozali's successor was Hendra Pramana, who took up his position as the new Consul General in January 2020. I asked him about the Indonesian Consulate's vision and directive under his leadership at our zoom meeting. He answered that there was no other goal than implementing the mandate from

current Indonesian President Joko Widodo. On the last meeting between Joko Widodo, all the Indonesian ambassadors, and the Consul General in January, Joko Widodo underlined the importance of the current Indonesian foreign affairs policy's economic aspect. Hence, for Pramana, the President's mandate is more important than continuing Gozali's directive on the political and cultural diplomacy towards the Melanesian society. The first steps taken by Pramana involved the maximising of all economic opportunities, either for export or import. The Indonesian Consulate office also became more active in promoting its activities through social media and YouTube.

As a result of the Indonesian Consul General's different directives and trajectories as the official state representatives in New Caledonia have served as factors in dividing the community. Most of my interlocutors did not understand that each Consul General follows a different directive, and thus although there was a Consul General such as Widyarka who focused on the Javanese community, there was also Gozali, whose focus was on diplomatic relations with the Melanesian community. Most of the Javanese community believed that the Consul General and the KJRI should pay attention solely to the interests of the Javanese and Indonesian community.

Town twinning

The town twinning agreement is the second area where attempts of establishing state hegemony becomes visible. Following World War II, bilateral town and city twinning agreements grew in popularity over the globe (Vion 2002). Much later then these early initiatives, and taking several aspects such as cultural similarity and historical links into consideration, a town twinning was initiated between Montdore (New Caledonia) and Yogyakarta (Indonesia). The plan was already in discussion in 2017 when the Third Javanese Diaspora congress took place in Yogyakarta. In early September 2018, the Montdore municipal government, together with Scout Laïcs Montdore representatives, came to Yogyakarta to sign a Letter of Intent (LoI). In the event, it was agreed that the signing of the twin cities Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) would be held in October 2019 in Montdore. And finally, on 25 October 2019, the signing of the twin city MoU took place at the Cultural Centre in Montdore. I had the opportunity to attend both the LoI exchange in Yogyakarta and the MoU's signing in Montdore. This event is essential in seeing how the Javanese diaspora in New Caledonia is regarded as an integral part of New Caledonia and Indonesia's history. On 25 October 2019 the chairman of the Montdore Twin City Committee, Laure Prevost, stated that:

This town twinning is the culmination of such a considerable collective work, initiated three years ago with the 120th anniversary of the Indonesian presence in the Territory. (Laure Prevost)

For the city of Montdore, the town twinning with Yogyakarta was the fourth after Nuku Hiva (French Polynesia), Arue (Tahiti), and Shire of Maroochy (Australia). For the city of Yogyakarta itself, the city of Montdore was the seventh city after the cities of Kyoto and Osaka (Japan), Ismailia (Egypt), Geongsangbuk-Do, and Chungcheongnam-Do (South Korea), Baalbek (Lebanon), and Chiang Mai (Thailand). For Montdore and Yogyakarta, this collaboration was the first to be established between the Pacific and Southeast Asia. The town twinning initiative highlighted the recognition of the importance of the Javanese community in New Caledonia.



Figure 34. The signature and MoU exchange for town twinning between Yogyakarta and Montdore in New Caledonia, 25 October 2019.
Photo credit: author, 2019

There were two groups (scouts and a music group) along with the government officials from Yogyakarta who travelled to New Caledonia for the event. They were the Yogyakarta City Scouts (attending the event with Scout Laïcs Montdore) and OCM (Omah Cangkem) (for music performances at the Francoceanie Festival in collaboration with the AINC culture section). The signing ceremony went well, as did the collaborative performances of OCM and AINC. The two-day show tickets sold out. The chairs were filled with spectators who had come from all over Noumea. Their enthusiasm was not unfounded. Before the show took place, the news had already spread from house to house, via telephone and WhatsApp, that there would be gamelan performances by artists from Yogyakarta. News and gossips concerned the quality and authenticity of the Javanese music performance. The performers would use new gamelans

from Montdore, which would sound differently from the one-hundred-year-old gamelan of the AINC. Eka described it to her friend on the phone two nights before the signature ceremonies:

The performances are by young artists from a famous *école de danse* in Yogyakarta. They're real artists. We finally have a chance to watch a rare performance like this. We do not doubt their quality, unlike our 'artist' on this island. (Eka 25 October 2019)

Aside from the success of the collaborative performance and the signature of the town twinning, problems arose. Among them was a miscommunication between two delegations from Yogyakarta (Scout and OCM) which meant that each party did not know the other's whereabouts. Eddy (the representative of the Yogyakarta city government) did not attend the Francoceanie Festival, where the OCM and AINC collaboration show took place. His presence was required for the closing ceremony of the Francoceanie Festival, where the mayor of Arue and Montdore required a meeting for the next programme of the town twinning in Arue. In the end, Pardiman from OCM came onto the podium representing Yogyakarta. Pardiman delivered a short speech and received tokens of appreciation from the mayor of Montdore and Arue on behalf of the government of Yogyakarta. The absence of the officer from Indonesia at the closing ceremony increased the tensions within the community. Santi and Saut, members of AINC, accused the Indonesian Consulate of favouritism because they 'ignored' the town twinning cooperation and the Francoceanie festival.

Apart from the problems mentioned above, most of my interlocutors were happy with the town twinning agreement, particularly with the presence of the OCM troupe at the AINC. As explained by Virgine Mamadouh, people who participate in this type of exchange get a unique glimpse into the daily life of someone from a different cultural background, which can be a formative experience (Mamadouh 2016, 344). The formative experience that occurred in the AINC foyer during OCM's presence was not only the exchange of knowledge of Javanese culture and language (as explained in Chapter 4) and religiosity (Chapter 5) but also political knowledge. People of Javanese descent in Caledonia often ask about the political conditions in Indonesia because many of them have never visited Indonesia. Knowledge about Indonesia's political conditions is obtained only from news in the media, presented under the media's ideology. Thus, town twinning initiates cultural cooperation for Montdore and Yogyakarta, and it is also important to open a meeting space for Javanese diaspora communities in New Caledonia and Indonesia.

The referendum and the cleavage in the community

While some powers were decentralised in New Caledonia after the Noumea Accord in 1998, France kept control over five critical areas: security, defence, finance, the judiciary, and foreign policy. As noted in Chapter 2, the 1988 Matignon Accord and the 1998 Noumea Accord established a 15–20-year transition period leading up to possible independence for New Caledonia by the end of 2018. During that time period, the transition period sought to create a ‘common destiny’ by uniting the diverse and divided communities. If the referendum resulted in a ‘No’ vote on independence, two additional referenda before 2022 could be held (Connell 2019; Fisher 2019).

The Accord arranged that the electoral roll for the referendum in 2018 was limited to those who had resided in this island for at least 20 years, effectively excluding recent migrants. The chosen date for the first referendum was 4 November 2018. More than 141,000 people went to the referendum ballots to decide the future of this territory. The result was that 56.6 per cent of voters opted to stay under the status quo, whilst 43.3 per cent chose for independence. The surprisingly narrow margin confirmed that the sovereignty dispute would continue to overshadow political life until the next referendum in 2020. Independentists hailed it as a temporary victory and a watershed moment on the road to independence (Connell 2019; Maclellan 2019).

The second referendum was held on 4 October 2020. Across the country, 304 polling stations opened. The turnout was higher in the 2020 referendum: 86 per cent of eligible voters, compared to 81 per cent in 2018. Both sides increased their total vote: some new Yes voters had been urged to boycott the 2018 election by small left-wing parties and trade unions. The result of the 2020 referendum was 53.26 per cent of voters opposing independence and 46.74 per cent supporting it (Connell 2021).

The 2018 and 2020 referenda show that the North Province, or known as *La Brousse*, which I will further explain in this chapter, is still the home for the pro-independence movement (Maclellan 2019; Fisher 2019; Chauchat 2019; Connell 2021). Although the pro-independence camp lost in both referenda, the percentage increased compared with the loyalist camp, as is evident in table below.

Year	No (against independence)			Yes (for independence)		
	Îles Province	South Province	North Province	Îles Province	South Province	North Province
2018	17.82%	74.12%	24.17%	82.18%	25.88%	75.83%
2020	15.73%	70.86%	21.66%	84.27%	29.14%	78.34%

Table 9. Results of 2018 and 2020 referenda.

Source: Haut Commissariat de La République en Nouvelle-Calédonie.

Emmanuel Macron, President of the French Republic, expressed a willingness to adhere to the terms of the Noumea Accord and pursue a third referendum if required by the Territorial Congress. Meanwhile, Sebastien Lecornu, France's foreign minister, expressed dissatisfaction with the binary Yes/No dichotomy, which undermines the possibility and necessity of dialogue, precisely what the movement toward a common destiny was intended to accomplish (Connell 2021, 157).

These referenda have also affected the Javanese community in New Caledonia and contributed to the community's fracturing. Most of my interlocutors are concerned about the outcome of this second referendum because they are concerned about the island's future if the pro-independence win the next referendum in 2021. This section will show the cleavage and tension in the community concerning the referenda and their view towards New Caledonia's future. I will divide this section into two sub-sections: firstly, a discussion of the political differences between the Javanese community in the North and South Province; and secondly, the Javanese community's views towards the future of New Caledonia.

The Javanese in *La Brousse*: imaginary lines between the Javanese in the South and North Province

The first time I heard the term *la brousse* spoken in a New Caledonian context was when I talked to Rose, a second-generation Javanese born in New Caledonia, who repatriated to Indonesia with her family in 1955. Rose and her family were part of the first transmigration programme in Lampung in 1955. She recalls her arrival in Lampung as 'time living *en brousse*, just like in New Caledonia'. At that time, I thought *la brousse* was used to describe the conditions of a road covered with bushes and wild animals. However, after arriving in New Caledonia, I learned the exact meaning of *la brousse*.

The words *brousse* (bush) in the French language carries connotations of a strange and attractive exoticism, as well as associations with primitive modes of life. In New Caledonia, *la brousse* generally designates the space outside Noumea and Grand Noumea, a rural world very diverse in its topography (Carteron 2008, 44–46). This term is also common with framings once prevalent in other former French colonial territories, such as Cameroon and Burkina Faso (Runcie 2020; International Crisis Group 2020). However, there is no clear boundary between areas that could be called *la brousse* and those which could not. For Rose, Bourail (a rural town outside Noumea on the main island in New Caledonia) can already be called *la brousse*. According to Sardi, however, *la brousse* is the whole North Province. As with Marto, all areas outside Grand Noumea are *la brousse*.

I went to *la brousse* with Sardi, Juliati, and Trisno in November 2018.

Sardi took me to visit his family in Hienghene in the North Province, which is considered the base of the pro-independence movement. A few days before our journey, I told some interlocutors about my plan to go to Hienghene. They responded variously. Some enthusiastically responded to my story, while others mocked me and told me to be careful because there are ‘too many’ Kanaky and few Javanese people in the North Province.

We departed from Noumea at around 6:00 a.m. to arrive in Poindimié in the afternoon. At Poindimié, we stopped at Wati’s house (Sardi’s aunt from his father’s side). It comprised three main buildings on land covering almost 2 hectares, for Wati, Mulyono (Wati’s son), and another that is rented out. While lunching on a dish of bamboo shoots à la Javanese Caledonia, we talked about the Javanese people’s lives in *la brousse*. Our conversations were in two languages, Javanese and French, with many pauses because Mulyono was not fluent in Javanese and his Melanesian wife did not understand Javanese at all.

The interethnic marriage of Mulyono and his wife is uncommon within the Javanese community. Traditionally, Javanese are endogamous, and even if there is an exogamous marriage, a Melanesian partner would not be the first choice. As a Javanese, Wati wanted Mulyono to marry a Javanese woman because that would make things easier. However, Mulyono, the fourth Javanese generation born and raised in Poindimié, had never been to Java. He was raised within the Melanesian society and felt that there was no need for him to marry a Javanese. After we had finished our lunch and Mulyono and his wife had gone home, Wati whispered to us that sometimes she feels ashamed to tell her relatives, especially in Noumea, that her daughter-in-law is Melanesian.

On my third day in the North Province in 2018, I went to Touho, which is about 30 minutes from Poindimié. There, we visited Mickey, Sardi’s nephew. Mickey was very critical and opposed the prevailing stereotype of *la brousse* among the Noumea and South Province residents. According to him, the stereotype of the dangerous environment in *la brousse* is mainly informed by fear of the pro-independence movement, which has its base in the North Province, as can be seen the interview:

Please bear in mind that not all Javanese descendants in New Caledonia hate the Melanesians or the pro-independence movement. Those who live in the South are biased in their opinion. They rarely visit *la brousse* but then spread the news that there are no longer Javanese here. I heard the silliest story: that they are afraid to come to the North because there are many Melanesian flags. There was also a rumour that the Melanesians will attack and ambush from the bush if you are not careful. We, the Javanese who were born and raised here, are closer to the Melanesian people than to the Javanese or the Indonesian. (Mickey, 17 December 2018)

For Mickey, those fears were biased. For him, born and raised in a Melanesian environment, no one would do anything as stupid as attacking people on the roadside. The vice president of the North Province and the majority of the current provincial council members are of Javanese descent. It is no longer a secret that most Javanese descendants in Noumea are anti-independence, but they never want to say it openly. The majority of my interlocutors believe that New Caledonia is not yet prepared for independence. They fear that New Caledonia will sink into a post-independence political and economic crisis like Vanuatu once they get their freedom. Above all, though, they are unwilling to ‘lose’ all the facilities (health insurance, education, and pensions) from France if New Caledonia gains its independence, as can be seen in the quotation below:

The Javanese character can be seen in how we react to the referendum issue. We’re afraid to speak up. But I believe we’re all in the same boat. We don’t want to lose our (French) passport. We must acknowledge that we’re afraid of losing all the privileges and benefits from France if the Kanaky win. Can you imagine life without health insurance and a lifetime’s pension? We don’t want life under a cloud, like our neighbour Vanuatu. Or, worse, like in Timor (Leste) after their referendum! (Sardi, 19 December 2018)

For Sardi, who had only visited Vanuatu once and had never been to Timor Leste, the independence of those two countries is not something to be grateful for, because the post-referendum economic and political conditions in both countries have become unstable. He, who has lived in Caledonia and receives various facilities there, certainly does not want to lose it all if pro-independence wins in the next referendum.

The division between the Javanese in *la brousse* and non-*la brousse* is not only about the ideology of pro-independence versus loyalists. According to Sardi, for quite a long time there has also been a ‘jealousy’ regarding capital gain. Most of the Javanese in Noumea (South Province) depict the Javanese in the North Province as a small poor population, uneducated, and pro-independence, although for Sardi, the reality is not like that. The Javanese in the South Province outnumber the Javanese descendants in the North Province because most of the latter (mainly from the regions of Hienghene, Touho, and Poindimié) moved to the capital in the 1980s following the bloody coup known as *Les Evenements*.⁵³ However, many also stayed and became wealthy by taking opportunities in the crucial times after *Les Evenements*. These were opportunities such as becoming drivers to transport people from the three regions, renting out their houses, and

⁵³The period of armed conflict between pro-independence and pro-status-quo parties. This period covered the big riots between French police and pro-independents in Ouvea in 1984 until the murder of Independentist leader Jean Mari Tjibaou and Yeiwéne Yeiwéne in May 1989.

providing catering services to metropolitan soldiers from France who came to New Caledonia to secure the post-riot area.

Towards the future of New Caledonia

Most of my interlocutors are optimistic that New Caledonia will stay under the Republic of France although admit worries about the uncertainty of the island's future. This topic brings me back to my first encounter with the Javanese community of New Caledonia in Yogyakarta in September 2018. They came with the Montodore city council to Yogyakarta to exchange a Letter of Intent for the town twinning officiated in 2019. I asked them several questions regarding the referendum and New Caledonia's current political situation at the farewell dinner. Gina, the second generation of Javanese born in Noumea, who came with her husband, answered that there was no problem with the referendum. She was optimistic that New Caledonia would remain under France. Parto, who heard our conversation, joined in and explained that the Javanese people would probably continue to support France because they did not want New Caledonia to end up like post-independence Vanuatu.

Another interlocutor, Josephine, was against the idea of independence but still optimistic that New Caledonia would not collapse like Vanuatu. She is a second-generation Javanese who has lived for more than 70 years in New Caledonia without a single problem with Melanesian and other ethnicities. However, after she was robbed and sexually assaulted in early 2019 by a drunk Melanesian young man, she became terrified for New Caledonia's future. She prepared to leave New Caledonia immediately if pro-independence won in the upcoming referendum. On the other hand, Marto and his wife insisted that they would not vote in the 2018 referendum Marto stressed:

We are old and only have a few years left, so why do we have to choose (in Referendum 2018)? It's better if the young people choose, it's for their future, not ours. But I am sure that if (New Caledonia) does gain its independence, it will end up like Vanuatu. The younger Melanesians are different from our generation's. Nowadays, they are more aggressive, as if they've been brainwashed. Do they know what they will do after independence? For them everything is always in the name of *coutume*⁵⁴ (customary law). They change the true meaning of what a *coutume* should be. Now, *coutume* is all about money. So, if you pay attention, no shops or services opened by Melanesians will succeed. Imagine opening a shop, and many people come and take goods without paying because they are

⁵⁴The term *coutume* or custom refers to several concepts that all stem from the word's broad definition: oral tradition or Kanak civilisation, customary ceremonies, and the gifts exchanged during the ceremonies (Leblic 2007, 275).

coutume. If you're a Melanesian, then you have to respect *coutume*. What will happen to the country if it is run with a system (*coutume*) like that? (Marto, 15 November 2019)

However, in the North Provinces and Provinces Iles des Loyautés, there are also pro-independence Javanese people. One of them is Mickey, a fourth-generation who lives with his extended family in the North Province. They declared themselves pro-independence and said that indeed not many Javanese were pro-independence. However, he also refutes an assumption that all people of Javanese descent are pro-status quo. Mickey believes that the Javanese community in Nouméa are overexposed. Their view (especially on the referendum) appears to represent all the Javanese descendants in New Caledonia but does not.

Regardless of Mickey's view on the referendum and New Caledonia's sovereignty, most of my interlocutors in Nouméa have the same opinion regarding the island's future. Economic welfare is the main reason for opting to stay with France, followed by health and security issues, as stated by Sardi below:

I was born and raised in *la brousse*, but I do not have the heart to witness this country's downfall. My heart votes on the Melanesian side, but my head tells me to remain French. We are Javanese descendants, but we do not have any relatives in Java. I still hope that the situation will be better in the future, even if France takes away all their facilities. I hope they will do it gradually. My children are in France and here [New Caledonia]. I wish to die here and to be buried here. (Sardi, 16 December 2019)

There is little discussion of political obligation in diaspora literature. According to James Clifford, the empowering paradox of diaspora is that living in the destination country presumes solidarity and connection. Despite this, there is rarely a single location or nation. In this context, solidarity and connection are descriptive concepts with normative meanings, not required terms (Clifford 1994, 322).

The concept of a diaspora's political obligation refers to the characteristics of life in the diaspora that are 'felt, experienced, or in some way understood to be obligatory and political' (Baron 2019, 225). Because diaspora politics are contingent upon a normative interpretation of diaspora geography (Dufoix 2008; Gilroy 1993), the assumption that 'diasporas can be either loyal or disloyal' imposes a simplistic dichotomy on the varied qualities of diaspora experience (Clifford 1994; Vertovec and Cohen 1999). However, as Ilan Zevi Baron argues, the political obligations of the diaspora do not require that our normative enquiry be limited to loyalty/disloyalty or solidarity/betrayal. When considering the refusal to assume responsibility within the diasporic community, it is only natural to do so out of a greater moral obligation (Baron 2019, 226). In New Caledonia,

the referendum not only creates cleavages in the Javanese community, but the above section also shows the importance of good, protective, relationships with the French state and the potential problematic relationships with other ethnic groups on the island.

The geopolitical situation

Diasporic politics is founded on transnational practice and the extension of state institutions across borders. It affixes itself to these institutions all the while growing its non-profit organisations to accomplish specific objectives (Laguerre 2006, 3). Diasporic politics follows a distinct logic from host society or homeland politics. It provides a new lens through which we can examine both, as well as the wider logic of globalisation (ibid., 5). In this section, I discuss two issues that connect the Javanese diaspora community to the geopolitical situation: the emergence of the global Javanese ethnic diaspora and the Melanesian issues that, to some extent, affect the Javanese community in New Caledonia.

Gathering the Scattered Bones (*Ngumpulke Balung Pisah*)

The Javanese Diaspora congress ‘Ngumpulke Balung Pisah’ (literally Gathering the Scattered Bones) was held in Solo on June 20–24. It was the fourth congress in series, following one held two years previously in Yogyakarta. The event was attended by 268 participants (123 Malaysian nationals, 38 Dutch, 26 Singaporeans, 51 New Caledonians, 6 Surinamese, including the Ambassador of Suriname to Indonesia, 2 Chinese, 1 American, and 21 participants from other islands in Indonesia). The opening ceremony proved to be quite lively, with the famous Javanese singers Didi Kempot and Waldjinh.

Unfortunately, the excitement and enthusiasm did not last long. The events were managed very unprofessionally. Among the problems were the constantly changing schedule of events, the absence of a Liaison Officer for each state delegation and the lack of a shuttle car from the hotel to the main venue. Finally, there were no translators, which was particularly problematic at events that used the Indonesian language. Many of these events were cancelled and eventually replaced by shopping trips to places that the committee had prepared. The complaints were not limited to participants. I had the opportunity to interview Himawan from The Indonesian Institute of the Arts in Surakarta, Central Java, who was supposed to be the official partner for the archival exhibition. The exhibition was supposed to be held at ISI Surakarta but was cancelled by the committee for no apparent reason. The exhibition was finally held in the library lobby of UNS (Solo National University) on the same day as the bestowal of the 2019 diaspora award on keroncong singer Waldjinh and wayang puppeteer Ki Manteb Soedarsono.

Despite the chaotic events, some of my interlocutors who attended the congress decided not to mind, such as Waginem, a second-generation Javanese. For her, the diaspora congress was an excuse to return to Java for a break from work. Likewise, Samuel and his wife, both also second-generation Javanese, only attended the opening; the next day they went to East Java for a vacation.

Even if they used the congress as an excuse for a holiday to Indonesia to visit relatives, Saut said that the New Caledonia delegation appreciated the occasion more than other delegates, as was demonstrated by their punctuality at every event. He also noted how the Malaysian delegation confused Islamic religious identity with Javanese identity.



Figure 35. Malaysian delegation at the closing ceremony of *Ngumpulke Balung Pisah*, 2019.

Photo credit: author, 2019.

I took the picture in Figure 35 shortly before the Malaysian delegation performed at the closing ceremony. Saut, who sat next to me, was shocked by the performance. Firstly, he was shocked by the absence of women on stage. Secondly, what surprised him was that the Malaysian delegation performed *shalawat*.⁵⁵ For Javanese Muslims growing up amid modern Islamic culture in Indonesia, *shalawat* is a familiar sound heard regularly in the mosque. However, it is undoubtedly different for Javanese Caledonians, who are not familiar with the sound of *shalawat* in New Caledonia, where there are no mosques with speakers. Moreover, they do not understand that *shalawat* is part of general Islamic society,

⁵⁵An Arabic song containing salutation and prayers to the prophet Mohammad.

since for them, this kind of prayer never existed. Therefore, when the *shalawat* was recited in the Surakarta City Hall that night, the New Caledonia delegation seats were filled with whispering. For most of my interlocutors who attended the event, Java is not necessarily identified with Islam, so performing *shalawat* at the diaspora event to them seemed inappropriate.

The illustration above also highlights the ‘diasporicity’ level in a transnational ethnic organisation. Diasporicity is a term that refers to ‘the relative embeddedness of dispersed ethnic groups in transnational ties to their ancestral homeland and co-ethnics scattered throughout the world’ (Tsuda 2019, 189). According to Takeyuki Tsuda, diasporas with a common culture, language, and religion are apt to be “more diasporic” than others. Regardless of geographical displacement, these cultural connections and religious faith would build ethnic solidarity beyond national borders, resulting in a stronger collective identification as a diasporic community. Furthermore, they enable transnational interaction, which is essential for transnational diasporic relations. Internally fragmented diasporic groups are prone to have weakened or fractured diasporic communities and lower diasporicity levels (ibid., 191).

Melanesian and the Papuan issues in Indonesia

In addition to the referendum, political conditions that also influenced the Javanese community in New Caledonia were violent incidents against Papuan students in Indonesia (Malang and Surabaya) on 15 and 17 August 2019. A few days after the incident, Papuan sympathisers protested in front of the Indonesian Consulate General⁵⁶, camping and giving speeches for three days. The protestors were members of the FLNKS (Front de Libération Nationale Kanak et Socialiste, Kanak and Socialist National Liberation Front). They said that the Consulate General did not want to meet with them for dialogue, and that if this continued, they would hold demonstrations and even occupy the AINC foyer in Montdore. The people of Javanese descent in New Caledonia, who initially did not have any interest in the demonstration, finally reacted. The AINC feels that their foyer has nothing to do with the Papua problem – and indeed, judging from its history, AINC has never had any contact with the people of Papua.

⁵⁶At the same time with this protest, FLNKS released a statement on their Facebook account (<https://www.facebook.com/FLNKSOfficiel/posts/376920752999870>). FLNKS said that the current assaults on protestors and the mass mobilization of the Indonesian military in Papua had urged it to ‘call on all parties to work for a lasting solution. The FLNKS recalls and supports the constructive dialogue effort with Indonesia initiated by the Pacific Islands Forum – of which New Caledonia is a full member – and calls on the Indonesian Government to work closely with the UN Human Rights Commission to finalize the Commission’s visit to West Papua. Furthermore, the FLNKS renews its unwavering support for our brothers in West Papua and calls on its militants and supporters to remain vigilant in the face of any move to discredit the West Papua liberation movement.’ It called on supporters to denounce any efforts to intimidate solidarity movements for West Papua. This press release was also covered in some online news, including The Asia Pacific Report (<https://asiapacificreport.nz/2019/09/04/flnks-condemns-west-papua-violence-calls-for-self-determination/>).

As one of the elders in the Javanese community in New Caledonia, Saut contacted Achmad Gozali, the Consul General, asking why the Indonesian Consulate General did not want to have a dialogue with the demonstrators. According to him, the problem could have a serious repercussion if the demonstrators attacked the AINC foyer. Achmad Gozali answered that the Indonesian Consulate General had never received a request for discussion, either by telephone or letter. In order to clarify the situation to the demonstrators, the Consulate General took action in several ways, including radio broadcasts and press releases (see Appendix 1).

In the press release, the Consulate clarified the Indonesian government's position: first, as a democratic country, the Indonesian government condemns violence against Papuan students in Malang and Surabaya (see Appendix 1). Second, the Indonesian government guarantees and protects the rights of all Indonesian citizens, including residents of the provinces of Papua and West Papua, including the possibility of setting up a specific government system in which only people of Papuan origin can become governors, mayors, or other leaders. Third, the total population of Melanesian ethnic groups in Indonesia is 13 million inhabitants, which is much higher than the Melanesian ethnic population of the South Pacific. Hence, this can be used as a solid foundation for improving relations between Indonesia and the South Pacific region, especially New Caledonia, in which Indonesia is Asia's closest neighbour to New Caledonia.

A few days after the Indonesian Consulate's press release, a petition circulated on social media, initiated by an organization called Kanaky NC WESTPAPUA.⁵⁷ The Papua problem and the FLNKS demonstration at the Consulate General's office became a burden for Achmad Gozali as the Indonesian government's head representative in New Caledonia. In our interview in 2018, he said that his vision and directive while leading the Indonesian Consulate was slightly different from the previous Consul, Widyarka, who was known to be very close to the Javanese community. Achmad Gozali, in contrast, implemented several programmes to embrace the Melanesian and FLNKS communities, such as a bamboo craft training (making *angklung* and *gazebo*s) for Canala people in the North Province, facilitating local Canala entrepreneurs to take part in the 2019 Indonesian Trade Expo, the cultural directive of the Indonesian Consulate General to various cities and islands in New Caledonia, and the Oceani 2019

⁵⁷This petition was addressed to Laurent Prevost (High Commissioner of the Republic in New Caledonia), Rock Wamytan (President of the Congress of New Caledonia), and Thierry Santa (President of the Government of New Caledonia) (see Appendix 2). The essential points in the petition made by the Melanesian solidarity forum were first that they underlie the action on behalf of ancestral ties as fellow Melanesian ethnic groups. Secondly, they emphasise how the Indonesian central government limits the Papuan people's rights, mainly to express their opinions. According to them, this is contrary to human rights. They conclude, therefore, that the Consulate General's press release did not make sense because democracy carried out by the Indonesian government was not real democracy (source: <https://www.change.org/p/le-président-du-congrès-de-la-nouvelle-calédonie-dénoncer-les-violations-des-droits-de-l-hommes-à-west-papua>).

Famtrip Programme (Familiarisation Trip) to Indonesia to two representatives of tourism bureaus in New Caledonia to promote Indonesian tourism.

For the Indonesian Consul General in Noumea the programmes were part of the primary goal of embracing the FLNKS, which allegedly has close relations with the separatist group OPM (Operasi Papua Merdeka). It must be admitted that Achmad Gozali was the first Consul General to pay great attention to the issue. However, there was a price to be paid by Achmad Gozali and his staff: they were not very well liked by Javanese descendants in New Caledonia because they were considered to favour the Melanesians and exclude Javanese descendants.

Conclusion

This chapter explores the ways in which the fractured nature of the Javanese diaspora community is also shaped by politics and state's affairs (Indonesia and France). According to Sheffer, tensions and confrontations in the host countries are more frequently caused by the diaspora's attitudes and actions, whereas, in relationships between homeland and diaspora, the homeland is typically the source of friction (Sheffer 2003a, 255). As I have explained in this chapter, significant tensions and frictions exist in homeland and diaspora relationships. The tension happens because most homeland leaders believe that the diasporas' *raison d'être* is to maintain constant contact with the homeland, demonstrate unwavering loyalty and serve the homeland's interests in host countries, particularly on defence issues. In the context of New Caledonia, people of Javanese descent have responded to the Indonesian Consulate's decision to focus on diplomacy towards the Melanesian community as a form of partiality that neglects people of Javanese descent. In other words, the Javanese people want the attention and recognition of the Indonesian Consul General as a representative of the government of their homeland, in which the island of Java is located.

This chapter also shows that the different political views of the Javanese diaspora community towards local political conditions in New Caledonia have sharpened the existing tensions. However, their political choices are often not based on ideology but rather on pragmatic choices related to elements such as security and economy. In the context of New Caledonia, most second-generation Javanese chose the status quo option in the referendum out of fear that their efforts to 'build' life would be lost if New Caledonia gained its independence.

This chapter also shows France's influence on New Caledonia's past and present. According to Aldrich (1996, 98), the French overseas personified as the personal link between colonies and the capital. They represented French interests abroad to the government in France. To the indigenous people, the French residents in their midst were the most apparent manifestation of the foreign state that controlled their destinies and proclaimed its mission to civilise them via

*mission civilisatrice*⁵⁸ and develop their resources. France's declared imperial objective was to reform culturally backward or barbaric societies by imposing its language, culture, and political and economic control (Lamont 2000; Buettner 2016, 111).

These ideas linger on into the present. The same paradigm about the links between the colonies and France Metropole was shown by Nicolas Sarkozy on 26 July 2007 in his speech addressed to the 'young African' at Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar in Senegal. Sarkozy began his speech by acknowledging the negative aspects of the French colonial project. However, the subsequent lines of Sarkozy's speech absolved French colonialism of any malicious intent, and he detailed the benefits of France's civilizing mission (Forsdick and Murphy 2009, 2). His speech shows the asymmetrical relations between the former colonial power and its former colonies. My pro-status quo interlocutors use the discourse of France's kindness towards its colonies to support France in the Referendum. They even believe their life in New Caledonia would not be as good and stable as it is today if their grandparents or parents had not left Java and joined the convoy of indentured labour. Hence, mobility is a keyword that highlights the relations between France and its colonies. The indentured labour scheme marked the commencement of the forced mobility from Java to New Caledonia. Conversely, the next few generations of descendants of the indentured labourer who settled in New Caledonia enjoyed the ease of mobility to France.

During his visits to New Caledonia in May 2018, President Macron emphasised the importance of regional cooperation as pivotal in the French strategy. In the context of geopolitical changes, Javanese descendants remain close to the 'stone' (New Caledonia) and far from the throne (Indonesia and France).

⁵⁸The term *mission civilisatrice* was coined by Prime Minister Jules Ferry in 1885 as one of the motivations for overseas expansion. According to Ferry, superior races have a right *vis-à-vis* inferior race. They also have a responsibility to bring civilisation to other peoples and, in doing so, to control what could become the unrestrained activities of traders and other foreigners (Aldrich 1996, 98)

Chapter 7.

Conclusion

12 December 2021 was a historic date that determined the future of New Caledonia: the day on which the third (and final) independence referendum following the mandate of the Noumea Accord was held. This referendum was different from the two previous referenda, mainly because it was held during the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the referendum results surprised all parties: 96.5% pro-status quo and 3.5% pro-independence. The worries expressed by most of my interlocutors in Chapter 6 did not, therefore, come about. Marto, Josephine, and Sardi, who had worried that New Caledonia would experience a ‘downfall’ like Vanuatu or post-independence Timor Leste, can now breathe a sigh of relief.

Four months before the 2021 referendum took place, I spoke with Eka and her husband on the telephone. They expressed optimism that New Caledonia would not become independent from France because the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic with assistance from the French government was going very well. The French government sent additional health workers from France several times, primarily to provide vaccines for various ethnic tribes spread across the islands of New Caledonia.

The results of the 2021 referendum, which ensures New Caledonia’s French status, can be said to be ‘indebted’ to the COVID-19 pandemic. What Eka and her husband said in their last conversation with me represents the thoughts of many other New Caledonians, including the Javanese communities in New Caledonia: that without the intervention and assistance of France, Caledonia would have been ‘destroyed’ by the pandemic. However, the pro-independence faction did not acknowledge the referendum’s result.⁵⁹ They felt that its implementation did not respect customary law because they were ‘forced’ to hold a referendum at a time when the mourning period for each ethnic tribe was not yet over.⁶⁰

In New Caledonia, which until 2021 was on the verge of pro-independence and pro-status-quo polarity, even the slightest change in public participation in the referendum could alter the result and impact the position of the Javanese minority. The active political participation of members of the Javanese diaspora

⁵⁹Palika and other pro-independence parties in the National Union for Independence coalition petitioned the Council of State. They filed an appeal challenging the 12 December 2021 self-determination referendum, which they boycotted and ultimately lost. Palika stated that it did not feel bound by the timeline outlined by Sébastien Lecornu, Minister of Overseas Territories, which calls for a transition period beginning on 13 December, followed by a referendum in June 2023 to determine the territory’s future status (<https://www.rfi.fr/en/france/20211223-new-caledonia-s-pro-independence-parties-file-first-referendum-challenge>).

⁶⁰<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/dec/08/covid-mourning-and-the-fear-of-violence-new-caledonia-prepares-for-blighted-independence-vote>

in the three stages of the New Caledonian referendum in 2018, 2020, and 2021 shows that members of diasporic communities can be highly engaged in the host society. In New Caledonia, this means they also cherish ties with France, as the vast majority of the Javanese community wished to remain part of the French postcolonial state. The descendants of indentured labourers, who were once brought in as part of an exploitative colonial scheme to work on the island, now play an important political role in formative events on this island. In return, engagement with New Caledonian society and the French State also shapes the Javanese diasporic community and their identity.

In this concluding chapter, I highlight and reflect upon three key findings to help understand the fracturedness in the Javanese diaspora community in New Caledonia better. These findings relate to the question of becoming or being Javanese, patchy memories, and imagining communities in between fraternities and fractures. Each discussion links back to my research questions and empirical chapters. I end this chapter, and my dissertation, with a critical discussion of the colonial and postcolonial context that created the conditions for the fractured diasporic identity of the Javanese community in New Caledonia.

Becoming Javanese or being Javanese (in diaspora)?

Diaspora formation is developed through interactions between people and places. The formation of these links is not necessarily directed exclusively toward a homeland but may take shape and re-territorialise in the hostland. In this study, I have presented the Javanese diaspora community in New Caledonia as an example of an indentured labour diaspora that later developed into a cultural or deterritorialised diaspora. Further, I have demonstrated that this cultural diaspora is not a homogenous community. This dissertation reveals the extent to which fracturedness is an inherent aspect of the diasporic condition. All discourses, expressions, values, and practices of individual members can affect cohesion within diasporic communities.

The Javanese community examined in this project reflects a strong sense of identity as an ethnic minority. However, this identity concept is often misleading. The ethnic minority model implies more homogeneous groups with more internal ties and sharper, more apparent divisions between them and the outside world (Hall 2019, 106). As Hall argues, ‘maintaining racialized, ethno-cultural, and religious identity is clearly important to self-understanding’ the diaspora communities’. However, ‘these are certainly not communities immured in an unchanging “tradition” (ibid., 107). Furthermore, as Hall continues ‘as in most diasporas, traditions vary from person to person and are continually in the process of being revised and transformed in response to the unfolding diaspora experience. There is significant variation in commitment and practice between and within different communities, within religious faiths, among men and women,

and across the generations' (ibid., 107). Second and subsequent generations in the diaspora community hold on to traditions alongside a visible decline in practice. However, this has different results in different communities.

In this research, the different views on ethnocultural identity cause fractures in the community. On the one side, the second generation, which still has a strong connection with Java as the 'homeland,' considers being Javanese as a pre-existing identity, followed by another identity (i.e. religious identity, political view, etc.). On the other hand, for the third generation and beyond, who no longer have strong ties to Java, their diaspora identities are not pre-existing identity, but rather a decision to relate to the diasporic group – becoming Javanese.

Evolving views on ethnocultural identity also led to a reproduction of Javanese values. Javanese people traditionally consider themselves a peaceful and altruistic community. The Javanese diaspora in New Caledonia is no exception. They will rarely admit that there is a problem between them. Even if there is, it is usually attributed to parties outside the community; in this context, for example, Melanesian, French, or newcomers from Indonesia. Living in harmony in the group is ingrained in the views of every Javanese. The continuation of the group, as well as the idea of harmony, needs constant maintenance through reaffirmation. The practice of social harmony, marked by cooperation, unity, and group peace, requires the participation of each member of the group. Each is raised to avoid externalising their emotions or generating conflict, to put aside individual interest for the group's interest and to provide help to those in need. The groups are more important than personal interests. For the Javanese community in New Caledonia, these values have been the core of their survival strategy as a minority in the hostland, and serve as the base of their diaspora identity.

This dissertation focuses on the paradoxes of diasporic identity practices and how they create tensions and contribute to fractures within the Javanese communities in New Caledonia. During the research presented in this dissertation, I found that fractures existing in the Javanese diaspora community did not appear suddenly. The process of fracturing occurs gradually, is located in various social, political and religious realms, and is expressed differently in each context. Even so, the tension within the community that leads to fracturedness never really takes antagonistic forms. It is enacted subtly and quietly, and sensitive issues are only talked about among other members of an 'inner circle'. Rarely, tensions within the community become visible more publicly, such as the differences in Islamic practices between *croyants* and *pratiquants* (Chapter 5) and the polarity between pro-independence and pro-status quo voters in the New Caledonian independence referendum (Chapter 6).

The paradoxes of diasporic identity practices that lead to fractures in the community are manifested in questions relating to memories and history, a sense of belonging, homeland practices, religion and beliefs, and politics. Each aspect does not stand alone and is intertwined with others. Furthermore, each individual

has a range of different opinions in these fields – and no one quarrels all the time. For example, they may disagree on one aspect, as the Sardi's and Eka's families did in their views on *croyants* and *pratiquants* (Chapter 5), but they can still sit together and have similar ideas when dealing with other groups, as they did in Solo at the Ngumpulke Balung Pisah event (Chapter 6)

This research contributes to the study of diasporas emerging from indentured labour by focusing on the evolution of visible and invisible fractures within diasporic communities. Most diaspora studies tend to assume homogeneity as the main feature that unites diasporas, with a strong pull to return to the homeland due to discomfort in the host land (see also Safran 1991; Clifford 1994; Sheffer 2003; Shuval 2003). This dissertation argues that the diasporic condition is more complex. In the case of the Javanese community in New Caledonia, collective memories of a painful shared history did engender the narrative that they are a unified community of Javanese descent. This narrative is actively sustained through various homeland practices that affirm their Javanese identity through language, food, sound, and images (Chapter 4). However, such homeland practices do not indicate a desire to return to an ancestral homeland. Rather, they mark tacit differences in notions of 'authenticity' within their community – a community that still tries to find a place for themselves in New Caledonian society as an ethnic minority without a clearly defined history. Like the first generation's fractured memories of indentured labour, which remained silenced in official history, among their descendants the narrative of Javanese identity is fractured among different groups in the community whose differences remain unspoken.

Patchy memories

Maurice Halbwachs introduced the concept of collective memory in diaspora studies. A group within a given society can reconstruct its past by drawing on the collective social memory of the group. People or historical facts that have permeated the group's memory gain meaning as a teaching point, notion, or symbol and become part of the society's system of ideas (Halbwachs 1992, 182–83). On the other hand, Pierre Nora refers to places, people, or objects representing a community's memorial heritage as *lieux de mémoire* (realms of memory). When an overwhelming presence of the past characterises these symbolic spaces, they become *lieux de mémoire* (Nora 1989). Given the multiple interpretations concerning the concept of collective memory and *lieux de mémoire*, it is impossible to strive for a unified idea system or memorial heritage (Reinhardt 2021, 53).

In the Javanese community of New Caledonia, the gradual transformation of moments, places, people, and objects into *lieux de mémoire* means that one can indeed speak of a reconstruction of the past; however, the result is also a

diversification of memory into multiple narratives about the past. Or, as Christine Chivallon points out, there is no single ‘encompassing narrative’ at the end of the road of memory (Chivallon 2008, 886).

Collective memories of the indentured labour history in this community are like a patchwork created from the memories of individuals who were part of the indentured labour scheme and those passed down by each family. The narrative has many gaps, and these remain areas of contention in the collective memory. In addition, patchy memories also cause fractures in the community because each individual and family feels that their memories are more valuable and more authentic than those of other families. A clear example of this can be seen in Chapters 2 and 3, with the refusal of some of my interlocutors to read Ama Bastien’s novel because it is Bastien’s family history.

In addition, these patchy memories impact homeland and religious practices that rely solely on memories passed down by the family and the individual – such as the notion of the ‘secret recipe from Java’ in Chapter 4 and the practice of the *wong pinter* in Chapter 5. The patchwork rites look ‘perfect’ and are accepted as the primary truth in the society. However, sometimes the community needs validation of their practice from the Javanese community – for example Pardiman’s ritual validation in the gamelan naming event in Chapter 5.

From another angle, the effort of the Javanese community to reconstruct their histories through oral history and writing autobiographical novels happens in response to the inadequacy of the history teaching regarding indentured labour in New Caledonia. My interlocutors hinted at the absence of historical markers of indentured labour in the school curriculum. As I explain in Chapter 3, the monument commemorating the centenary of the Javanese presence in New Caledonia is the only visible reminder of this past. This visible manifestation would, however, be much more meaningful to the community if it were embedded in a historical context and included in the school curriculum.

Throughout Chapter 3, I show that the Javanese community in New Caledonia is still trying to retrieve the narrative of the ‘homeland loss’ in the collective memories of the indentured labour period. This research also shows that the histories and memories of this community comprise a very fractured story. History is constantly in the making and re-making and being challenged from within and without. Lastly, due to the lack of an official narrative of the history of contract work in New Caledonia, the collective history and memories are always in process.

Imagining communities in between fraternities and fractures

The third point I want to make here is about fractures and fraternities. The fractures are, paradoxically, also sustained through the notion of fraternity in the community. As I show in Chapter 3, Javanese society in New Caledonia categorises fraternity

relationships into three groups: the *wong kontrak* (the indentured labourer); the *kawane* (the shipmate); and the *wong balen* (the returnee). At first glance, the appellation only describes the fraternity. However, this categorisation shows the tension between groups within the community – as illustrated in Chapter 4, when the presence of Indonesian women became a source of problems during the dinner box incident, and created a topic of criticism and gossip for the descendants of the *wong kontrak*.

The concept of fraternity developed by the Javanese diaspora community in New Caledonia is similar to the pattern of extended kinship in communities that emerged due to transatlantic slavery. They built a brotherhood on the ships that continued until their arrival at a new place. The initial goal was to share grief and ease the pain and loneliness of being far away from home. In the context of the Javanese community in New Caledonia, the bond became even more robust over time. It lasted for generations, even superseding ties with family on the island of Java. This bond later became the basis of the formation of the Javanese diaspora community in New Caledonia. However, this awareness only emerged as the collective discourse in 1996 through the celebration of the centenary, as I explain in Chapter 4.

Behind the concept of fraternity among Javanese descendants in New Caledonia, many conflicts and tensions lead to fractures in the community. In this research, the fractures within the Javanese diaspora occurred due to two main factors: claims of authenticity and different views of homeland between different generations. Notions of authenticity in this research are the key to understanding how individuals and the collective diaspora as a whole claim their ‘Javaneseness’. Although the ‘authenticity’ focus should resolve the creative conflict between border preservation and boundary erosion in the diaspora literature found by Brubaker (2005), in actuality it contributes to the community’s fracturing process. The contested degree of Javaneseness is a source of fractures in the community. All are competing to be labelled as the ‘most’ among others, which creates polarity and tension within the community.

The contestation of authenticity within the Javanese community is articulated in three forms. Firstly, the second generation (and after) assert the validity of their identities by appealing to their diasporic community’s collective experience, potentially through individual and collective memory of indentured labour passed on from their parents and grandparents. Secondly, the ‘coming’ home experience: emphasising regular visits to Java as a ‘homeland’ and engaging in Javanese cultural practices. The different views of *croyants* and *pratiquants* (Chapter 5), the battle of the secret recipe from Java (Chapter 3), and the polarisation of pro-independence and pro-status quo voters (Chapter 6) all illustrate this point. Thirdly, each generation interprets ‘fraternity’ differently from the previous generation. The clearest example of this is shown by Mickey in Chapter 6, who feels closer to Melanesian people than those of Javanese descent.

Mickey also feels that the stereotype about *la brousse* (areas outside Noumea, especially in the North Province) held by Javanese descendants in Noumea demonstrates the failure of the Javanese community to assimilate into French culture.

Claims to cultural authenticity often become engrossed in an essentialist cultural perspective, wherein fixed traditions are viewed as indigenously original. Others, however, are excluded because they are mixed or tainted. According to Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, this view has the unintended consequence of ignoring the possibility that cultures can develop and change in response to changing circumstances. Furthermore, ‘the tendency to use generic signifiers for cultures with many variations may override the actual differences within such cultures’. Consequently, ‘cultural difference markers may be perceived as authentic cultural signifiers, but this claim to authenticity may imply that these cultures are not subject to change’ (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2000, 17).

The relationship between the homeland and the diaspora represents political, generational, and other factors that impact memory functions (Um 2019). In the diaspora community, how and what to remember, celebrate, or mourn is a source of contention. Memories of home are influenced by time, location, and generational distance. A lack of exposure and cultural disconnection causes memory loss. We can see the tension and struggle in how the younger generations are different from the older generations in their work and social attitudes – such as the contestation of the notion of ‘*pulang*’ (return) for Rose (Chapter 3). When she followed her father’s repatriation to Lampung, Indonesia, in 1955, she felt heartbroken because she was ‘uprooted’ from her actual home in New Caledonia.

Early theories on diaspora claim that orientation towards the homeland is a crucial feature of diasporic identity. This claim is profoundly influenced by a particular view of the Jewish diaspora community. But recent studies stress that we must be careful not to locate the diaspora’s home too quickly in the ancestral homeland (Tölölyan 2019, 25). This research shows that disconnection from the ancestral homeland is typical in the cultural diaspora community as well as in political and religious terms, particularly for the second and subsequent generations. Many diasporas share a connection to the homeland because of close family ties, collective memories, myths, and stereotypes associated with the homeland. But this homeland is largely imaginary and if they travel or meet with representatives of Indonesia today, they often end up disappointed, finding that reality is very different from their imagined homeland, and feel conflicted about their contradictory feelings. Moreover, in the process, they discover that their “homeland” may be New Caledonia, and sometimes even France, a country they might never have visited. Implications for the current literature on diaspora are manifold.

For the majority of the Javanese descendants described in this study, home refers to a ‘lived experience of a locality’ (Brah 1996, 192) in New Caledonia. In comparison, Java exists in the diasporic imagination as a mythological destination of longing. Java is a land of no return, despite the fact that it is possible to visit Java, the alleged origin of their ancestors. As my interlocutors have indicated, for the Javanese diaspora in New Caledonia, visiting Java is like a pilgrimage. Their ‘luggage’ from New Caledonia is made up of what James Clifford characterised as ‘communities of relations,’ in which cultural values evolved within the local Javanese community predominate. While this ‘community of relations’ is formed on a local level, it incorporates elements of the Javanese diaspora’s transnational flow of meaning.

Following Gijsbert Oonk, people in the diaspora share the same deep emotional bonds to the homeland (2019). The first generation wishes their children to succeed in their host country. While still preserving their cultural roots, they also want their children to embrace their homeland’s customs. These reconnections are often viewed as a romantic rendezvous with the historical past and attributed to ‘original roots.’ However, many interlocutors in this research do not wish to become more engaged with their ancestral homeland on the island of Java. Even if they do visit their ancestral homeland, their journey is no more than a pilgrimage, a ticking off on a list that they have visited it once in their lifetime.

Throughout this dissertation I show that the concepts of harmony promoted by the Javanese diaspora community cloak internal differences and disagreements. Conflicts within the community frequently occur, which makes the Javanese diaspora communities less harmonious than they appear to be in public. Furthermore, these conflicts disrupt the discourse of the Javanese community in New Caledonia as being an example of ‘good immigrants’, who have assimilated into New Caledonian society, as mentioned on several occasions by representatives of the French government. Mickey and many others among my interlocutors, especially among the third generation, disagree with this view. Hence, for them, it raises questions. Does being closer to Melanesian people and seeing them as brothers and sisters make them lose their Javanese identity? And is Javanese the most ‘sublime’ identity compared to other identities embedded in each member of this community?

What if the answer to these questions of diasporic identity and community were to use the word ‘dream’, as mentioned repeatedly in the song *Cent Ans Déjà*, which became the official song for the Centenary memorial and which inspired the title of Ama Bastien’s novel *Le Rêve Accompli de Bandung à Nouméa*? Then, Java and Javanese-ness are located in the past. After more than 126 years, this diaspora, which emerges from the indentured labour, the diaspora has achieved their dream of a good life in New Caledonia.

Il y a de cela cent ans déjà
(*A hundred years ago already*)
Ils avaient mené jusqu'au bout leur rêve fou
(*They carried out their crazy dream till the end*)
D'Indonésie
(*From Indonesia*)
Tanah air yang tercinta
(*The beloved homeland*)
Destination, la Kaledoni baru
(*To the destination in New Caledonia*)

(Song, *Cents ans déjà* by Ardi Panatte)

From memory to history: present-day relevance

New Caledonia was part of the French colonial utopia as a space for social regeneration through its *mission civilisatrice*. French Republicans believed that through penal colonies and indentured labour, this colony in the Pacific could grow into an important region contributing to France's prosperity. Conversely, following the end of the indentured labour era, Javanese descendants experienced a paradoxical and ambivalent relationship with the French, New Caledonian and Indonesian governments. While the demands of indentured labourers and the second generation centred on meeting basic needs (education, employment, decent living), the recent generations focus more on issues of recognition, identity and memory.

The existing literature on slavery and indentured labour has focused almost entirely on the European transatlantic slave trade and its plantation slavery system, especially on the celebration of their abolition and its meaning for the community of descendants of enslaved people (Frith and Hodgson 2021, 10). This dissertation has examined the diaspora community that arose from indentured labour in the Pacific region, which has received little attention in the literature on indentured labour and Asian migration history. This research also fills the gap in knowledge about the Javanese diaspora in New Caledonia in Indonesian postcolonial studies. So far, research on the Javanese diaspora that emerged from indentured labour has mainly focused on the Suriname region. In addition, most of the postcolonial literature on the Javanese diaspora is situated within the colonial empire; there are few studies about the cross-colonial exchanges of indentured labourers. In particular, little is known about minorities or diasporas in French colonies from outside France, and the Asian and Pacific settings are particularly ignored.

The unspoken fracturedness in the Javanese community in New Caledonia partly stems from the colonial and postcolonial politics of France and the Netherlands, in particular with regard to the lack of historical recognition. Compared to France and Britain, the Netherlands realised its role and responsibility in the international slave trade relatively late. While traces of the colonial past are widespread in the Netherlands, they are rarely clearly expressed in postcolonial settings. A thriving cultural market for ethnic literature and cuisine, postcolonial ethnic festivals, and serious attempts to integrate the history of slavery into the Dutch historical canon are all fragments of the realisation that the Netherlands was once a significant colonial power with all its moral implications (Bosma 2012, 193). So far, Dutch involvement in the indentured labour scheme in New Caledonia is a part of the colonial legacy that remains a blind spot in Dutch colonial history (Termorshuizen 2008). Although slavery was abolished in 1860 in ‘the Dutch Indies’, afterwards, the Dutch government explicitly engaged in recruiting indentured labourers in Java and trading them to other colonial powers. Their active involvement in the indentured labour scheme brought grief and suffering for the Javanese labourers. To date, the Dutch government has not acknowledged that they were partly responsible for the massive displacement scheme of Javanese people to New Caledonia. Hence, the Dutch government should consider acknowledging the colonial wrongdoings and suffering of the Javanese indentured labourers sent to New Caledonia.

On the other side, although the French government acknowledges its role in slavery history, its negative role in recruiting Javanese indentured labour has also been little discussed. French colonial history has paid little attention to Overseas Territories and New Caledonia is one of the blank spaces. This suggests an absence in French colonial and postcolonial narratives and an ambivalence towards the lack of attention to the colonies that were the foundation of French imperialism. On the margins of colonial history, the Overseas Territories remain a space excluded from history. This vague collective memory between remembering and forgetting is interesting for analysing the rift in French colonial history and the relationship between the Metropolitan and the colonies. The starting point for rethinking the intersecting histories is the absence of indentured labour in the national narrative, despite its strong presence in the indentured labourers’ local memories. For the Javanese descendants in New Caledonia, the lack of proper recognition of indentured labour history affects their feeling of recognition today. Moreover, it affects ethnic relations in the current situation.

The community history of indentured labourers also influenced the fractures in the present-day Javanese community in New Caledonia. From the beginning of the indentured labour scheme in New Caledonia, labourers from Java were not allowed to ‘bond’ as a community. As I explain in Chapter 2 regarding the process of recruiting workers from Java, this indentured labour scheme uprooted workers from their homes and families in Java. They were even

stripped of their original identity, their names, and were identified by a *matricule* number allotted by the colonial administration officer. Their original names were changed to those given by administrative and immigration officials in New Caledonia. These names are still used by their descendants today: a lasting legacy from the history of indentured labour. Furthermore, the Javanese labourers had few opportunities to gather and form a ‘unity’ as a community. Their sense of togetherness as a community was built on the foundation of extended kinship that started with shipmate camaraderie, or the *kawane*. However, apart from occasional gatherings at feasts and life cycle rituals, as I explain in Chapters 4 and 5, they were unable to get together much because they lived too far away from each other.

Following Indonesian independence, the partial repatriation of Javanese indentured labourers to Indonesia in 1953 did not contribute to greater awareness about indentured labour history. This painful history has been largely forgotten in France, where there have been few attempts to write a narrative about the history of indentured labourers. The first book on Javanese indentured labourers in New Caledonia was published only in 1996, written by Fidayanti Muljono-Larue. Otherwise, attempts to write this history have mainly taken the form of autobiographical novels published in the 2000s–2010s, which rely on scattered historical records and patchy memories from Javanese (grand)parents in New Caledonia. The increasing interest in remembering the dark history of the colony remains a central issue in French historical studies. However, a narrow focus on dark pasts risks forgetting that colonial and postcolonial situations are intertwined with the present.

In the context of New Caledonia, the obscure history of Javanese indentured labour has resulted in an ambiguous position for the Javanese in present-day New Caledonian society. Within the Javanese community, the history remains vague as many versions occupy the grey spaces of collective memory, as discussed in Chapter 3. This vagueness of history, along with the veiling of conflicts within the community, allowed the Javanese in the region to be considered a model minority. This further complicated their position in New Caledonian society, influencing their attitudes towards the French state and their complicated relationship with the indigenous Melanesian population. On the one hand, they resent the French state for creating the conditions of hardship experienced by their (grand)parents. On the other hand, they align themselves with the French state, as expressed in the referenda for independence; the majority of Javanese descendants voted ‘no’ on the independence because they did not want to lose French protection and facilities (Chapter 6).

Finally, to understand the ambiguous position of the Javanese community in New Caledonia today, we must look at it in the context of the colonial history of indentured labour. As explained in this dissertation, the indentured labour scheme in New Caledonia is an example of cross-colonial labour exchange. Javanese

workers were forcibly uprooted from their home environment to become part of the French colonial project in the Pacific. The harshness of life in New Caledonia has left a sad story for the descendants of indentured labour. This has created fractured memories regarding indentured labour. These fractured memories are the source of a fractured community, which results, to this day, in a paradoxical diaspora identity.

Appendix

Press release from KJRI Noumea concerning the pro-Papua demonstration



KONSULAT JENDERAL REPUBLIK INDONESIA
NOUMEA

COMMUNIQUE

Réf : 351/NOU/IX/2019/04

LES SITUATIONS EN PAPOUASIE ET EN PAPOUAISE OCCIDENTALE SONT DESORMAIS RETOURNEES A LA NORMALE

1. Le gouvernement indonésien regrette profondément les incidents survenus à Malang (15/08) et à Surabaya (08/17), impliquant des individus irresponsables et des membres sans scrupule des forces de l'ordre, notamment les propos personnels inappropriés envers les étudiants indonésiens de Papouasie.
2. Dans toutes parties de l'Indonésie, à partir de Sabang (Aceh) jusqu'à Merauke (Papouasie), il n'y a pas de place pour le racisme. Le gouvernement indonésien condamne fermement et ne tolère aucun acte de racisme et de discrimination. La République d'Indonésie est un pays qui veille au respect des droits de l'homme et à l'application de la loi.
3. Les membres des forces de sécurité impliquées dans ces incidents ont été immédiatement suspendus, les personnes civiles qui ont commis les crimes ont également été punies. La police nationale indonésienne a ouvert de nouvelles enquêtes et nous soulignons qu'aucune arrestation n'a été effectuée contre des étudiants indonésiens originaires de Papouasie.
4. Le gouvernement indonésien est également très préoccupé par les émeutes qui ont eu lieu dans plusieurs régions en Papouasie et en Papouasie occidentale, à la suite des excès causés par les événements à Malang et à Surabaya. Le gouvernement indonésien agira de manière décisive, conformément à la loi en vigueur, contre les canulars et les provocateurs, auteurs des actes anarchiques qui ont détruit et incendié des bâtiments publics, au détriment des peuples de la Papouasie et de la Papouasie occidentale.
5. Les gouverneurs de la Papouasie et de Java Oriental ont tenu une réunion pour examiner avec soin la résolution des incidents et l'avenir de la Papouasie. Tous deux ont exprimé leur profonde préoccupation. Le gouverneur de Java oriental et le maire de Surabaya ont présenté leurs excuses pour les incidents survenus dans leurs villes et ont souligné que les déclarations de certaines personnes inadaptées à des étudiants indonésiens originaires de Papouasie relevaient de leur responsabilité personnelle.
6. Maintenant la situation en Papouasie et en Papouasie occidentale sont retournées à la normale. Un certain nombre d'activités communautaires et de services publics sont de nouveau opérationnel. Le gouvernement ainsi que les chefs coutumiers, les chefs de communautés et les chefs religieux de la Papouasie ont coordonné leurs efforts et se sont réunis (par le biais d'un dialogue) pour maintenir un État pacifique. Les propos négatifs, les canulars et les provocations sur la situation actuelle en Papouasie peut porter atteinte à la paix qui règne dans le pays.
7. Le gouvernement indonésien garantit et protège les droits de tous les citoyens indonésiens, y compris les habitants des provinces de Papouasie et de Papouasie

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occidentale, de jouir du développement et de la prospérité. Le développement des infrastructures dans les deux régions de l'ouest indonésien est massif, le gouvernement provincial en Papouasie a eu la possibilité de gérer son budget et son autonomie (autonomie spéciale), le robinet de bourses d'études pour les Papous qui leur permet d'étudier à l'étranger a été largement ouvert, l'inégalité économique dans la société en Papouasie a été progressivement rétablie, l'application de la loi est effectuée le plus équitablement possible et non discriminatoire.

8. L'autonomie spéciale dans les deux provinces de Papouasie en 2001 permet également de mettre en place un système gouvernemental particulier où seules les personnes d'origines de la Papouasie peuvent devenir gouverneur, maire ou d'autres dirigeants. Or les Papous peuvent également devenir gouverneurs, maires ou autres fonctionnaires dans d'autres provinces d'Indonésie. C'est une action positive pour les provinces de Papouasie et de Papouasie occidentale.
9. L'Indonésie est la troisième plus grande démocratie du monde à garantir la liberté d'expression à chaque citoyen, à respecter la mise en valeurs des lois et des droits de l'homme. La soumission des aspirations doit être effectuée de manière pacifique et dans le respect du droit en vigueur.
10. La Papouasie fait partie du territoire de la République d'Indonésie. La ratification du peuple papou à l'Indonésie a été faite par l'acte de libre choix par la résolution n° 2504 de 1969 de l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies, où 84 pays ont approuvé, 30 se sont abstenus et aucun pays ne s'y est opposé. n'ayant pas été mis en cause par aucun pays, le résultat de cet acte montre clairement que la communauté internationale l'a accepté, ce qui signifie que la Papouasie est une partie indissociable de l'Unité de la République d'Indonésie de façon définitive et avec une forte légitimité.
11. En Indonésie, des ethnies mélanésiennes sont réparties dans cinq provinces : Papouasie, Papouasie occidentale, Nusa Tenggara oriental, Moluques et Moluques Nord, dont la population totale est de 13 millions d'habitants, soit bien plus que l'ensemble de la population ethnique mélanésienne du Pacifique Sud. Cela peut être utilisé comme l'une des bases solides pour améliorer les relations entre l'Indonésie et la région du Pacifique Sud, en particulier la Nouvelle-Calédonie, où l'Indonésie est le voisin asiatique le plus proche de la Nouvelle-Calédonie.
12. Les relations étroites entre l'Indonésie et la Nouvelle-Calédonie ont parcouru un très long chemin et historique, depuis l'arrivée des premiers indonésiens en 1896 jusqu'à présent. Les Indonésiens font partie du peuple calédonien et contribuent également au développement de la richesse culturelle en Nouvelle-Calédonie.
13. Nous espérons que les relations futures entre l'Indonésie et la Nouvelle-Calédonie pourront encore être améliorées dans divers secteurs, notamment en renforçant et en mettant en synergie l'amitié qui est mutuellement bénéfique pour l'Indonésie et la Nouvelle-Calédonie.

Nouméa, le 10 septembre 2019



Consulat Général de la République d'Indonésie

Asep Hermawan

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Source: Facebook KJRI Noumea (public page)

Petition from FLNKS concerning the support for Papua

with this, draw your attention to the news in West Papua marked by the acts of extreme violence suffered by the Papuans. Customary of human rights violations, the Indonesian State adds to its long list, when, on August 16, the police arrested around forty Papuan students, suspected of having soiled the Indonesian flag during their peaceful rally on August 15. No sanctions have been imposed, however, against the masked individuals who deliberately attacked the demonstrators, or against the 500 people who gathered outside the residence of the Papuan students to utter racist insults against them.

These facts have, on the one hand, stirred the anger of the population who denounce injustice and racism and, on the other hand, have confirmed the desire for independence carried by the liberation movements.

This news questions us on the positioning of New Caledonia, with regard to these abuses, which have persisted since the annexation of West Papua by Indonesia in 1962.

If, in the name of ancestral ties, support for the Papuan people is obvious for the Kanak people, it is just as reasonable for the citizens of this country who denounce injustice and human rights violations in Papua West.

For 39 years, solidarity with the Papuan people has been expressed in the independence network, in the name of the freedom of the colonized peoples of the Pacific. Indeed, no one is supposed to ignore the colonial history of the Pacific. Still, if for New Caledonia, the bet of intelligence transcends the construction of the country, in West Papua, it is violence, the slow genocide of people who organize themselves before our eyes in the name of economic interests.

Although our country is in a particular situation concerning its statutory future, we can congratulate ourselves, despite the internal political disagreements, for responding to the fundamental principles of a democracy, which allows everyone to be able to express their opinion, to enjoy their fundamental rights, which is not the case in West Papua territory annexed by the so-called “democratic” republic of Indonesia.

Following the values which animate us as French, Melanesians, Caledonians, citizens of the World, we request your support and invite you to join us, in a common impulse of solidarity common to:

- 1. Denounce human rights violations and discrimination in Western New Guinea;*
- 2. Firmly condemn the racist remarks of which the Papuans are victims;*
- 3. Condemn the abuses of the police and the Indonesian army against the Papuans;*
- 4. Condemn the injustice of which the Papuans are the recurring targets;*
- 5. Condemn the blocking of media and internet by the Indonesian State which wants to stifle the news of West New Guinea,*

6. *Support the request for the intervention of the UN Commission of Inquiry, which cannot go there to find out the facts,*

Also, we hope that this request will be the subject of a formulation of a promise of support on your part in the name of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in the name of respect for the dignity of peoples, in the name simply of the 'Humanity.'

Also, in response to the latest press release from the Indonesian Consulate in New Caledonia, which you will find in an attached copy, we would like to remind you that democracy, in a sense understood by the Republic of Indonesia, is nothing like that which animates our country.

Also, concerning the partnerships, of various natures, that the Republic of Indonesia intends to conclude with France or with New Caledonia, we strongly encourage you to assert as an exclusive and non-negotiable condition the respect of the fundamental rights of the Papuans on their territory.

Please accept, Gentlemen, the expression of our sincere greetings.

(source: <https://www.change.org/p/le-président-du-congrès-de-la-nouvelle-calédonie-dénoncer-les-violations-des-droits-de-l-hommes-à-west-papua>)

Lyrics to songs by Ardi Panatte and Anton Sisal

Cent Ans Déjà (Hundred Years Already)

by Ardi Panatte

Ils sont venus de loin
(They were coming from afar)
D'un pays tout là bas
(A faraway country)
Pays capitale Batavia
(Where the capital is Batavia)
Ils changent leur destin
(They changed their destiny)
Leur vie leur lendemain
(Their life, their future)
En partant pour ce pays lointain
(By going to this distant land)
Ce rêve fou, rêve incertain
(This crazy dream, uncertain dream)
Ils, ont su le mener à bien
(They knew how to carry it out)
Ces anciens, nos anciens
(These elders, our elders)
Cent ans déjà
(One hundred years already)
Il y a de cela cent ans déjà
(A hundred years ago already)
Ils avaient mené jusqu'au bout leur rêve fou
(They carried out their crazy dream till the end)
D'Indonésia
(From Indonesia)
Tanah air yang tercinta
(The beloved homeland)
Destination, la Kaledoni baru
(To the destination in New Caledonia)
Les, années ont passé
(The years have passed)
Avec leur part de joie
(With their share of joy)
Leur part de peine, de larmes versées,

(Their share of sorrow, of tears shed)
Des enfants y sont nés
(Children were born there)
Dans cette ile de beauté
(On this beautiful island)
Héritiers de ces aventuriers
(Heirs of these adventurers)
Qui ont su mener à bien
(Who knew how to carry out)
Jusqu'au bout leur rêve fou
(Until the end of their crazy dream)
Ces anciens, nos anciens
(These elders, our elders)
Ces travailleurs venus de loin
(These workers from afar)
Ils, étaient tous plein d'entrain
(They were all full of spiritlively)
Ces anciens, nos anciens
(These elders, our elders)
S'ratus tahun
(One hundred years)
Sampai kini s'ratus tahun
(It's been a hundred years)
Kau jalankan, sampai ujung mimpi indah
(You live, until the end of this sweet dream)
Dari Indonesia
(From Indonesia)
Tanah air yang tercinta
(The beloved homeland)
Ke tujuan di Kaledoni baru
(To the destination in New Caledonia)

Source: (Ardi Panatte - Cent Ans Déjà 1996 2018)

Matur Nuwun Simbah (Thank You, Elders)
by Antoon Sisal

Yen eling lelakone simbah
(Recalling the elders' stories)
Ninggal njowo ning diaspora
(Leaving Java for the diaspora)
Kanthi ngoyo tenan nggolek sandang pangan
(Working hard for clothes and food)
Ngrasakake kasangsaran
(Feeling miserable)
Negakake bopo lan biyung
(Delivering our parents to this world)
Koyo ngopo lih podo bingung
(Emotionally drained out)
Sedih njroning ati nganti tekan pati
(Extremely sad until death comes)
Priye ora ngerti
(Did not know how it happened)
Matur nuwun simbah
(Thank you, elders)
Kowe kuat nyonggo, senajan kelara-lara
(You are strong despite the pain)
Matur nuwun simbah
(Thank you, elders)
Aku ora biso mbales opo-opo
(I can't give anything in return)
Kangelan nggonku nyritakake
(It's hard for me to tell)
Kangelan nggonku ndunungake
(It's hard for me to explain)
Lakone wong jowo dikontrak wong londo
(The story of Javanese recruited and contracted by the Dutch)
Sopo ra sedih ngrasakke
(Who doesn't feel sad)
Nanging wis ojo noleh mburi
(But let's not look back)
Jaman kuwi wis diliwati
(The era has passed)
Hayuk bebarengan numpak kapal anyar

(Let's embark on a new ship)
Menyang kemajuan
(Towards advancement)
Matur nuwun simbah
(Thank you, elders)
Simbah kuat nyonggo, senjata kelo-ro-ro
(You are strong despite the pain)
Matur nuwun simbah
(Thank you, elders)
Aku ora biso mbales opo-opo
(I can't retaliate)
Matur nuwun Simbah
(Thank you, elders)
Pancen gedhe banget
(It's tremendous)
Pelabuhanmu kanggo anak lan putu
(The 'harbour' you build for your descendants)
Pandongaku muga Gusti Allah
(I pray to God)
Paring marang Simbah
(For Him to bless you)
Urip sing ayem lan bungah
(With a peaceful and joyful life)

Source: (Antoon Sisal 'Maturnuwun Simbah' 2013)

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Summary

Introduction

Based on an in-depth ethnographic study in 2018 and 2019, this dissertation focuses on processes of identity and community formation among the Javanese diaspora in New Caledonia; a French territory comprising over 140 islands in the South Pacific. Members of this diasporic community are predominantly descendants of Javanese indentured labourers, who were brought to New Caledonia by the Dutch colonial empire between 1896 and 1949 to meet the French colonial empire's demand for labourers. A century later, social researchers started to take an interest in studying this diasporic community (Roosman 1971; Muljono-Larue 1996; Maurer 2006; 2010; Adi 2014; Subiyantoro 2014; Allen 2018). The majority of these studies, however, incorrectly depict the Javanese diaspora in New Caledonia as homogeneous, rooted in the assumption that all diasporas have strong ties with their homeland. Using an extended case method by Michael Burawoy (1998), this dissertation reveals that diasporic identities among the Javanese diaspora in New Caledonia have been constructed and reconstructed historically as well as socially, and developed in rather complex ways. The formation and continuous reconstruction of a 'diaspora' is therefore a multi-faceted process and any sense of communal identity is fluid, fractured, and constantly changing rather than homogenous.

Moreover, this dissertation highlights the importance of taking into account the history of indentured labour, and how it is remembered, when trying to understand the complex dynamics of a diaspora. Contrary to identities based on enslavement history, indentured labour histories are seldom discussed and receive relatively little attention. Diasporic identities that emerge from indentured labour are often associated with shame and the desire to forget the past (Goffe 2014; Allen 2015). As a result, members of such diasporic communities often engage in selective remembering and forgetting, calling for a processual approach when trying to understand indentured labour, diaspora, and identity. Moreover, existing literature on slavery and indentured labour focuses almost entirely on the European transatlantic slave trade and its plantation slavery system (Frith and Hodgson 2021, 10). This dissertation advances the academic debate by drawing attention to the often-overlooked history of indentured labourers, particularly in the Pacific region, and by filling in the gap in knowledge about the Javanese diaspora in New Caledonia in Indonesian, French, and Dutch postcolonial studies.

Following an introductory chapter on the research questions, methodology, and theoretical framework of this research, four key themes will be discussed: homeland and belonging, history and remembrance, religious beliefs, and political orientations. These four themes offer a lens through which the diasporic identity construction of the Javanese diaspora in New Caledonia can be studied

and understood, and offer valuable insights into the tensions and paradoxes that contribute to cohesion as well as fracturedness; revealing the diasporic community's richness and diversity.

Chapter 2, "Locating New Caledonia: The History of the Javanese Indentured Labour Diaspora," sketches out the history of New Caledonia's indentured labour scheme, which laid the foundation for the current Javanese diaspora community. It describes how the Javanese diaspora's history in New Caledonia remains patchy and fragmented due to its patchy and fragmented remembrance. Many Javanese descendants in New Caledonia do not know their family histories because much of the information was hidden by their parents and/or grandparents, due to the shame they experience being a descendant of indentured labourers. Moreover, the history of indentured labour receives little to no attention in the French colonies and French history in general. This lack of recognition and fragmented remembrance contribute to the fracturedness of the Javanese diaspora in New Caledonia. Many descendants still long for recognition and with the absence of an 'official' shared narrative, the vernacular collective memory of the Javanese community in New Caledonia is constantly reshaped and contested.

Chapter 3, "Memories and Uprooted Identities," focuses on the different and sometimes conflicting recollections of the Javanese diasporic community's history in New Caledonia, which are both the result as well as the cause of its fragmented retelling. Much like a taproot, the first generation's memories came from a single root which then became dominant. Over time, however, the memories of the second generation and those following became more like a fibrous root, where the primary root is no longer the dominant one and becomes replaced by a large number of smaller roots. This complex branching of roots and thus differing retelling of the community's history leads to varying conceptions of 'homeland'. As Jennifer Cole pointed out 'memory remains a key site at which one can witness the multiple ways in which individual subjectivity is tied to larger projects of political struggle and historical transformation' (2005: 104). Memory intricately links the private with the public. Because earlier generations preferred to forget their shared history as (descendants of) indentured labourers, newer generations (who increasingly wish to acknowledge their ancestral history) have different recollections that compete with one another and demonstrate the fracturedness of the community's collective memory.

Chapter 4, "In Search of Homeland," focuses on how the Javanese community performs homeland-making practices in the context of their everyday lives in New Caledonian society. It discusses the community's dialectics of 'homeland' and 'diaspora' through a shared discourse, food, music, and the visualisation of Java. Such expressions of homeland anchorage suggest the formation of a homogenous community but, as this chapter will show, this concerns a myth. The extent to which 'their homeland' feels shared or fractured

differs from generation to generation and the very notion of a ‘homeland’ is not straightforward and fixed among the Javanese diaspora in New Caledonia. The varying and at times conflicting recollections and experiences of home(land) and displacement cause varying and conflicting notions of what it means to be at home in the diaspora. While some members of the Javanese diaspora consider Java as their homeland, others (often newer generations) consider New Caledonia as their homeland. Avtar Brah encapsulates such diasporic transformations of home as ‘the homing of diaspora, the diasporising of home’ (Brah 2018, 236).

Chapter 5, “Religion and Belief in the Community,” discusses how Javanese descendants navigate their ethnoreligious identity within contemporary New Caledonia’s secular society, which strictly separates religion from politics. Analysing the distinction between *croyants* (believers) and *pratiquants* (practitioners), this chapter demonstrates that religion reinforces the community’s solidarity and spirit of togetherness while simultaneously causing tensions and differences. *Croyants* identify as *Kejawen*; a Javanese religious tradition that merges Islamic, Hinduistic, and Buddhist beliefs and practices. Their parents taught them Islamic prayers, rituals, and offerings but they do not actively practise these. *Pratiquants*, on the other hand, practice orthodox Islamic teachings and forbid religious syncretism; prohibiting the blending of Islam with other religions. New Caledonia’s secular society is therefore more easily navigated by *croyants*, who do not strictly practice *kejawen*, than *pratiquants*, who live by strict guidelines when it comes to prayer times, food consumption, and modest attire. The differences between these two groups cause tensions and stir a silent conflict within the community. *Pratiquants* are judged for their (more overt) religious practices whereas *croyants* are judged for not (properly) practising Islamic teachings and religious syncretism. Everyone harmoniously comes together and participates in social gatherings but below the surface, disapproval and judgments are expressed through gossip causing a covert polarisation.

Chapter 6, “Politics and the Future of Community,” examines how the Indonesian state’s policy towards its diaspora and the political situation in Papua and New Caledonia further contributes to the fracturing of New Caledonia’s Javanese diaspora. It demonstrates that the Javanese diasporic identity is not merely about culture and memory, but also (and arguably more so) about political identity. In New Caledonia, tensions exist between those who wish for the country to remain a French territory and those who wish to gain independence. This is further shaped by politics and state affairs in New Caledonia. Most Indonesian consul-generals, for example, believe the diasporic members’ *raison d’être* is to maintain constant contact with ‘their homeland’ Indonesia, demonstrate unwavering loyalty, and serve Indonesia’s interests in host countries, particularly on defence issues. Such expectations cause tensions, especially when later generations experience stronger ties with the country in which they were born rather than their ancestral homeland. These tensions are further complicated

by more pragmatic factors among which France's financial aid program, which provides Javanese diaspora members with health insurance, pensions plans, and other benefits. Were New Caledonia to become independent, these benefits would disappear - making the diaspora members' national orientations not only about political ideology but also about financial safety and security. Together, these factors cause significant differences within the diasporic community, further demonstrating that 'the diaspora' is everything but homogenous.

Conclusion

Based on rich ethnographic data, this dissertation reveals that fracturedness is an inherent aspect of the diasporic condition. While the Javanese diasporic community may seem homogenous and harmonious to the unknowing eye, internal differences and conflicts frequently occur. Such tensions never take on antagonistic forms and are enacted quietly and subtly, away from the public eye, but cause fractures. Focusing on four key themes; homeland and belonging, history and remembrance, religious beliefs, and political orientations, we can recognize discourses, customs, values, practices, tensions and paradoxes that affect cohesion within diasporic communities. Fractures do not come about suddenly but develop over time and manifest differently in different social, political, and religious realms. What becomes clear is that 'diaspora' is not a fixed term that can be grasped and defined definitively, but rather comprises a fluid process ingrained in the social sphere that continually evolves. What is understood to be 'the diaspora' is continually challenged, and in this context mostly by the Javanese diaspora community itself through (selective) remembrance and varying homeland rituals, religious beliefs, and political orientations. Such contestations result in a diaspora community that, rather than being homogenous, is fragmented and in a constant state of flux.

Moreover, this dissertation calls for greater awareness and acknowledgement of the often-overlooked history of indentured labour. The *fracturedness* of New Caledonia's Javanese community stems from colonial as well as postcolonial politics and is, in part, maintained by the lack of historical recognition. This particularly applies to the Netherlands. Although slavery within 'the Dutch Indies' had been abolished in 1860, the Dutch empire continued its trade in humans through the recruitment of Javanese indentured labourers to supply their own and other colonial powers' plantations with a workforce. To date, the Dutch empire's involvement in these indentured labour schemes remains a blind spot in the retelling of Dutch colonial history and the Dutch government has still not taken responsibility for its displacement of tens of thousands of individuals. As this dissertation has demonstrated, the displacement of Javanese indentured labourers to New Caledonia brought about grief, suffering, and *fracturedness*, and it is about time that the Dutch government also acknowledges these colonial wrongdoings.

Samenvatting

Introductie

Gebaseerd op een uitgebreid etnografisch onderzoek verricht in 2018 en 2019, beschrijft dit proefschrift de processen van identiteits- en gemeenschapsvorming onder de Javaanse diaspora in Nieuw-Caledonië; een Frans gebiedsdeel dat meer dan 140 eilanden in de Stille Zuidzee omvat. Leden van deze diasporagemeenschap zijn voornamelijk nakomelingen van Javaanse *indentured labourers* (contractarbeiders). Zij werden tussen 1896 en 1949 door het Nederlandse koloniale rijk naar Nieuw-Caledonië gebracht om het Frans koloniale rijk, tegen betaling, te voorzien in hun behoefte aan arbeiders. Omstreeks een eeuw later begonnen sociale onderzoekers zich te interesseren in deze diasporagemeenschap (Roosman 1971; Muljono-Larue 1996; Maurer 2006; 2010; Adi 2014; Subiyantoro 2014; Allen 2018). De meerderheid schets de Javaanse diaspora echter ten onrechte af als homogeen, geworteld in de veronderstelling dat alle diaspora in Nieuw-Caledonië een sterke band zouden hebben met hun thuisland. Met behulp van een extended case method van Michael Burawoy (1998), laat dit proefschrift zien dat diasporische identiteiten onder de Javaanse diaspora in Nieuw-Caledonië zich zowel historisch als sociaal op complexe wijzen ontwikkelen. Deze voortdurende ontwikkelingen onderstrepen dat “de gemeenschappelijke identiteit” in werkelijkheid fluïde, gefragmenteerd, en veranderlijk is - en daarmee verre van homogeen.

Verder benadrukt dit proefschrift het belang van historische contextualisering. Om de complexe dynamiek van de Javaanse diaspora te kunnen begrijpen moet de geschiedenis van *indentured labour* in Nieuw-Caledonië, en de wijze waarop deze wordt herinnerd, in acht worden genomen. Diasporische identiteiten die voortkomen uit *indentured labour* gaan vaak gepaard met schaamte en een wens om het verleden te vergeten (Goffe 2014; Allen 2015). Hierdoor is er onder leden van dergelijke diaspora-gemeenschappen veelal sprake van *selective remembrance* en *forgetting*. Het bestuderen van *indentured labour*, diaspora, en identiteit vraagt daarom een procesmatige benadering. Daarbij wordt, in tegenstelling tot de slavernijgeschiedenis, de geschiedenis van *indentured labour* zelden besproken (Frith en Hodgson 2021, 10). Dit proefschrift biedt daarom een verrijking van deze onderbelichte geschiedenis, met name in het Pacifisch gebied, en vult een hiaat in de kennis over de Javaanse diaspora in Nieuw-Caledonië binnen Indonesische, Franse, en Nederlandse postkoloniale studies.

Na een inleidend hoofdstuk dat de onderzoeksvragen, methodologie, en het theoretisch kader van dit onderzoek introduceert, worden vier hoofdthema's besproken: *homeland* en *belonging*, geschiedenis en *remembrance*, religieuze overtuigingen, en politieke oriëntaties. Deze vier thema's bieden een lens waardoor de diasporische identiteitsconstructie van de Javaanse diaspora in Nieuw-Caledonië kan worden bestudeerd. De thema's bieden waardevolle inzichten in

de spanningen en paradoxen die zowel cohesie als *fracturedness* teweegbrengen, en onthullen zo de verscheidenheid en diversiteit van de diaspora-gemeenschap.

Hoofdstuk 2, “Locating New Caledonia: The History of the Javanese Indentured Labour Diaspora”, beschrijft de geschiedenis van *indentured labour* in Nieuw-Caledonië, die de basis heeft gelegd voor de huidige Javaanse diaspora-gemeenschap. Veel Javaanse nakomelingen in Nieuw-Caledonië kennen hun familiegeschiedenis niet omdat hun ouders en/of grootouders zich schaamden af te stammen van *indentured labourers* en daarom informatie hierover verzwegen. De gefragmenteerde en wisselende narratieven die uit deze versnipperde herinneringen voort zijn gekomen resulteren in een gefragmenteerde geschiedenis en *remembrance*. Daar bovenop wordt er weinig aandacht besteed aan de *indentured labour*-geschiedenis binnen de Franse koloniën en Franse geschiedenis. Dit gebrek aan erkenning draagt verder bij aan de *fracturedness* van de Javaanse diaspora in Nieuw-Caledonië. Veel nakomelingen verlangen nog altijd naar erkenning en door het ontbreken van een “officieel” gedeeld narratief, wordt het collectieve geheugen van de Javaanse gemeenschap in Nieuw-Caledonië voortdurend opnieuw vormgegeven en betwist.

Hoofdstuk 3, “Memories and Uprooted Identities”, richt zich op de verschillende en soms tegenstrijdige narratieven over de geschiedenis van de Javaanse diaspora-gemeenschap in Nieuw-Caledonië. Deze verschillende narratieven zijn zowel het resultaat als de oorzaak van de gefragmenteerde (na)vertellingen ervan. De narratieven van de eerste generatie kwamen direct voort uit hun eigen ervaringen en herinneringen. Door de generaties heen raakten deze herinneringen echter vertakt. Deze complexe vertakking heeft binnen de gemeenschap geleid tot verschillende navertellingen van de geschiedenis evenals diverse opvattingen over “homeland” (thuisland). Zoals Jennifer Cole stelt “memory remains a key site at which one can witness the multiple ways in which individual subjectivity is tied to larger projects of political struggle and historical transformation” (2005: 104). Herinneringen verweven het persoonlijke met het collectieve domein. Omdat vroegere generaties hun gedeelde geschiedenis als (nakomelingen van) *indentured labourers* liever wilden vergeten, hebben nieuwere generaties (die in toenemende mate hun afstammingsgeschiedenis willen erkennen) verschillende herinneringen en narratieven die met elkaar concurreren en de *fracturedness* van het collectieve geheugen aan het licht brengen.

Hoofdstuk 4, “In Search of Homeland”, belicht de manier waarop de Javaanse gemeenschap *homeland-making practices* beoefent binnen de context van hun dagelijks leven in Nieuw-Caledonië. Via een gedeeld discours, voedsel(tradities), muziek, en de visualisatie van Java wordt er door de gemeenschap op verschillende wijzen uiting gegeven aan het idee van ‘thuisland’ en ‘de diaspora’. Dergelijke,

veelal overlappende, uitingen van *homeland anchorage* (thuisland-verankering) suggereren dat er binnen de Javaanse diaspora sprake zou zijn van een homogene gemeenschap. Zoals dit hoofdstuk laat zien betreft dit echter een mythe. De mate waarin ‘het thuisland’ als gemeenschappelijk of *fractured* wordt ervaren verschilt al naargelang generatie. Ook zijn noties van ‘thuisland’ niet eenduidig en vaststaand onder de Javaanse diaspora in Nieuw-Caledonië. De uiteenlopende en soms tegenstrijdige herinneringen aan en ervaringen met ‘thuisland’ en *displacement* leiden tot uiteenlopende en tegenstrijdige opvattingen over wat het betekent om thuis te zijn in de diaspora. Terwijl sommige leden van de Javaanse diaspora Java als hun thuisland beschouwen, beschouwen anderen (vaak nieuwe generaties) Nieuw-Caledonië als hun thuisland. Avtar Brah omschrijft dergelijke diasporische transformaties als “the homing of diaspora, the diasporising of home” (Brah 2018, 236).

In hoofdstuk 5, “Religion and Belief in the Community”, wordt besproken hoe Javaanse nakomelingen hun etno-religieuze identiteit navigeren binnen de hedendaagse seculiere samenleving van Nieuw-Caledonië, waarbinnen een strikte scheiding bestaat tussen religie en politiek. Door het onderscheid tussen *croyants* (gelovigen) en *pratiquants* (beoefenaars) te analyseren, toont dit hoofdstuk aan dat religie de solidariteit en saamhorigheid van de gemeenschap versterkt maar tegelijkertijd ook spanningen en verschillen veroorzaakt. *Croyants* identificeren zich als *kejawan*; een Javaanse religieuze traditie die islamitische, hindoeïstische en boeddhistische overtuigingen en praktijken combineert. Vele *croyants* kennen de islamitische gebeden, rituelen en offergaven, maar beoefenen deze niet. *Pratiquants*, daarentegen, praktiseren de orthodoxe islamitische leer en verbieden religieus syncretisme; ze keuren de vermenging van islam met andere religies af. De seculiere samenleving van Nieuw-Caledonië valt daarom eenvoudiger te navigeren door *croyants*, die *kejawan* niet (strikt) praktiseren, dan door *pratiquants* die leven volgens strenge richtlijnen als het gaat om gebedstijden, voedselconsumptie, en bescheiden kleding. De verschillen tussen deze twee groepen veroorzaken spanningen en wakkeren een stil conflict aan binnen de gemeenschap. *Pratiquants* worden veroordeeld voor hun (meer openlijke) religieuze beoefeningen, terwijl *croyants* worden veroordeeld voor het niet (juist) praktiseren van de islamitische leer en religieus syncretisme. Iedereen komt harmonieus samen en neemt deel aan sociale bijeenkomsten, maar achter gesloten deuren worden afkeuringen en oordelen geuit via roddels, die tot een verholde polarisatie leiden.

In hoofdstuk 6, “Politics and the Future of Community”, wordt besproken hoe het beleid van de Indonesische staat ten aanzien van de Javaanse diaspora en de politieke situatie in Papoea en Nieuw-Caledonië verder bijdraagt aan de *fracturedness* van de Javaanse diaspora in Nieuw-Caledonië. De Javaanse

diaspora-identiteit wordt niet alleen gevormd door culturele invloeden en de verschillende wijzen waarop de geschiedenis wordt (her)verteld, maar ook (en aanwijsbaar meer) door politieke oriëntaties. In Nieuw-Caledonië bestaan spanningen tussen zij die wensen dat het land een Frans grondgebied blijft en zij die onafhankelijkheid ambiëren. Dit wordt verder beïnvloed door de politiek en staatszaken in Nieuw-Caledonië. De meeste Indonesische consul-generaals zijn bijvoorbeeld van mening dat de *raison d'être* van de diaspora-leden inhoudt dat zij in voortdurend contact met “hun thuisland” Indonesië moeten staan, onmiskenbare loyaliteit moeten tonen, en de belangen van Indonesië in ‘gastlanden’ als Nieuw-Caledonië behoren te behartigen en verdedigen; met name op het gebied van nationale veiligheid. Dergelijke verwachtingen veroorzaken spanningen, met name wanneer latere generaties een sterkere band ervaren met het land waarin zij geboren zijn dan met hun voorouderlijk thuisland. Deze spanningen worden verder beïnvloed en gecompliceerd door pragmatische overwegingen, waaronder het Franse financiële steunprogramma dat Javaanse diaspora-leden voorziet van een ziektekostenverzekering, pensioen, en andere voordelen. Als Nieuw-Caledonië onafhankelijk zou worden, zouden deze voordelen verdwijnen. Hierdoor wordt de nationale oriëntatie van diaspora-leden niet alleen bepaald door hun politieke ideologie, maar ook door financiële veiligheid en (on)zekerheid. Gezamenlijk zorgen deze factoren voor aanzienlijke verschillen binnen de diaspora-gemeenschap, welke verder bevestigen dat “de diaspora” allesbehalve homogeen is.

Conclusie

Op basis van een uitgebreid etnografisch onderzoek laat dit proefschrift zien dat *fracturedness* een inherent aspect is van de diasporische conditie. Hoewel de Javaanse diaspora-gemeenschap op het eerste gezicht homogeen en harmonieus lijkt, komen interne verschillen en conflicten vaak voor. Dergelijke spanningen nemen nooit antagonistische vormen aan en spelen zich onopvallend en subtiel af, maar veroorzaken *fracturedness*. Door vier hoofdthema's te belichten; *homeland* and *belonging*, geschiedenis en *remembrance*, religieuze overtuigingen, en politieke oriëntaties, kunnen meerdere discoursen, gewoonten, waarden, praktijken, spanningen, en paradoxen worden geïdentificeerd die de cohesie binnen de diaspora-gemeenschap beïnvloeden. Daaruit voortvloeiende *fractures* ontstaan niet plotseling maar ontwikkelen zich in de loop der tijd en manifesteren zich op uiteenlopende wijzen in verschillende sociale, politieke, en religieuze domeinen. Wat duidelijk wordt, is dat “diaspora” een complex begrip is dat geen vaststaande realiteit behelst, maar veeleer een vloeibaar proces dat voortdurend evolueert. Wat verstaan wordt onder “de diaspora” wordt daarbij hoofdzakelijk door de Javaanse diaspora-gemeenschap zelf betwist, onder andere door selectieve herinneringen en tegenstrijdige narratieven, rituelen, religieuze overtuigingen, en politieke oriëntaties. Dergelijke geschillen leiden tot een

diaspora-gemeenschap die, in plaats van homogeen, gefragmenteerd is en zich voortdurend blijft ontwikkelen.

Tevens pleit dit proefschrift voor meer bewustzijn en erkenning van de vaak onderbelichte geschiedenis van *indentured labour*. De *fracturedness* van de Javaanse gemeenschap in Nieuw-Caledonië komt voort uit zowel koloniale als postkoloniale beleidsvoering en wordt deels in stand gehouden door het gebrek aan historische erkenning. Dit geldt in het bijzonder voor Nederland. Hoewel de slavernij in Nederlands-Indië in 1860 is afgeschaft, zette het Nederlandse rijk de handel in mensen voort door Javaanse contractarbeiders te rekruteren om hun eigen plantages en die van andere koloniale mogendheden van arbeidskrachten te voorzien. Tot op heden blijft de betrokkenheid van het Nederlandse rijk bij deze *indentured labour schemes* een blinde vlek in de Nederlandse koloniale geschiedenis en heeft de Nederlandse overheid nog altijd geen verantwoordelijkheid genomen voor de *displacement* van talloze mensen. Zoals dit proefschrift heeft laten zien, veroorzaakte de *displacement* van Javaanse *indentured labourers* naar Nieuw-Caledonië veel verdriet, leed, en gebrokenheid, en wordt het hoog tijd dat de Nederlandse regering al haar koloniale wandaden erkent.