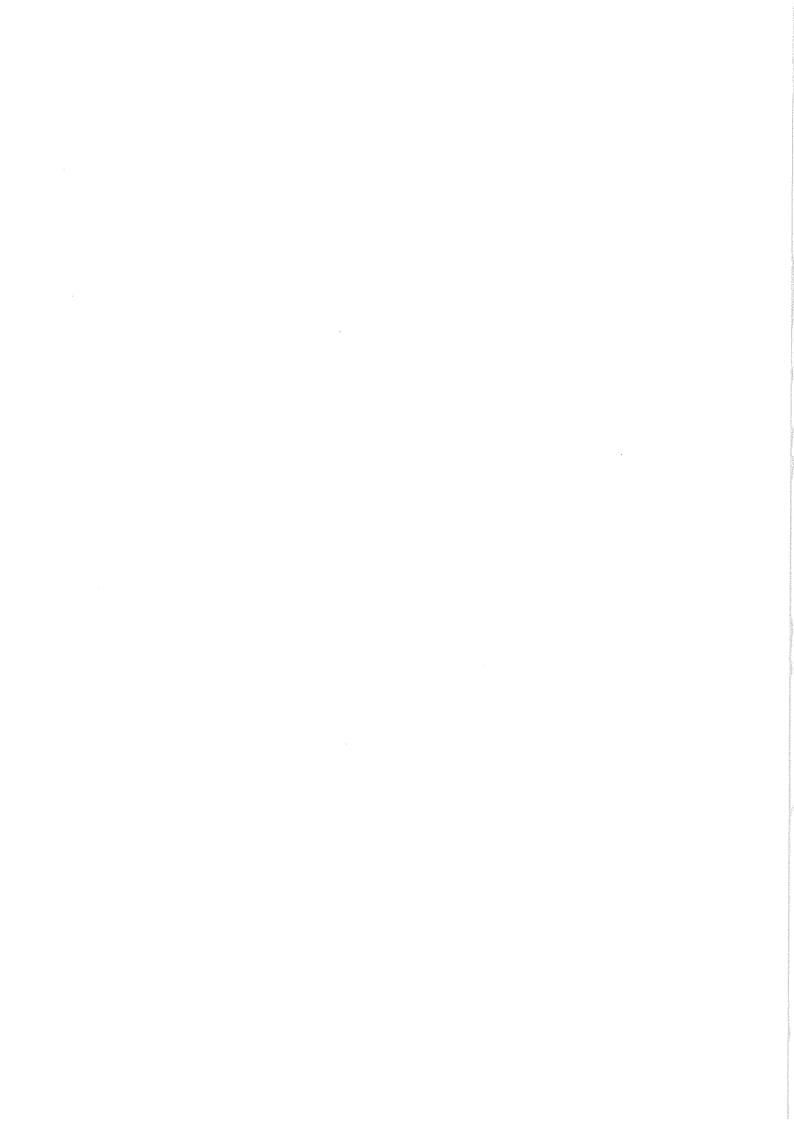DEFINING NEW DOMAINS

Identity Politics in International Female
Migration:Indonesian-Chinese Women
in The Netherlands

Tineke Jansen was a participant in the MA Programme (Women and Development) at the Institute of Social Studies, 1990-91.

'I learned to make my mind large, as large as the universe;
so that there is room for paradoxes'

(Maxine Hong Kingston)

        We cannot choose the country of our birth
yet still love the country, in which we were born
        We cannot choose the times,
in which we enter the world;
but we must leave traces behind
in our times.
        Nobody can escape her responsibility.
        Nobody can close her eyes and ears,
become dumb and cut off her hands
        We cannot choose the moment
at which we enter this world,
in which the seed grows which we carry in us.

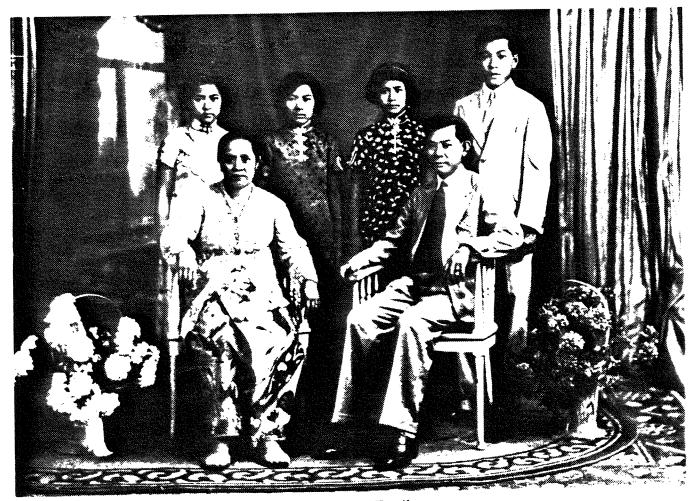   (Free translation of poem by
        Giocouda Belli / Nicaragua)

Visiting the fisherplace Volendam in the Netherlands
my grandfather and immigrated relatives – 1964
(photo family collection)

Photo: H. Gottwald
Original caption: 'Emigrants – Women and Children
(on the boat from Amoy/Hsiamen – China – around 1900)

Batavia (Jakarta, Indonesia) – 1935 – Indonesian-Chinese Family
my mother amidst her sisters, in Chinese dress
my grand-mother in Indonesian sarong and kabaya
my grand-father and uncle in western clothes
(photo family collection)

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

This research examines the dynamic process of strategic reconstruction of 'new' identities in the case of migrant women. Or, in other words, of 'defining new domains' by Indonesian-Chinese women who arrived at the end of the 1960s, early 1970s in The Netherlands from Indonesia.

Despite many critiques of Western societies, there is a widespread, persistent myth that developed, industrial countries have succeeded in eliminating poverty and have progressed in solving social inequalities. The existence of, among others, formal legal equality[1] and an extensive social security and social assistance system in rich Northern welfare states like The Netherlands, help to create this fallacious image.[2]

Internationalization of economies and of the labour force, and changes after 'decolonization' in the global political infrastructure which is based on the nation-state, have left their mark on the countries in the Northern hemisphere, though in a different way to that of 'Third World countries'. In the welfare state the result is the creation of new divisions and new inequalities, while socio-cultural, ideologically-based traditional inequalities still prevail. Expressions like 'social partners' in economic-political discourses do not eradicate opposing interests between workers, state and employers; heterosexuality is still an oppressive hegemonic norm; women's formal rights haven't provided them yet with equal valuation; colour, ethnicity and race determine still too easily someone's socio-economic position. International migration to white-dominated, Western countries is still too often without criticism and is generally seen as an improvement. In economic respects, as well as in terms of 'freedom' and 'security', Western countries indeed have a lot to offer. Yet, to what extent is this valid, and for whom? In relation to limitations of freedom and security, this paper will examine what the parameters might be for improvement of processes involved in international female migration from 'East' to 'West'.

The study is motivated by the need to find options and possibilities for individual acting[3] and strategizing. The permanent process of 'construction and deconstruction' in a 'new world' is far from a matter of free choice. Firstly, the reconstruction process itself has conscious and unconscious, visible and invisible features. Secondly, the new geographical location compels acceptance of changes in opportunities and limitations when meeting with the cultural, political and economic atmosphere prevailing. Thirdly, potential changes in class and in perceptions of ethnicity form inextricable parts in the dialectical process of reconstructing and rebuilding a 'new' female identity. Fourthly, in respect of the time and the age, demands

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[1] Even this is not completely true. In 1989 Dutch women lawyers brought The Netherlands to the European court in order to obtain equal rights for women in the case of a particular welfare provision. In response to this the state 'equalized' by reducing the men's rights.

[2] In the UNDP 1990 report The Netherlands holds the third place on the 'liberties' list since '...there is no full equality between men and women in the socio-economic legislation and as women do not sufficiently participate in politics. The same is valid for the ethnic minorities living in the Netherlands' (Volkskrant, 23.05.1991).

[3] The concept 'to act', hence 'acting' will be explained in the part 'concepts and criteria'.

and perspectives in terms of gender relations change as well. I am interested in what space 'acting' subjects have in this overall process of 'defining new domains'.

Research question:

Supposing that multiple identities are based in certain identifiable structures of class, caste, religion, ethnic or racial group[4], how can the 'politics of identity' be delineated in the case of Indonesian-Chinese women who migrated at a certain time to The Netherlands? What can we learn in terms of political strategies from these experiences?

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are:

I.   To understand the process of (re)construction of identities among women in international migration, specifically Indonesian-Chinese women in The Netherlands. In doing so, the study will provide a feminist contribution to the knowledge of a little-known ethnic minority in Europe;

II.   To identify and analyse the relations between women, ethnicity, class and state in order to build an adequate theoretical framework and to pursue further research on processes involved in international female migration.

III. To identify options and possibilities to act in the process of sudden changes in a person's surroundings from which appropriate strategies can be designed.

IV.   To obtain more clarity on the contradiction between women's development and development for women.

The approach

The research is based on a black feminist perspective. Feminist theories, taking sex and/or class divisions as the main structuring principles of social relations, have been severely criticized by black women as they assume an ethnically specific position. White feminist theories breathe the arrogance of a universal applicability, while black women were 'ghettoized', marginalized and made invisible. From the late 1970s, white and black feminists have engaged in national and international debates about the tenability of theories and the value of and relation between political strategies from a variety of positions reflecting their identities and political views (Carby, 1982; Amos & Parmar, 1984; Barrett & McIntosh, 1985; Leeman & Saharso, 1985, 1986; Loewental & Kempadoo, 1985; Tang Nain, 1991). The need for political unity among those

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[4]   This is slightly different from Chhachhi and Pittin, who talk about 'objective structures' (Chhachhi, 1991 and Chhachhi & Pittin, 1991). I prefer 'identifiable' as this word places responsibility on those who identify to name and give clarifications. This offers the possibility to 'negotiate' what is understood under 'class, ethnic group', etc. In my opinion 'objective' suggests too much fixed delineation of class or race, that everybody has to agree upon.

who until then had been named 'immigrants', 'foreigners', 'guest-workers', 'people from ex-colonies', led to the adoption of the political term 'black' in opposition to 'white'; an expression of oppressive relations parallel to 'male gender-female gender' or 'working class-capitalist class'. Although its potentially mobilizing character is not denied, 'internally' (among black and migrant women) the term has come under attack as an inadequate political umbrella for 'Third World women in the West' or 'immigrants' etc. Until now the problem of defining Third World women in white-dominated societies has not been adequately solved.[5] I personally opt for 'black', as I want to recognize the political, social and ideological force of racism in white society, in addition to its patriarchal character: a general, institutionalized male dominance.[6]

Chandra Mohanty recently seemed to have revived the definition debate. Inspired by Anderson (1983), she proposes naming the struggles in common instead of naming the people (Mohanty, 1991, p. 4). Accounting for the book title 'Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism' which she edited with Torres and Russo, Mohanty writes: 'I want to recognize and analytically explore the links among the histories and struggles of Third World women against racism, sexism, colonialism, imperialism and monopoly capital. I am suggesting, then, an "imagined community" of Third World oppositional struggles' (Mohanty, 1991, p. 4). As I feel comfortable with this position, my use of the term 'black' includes this 'multiple struggle' point of view and is the perspective from where I conduct this research.

Sources of data

The research is based on primary data gained from interviews, informal or casual discussions and other sources, and secondary data (literature, publications).

Primary data are derived from six cases in the form of extensive interviews with Indonesian-Chinese women. Large parts of these talks are recorded and fully transcribed. Other sources are discussions with a number of female and male friends belonging to the Indonesian-Chinese 'community'[7] (in the current

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[5]   In May/June 1990, during the pan-European conference 'Racial Justice: A Challenge for Europe in the Nineties' (in Chantilly, France) the women-section chose 'BRIM-women' as a working definition: Black, Refugee and Migrant Women, referring to those who experience racism systematically and structurally. The definition allows attention to different expressions of racism (Kempadoo, 1990, p. 46). The conference was organized by the Programme to Combat Racism of the World Council of Churches and CIMADE, a French oecumenical organization for refugees.

[6]   Indeed, I make a distinction between ethnocentrism and racism. There is only one race, the human race, and there are many ethnic groups. 'Race' as a theoretical concept, originated from Western 'science', giving strong ideological support to western economic and political domination over people of colour: a concept which implies the natural inferiority of people of colour. Hence, racism specifically defines the situation of unequal power relations by white superiority; skin colour is certainly involved, producing perceived differences that are negative in character. This does not exclude superiority and inferiority feelings and operation based on these feelings, in cases of ethnic oppression. Racism here is limited and reserved to one particular power relation, not necessarily the exclusive nor the primary one: racism often intersects with sexism and/or other oppressive forms.

[7]   I hardly come across Indonesian-Chinese people who refer to a 'community', when talking about their own group. This experienced 'lack of community' among Indonesian-Chinese will be elaborated on. Here 'community' is used for the pragmatic purpose of referring to a particular ethnic minority in The Netherlands.

European term, 'second generation') and a broad network of family and friends. Letters, photo albums and other personal material also provided me with information or provided an opening for discussions with the interviewees.

Secondary data (listed in the bibliography) can be classified as follows:
1) academic publications and research findings on:
   a. feminist theories on gender, state, ethnicity, identity;
   b. (international, female) migration and settlement;
   c. 'overseas Chinese';
   d. black and migrant women in Europe;
2) publications, questionnaires or other material concerning immigration in The Netherlands;
3) a number of publications from Indonesian-Chinese organizations in The Netherlands;
4) novels from Chinese women in societies dominated by whites (mainly U.S.)

Method

The six life-story narratives provide concrete and solid information about living persons, acting within given constraints. In fact people's own stories give access to the 'internal' relations they live and which they experience. The limited (summer-holiday) time (four months) determined the 'choice' of the women: who is willing, who is able? Therefore, the relatively regular age distribution of the interviewees (see graph in the appendix) was an unexpected, pleasant surprise. The age differences provide a variation in perspectives on migration, which allows us to examine a variety in strategies. The dialogue form of the talks aimed at eliciting and maintaining a full narration by the interviewee (as opposed to argumentative or theorizing styles). The method is based on the assumption that the narration of one's experience comes closest to the actual experience itself.[8] When I posed questions, these focused on what happened and _how_ things had happened before and after the women arrived in Europe. I concentrated on issues of school, education, and work (in the broadest sense).

The six cases provide verbal events of interaction in which the women expressed (often implicitly) their relationships then and now. These personal reflections are juxtaposed with retrospective insertions out of their socio-historical background. Often the women themselves mention historical events ('establishment of a new economic faculty in my town' or 'it happened in October 1965, when the coup took place'). Additional historical information was also needed, for which I resorted to socio-political and socio-economic studies.

When jotting down the life-stories against the background of the social history, almost automatically certain 'configurations' turned up. These can be seen as a bas-relief, showing a chain of lived experiences and daily-life events that are linked with the wider socio-political context, which at the same time informs

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[8]   Narration of biographical events gives the sociologist 'the chance to glimpse some of the motives and interpretations guiding the actions of the individual in question' (Rosenthal, 1989, p.192).

and guides their identity as an Indonesian-Chinese woman. For all the women, the chain of lived experiences and daily-life events are at once similar and different.

For instance, one woman recalls the fact that her father 'had lost his job through "guna-guna", as the Chinese owner of her father's firm was obliged to take an Indonesian business partner.'[9] As a result, the financial circumstances of her family weren't very bright and she had to leave school. Another woman explains that she never understood 'that discrimination, as many Chinese maintain'. She tells that her brother-in-law was indignant at the fact that an Indonesian was chief over many Chinese but she agrees with her father that 'everywhere you go, in each country, you will be a minority.'... 'So, my father said, "What do we want? We do not want an Indonesian name, but we want a good position". And he is right, because it is their country'.

These two women have opposite opinions and different experiences and are different personalities; the events took place in different places and at different moments. In the context of Indonesian society, however, both experiences of power relations between 'Indonesians' and 'Chinese'[10] create the women's ethnic Chinese identity as a range of varying experiences have constructed that identity.

These constructions of (gender, class, ethnic) identities are set against the wider social background, shaping varying configurations. Two of these are described as attempts to propose certain links of acting subjects with the wider socio-historical contexts in which they function. People act, make decisions, strategize within a multiplicity of power relations. As the main structuring power principles in society I consider class, gender and race/ethnicity. People are aware of these relations of power, although not always of the opportunities they have to resist or oppose them. I do not assume that simply being a woman, a woman of colour, a person from the Third World, or being poor is identical to a politicized oppositional identity. It is the way that I 'read' the life-stories, which should offer a glimpse of the picture of a 'politicized oppositional identity'.

Limitations

Talking to 'strangers' about personal experience is not very common among Indonesian-Chinese. Even among family members there is hardly a tradition of structured, organized sharing about the personal past. Maxine Hong Kingston's sensitive remark is illustrative: 'I cannot ask that. My mother has told me once and for all the useful parts. She will add nothing unless powered by Necessity, a riverbank that guides her life' (Hong Kingston, 1989, p. 6). This touching statement is the more valid when it concerns sensitive or painful issues. The experiences of migration are for many Indonesian-Chinese still not subjects to discuss with 'outsiders'.

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[9] 'Guna-guna' is black magic. This event must have taken place around 1957, when the Indonesian government introduced the 'Benteng-system', an attempt to redistribute economic power. Enterprises with 'foreign' owners had to take an Indonesian (non-Chinese) partner. All ethnic Chinese, regardless of their nationality were considered 'foreigners'.

[10] The two words are put between inverted commas, as they refer to created identities, not nationalities.

As I am a woman of Indonesian-Chinese descent and of a certain age, there was the advantage of common understandings and knowledge. Older women could refer to experiences that my family must have had: 'You should ask your mam', 'Your mother will know'. Yet it also meant limitations in terms of sensitivity for the authority of older persons, particular codes of conduct (questioning) and my own ambiguous attitude towards many Indonesian-Chinese. For instance, I can explain Indonesian-Chinese prejudices towards Indonesians, but I do not justify them. I also reject (although this is not limited to Indonesian-Chinese) the blind drive for material gain or an arrogant attitude towards 'have-nots'. This type of research limitation could only be overcome through the contacts with those women who were really willing to cooperate.

The exploratory character of the research does not permit generalizations or statements about 'the truth'. There are more 'truths', and doubtless other, or more 'configurations' could have been made. It is important to note that the analysis stays within the framework of heterosexual relationships and middle-class economic positions, since these formed the parameters of the data.

Concepts and criteria

I have deliberately chosen the broad term 'work' or 'activities' of women, be it paid work, domestic work, child care or other activities. The narrow concept of 'work' applied only to paid labour is a social invention (see also Beechy 1988; Macintosh 1984; Beneria 1981). Even when domestic labour (paid or not paid) is counted, the distinction 'work' and 'leisure' is socially constructed throughout history. In my ideal society there is a fluid border between 'work' and 'leisure' and all activities are shared based on equality. However, this distinction is part of current reality and women and men are raised with the notion that women have double responsibilities: in reproduction and production. Especially in (early) Indonesia, women could hardly have had a life outside a(n extended) family, whether married or not. If she is educated and lives in a family where people can earn money, there will often be servants who do the domestic work and take care of (small) children. Nevertheless, domestic work and child care are considered the housewife's natural tasks and responsibilities. Societal contexts shape women's role, and to express its geographical and historical specifities the concept 'gender' is used. 'Sex' refers to the biological woman as different from the biological man.

I will use the expression 'Indonesian-Chinese' when I refer to those people of Chinese descent, who have lived for many generations in the Indonesian archipelago. In this way I pay attention to the female ancestors who were from the islands; 'Chinese' has undergone a fundamental change and has become 'Indonesian-Chinese'. Chapter II will give more detailed information on this issue.

De Zeeuw's concept 'act' or 'acting' is useful, since it is distinct from 'behaviour'. The psychological term 'behaviour' tends to look for motives, for what is 'typical', hence the invariables

'behind' the human being. The concept of 'acting' in contrast looks for options, for possibilities.[11] Taking the view that people already act (strategize, function), the question is what people can do 'more' (sometimes this might be 'differently'). How and with what can people extend their acting possibilities? The concept 'act' emphasizes the search for variables (De Zeeuw, 1976, p. 106 and 113).

Development, organization and individuals

> Your status depends on your husband. You are respected when your husband has studied economy. But even if you are a doctor in economy and you earn your own money and you are not married, you are worth nothing. (Interview with Nydia)

Women's development is frequently described in terms of their enrolment in education, participation in the labour force, or inclusion in the modern occupations. But the picture provided by this is partial or sometimes false. The mainly quantitative data on, for instance, the big numbers of women in international factories do not adequately indicate nor assess improvements in terms of quality of women's life (Heyzer, 1986, Elson & Pearson, 1981). Nor does enrolment in (higher) education give conclusive arguments on women's further future. Women may have had excellent education, yet be expected eventually solely to wash the dishes and clothes for husband and children. Despite differences in regions, these expectations seem to be in both Northern and Southern countries. In Northern countries, positive policies like affirmative action to improve the (economic) situation of black and migrant women has also opened up many social, political and economic contradictions. Effects like stigmatization, marginalization and tokenism proved not to be necessarily to the benefit of the people concerned (SOVA, 1990; Robles, 1991). Sharpening concepts of 'women's development', therefore, remains a serious concern.

On the international level, women developmentalists and feminist movements succeeded in putting 'women' on the agenda of 'mainstream development', which refers to projects initiated by states and international aid agencies (Boserup, 1979; Bandarage, 1984; Tinker and Jacquette, 1987). Studies pointed out that the major approaches, targetted at 'bringing women into development', either marginalize women from 'mainstream development' (separate women's projects which often relate to stereotyped views on women) or make women instumental to development. A good example is provided by 'Engendering adjustment for the 1990's', from the Commonwealth Expert Group, London, 1989. The Group states in their 'Strategy for Change': 'Women's concerns need to be explicitly incorporated as integral elements of the objectives, content, monitoring and international support for structural adjustment. This should be done as part of a more general broadening of adjustment, to focus more directly on human needs and long-term goals for sustainable, environmentally-sensitive development. We are convinced that this is possible and will increase the efficiency and sustainability of adjustments efforts, as well as their acceptability'

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[11]   Reference might be made here to D. Kandioty's Bargaining with Patriarchy (1988) as one of the few articles that looks for differentiation in women's (individual) strategies within the patriarchal system they are confronted with.

(Commonwealth Expert Group, 'Executive Summary' part nr. 16, no page).

So feminists started to doubt whether development projects designed to 'integrate' women are indeed improving women's economic and social situation, and bringing them closer to equality (Lycklama à Nijeholt, 1987; Sen & Grown, 1987; Kandiyoti, 1990).

Strategies to tackle this problem of ignoring women in the formulation of the needs for development, include the empowerment of women through conscientization, political organization and popular education. Women, to whom mainstream development is addressed, should themselves become able to challenge the economic, ideological and cultural restraints placed on them (Sen & Grown, 1987; Lycklama à Nijeholt, 1987). The question then is often, what are women's needs, and, even more important, who defines 'women's needs'? This last question (posed in a rhetorical way) had been Third World women's critique on for instance Caroline Moser's gender planning proposal (1989) to distinguish analytically 'strategic' and 'practical' gender needs (presentation of Bunnie Sexwale and Nirmala Nair, Wassenaar, June 1990).

Unfortunately, literature on women in development hardly deals with women's individual search for development strategies.[12] Feminist policies and research often assume that group mobilization and organization form the best (or only) strategy for an improvement of women's position, both of the individual and as a group. Yet, also as a result of their social position, many women still choose individual solutions to change their situation. Even if group organization to enable empowerment of women is preferential or superior, a yawning abyss in terms of knowledge exists about the path from individual solutions towards (mass) mobilization.[13] It would be, therefore, a contribution towards women's development, if at least part of the picture of women's individual search for change in their lives can be outlined, and if something more can be said about woman's individual strategic potential in relation to what she considers her development.

General information about Indonesian-Chinese (women) in The Netherlands

According to Dr Lie Tek Tjeng, by 1967 approximately 64.000 overseas Chinese from Indonesia had arrived in The Netherlands, while at the same time 75,000 planned to leave for Europe in the near future (Liem, 1980, p. 253). Yet it is hard to say how many Indonesian-Chinese are actually living in The Netherlands. Unless all those of Indonesian-Chinese descent are prepared to participate in a special census, it will never be possible to arrive at an exact figure. Many have now Dutch passports while those who

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[12]   See for instance the literature of the Subspecialization course 'Women organizing for Change, Strategies and Struggles' MWS 310, 1991, Institute of Social Studies, The Hague.

[13]   A strategy which has recently been re-emphasized is (global) 'networking', probably more 'adjusted' to women's situation which tends to become increasingly individualized and isolated through 'mainstream development'. The 'network' concept emphasizes the establishment of national and international linkages and relations. See Instraw News, Women & Development, winter 1988, no. 11. Yet the main framework is still mass mobilization. Development of concepts on woman's development as well as how to deal with contradicting views in these remain neglected.

arrived after independence had Indonesian nationality. In immigration figures, ethnicity is not explicit. Concrete data on Indonesian-Chinese who arrived in the 1960s are therefore also not available from the Central Bureau of Statistics. This national institute only deals with nationalities or countries of birth and gets its data from lower levels of government only in numbers, with specification of sex, age and place of birth. So the 1960s did not see Indonesian-Chinese appear as a specific ethnic group.

The estimate of ca. 5,500-7,000 people as the total number of Indonesian-Chinese people living in 1987 in The Netherlands is based on data from Ellemers & Vaillant (1985), and Van Galen (Benton & Vermeulen, 1987, p. 7). Van Galen made a random sample in 1984 on the basis of the names in telephone books[14]. The problem here is the patriarchal and Western assumptions on which the method is based. In his chapter, Van Galen does not give any account of his assumptions in relation to family units (size, membership) or Chinese women who are married to Dutch men and are not mentioned in the telephone book. In any case there is no reliable information about the numbers of women, their work as housewives or formal workers at all.

When I started researching I assumed that in the period concerned, the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s, many of the Indonesian-Chinese women arrived in Europe as family members, as wives, daughters and sometimes as grandmothers. During the research process I came to the realization that this might be an unreal generalization, reproducing patriarchal notions of the dependent girl and woman. However, it would be beyond the scope of this paper to elaborate on the issue, on which further research should surely be done (but see also Chapter IV).

Taking into account the historical past of colonized Indonesia, the women have/had access to good education[15]; some worked in their profession before migration. The move from Indonesia to Europe meant a drop in socio-economic conditions for the family as a whole, and a period with many uncertainties regarding status, work and permission to stay. Ethnicity and nationality played roles in getting a job, a place at school or a house. Language problems caused difficulties especially for the children who were often forced to take a step back at school. There was a major change for women professionals who tended to give up their profession in order to dedicate themselves fully to domestic work and the raising of children, in which is reflected not just the continuation but a reinforcement of an existing patriarchal ideology. But the migrants were highly motivated by two factors: 1) the strong wish for better educational opportunities for their children and 2) an unbearable fear of violence and loss of life. So, any settlement in The Netherlands under legal protection was considered an improvement in living conditions, for an increase in social safety and security had been the main objective.

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[14] For his account of his method, see page 146 of Benton and Vermeulen, (1987).

[15] In colonial Indonesia, education was only available for the bourgeoisie and élites. Against this background, good education here means the possibility to attend primary school and the potential to go to secondary school.

Organization of the paper

The next chapter gives an understanding of the context in which the migration of Indonesian Chinese should be seen. Next to historical information on the migration background, the 'making' of 'Indonesian-Chinese' as a distinctive ethnic group is explained as well. Chapter III functions as an introduction to specific theories, in order to provide analytical tools to facilitate understanding of Chapter IV. This chapter proposes two configurations which show the 'internal' and 'external' relations of power in which Indonesian-Chinese women operate. Chapter V provides initial conclusions as well as some thoughts about the existence of Indonesian-Chinese in The Netherlands. As usual, this paper ends with an extensive bibliography containing books which have inspired me but which could also bring me to despair. Yet they made me realize that without writing, our histories will too easily be completely lost.

DEFINITION OF MIGRATION AND THE GENERAL CONTEXT

The presence and existence of these Indonesian-Chinese women in The Netherlands, who are focus of this paper, cannot be simply contextualized within the overall process of massive international labour migration, or treated simply as a direct consequence of Indonesia's struggle for independence. Their migration has hardly been noticeable and visible. The individually organized departure from Indonesia happened often in complete silence, without informing others and leaving everything behind (Oei I.S., 1983, p. 42-43). For the average Dutch citizen, Indonesian-Chinese suddenly popped up in the street[1]: relatively small families, buying or renting a house or flat. The lack of large numbers and registration as ethnic Chinese do not make them an obvious group of labour migrants, like Filipinos or Moroccans; or war victims like Vietnam refugees or those who arrived in industrialized countries as a result of the independence of former colonial states. In terms of class, the migration of Indonesian-Chinese people in the 1960s and early 1970s carries features resembling the flight in the 1930s of certain well-to-do, intellectual Jews from Europe to the U.S.

The double migration history of ethnic Chinese cannot be understood without knowing the turbulent past in which Asia's colonial history plays a crucial role. The departure from Indonesia in the 1960s and 1970s I situate within the conflict-ridden nation-building process of Indonesia but it was the colonization process itself which created the stimulus for the move to The Netherlands.

Nation-building on the inheritance of colonialism

The two decades after World War II were marked by an abandonment of the colonial ties by a chain of South and Southeast Asian countries, including Indonesia. Western colonialism, however, had not only meant the political dependence and economic subjection of a dominated area. Colonial hegemony assumed its character through the specific exploitative way in which economic subjection as well as cultural conquest in terms of gender, religion and race, had been structurally realized.

From roughly 1600 AD until the Japanese occupation in 1942, the Dutch East-Indies had provided the Dutch colonial power with spices and raw material for trade. The archipelago had also functioned as a market and given broad possibilities for large-scale investment in sectors such as plantations, mining, trade and transportation. Modernization and infrastructure was restricted to these sectors. Neither the large agricultural sector for food production, on which the large population had to rely, nor an Indonesian

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[1]   Yet not always smoothly: some relatives told me how the neighbours in well-to-do areas made inquiries about their background before they could live there. Someone else remembered how badly the children were treated in the street, which she analyses now as racism.

industrial sector had any chance to develop. Colonial attention given to provisions such as education and health ignored the local population (Pluvier, 1985, p. 14; Pluvier, 1979 - **in biblio: 1978**). This situation provided the material conditions in the post-colonial states for crisis and ethnic conflict (David & Kadirgamar, 1989, p. 2).

The colonial economic organization had drawn lines between ethnic groups, influencing also their geographical distribution. Dutch colonial focus on the spice trade had for a long time been limited to the islands of Java, the Moluccas and parts of Sumatra and Sulawesi. As a result, the early Chinese traders, who had been forced into the intermediary trade, resided mainly in coastal cities although there were also Chinese settlers living in the interior. Towards the end of last century transportation and communication systems improved and trade was extended to include raw materials. The Dutch controlled the whole area now known as the Indonesian nation-state[2] at the beginning of this century, and began to import new Chinese labour for work in the mines on, for instance Borneo, now Kalimantan.

Socio-politically, the old feudal structures had largely remained in place during the colonial period. Nevertheless, the Dutch had introduced new religious and racial politics through the new state structure, a mixture of 'direct' and 'indirect rule', and established gender politics on existing patriarchal systems. The conquest of the 'discovered' areas had been merely a white male matter: 'a masculine adventure perceived and motivated as such' (Connell, 1990, p. 521). Important state institutions, such as the colonial administration, auctions or education became personified by the presence of white, Christian males. At the end of last century, the colonial administration extended its civil servants with the 'mixed' Indo-Europeans, the 'Indos' who were also mainly Christian. Hence, white Dutch civil servants occupied the top level, whereas the Indos and specific groups of the local population (Moluccans) could be found in lower ranks or the army.[3]

The established racial structure in society was most clearly reflected in distinctions made in legislation. The state recognized three kinds of people: on top the 'white' Europeans (and those who were accorded 'equal' status and the Japanese), in the middle the 'yellow' Foreign Orientals (Chinese and Arabs) and down the hierarchy the 'dark' local population, with the connotation of being inferior (Anderson, 1983, p. 112). The arrival of the Dutch signalled a halt to assimilation of the Chinese who were separated from the locals and socio-economically divided. The effects of the colonial state structure on the ethnic Chinese are made explicit in the next part of this chapter.

The struggle for independence in Asian countries, including Indonesia, clearly related national, ethnic groups to specific geographical areas. Since the struggle (revolution) was defined in national terms, in

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[2]   Except East Timor, which was Portuguese until 1975 when it was invaded and occupied by Indonesia.

[3]   This Eurasian group came into existence with the mixed children, born outside marriage, of Dutch men and local women. The puritanical Dutch considered them a sign of sin and hypocritically treated them and their mothers with disdain. Yet from both sides (Indonesian and Dutch), the Indo-Europeans were left to their own devices. Only with the rapid expansion of the colonial administration at the end of last century, and because of lack of sufficient number of 'pure' Dutch males, the Indos as a group had opportunities to improve their economic situation through jobs as civil servants or in the army. See also: R. de Bruin, 'De Indo-Europeaan in de Geschiedenis van Nederlands-Indië', in: Indische Nederlanders in de Ogen van de Wetenschap, W. Willems (ed.), Leiden (COMT), 1990, pp. 26-51.

Benedict Anderson's words: it has 'grounded itself firmly in a territorial and social space inherited from the pre-revolutionary past' (Anderson, 1983, p. 12). This reference to land, combined with reference to a common cultural (religious, ethnic) past, excluded those (ethnic) groups whose claim on territory had no or not sufficient political or ideological support.

Indonesia fought her nationalist struggle for independence for five years before the Dutch withdrew in 1949. As colonialism had mediated and transformed pre-colonial circumstances, the success of Indonesia's nationalist movement, which opposed the dominance of the foreign ruler, could not mean a return to a pre-colonialist situation. Before Western colonizers had even seen a glimpse of the Southeast Asian seas, several ethnic groups had already mixed. Moreover, the import of (Chinese) immigrant labour in colonial times had also changed the composition of the population and its geographical distribution. Further, national objectives were more than mere political national liberation. The educated Indonesian (mainly Javanese and Sumatran) élite which was the motor of the nationalist movement, aimed at modernizing society as a condition to achieving other fundamental goals such as social justice. In this process, nationalist leaders referred to their own cultural values and gave preferrence to indigenous art and tradition. This was, for instance, expressed by the revival of Islam. In order to pursue the nationalist objectives, however, ideas, means and institutions introduced and established by the former colonizer (like education, political organizations and legislation) were the instruments (see also Anderson, 1989, p. 107-108).

Inherent contradictions in this socio-political process could not but cause conflict. For instance, the nationalist movement would gain strength with women's participation; women's education was therefore considered a necessary condition. Jayawardena stresses Western secularism as the impetus for the improvement of women's position: the Eastern élite was impressed by the high status of women in the West (Jayawardena, 1986, p. 14). Yet, the liberal rights of education were merely intended for the women of the bourgeoisie class. The male national reformers also preferred to educate women within the confines of a traditional patriarchal framework. Women reformers, however, were interested in emancipating women from certain social customs that were detrimental to them. Although women did not come to an evaluation or criticism of the patriarchal nature of society, their education did trigger off further demands for, for instance, suffrage (Jayawardena, 1986, p. 16-17). Also the liberalizing ideas of nationalism had spread further than only to the toplayer in society.

Besides these inherent potential conflicts, the newborn nation was left with a diversity of ethnic groups that were relatively separate socio-economic entities. The country consists of thousands of islands. In 1950, it had more than 100 million people, with hundreds of differences in ethnic background, of whom 90 per cent were Muslim, with three to five per cent ethnic Chinese. The first national(ist) leader, Sukarno, put great emphasis on the unity of Indonesia in the geographical, national and social senses and stressed cooperation between all classes and sections in Indonesian society. However, now that the limiting factor, colonial hegemony, had been eliminated, various dissonant forces got free play. National development plans, including state-controlled redistribution, were not gladly received by all groups and communities. As

the socio-economic diversities along racial lines kept playing a role, class and ethnic conflicts were bound to happen. The post-colonial state could also not meet the increased expectations in terms of social mobility for its ethnically diverse middle-class groups and petty-bourgeoisie. Especially not the aspirations they held for their children on such issues as white-collar employment, access to the higher professions, education and social acceptance. This led to competition, intolerance and conflict.

It should be noted that Indonesia is a militarist country, not only because the military took power in 1965. The army, that as result of colonial politics was never attractive for ethnic Chinese, saw its significant role in the nationalist struggle rewarded by a deliberate integration of the military at all levels in society. The anti-Western course in foreign policy in the first decades of Indonesia's independence was not appreciated by economically and politically dominant Western countries. After 1965, the military gradually re-established Indonesia under Western economic and political influence.

Ethnic conflict and migration

The defeat of the colonizer was coupled with an exodus of people from the colonies to their so-called 'motherland'. They were not only the colonizers, but also thousands of families and individuals who had showed in one way or another a certain loyalty to or affinity with the first group. The 'democratic' European industrialized nations found it difficult to accept this 'final-product' of centuries-long political and economic domination in their former 'backyards'. Nevertheless, thousands of Indo-Europeans (or 'Indos', mainly civil servants) and Moluccans (military personnel) came to The Netherlands. There was no overtly restrictive legislation to prevent 'Dutch subjects' from coming. However, many Indos in particular can testify from their own experience that in the early 1950s, when people could opt for one of two nationalities, The Netherlands actively discouraged people from taking up Dutch citizenship.[4]

While subjugated to the same colonizer, the position and circumstances of the ethnic Chinese group differed. The majority of Chinese could be found in trading professions. As a group they were and are economically quite strong, a result of colonial politics that had put them in the position of 'middle-man'. Chinese political lines were along 'pro-nationalist', 'pro-China' (Taiwan or Beijing) or 'pro-West' divisions; the majority was/is politically passive and/or not politically conscious. Culturally speaking, or in terms of religion, Chinese are Buddhists, Confucianists, Christians or Muslims, and some practice a mixture of folk religions. Generally, they had arrived from the Southeast coastal province of Fujien.

The cultural, territorial and class dimensions of Indonesia's struggle for independence, leading to ethnic conflicts in the first decades of the new nation-state put the ethnic Chinese in an awkward position. One reason was uncertain citizenship. The ethnic Chinese had always been at the mercy of international politics between the Dutch East Indies and China. China's revolutionary changes around the turn of the

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[4]   The Netherlands reluctantly received Indo-European and Moluccan migrants from the former Dutch East Indies in the 1950s. The admission policies were governed by long-established legislation and registration procedures, even now still used to categorize and describe this group of immigrants (Ellemers & Vaillant, 1985, p.13).

century for instance, had caused an inflow of new Chinese immigrants from the mainland coupled with a Chinese ethnic revival. China considered 'overseas Chinese' as their nationals, based on the principle of 'ius sangui', hence also including the ethnic Chinese in the Dutch East Indies. Consequently, the Dutch feared a 'fifth column' in the shape of the 'yellow peril' and created in 1910 the status of 'Dutch Subject' (in addition to Dutch citizenship), applying it to all who were born on Dutch territory. At the sovereignty transfer in 1949 the ethnic Chinese had to choose between three citizenships: Dutch, Indonesian or Chinese.[5] Many of the Indonesian-Chinese had not been prepared for this imposed 'choice'. For the majority it was not realistic to opt for a nationality. With a limited perspective of the current situation they had to make general appraisals for their and their (grand)children's future. Generally, it was expected that independent Indonesia's future was great and bright, given its large natural resources, strategic, geographic and economic position.

In contrast to these expectations many people experienced social insecurity, political instability and economic disorder during Indonesia's first decades of independence. Reciprocal hostility and mistrust between several groups also received an organizational basis in newly-set-up political parties and religiously-oriented groups like Sarekat Islam. Besides the generally prevailing feeling of insecurity, fear amongst ethnic Chinese was raised by severe anti-Chinese riots often taking place at the same time at different places. The worst (armed) attacks after the Japanese occupation were between 1945 and 1949, especially in 1947 (Tanggerang), followed later in 1957 (West Java), 1963 (Bandung), 1966 (North Sumatra), 1967 (West Kalimantan), and 1968 (Jakarta) (Sie, 1990, p. 15-16).[6] Cultural and social gaps between ethnic Chinese and non-Chinese were furthered by the dualist national policy of independent Indonesia, based on the inherited distinction between ethnic Chinese and Indonesians. A period of great uncertainty now gave way to one of insecurity as a deterioration of the Chinese's position became obvious. Citizenship continued to play a role. For the indigenous Indonesians, the national integration policy was and still is one of 'amalgamation', in contrast to the 'absorption' model for the ethnic Chinese. Indonesian culture is thereby seen as a new culture, based on various cultures with Bahasa Indonesia as the language of communication and Islam as the dominant (but not national) religion. Native Indonesian minority groups are tolerated or encouraged to retain their ethnic identity - provided that they accept national education and the national government. The 'absorption' model for the ethnic Chinese however, requires abandonment of the Chinese

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[5] At the sovereignty transfer in 1949 those who were born as Dutch-Indies subjects automatically received Indonesian citizenship; those who rejected it could opt for Dutch citizenship (within two years). Ethnic Chinese who rejected Indonesian citizenship without choosing Dutch citizenship fell back on Chinese nationality, based on ius sangui, which was still valid (Kwee Swian Liat, 1986, p. 10). During the Dutch colonial period ethnic Chinese could allow themselves the luxury of pretending not to care about 'ius soli' since the colonial government assured the group of a relatively clear legal status, a situation that changed after 1949.

[6] Also in October 1965, when the military took power in Indonesia a mass slaughter of unequalled dimension started in central Java, which extended in the subsequent months over Indonesia as a whole. Chinese were also targets in these killings which were however induced by a supposed communist uprising. The killing lasted until March/April 1966, with peaks in November, December and January; the most affected areas were Bali, central and east Java. The numbers killed are estimated from 500,000 to one million, among them 20,000 Chinese. A quarter of a million prisoners are estimated (Pluvier, 1978, p. 270-1). People in and outside prison are still persecuted today by stigmatization within society as a whole while some prisoners are condemned to death and are executed from time to time up till today.

identity, for instance by forcing them to reject Chinese names and replace them by Indonesian names; Chinese should transform themselves into natives. Chinese is considered 'alien' (a concept introduced by the Japanese, who compelled everyone of Chinese descent be to registered) and 'harmful' (Suryadinata, 1988, p.113).

Class analysis does not sufficiently explain the ethnic clashes between Indonesians and Chinese people (see also Oey, 1976, p. 128). The Indonesian hostility towards 'the rich Chinese' expressed in pogroms and massacres had no comparable hostility towards rich Indonesians. Explanations in terms of cultural and religious differences between the Islamic Indonesians and the pork-eating Chinese tend to look for solutions of the social problems by assimilation politics. Or absorption, as the Indonesian government does now. However, Wertheim has indicated the irrefutable historical proof that assimilation will not per definition end hostilities and prevent ethnic clashes. Hardly any group had been so assimilated as the German Jews by the 1930s. Tensions become problems, according to Wertheim, when cultural and ethnic groups come so close to each other that they start to compete (Wertheim referred to by Go, 1989, p. 43). More than looking for sociological explanations, a more fruitful area of investigation would be to look at the power mechanisms at work. However, the point is that neither a sociological explanation nor any other appropriate politics for instance is important here. For individuals who live in a permanent state of fear, social analysis can be useful for understanding their position, but the basis on which they take decisions is seldom one of academically derived explanations. Personal experiences of joy and happiness, fear and anger or feelings of loyalty and protection seem to constitute a much stronger impetus, for instance, to decide to move. As is clear from Figure 1 below, rebellions[7], financial uncertainty and maltreatment had led in the years after Indonesia's independence to massive internal migration, especially to towns like Jakarta and Bandung (Hugo, 1987). As migration was caused by ethnic-based conflict, ethnic Chinese constituted a great part of these substantial displacements of people (Hugo, 1987, p. 288). Reflecting on this past, the internal and international migration of Indonesian-Chinese at the end of the 1960s and start of the 1970s should be considered as forced migration, in fact, a search for refuge. The Indonesian-Chinese families who arrived in the 1960s and 1970s in The Netherlands were some of these 'forgotten refugees' (Hugo, 1987), but they were the 'fortunate ones' who could migrate overseas. They anxiously hoped or trustfully expected that the old 'mother-country', The Netherlands, offered the best destination. This confidence did not alter the fact that emigrated Indonesian-Chinese kept defining themselves as 'alien' or at least 'different' from Dutch culture. In order to understand that process and its implications for Indonesian-Chinese women when they migrated to The Netherlands, the next part of this chapter focuses on relevant historical transitions which created the Indonesian-Chinese as a relatively separate group with its own identity.

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[7]   The Darul Islam rebellion (1948-1962; first against the Dutch, but later against the Indonesian government) initially adopted a campaign of terror and sabotage against the government. As years went by the 'campaign' degenerated into terrorizing and plundering gangs who could not return to normal life in society. They caused much devastation of life and of property, economic opportunities shrank in the rebel-threatened or rebel-controlled areas as roads and railways became unsafe and as peasants limited their output of foodcrops in response to rebel requisitions (Hugo, 1987, p. 285-6).

THE FORMATION OF THE INDONESIAN-CHINESE GROUP AS 'ALIENS': A GENDERED AND RACIAL PROCESS

The origin, formation and existence of the Indonesian-Chinese as a community are patriarchally and racially conceptualized, as is the central issue of this section of chapter II. Male and female social actors, 'Indonesians', 'Chinese' and 'Dutch', have all contributed to the formation of the Indonesian-Chinese community, though the character of their unequal relationships with each other determined their respective contributions. There are three important periods in terms of gender and race for this formation: the beginnings of the community, the arrival of the Dutch colonizer and the ethnic revival at the beginning of the twentieth century. It is argued that power relations of gender and race were important determinants in historical transformation processes in which the community's identity was created. Yet power relations of gender and ethnicity play a role throughout history. Hence one shouldn't make the mistake of assuming an unambiguous historical order of these power relations. The task here is to indicate some important power relations which contributed influentially to the creation of the Indonesian-Chinese identity.

The implications concern identity and political questions that are valid for Indonesian-Chinese women until today. Indonesian-Chinese women are supposed to behave according to certain images which have evolved from the dominant ideolgy on what is considered the group's identity. Therefore it is important to know more about the creation of that identity.

The 'survival' of the earliest settlers

Social and historical studies situate the ethnic Chinese communities in Indonesia from the fifth century AD. The earliest traces on the Indonesian islands of settlers (traders and monks) from mainland China date back to that period. Chinese in later times developed direct exchange trade with the indigenous Indonesians who lived more inland from agriculture (rice and vegetables). The Chinese settlers were also involved in handicrafts, were arak producers, and had established pepper and sugar cultures on at the north coast of Java. The economy then consisted of subsistence production with small self-supporting units.

But without women the 'Indonesian-Chinese' as a group could never have come into existence, nor could have survived. Studies on Indonesian-Chinese do not deny the contribution of indigenous women to the establishment of the community, but further analyses of ethnic group formation generally assume either that men's and women's experiences in the process are identical or that women's experience as well as men-women relationships are irrelevant in social change. Women's contribution to social change is made negligible because history and social science mainly focus on 'public' developments like state and economic developments in the narrow terms of the professions and formal institutions, on wars or on technological and military changes.

Nevertheless, there are a few exceptions of research dedicated to women's contribution to socio-historical changes concerning Indonesian-Chinese: Claudine Salmon (1978), Oei Ien Siang (1983) and Myra Sidharta (1984).[8] To restore the balance however, these efforts need to be supported with a lot more information on women's activities in Indonesia's colonial past. Moreover, existing data and research on the Indonesian-Chinese should be scrutinized as the crucial question about women's participation in historical changes (hence also determining men's position in history) generally has not been posed. Further, women's roles and positions have been shifted in the course of history. The instability of the concept (Indonesian-Chinese) 'woman' becomes immediately clear when the three studies mentioned above are juxtaposed: the squatting woman chewing betel leaves in the works analysed by Sidharta represents another image than the Indonesian-Chinese Lilian in Western dress, known from post-war periods (see also: Chan, 1989; Ling, 1990; Yung, 1986). To analyse history adequately Joan Wallach Scott's suggestion to use 'gender' as a category is therefore adopted here. 'Gender' should be understood as the integral connection of two propositions; namely as a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between sexes, and as a primary way of signifying relationships of power (Scott, 1988, p. 42). Scott looks for the meaning that women's activities have in history, to understand women's position but also to understand history in terms of power relations. 'Changes in the organization of social relationships always correspond to changes in representations of power' (Scott, 1988, p. 43). With these suggestions in mind, what might be the implications concerning the formation process of the Indonesian-Chinese community?

In many of the best-known works[9] on the Indonesian-Chinese community, female Indonesian influence is represented by simple comments such as 'the Chinese settlers ... married uninhibitedly with the local women' or 'took indigenous women as wife' (Liem, 1980, p. 97 and 110). Liem, his sources and other studies limit themselves to sentences like this and refrain from further investigation of the development of the group as a whole. Women disappear from that moment from the pages to return (if at all) in one chapter on the family (p. 277 -297), as mother, daughter and 'transmitter of culture'. A particular traditional family ideology pervades Liem's extensive Ph.D study, since it carries the implicit message of women as dependent mothers and child-minders, as if women were completely absent from (food) production, trade, agriculture, wars, health care, and as if distribution, consumption and reproduction didn't exist.

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[8] Salmon, a world-reknowned French professor in Chinese and Malay literature, fluent in Malay, Chinese and English, described women's contribution to the Chinese community in the Archipelago from the early settlers. Oei is an Indonesian-Chinese welfare worker in The Netherlands and migrated about 20 years ago from Indonesia. She noted down life-stories from older generation women in order to reconstruct the lives of several generations of Indonesian-Chinese women. Siddharta's paper is an investigation into (Indonesian-)Chinese written works on the 'making of Indonesian-Chinese woman'. Siddharta is also Indonesian-Chinese.

[9] To avoid misunderstanding, it is important to note that Liem Yoe Sioe's impressive and extremely useful Ph.D. thesis on the Indonesian-Chinese is an indipensable source for any study on the issue. In this (critical) part I will often refer to his study (Liem, 1980, 626 pages). In relation to women's postion in history, the work is in no way an exception among the mass of studies on the Indonesian-Chinese. Liem's work may seem old, but unfortunately for this special purpose not outdated (see Oey, 1976; Suryadinata's work, among others 1979, 1988; Go, 1989; Sie, 1990; Mackie in Yen, 1990). To my knowledge no large, gender-sensitive study on the social history of the Indonesian-Chinese has been made so far.

On the other hand, there are current feminist anthropological and development studies that have extensively shown women's participation in all sectors (production and reproduction) and that woman's (unpaid) labour is crucial in subsidizing feudal, capitalist and socialist production relations.[10] There is no reason to assume that in early Indonesia young and old women didn't work in rice culture or grow vegetables next to males. But while there might be complementary agricultural production, inequality in terms of access to and control over resources like land probably existed. In feudal societies women can own property as well as be property. As access to and control over property is narrowly tied to sexual inequality, this dual 'role' reflects both her strength and vulnerability. This poses questions as to what kind of marriages the studies on Indonesian-Chinese refer? Are they arranged marriages, or loose unions? How about ownership and inheritance of land? Did women play a role when Chinese men obtained pieces of land to start pepper or sugar culture?

Both in coastal cities as well as more inland, many sources note the integrated and high positions occupied by people of Chinese descent (Go, 1989, 38-39). What role did women play in relation to Chinese men who gained higher status? Did Chinese men become translators at the Javanese courts, after they had learned the language from the women they lived with? The exploitative circumstances under which the 'conjugal unions' took place also remain unknown. It can be doubted that women were able to control access to their bodies or had any form of fundamental reproductive rights. In this period of slavery, the Chinese man had a number of women, depending on his wealth. He could leave her (and the daughters) behind when returning to mainland China, taking the sons with him. When a (rich) Chinese died, his wife (wives) could become property of the heirs or be sold to others (Salmon, 1978, p. 163). It is recorded that women actively participated in business. Women also had property and high status. However, they could be envied and deprived from social-political power by jealous males who did not accept being ruled by a woman (Salmon, ibid.; Sidharta, 1984, p. 5). Both Sidharta and Salmon provide information about Indonesian-Chinese women who were famous for their healing capacities and knowledge about medicines and political insight. Salmon's research makes clear that men not only communicated with women but also negotiated and bargained with them in order to retain their power in history. Moreover, among men themselves there has apparently not always been an agreement that they were always the best persons to rule. These uncertainties are indicative for new research areas. Although small, the glimpses of the past show that the presentation of Indonesian-Chinese man as the person who controls and exerts power over women is the outcome of struggle and conflict, rather than of social consensus.

In order to pursue the objective of male power, the Indonesian-Chinese community had a powerful weapon at its disposal: the concept of 'Chineseness'. Female Chineseness in feudal-patriarchal China meant subordination in various spheres of social life. As a daughter the Chinese woman has to obey her father, as wife her husband, as widow her eldest son. As an adult she was responsible for the household's productive and reproductive tasks. Chinese women's space was confined to the parent's home; they only left to go to

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[10]   Beneria succinctly makes clear how women's contribution to capitalist economy is neglected, marginalized or ignored due to prevailing economic male-biased concepts (Beneria, 1981; also Beneria, ed. 1982). See also Veronica Beechey, 1988.

another home because of marriage or concubinage. The axis of the family was the father-son relationship, taking precedence over the bond between husband and wife. The son's first bond was that with his parents and the worst a son could do was to die without any male descendant. Feudal 'Chineseness' meant also priority of the family over all other matters of the state. In times of famine or natural disasters it was understandable that male members of the family migrated for economic survival. Only they were entitled to do so. 'For women and their families the means of survival were sought in their transfer and sale into prostitutions, concubinage and domestic servitude (Lai, 1986, p. 14).[11]

Separation from the Indigenes

The Chinese patriarchal ideology was also reflected in the patrilinear identity concept. Persons in the Indonesian archipelago of Chinese descent were Chinese when they were registered with a Chinese name. Formal registration always serves the aim of controlling and exerting power over groups of people, since registration marks out the boundaries of a group, and hence creates divisions and separations. Registration, which was introduced by the Javanese sultans before Dutch rule, and by the Dutch in the early period of colonialism (16th and 17th centuries), reflects the conflicting interests of the rulers and the shift in power balance from the indigenous rulers to the colonizers. At the same time, the shift shows the transition from the concept of 'indigenous' woman into 'Indonesian-Chinese' woman. In fact this period marks the birth of 'Indonesian-Chineseness'.

To prevent confusion concerning the many expressions or labels given to Chinese outside mainland China, I give here these names and their meanings. Hua-chiao, Hua-ren or Hua-yi are used for 'overseas Chinese', but correct translations for the first two names would be 'chinese sojourner' with the connotation of 'enforced migration, duty to return and nostalgia for home' (Wong, 1989, p. 278) and 'ethnic Chinese'. 'Hua-yi' articulates China's perspective on the ethnic Chinese possessing a foreign citizenship. In Southeast Asia overseas Chinese are also labelled as 'Peranakan Chinese', 'Totok Chinese', 'Singkeh's', 'Indonesian-Chinese', 'Baba's and Njonja's' or 'Straits Chinese'. 'Peranakan' is derived from the Malay word 'anak' (child), so Peranakan-Chinese means 'child of the country' and is often used for ethnic Chinese who have lived in Indonesia for centuries, having emerged from the union of Chinese men and Indonesian women and established as an ethnic group during colonial times. 'Peranakans' were distinguished from those who arrived at the turn of this century: the 'Totok Chinese' ('fullblood') or 'Singkeh's' ('newcomer'). After a number of generations this distinction has lost its meaning of course. 'Baba's and Njonja's' (the only

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[11]   The reasons why women did not migrate in these early times vary from direct state control to patriarchal ideology: a) prohibited by the Chinese government in order to prevent groups settling somewhere else; according to the dominant view someone who leaves the country shows himself to be a bad son. b) The inconvenience for women of the footbinding practice. C) The families, the clans themselves, wanted the women to stay at home as moral pressure on men to return. d) The migrant's misery prevents him from bringing his family to the place where he landed up (Liem S.Y., 1980; J.Pluvier, 1979; Cl. Salmon, 1978, p. 161). Yet the state had priority and a strong harmonious family should guarantee a harmonious state. The imperial government considered those who left the mainland 'bad sons'. From the time that the family became an aim in itself however, the duties of the good son and family man could start to conflict with his duties as good citizen (Sie, 1970, p. 16).

expression with an explicit male and female exponent) and 'Straits Chinese' are the Malaysian and Singaporean equivalents of Peranakan-Chinese. As the focus is here on those persons who have Indonesian (female) ancestors, the expression used here is 'Indonesian-Chinese'. The phrase expresses the fluidity of the concept 'Chinese'.[12] I also want to pay attention to the female contribution to the group's existence. Compared with her sisters of mainland China the Indonesian-Chinese woman is often pictured as 'less docile', most of the time explained by the influences of 'the more bilateral character of the Javanese family' (for instance Sie, 1970, p. 24). This emphasis on culture is not satisfying nor sufficient, but no less salient for that. For in periods of 're-sinification' (ethnic revival among Chinese) the 'subordinated woman' is showered praise as the 'real Chinese woman'. The following case study on the Cirebon princes is indicative of a more material base for explaining about power relations between Indonesian-Chinese women and men.[13]

'Peranakan' (not exclusively meaning of Chinese descent) appeared in the records on Java in the 16th century before the Dutch arrived, referring to people with a Chinese father who culturally belonged to the Javanese. The concept Peranakan entailed an ethnic classification of the converted 'half-Chinese' male, who bore a Javanese name and oriented himself to the Javanese lifestyle at the courts. A Chinese, in contrast, kept loyal to the Chinese lifestyle, the klenteng (Chinese temple) and kept his Chinese name. The cultural border manifested itself between Chinese on one hand and Peranakan-Chinese and Javanese on the other. From the start the Dutch never liked the assimilative tendency between the Chinese and Javanese and took all possible measures to break the (cultural, social administrative) alliance. The Chinese were forced to register at the 'kapitan Cina' (established by the Dutch), whether they were 'Chinese' or 'Peranakan'. The Dutch even changed names of dead 'peranakans' into Chinese (Hoadley, 1988, p. 511). Everyone born on Java had to become 'Peranakan-Chinese'. Dutch colonial power and control was further exerted by forbidding the Chinese to serve Javanese kings any longer (in the army, as civil servants). In fact, the Dutch introduced the racial concept of 'Chineseness' and cornered the Chinese into the trading professions.

Subdued by the VOC (Dutch East Indies Company), the Cirebon kings introduced in 1720 their own regulations to counter colonial power. The initiatives were intended to avoid Dutch measures limiting Peranakan participation in the professions, although the main objective of the sultans was to stop a decrease in their 'manpower' and eventually strengthen their military forces. The measures of the Cirebon kings concern marriages, ethnic registration and debt regulation. Before 1720, when a Chinese man married a Javanese woman belonging to the 'cacah' (manpower) of a Cirebon prince she left that category and the princes didn't make claims on the children. After introduction of the counteracting rules, Javanese women of a 'cacah' needed permission from their owners (one of the princes), yet had to stay within the cacah, as did their female offspring. The boys 'followed' their fathers and became Chinese, and had to register with

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[12]   Indonesian-Chinese contrasts with the politically loaded expression 'Chinese Indonesians', which in the Indonesian nationalist discourse excludes this particular ethnic group from all the ethnic groups that makes up the Indonesian state. People do not speak about the Batak Indonesians or the Balinese Indonesians.

[13]   For this section I rely on data of historical research from Hoadley, 1988 and Winarta, 1989.

the 'kapitan Cina'. The Javanese princes, however, also introduced a registration system and demanded every Chinese in Cirebon to register at the 'kapitan Peranakan' in order to get the mark 'Peranakan'. From 1731 Peranakan administrators, married to 'cacah' women, had to remain under the 'cacah' owner. Also the 'destiny' of the children was fixed from then on: girls would stay with the mothers, whereas the boys would register under 'kapitan Peranakan'; unless he marries a 'cacah' woman, for then he came under the 'cacah' owner. In fact this was a reaction and protest against the decision of the Dutch rulers to turn over to the 'kapitan Cina' all Peranakans who were married to Cirebon 'cacahs' and in the princes' service; even those who had converted to Islam (Hoadley, 1988, p. 514). The Javanese rulers wanted to put the Peranakans in Cirebon in a Javanese subcategory, and not a Chinese. Yet the limits put by the Dutch on 'Peranakan' made it no longer attractive for Chinese males to adopt Javanese identity. They also experienced the registration as a reinforcement of the Peranakan-Chinese versus Javanese separation. The result was that Peranakan became a Chinese subcategory and no longer a Javanese category.

These historical events do not only show an economic and militarist power battle in which ethnicity is at stake, but also make clear that gender is an inextricable and crucial part in the shift of power relations. The 'Chineseness' of the earlier settlers could survive through the social creation of a separate ethnic Chinese community, whereby especially the registration of the Chinese names functioned to peg down what was left of the cultural 'Chineseness' of the earlier settlers. It is important to see that the women are regarded by people in power as biological reproducers of members of ethnic collectivities (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1989, p. 8). In order to exert economic power over the Javanese princes, the Dutch wanted to control those who via marriage 'traditionally' belonged to the courts, which would lead to the curtailment of the princes' male retainers. The Javanese reaction was to control their 'cacah' through control of the female group members. In principle, the women had been at both sides of the 'ethnic gap': as (mixed) Javanese and (mixed) Chinese. With tightening of the ethnic boundaries, the women stayed more and more within the collectivity. This might have strengthened her position in the community. Women's dependence and submission is great in systems with patrilocal marriages; as she will move into the family of the husband, there is no interest to invest in daughters or to give her access to resources. In the family of their in-laws, women have no point of unity and her only reference is her husband, while his position remains unchanged. With the opening up of the possibilities for women to stay in their family or collective, changes in inheritance laws or access to land ownership might turn to her advantage.

The gender dimension in Indonesian-Chinese history becomes also apparent in the way colonial powers have used women as an instrument in 'stabilizing' labour communities (with an unbalanced sex ratio). Women prevent men from crimes, domesticate them and ensure adequate and cheap labour. In 1622, when the Dutch needed to reinforce the trading position of Batavia they 'kidnapped from China hundred of Chinese, men, women and children' (Liem, 1980, p. 131). To my knowledge this is the first report of the Dutch colonizer bringing Chinese women (and children) to the islands. Lai noted deliberate British colonial state policy at the beginning of this century to bring in women with the labour force in order to keep peace in the colony (Lai, 1986).

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The first successful attempt of the Dutch colonizer to constitute the ethnic Chinese as a distinct community from the indigenous population was followed by many others, sharpening the divisions between indigenous people, 'Chinese' and 'Dutch'.

Ethnic Chinese were deliberately manoeuvred into the 'middleman' trade. They became the collectors of indigenous agricultural commodities (sugar, coffee, tea, pepper and tobacco) and distributors of Dutch manufactured goods and Asian made goods. This happened by rules and regulations, but also by blatant force. For instance when the Dutch wanted to strengthen their economic strategic point Jacatra, (now Jakarta), they removed Chinese sugar- and pepper farmers and arak burners in order to replace them by Chinese traders from Bantan. But Bantan was not under Dutch control and resisted. The traders were finally persuaded to move to Jacatra when Bantan suffered severe poverty after the Dutch had blockaded their city totally. The worsened relations between the Dutch and Chinese resulted (among others) in one of the most traumatic events in Indonesian-Chinese history: the massacre in 1740 in Jacatra. More than ten thousand Chinese were burned alive when the city was on fire, for which the Dutch were responsible. The hunt for Chinese had been started (Pan, 1990, p. 32). After 1740, harsh restrictive measures taken by the colonizer towards the Chinese increased. Chinese were forced to live at an indicated, marked place in Batavia and became subject to a strict 'passen- en wijken stelsel' (ID-card and zone system), lasting in several forms until 1926. Chinese were also prohibited from overbidding the Dutch at auctions and there were laws restricting immigration. The Chinese were (made) easily recognizable by external attributes such as the compulsory wearing of the Chinese 'konde' hairstyle and Chinese style-clothing. Chinese were forbidden to use Dutch or European personal names, to speak Dutch and were by law, from 1717 at the latest, prohibited from marrying outside the ethnic group. Economic subjugation was ensured through compulsory taxes which, because they were levied exclusively on the Chinese, could only further the process of alienating the Chinese from other residents of the Dutch colony. (Go Gien Tjwan, 1984, p. 4; Kemasang, 1984, p. 4-5)[14].

Indonesian-Chinese were also contained as a group due to immigration restrictions of both the colonial and Chinese imperial government. During the greater part of the colonial period the Chinese were not permitted to leave China and those who had not come back by 1726 were not allowed to enter the mainland. Officially the ban on returning was lifted in 1898.

However, the Dutch recognized their need for the Chinese trading minority. During times when the economy broke down as a result of too harsh measures which caused a severe obstruction of Chinese economic activities, the measures were eased and the Dutch approached the Chinese with more benevolence

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[14]   Kemasang carried out detailed research on the Peranakan-Chinese in the 18th century and writes in detail about these restrictive measures taken by the Dutch in several articles. I draw this information from his English language unpublished article, which was later translated into Dutch for Indonesia Feiten en Meningen IFM, December, 1984. Kemasang's main argument (which he works out in a dissertation) is that in Java, the Chinese had always been the most suitable community for the purposes of a corporate pariahdom. Possessing neither religion nor any other form of ideology to proselytize, they had always been politically marginal. The essential characteristic of pariah groups, despite the spatial and temporal distance which separates them, is the fact that they are created and maintained by the exploiting classes and, as such, are wholly dependent on the sufferance of the latter (Kemasang, 1984, p. 3).

and friendliness. This seductive policy with rewards in the form of Chinese control over harbours and parts of the community divided the Chinese from the Indonesians of whom the majority worked in agriculture. Colonial state interventions in the agrarian sector furthered alienation. By the end of the nineteenth century the Javanese agrarian structure had been made inferior to the Dutch economy. The introduction of new agrarian legislation in the 1870s prohibited Chinese from buying land, weakened the indigenous people's position, yet provided the colonizer with convenient investment conditions. As mentioned earlier, the state's divide-and-rule policy was most clearly expressed in the legislative system, keeping the three groups separated for court: the Europeans, the Foreign Orientals and the indigenous population.

Chineseness of Indonesian-Chinese women

At the end of the 19th century revolutionary tendencies in mainland China regarding democracy and modernization found a footing in the Indonesian-Chinese community that felt oppressed and limited in its social and economic potential. Restrictions in education and the prevailing ID-card and zone system were important reasons for opposing the colonial ruler. Hence, China's renewed interest for its nationals overseas met with a response in the community's firm reorientation to Chinese values, expressed in among others the establishment of the Chinese association with its own school, the Tiong Hua Hwe Koan (THHK) in 1900. The period was marked by an economic transition whereby the colonies became important for not only profitable consumption goods, but also for the raw materials they offered the new Western industries. The capitalist expansion demanded a big labour force and to cater for this thousands of Chinese men and women from the mainland were transported to plantations and (tin) mines. They generally belonged to the poorer strata of the Chinese society. Next to the 'old' Indonesian-Chinese communities appeared communities of 'totok' Chinese who spoke Chinese and adhered to many Chinese habits which had been lost and forgotten by the Indonesian-Chinese. The focus here is limited to the colonial state's reaction to Chinese nationalist feelings and the ensuing ethnic revival and to 'Chinese women's behaviour' as subject in the community's internal discussions.

The import of female Chinese immigrants within the total labour force was intended to control the labour force and keep peace and order in the colony, as pointed out above (Lai, 1986). But the state's two aims, capital accumulation and social control, started to conflict. The recently-imported labour force, needed to meet the first demand, began to stimulate demands among the Indonesian-Chinese group that could culturally identify with them. The two Chinese groups didn't really mix and had different socio-economic status, yet the separatist Dutch policy 'had made the Indonesian-Chinese more Chinese than Indonesian' (Liem, 1980, p. 355). In the anti-colonialist, Chinese nationalist movement totok Chinese and Indonesian-Chinese could cooperate. But the effect of the creation of the new status 'Dutch subject' in 1910 (out of fear for a Chinese 'fifth column') was, that on a formal level the two groups were split politically. Dutch subjects were required to do military service for the colony and were allowed as political representatives in city councils. Subjectively this caught Indonesian-Chinese in a dilemma, since they could theoretically have

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become involved in a war against China. When Chinese were involved in group conflicts all ethnic Chinese united; nevertheless the totoks stayed foreigners. At the same time, all Chinese were made equal with the indigenous population under criminal law. Despite efforts to enhance the status of the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia, the Chinese movement never achieved its aim of being formally equal with the Europeans. The groups also never really mixed. A cohesive ethnic group formation involves the downplay of other internal divisions like class or caste. And class divisions had been created earlier internally through the appointments of 'captain of Cina' by the Dutch. Moreover, racist notions on the 'unscrupulous, mean and a-social Chinese' had found their way in the heads of Indonesian-Chinese. Among the latter there were elements who considered themselves 'better and higher' than the totok Chinese (Go, 1971, p. 54).

To counter the strength of the Chinese movement and especially the popularity of the THHK schools, the Dutch established in 1908 the HCS (Hollandsch-Chinese School), Dutch Chinese schools. These Dutch medium schools ('Chinese lessons were given in the tropical hot afternoon', one of my aunts once told me) had the same curriculum as Dutch schools. Initially, the HCS was attended by few Chinese since the fees were higher than at the THHK schools and the restrictions of movement for Chinese were still in force. Compared with the China-oriented THHK schools, they promised a better future for the Indonesian-Chinese, since they led on to the secondary education institutes and possibilities to attend Dutch universities opened. When the restrictions were lifted (in order to ease Western capitalist expansion that needed the Chinese to penetrate the country) and the fees were lowered in the 1920s, the HCS overtook popularity from THHK.

Western-type education allowed the Dutch colonial ruler to widen the gap within the Chinese community and recruit a Western-educated Indonesian-Chinese élite. But although certainly Western ideology could find its way to the Indonesian-Chinese because of the 'peculiar intimacy between dominators and dominated', Dutch 'grip' on ethnic Chinese could never be total. The formal distinctions of the racial society eventually set the limits of the cultural transformation process: Chinese would never be equal to Europeans, not on a formal nor ideological level. At the same time, this group was alienated from its own ethnic background through the construction of class differences. To paraphrase Nancy Rose Hunt: for élite Chinese, measures designed to seduce their participation and cooperation were as salient as forms of distancing from the colonizer. Although targeted for special attention and inducements through the HCS, their distinct place in the colonial racist hierarchy was ultimately reinforced, even as their élite position among the other ethnic Chinese was simultaneously delineated (Hunt, 1990, p. 449-450).

For the Indonesian-Chinese community, women had to become Chinese (again). As pointed out earlier, women's education in the Indonesia of this century was associated with nationalism. Yet not only was the improvement of women's position limited to bourgeois women, the aim of education also didn't go beyond patriarchal ideological notions of the family (Jayawardena, 1986, p. 12). The newly-independent country needed educated wives and mothers. Concerning the ethnic Chinese community, these patriarchal ideological strongholds were present as well. The increased amount of Chinese literature translated into Malay, as well as magazines, articles and books, that appeared in the early decades of this century, reflect

the community's attempts to control 'their' women by teaching them lessons on 'real Chineseness' (Sidharta, 1984). 'Typical Chineseness' included marrying within the community, very restricted sexual behaviour, paying respect to parents and the old rules of obeying father, husband and son. Education was an issue of conflict, as was engagement in social activities outside the house (Liem Sam Tjian-Ong, 1936). But foot binding, for instance, was never introduced. Also during the Japanese occupation of 1942-45, some people speak about an 'ethnic revival' among the Chinese caused by the closing of the Dutch schools and the Chinese-Japanese war.

The upbringing of the women in this study took place in the years after the 'lessons in Chineseness'. They couldn't escape most of the gender-associated constraints, yet for none of the interviewed women was there a question of whether or not they should have primary, secondary or even higher formal education. Obviously the family's socio-economic position plays a major role in realizing choice.[15] Remarkably enough, all women especially emphasized the progressive and open-minded characters of their fathers or their insistence on study and learning. They were the persons the women could talk to and discuss with, from whom they got a bike, and learned to repair it; but who also determined or strongly influenced their school (medium): Chinese, Chinese-Dutch, Dutch, English or Indonesian.

> I first went to Chinese school, when my grandfather was still alive. A Chinese must learn Chinese, was his opinion. After he passed away my mother considered the nun's school better because of future perspectives. My father had gone to a Dutch-Chinese school, so he agreed. ... Halfway through my secondary school my father sent me to Java, since he thought education there is better. (Lies, born 1938)

> I never learned that technical science wouldn't be proper for girls. In this sense I am not educated differently from my brother. My father taught us all how to repair your bicycle. We all had dirty hands. (Tsui, born 1946)

This picture differs somewhat from that of Liem Sam Tjiang-Ong, according to whom the emancipation of Indonesian-Chinese women in the 1920s and 1930s was one that had been supported and assisted by mainly male community members of the same generation (Liem, 1936, p. 15).

The (Western-) educated Indonesian-Chinese woman was bound to experience contradictions in terms of ethnicity as well as gender. The 'real' Chinese woman speaks Chinese, wears Chinese clothes and stays in the background; but she is also illiterate and only occupied with 'domestic' affairs. Conflicts in relation to gender might arise as knowledge and skills became accessible to women, and gave them, in principle, opportunities to become intellectually equal to men. These conflicting demands of Indonesian-

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[15]   Rich Chinese and indigenous people could buy a position 'equal' ('gelijkgestelden') to the colonizer. This generally entailed an equal legal position under criminal law. Colonial arbitrariness and racism pursuaded people to undertake these 'improvements' of their status. It entitled them to enter the Dutch classes. None of the women in my research seemed to have come from a family with this status.

Chinese women's development have made it possible to pit women against women as they are also to play the role of 'transmitters of culture'.

> My father was very progressive, my mother was of course very patient ... my father gave me a bicycle, although my mother didn't like it. 'Girls just don't cycle,' she said, 'look at your (female) cousins.' (Swan, born 1918)

Women could be assessed then along the measuring-rod between the two polars 'traditional' and 'modern'. Or translated into ethnic terms: 'still Chinese' or 'already Westernized', according to which Indonesian-Chinese women are judged up till now. It becomes crucial for Indonesian-Chinese women to recognize who is/are using these terms and in whose interest appeals to 'traditional Chineseness' or accusations of 'too Westernized' are mobilized. The underlying assumption is that there is something fixed called 'Chineseness'. It should be clear that there is no stability in terms of culture and that those who suggest this are doing so to legitimize the authority of tradition as a tool in their own interest (see also Chow, 1991, p. 89).

Conclusion

This section was occupied with criticizing existing historiography and proposed the re-reading data and research. It also posed (re)new(ed) questions in relation to women's role in the formation of the Indonesian-Chinese community. In fact, history shows how much ethnic identity, as well as Indonesian-Chinese womanhood has been an outcome of a social process of negotiation, bargaining and struggle.

Chapter III

RELATIONS, NETWORK AND OPPOSITION: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The previous chapter indicated historical factors leading to the creation of the Indonesian-Chinese as a distinct, socio-economic, ethnic formation in colonial Indonesia. Despite internal class and other divisions (like religion) this group was seen as constituting a whole by the political powerholders but at the same time internal differentiation was sharpened by the opportunities provided by the colonial education policy. During colonialism some groups within the Chinese community became strongly attached to the colonizer. This process lacked open coercion and resistance yet can be analysed in terms of its inherent power relations of class and race. Education as a state institution facilitated this unavoidable process which enmeshes individuals in an all-encompassing network of which the acting subject itself was part.

As my perspective shifts here from a bird's eye view over history to the acting individual, this chapter will provide some theoretical notions to analyse Indonesian-Chinese women's reality after migration.

Moving women: female migration

Thanks to women's and feminist movements, genuine attention on women has reached the desks of researchers on migration.[1] This academic attention for women in migration, reflected in the growing number of national and international studies since the 1970s, also involves two kind of problems. One is the danger that knowledge about female migration can make women instrumental in migration politics of state and capital. The starting point for feminist concern has been dissatisfaction with mainstream migration studies because of their male bias. As the male migrant was and still is the central focus of research, women cannot be others than non-migrants or passive followers. Focus on women migrants underscores these ideas, and makes clear at least two important points: women migrate independently in substantial numbers and women have an active contribution in the migration process of (parts of) the family (Wilson, 1978; IMR, 1984; Morokvasic, 1984; James, 1985; Kay, 1987; APDC, 1989). As well as men, labour migration (national and international) involves also thousands if not millions of women (IMR, 1984; Pessar, 1984; Pittin, 1984; APDC, 1989, development research on Asia, Africa and Latin America as well as research on

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[1]   To my knowledge this cannot yet be said about literature on refugees which is still mainly concerned with state (resettlement and aid) policies. Unfortunately, time constraints do not allow a thorough study of this subject. I mostly rely on Rogge, 1987, Camus, 1989 and Loescher, 1989. In The Netherlands, a section of the Vereniging voor Vluchtelingen (Dutch Association for Refugees) in cooperation with women lawyers, is campaigning for international recognition of women as a refugee category on its own. Because of their social status in society women are vulnerable as women; this is reflected, for instance, in the ever-present threat of rape or other sexual harrassments. In 1985, a Dutch court passed the judgement which considers Iranian women as a social group with refugee status, as Iranian women can be persecuted for not complying with the demanded social- religious norms. This is remarkable, since the time-worn conflict between Christianity and Islam can be involved (Van Blokland, 1990, p. 34). My assessment that substantial gender- and race-sensitive qualitative data on migration is urgently needed is based on scrutinizing the ISS library shelves.

immigrants in Europe).

In studies on women's participation in family migration, women are only seen in terms of their relationship with other family members and their relationship to the problems associated with migration but not as individuals in their own right. Women encounter more or different problems than other family members. The most significant conclusion is that women manage to live with these mainly family-related problems and can overcome them (see IMR, 1984). Women's central, facilitating role within the family has been exploited in the case of the Chinese families that were transported to Southeast Asia by the colonial power. Similarly, when in the 1950s many Dutch people considered looking for a better economic future in Aorotorea (New Zealand), Australia and Canada, the Dutch authorities gave serious attention to women's role as it was clear that women determine whether emigration will be successful or not. Dutch government publications from that time are very informative, as they are dedicated to the question of how to approach wives and 'handle' them in order to ease decision making as well as to guarantee a smooth adaptation to the new life.

The second kind of problem relates to the types of research on international female migration. The objective of feminist research is not that women should become instruments in the migration policies of state or capital, that are outside women's power. It is therefore a premise of feminist research to situate women within the structural power relations of gender, class and race. This has been done, among others, by Lycklama while making theoretical propositions concerning international household labour migration. To gain an understanding of migration processes, micro and macro levels of analysis need to be linked (better). Yet, the main difficulties here are the lack of information at the micro level or the 'incompatibility' of the different types of information (Lycklama, 1989, p. 21). Due to the characteristics of household labour and the labour force, as well as the internationalized organization of household labour, her study on housemaids in the international migration process requires analysis of the interrelated forces on the two levels. The author proposes therefore '...to stay embedded in the historical-structural approach' and enrich these types of analysis by linkage with an analysis of the power relations within the micro social system, social network of family, kinship, neighbourhood etc directly influencing the migrants. In particular, the requirement of analysis of the state's relation to the female household labour migrants was stressed (Lycklama, 1989, p. 27-29). These two propositions might well apply generally in the context of Third World female migrants to industrialized countries as well.

An example of linking socio-political history and the acting individual in the migration process is provided by Diana Kay (1987). Her in-depth study on Chilean exiles in Scotland shows the distinct ways in which men and women reconstruct their new existence in a European society; this in accordance with their main location of operation: public (men) - public/private (women also doing paid work outside the house) - private (women). Kay takes the far reaching event of the Chilean military forces brutally seizing power in 1973 as socio-historical point of orientation that set the stage for the Chilean people in exile. Bringing biography and history together, Kay realizes that there is in fact no single experience of the same, objectively identifiable historical events or processes. Rather people live a number of contrasting and at

times conflicting experiences depending upon the social location of the actor (Kay, 1987, p. 2). The author succeeds in giving a clear insight into pressures and changes concerning the social relations of gender and class in the migration process. However, while working out the three distinct ways of reconstruction, the acting subjects become progressively enclosed in a fixed particular social category that itself tends to become disengaged from the socio-political background. Although the Chilean women and men give explicit indications about the negative way they are treated in Scottish society (ibid. p. 140, 90-91, 100), the experiences are not analyzed in terms of racism or even ethnic power relations. The study is also characterized by the dominance of heterosexual ideology. And as much as class and gender, women are positioned by race, ethnicity and sexuality.

Oppositional agencies

Race and ethnic identity in the 1980s became the crowbar for opening up theoretical debates among feminists in the Western world. Black feminists in the US and Europe cut through arrogant notions of universality of mainstream feminist theories. This resulted in the search for new feminist identities. This recalls some accounts shared with other 'second generation' Indonesian-Chinese and Indo-Europeans, mainly women. We brought together our life-stories and discovered that not so much our fathers, but our mothers had set in motion the move to The Netherlands.[2] The women had been the realistic ones who often stressed the importance of a secure and decent life 'in Holland'; the fathers seemed to allow themselves more easily to indulge in nostalgic dreams about former times. We associated our mother's initiatives merely with the mother role: she feared for her children, who could have been hurt or killed or become orphans but in any case would have no future. Once in The Netherlands, we thought, the mothers couldn't resort in moments of doubt to a dreaming husband. The result was that they had to persist in their belief that they had made the right choice. Some of us were of the opinion that the oldest child was therefore granted the important role of supporter and assistant of the realistic mother.

Individually, we had known this 'sexual division of decision making' earlier. Influenced by the 'white women's movement' we had become curious about the female members of our families, only to find out that they didn't respond at all to the victim-image of the oppressed housewives and mothers. The discovery caused bewilderment, because at that time the conclusion was either we didn't really belong to the women's movement, or we didn't properly understand what oppression was. Through our sharing and

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[2] Turning the kaleidoscope on decision-making mothers in migrant families a little further, women appear as the persons who use marriage as a vehicle for migration. In societies where social power relations, norms and values leave women hardly any room (literally) to move, women have two main channels to fulfill aspirations of migration: marriage and organized labour. Concerning the first, women's wish to marry Westerners is not only restricted to economically deprived women, or those who seek improvement of social status. One former Asian female ISS participant, who had made friends in Dutch society, sighed: 'What I will miss the most when I go home, is that I am recognized in my own aspirations and that men approach me as a person with my own ideas. Back home I will only be assessed on whether I am a good marriage candidate or not.' Many Asian women I know, who married or want to marry Westerners show in one way or the other strong dissatisfaction with the patriarchal and restricting social atmosphere. This seems to apply to women of all classes, if not more among those of middle or high class.

exposure to other Third World women in industrialized countries, we learned that black women's experiences can fundamentally be different from what white women had presented as a universal theory. White women's resistance to black women's critiques also made clear that the image of the victimized (white) woman could not coincide with the oppressive female.

This short personal observation reflected a shifting time-frame as the old, rigid dichotomization of power relations was eroding. Foucault's more flexible concepts of power, discourse and discipline offered feminist theorists welcome new tools for analysis.[3] 'We need to replace the notion that social power is unified, coherent and centralized with something like...' '...power as dispersed constellations of unequal relationships, discursively constituted in social fields of force', Scott wrote in 1988 (Scott, 1988, p. 42). Power has sited itself as it were among people, to fold and unfold itself in the dynamics of social relations. However, these social relations (and Foucault's work is specifically cited in the European context) has been structured and organized in a network of institutions, organizations, formal alliances and formal groups. This whole network had been increasingly refined in the course of the time, functioning through the principle of discipline (Foucault, 1979). By using particular technical time-saving machines and appliances more and more can be 'produced'. If Foucault's line of thought is applied to housewives, women in Western societies have been increasingly divided into smaller units, resulting in the nuclear family, and their time is regulated and controlled through their link with other institutions like school, office hours, public transport, even shop closing times. Third World people who arrive in Europe have to adjust to this pervading process of disciplining, control and policing.

Feminist analysis, making use of these new concepts of power relations, discipline and discourse, need to avoid accepting a Trojan horse with paralysing relativism or an inappropriate overall theory. Recently, Chandra Mohanty made an encouraging contribution to the debate in her 'Introduction' of Third World Women and Feminist Politics (Mohanty et al., 1991). According to Mohanty it should be possible to 'retain the idea of multiple fluid structures of domination which intersect to locate women differently at particular historical conjunctures, while at the same time insisting on the dynamic oppositional agency of individuals and collectives and their engagement in "daily life"' (Mohanty, 1991, p. 13). It is in this simultaneity that Mohanty sees the operation of power relations. In her plea to learn to appreciate and understand the 'complex relationality' the author argues that power relations operate through the setting up of 'historically specific relations of ruling'. She adapts this concept from Dorothy Smith. 'Ruling' means 'a complex of organized practices including government, law, business and financial management, professional organization and educational institutions as well as discourses in texts that interpenetrate the multiple sites of power' (Smith, 1987 cited in Mohanty, 1991, p. 14). Focus on the dynamic oppositional should clarify 'the intricate connection between systemic relationships and the directionality of power (Mohanty, 1991, p. 13).

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[3] Foucault defines discourse as: a) the relation between statements, even if the person is not conscious of it, even also if the statements are not from the same person, even if the persons don't know each other; b) the relations between sequences of statements, even if these statements do not belong to the same or related theories; c) the relations between statements or sequences of statements and technical, economic, social and political events (R. Coward in: Tijdschrift voor Vrouwenstudies, no. 14, 1983, p. 535. See also Foucault, 1976).

Black feminist thinking grapples with a plurality of struggles to be brought back into two dimensions. One is the aim to find, detect, name and oppose oppressive powers in class, race and gender relations. But also, at the same time to create or force the margins for operation in a liberating direction. As a result of this and in an attempt to avoid serving an instrumentalist objective, it is my political choice as researcher to focus on the acting subject in terms of the strategizing individual, who operates within the power relations that derive from the several levels of analysis, as outlined earlier. The positions of people are indeed a socio-historical outcome, but people are not unconscious instruments of culture and history. Inherently to their existence they participate in and contribute to the constant process of producing and reproducing those power relations they are themselves also part of. Outcomes of these processes are not always in favour of themselves. Or the social changes develop in unintended directions. Presenting this research as 'a mirror', of which its bias, focus and orbit has been made explicit, facilitates the exposition of 'the face' of a part of social reality that might need change. One immanent dimension of strategizing is Third World women's self-positioning as women of a specific class, ethnic group and with their own sexuality in relation to her environment. As an immigrant's self-positioning is associated with his/her relation to the nation-state, first some thoughts are dedicated to the relation between women and state.

The female estate agent

A study on immigrant women is impossible without defining women's relation to the state. Seeking residence in another country, especially an industrialized one for Third World women, means confrontation with 'nationality' or 'citizenship'. Beyond being 'labelled' as a citizen of a nation-state, women also participate in the state through institutions and organizations and as individuals. Women are acted upon as members of collectivities, institutions or groupings and as participants in the social forces that give the state its given political projects in any particular social and historical context. Women are also a special focus of state concerns as a social category with a specific role (particulary human reproduction) (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1989, p.6). I would like to elaborate on two aspects of women's relation to the state. One is women's link with the Dutch welfare state, and in particular its functioning through rules and regulations which are an outcome of negotiations between the state and organized labour. The other point concerns the relation between the Dutch state and Indonesian-Chinese women as members of an ethnic minority group.

The Netherlands is an over-regulated nation-state that allows people without licences, diplomas, passports, documents, reports, forms and other papers to not exist. Whoever wants to trade or do some small work needs 'papers'. But more than by established formal rules and regulations, people's lives in Dutch (and European) society are dominated and determined by 'time'. The phenomenon of dividing activities into increasingly shorter periods of time forces people to manage and regulate their activities in a way whereby they largely surrender control over their lives. Opposition to this system is sanctioned in terms of income and/or by social isolation. Also people's activities have become increasingly mutually dependent while strictly disciplining schedules pervade people's minds. The latter takes place in the insidious disguise

of being an 'organic' process. A small, but glaring example is 'shop closing time' in The Netherlands. As one of the many other outcomes of bargains between the state, trade unions and employers ('social partners'), the country has a strict regulation of shop closing times. The main objective was protection of the smaller shops in their competition with large(r) enterprises, as well as defence of workers' rights. The result is that the periods in which products can be bought for household and family maintenance coincides with school and university hours as well with working hours of the largest part of the paid workforce. Hence, people with a paid job can hardly take proper care of themselves unless they have bought fridges, freezers, magnetrons, etc. Or, unless they have somebody at home... without doubt the assumption that has been underlying the process of negotiations. In addition to this example of a historic outcome of political, economic and social conflict and contradictions, a broad range of rules and regulations came into existence through this bargaining and negotiation, with several degrees of coercion.

An explanation of this establishment of a particular social structure in which women are mostly found at home is possible with the concepts of sexual division of labour and by conceptualizing the state as a process rather than an organization.[4] Despite female pioneers in the defence of workers' rights, labour organizations are mainly a male matter, both in terms of their personnel and their field of operation. Since they operate within the public sphere they perpetuate and reinforce a particular form of the sexual division of labour. The industrialization period in Europe at the end of last century, showing the first signs of what now are called trade unions, saw an increasing institutionalization of one form of the sexual division of labour. Women became domesticated, society became got used to the male head of the household in the role of breadwinner. In the ideal family, mother waited at home for father who brought the household income, in order to spend this on food and clothes in the happy family.[5] The state contributed to this process of domestication by the establishment of institutions through which it operates in terms of regulating processes (of which shop closing times is one). Patriarchy, in the form of historically produced situations of institutionalized male domination, is embedded in the state's way of functioning. The state as a process of social regulation is gender-structured as the states's constituency is in the 'public' realm (culturally marked as masculine) and because of the systematic gender pattern within the state (for instance reflected in the distribution of personnel) (Franzway et al., 1989).

Newcomers in the over-regulated Netherlands have to insert themselves in a new society and comply. Among the Indonesian-Chinese women I spoke to there were strong complaints about fitting into the time-regulated structure that forces women to organize their lives according to an all-embracing particular network of schedules. Especially those women with small children talked about the strict schedules to which they had to submit themselves: school hours, shopping hours, bus schedules, office hours, doctor's hours. 'I always had to look at the clock'. This also includes social visits: only at particular

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[4]   In 1971, The Netherlands was the country in Europe with the lowest percentage of women working outside the home: less than 30% (see Women and the State, Dutch Government Policy for the Advancement of Women, Ministry of Social Affairs, Government printer, The Hague, (1989), p. 5.)

[5]   This was of course not reality for the majority of people.

times ('after eight') were they welcome without children in Dutch homes, where they could otherwise not be received. Congruent to this are the numerous organizations, institutions, formal groups and clubs that had their own time schedule.

Forged Identities - Forced Identities

Indonesian-Chinese women's ethnic identity as 'Chinese' had been constructed during the time they lived and grew up in Indonesia. This was continued after migration, however, in a slightly different form. In relations with the Dutch, the Chinese ethnic background takes precedence over nationality because of Chinese names and Chinese features. Indonesian-Chinese people themselves also contribute to this by insisting on their 'Chineseness' in case they are 'mistaken' for 'Indonesians'. Yet, the process of transformation, adaptation and reconstruction of that identity, in which unequal forces are involved, demands a clear position from the person in question everytime. Kiem, for instance, came to Europe and worked in a Chinese art shop; in the eyes of the European her appearance matched perfectly: she could respond to prevailing stereotyped images. She herself is very aware of her 'Chineseness': 'If you are always named "cina" in Indonesia, then you will never feel Indonesian.' ... 'Then I met a Chinese from Shanghai, who asked me what I was, since I didn't speak Chinese. I became completely confused, so I wrote to my parents in Indonesia: "What am I?"' In later years with friends she set up a support organization for Indonesian-Chinese in The Netherlands, delineating the boundaries of her ethnic identity in a white-dominated country.

Developments in Dutch society from the time of the immigrants' arrival until the interview period are illustrative for the way the state relates to ethnic minorities. These developments also provide indications for the construction process of women's own perceptions as ethnic minority group members. Despite the presence of diverse ethnic groups, mainly from the early colonies, it was around 1970 in The Netherlands not yet 'bon ton' to deal in discourses with notions on 'ethnic identity'. The turbulence of the final 'anti-authoritarian', 'flower-power' years of the 1960s had only just faded away. Western feminists had just started to occupy the headlines with their demands and action for equality and liberation. In contrast with a long tradition in English language studies on ethnicity and ethnic identity, neither Dutch mainstream academics nor government cared about the issue. Yet, the end of the 1970s saw a sudden surge in of academic studies on ethnicity and immigration concerning Dutch society because the state felt a pressure to design policies. Ministries urged social scientists to provide them with relevant information on 'the minorities'. Dutch society started to realize that those immigrants who had arrived in the 1960s and 1970s as 'guest workers' and those who arrived after the independence of Surinam would stay and settle. This awareness was mainly expressed in terms of concern. Of course, The Netherlands also took part in processes of internationalization of economies and labour. Yet, despite the presence of thousands of Indo-Europeans, Moluccans, Surinamese, Antillians, Chinese, Italians, Spaniards, Yugoslavs, Greeks, Moroccans and Turks, the state had refused to recognize The Netherlands as an immigration country; even the term had

been taboo up to then (Van Amersfoort, 1991, p. 25). Hence public discourse employed terms which evolved from 'guest workers' and 'foreigners' to 'immigrants' and 'the minorities'; 'the ethnic minorities' (a term often used with negative connotations) became a serious topic in Dutch public life. Racism and dangerous ethnocentrism became more apparent and the myth of the tolerant Dutch was also broken down even among the white Dutch themselves. The state's response, however, was not against racism. Its welfare approach towards the newly-arrived society members ironically reproduced negative stereotypes of backwardness and increased stimatization of the ethnic minorities. As a result of Dutch state tradition to classify (ex-colonial) immigrants under the Welfare Ministry or under Social Affairs when part of the temporary labour force, public discourse came to equate 'ethnic minorities' with 'backwardness' and the 'poor who need state assistance'. 'Immigrants have to be defined first as "a category to care for", before state policies are justified'. Hence, 'immigrants are as well objects of policy as well as indication for policy' (Van Amersfoort, 1991, p. 7). In the case of the ethnic minority woman, her relation to the state as well as her position in public discourse is still more complicated.

Anthias & Yuval-Davis (1990, p. 7) identify five major but not exclusive ways in which women have tended to participate in ethnic and national processes and in relation to state practices: a) as biological reproducers of members of ethnic collectivities; b) as reproducers of the boundaries of ethnic/national groups; c) as participating centrally in the ideological reproduction of the collectivity and as transmitters of culture; d) as signifiers of ethnic/national differences - as a focus and symbol in ideological discourses used in the construction, reproduction and transformation of ethnic/national categories; e) as participants in national, economic, political and military struggles. Limiting the discussion here to ethnic minority women as signifiers of ethnic/national differences, women are caught in a complicated ideological pitfall. Public discourse in The Netherlands on immigrant women originated in the context of family reunion. This created a dominant image of immigrant women: a Mediterranean woman with children who joins her husband in Northern Europe. Dutch notions on 'foreign backward cultures', supported by the Dutch migrant policies, constitute the images of female and male migrants. In Dutch discourse, therefore, the immigrant woman is not only an object of care but is also, in the assumption that she is dependent on husband or father, more 'backward'. In feminist discourse, Western women often claim solidarity with immigrant women, based on an assumed communality in oppression. Hence the immigrant women's image here is one of the oppressed, powerless female (Mohanty, 1988;91, p. 57). Within their own ethnic group, women face the problem that dominant forces mobilize cultural tradition to establish their authority over women. Women themselves contribute also to these discourses. In several tones I could hear for instance how they could use ethnicity and culture to justify particular opposing male-female roles: 'Did you ever see a Chinese man doing the dishes?' These types of rhetorical questions mobilize explicitly also traditions as authorities which rule reality. Yet, in whose name? And why?

Approaches (public or political) to immigrant women, as well as agreements (among immigrants and non-immigrants) shift over time and change according to the particular context, and the operating forces of power. Also, the women themselves function within these shifting social realities. The question is how

these changes take place; what mechanisms are at work. And: when are the points in time and where are the margins to oppose forces that work detrimentally to immigrant women's interests?

Whether part of a dominant discourse or not, ethnic identity constitutes a salient feature in the lives of ethnic minorities themselves. This might not always be expressed in academic work, but issues of racism and ethnicity in relation to identity always crop up among the people in question soon after their arrival.[6] In this sense, Indonesian-Chinese in The Netherlands do not differ from other ethnic minorities: ethnic identity is the most popular topic.[7] As they do not really belong to mainstream social research, I will highlight several academic works on Indonesia-Chinese in The Netherlands, which have some relevance here.[8]

Tik Ho Ong suggests construct-systems of ethnic identity of second-generation Peranakan-Chinese in The Netherlands and bases his work on a comparative study of psychological theories. These construct-systems show a hierarchy with a foothold on categorization and meanings learned during early socialization and can shift when identification conflicts arise (Tik Ho Ong, 1989). This interesting conception of flexible ethnic identity leaves, however, the possibility that one may be drawn into the innumerable types of hierarchies that can emerge, for life is full of conflicts and contradictions. The sociologist H.T. Sie Dhian Ho[9] was probably the first Indonesian-Chinese in The Netherlands to put down his thoughts on 'Ethnic Identity of Peranakan Chinese in The Netherlands' in an academic study. In 1970 he wondered how persistent 'ethnic Chineseness' will be, and defined 'ethnic identity' in the context of his study in terms of opinions, typical characteristics (like 'fear of politics' and 'absence of territorial bonds') and a self-definition opposed to European (mainly Dutch) or other Indonesian and Chinese people (Sie, 1970). Using creative language, Sie describes the history of migration over centuries of the Chinese from the 'motherland' via Indonesia to The Netherlands, which was characterized by the crucial role of the (multi-generation) family. Sie distinguishes to some extent the different roles of men and women. He ends with some predictions on the slow but definite decline of Chinese ethnic identity. This prediction of a silent disappearance proved, however, to be false with the sudden emergence of Peranakan-Chinese associations and periodicals in the early 1980s hankering after presumed ancestral characteristics of Chineseness. To elaborate fully on the

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[6] In the early 1980s, when looking for material on the attitude of Indo-Europeans (Indos) towards racism in The Netherlands when they had just arrived at the beginning of the 1950s, I found newspaper clippings with letters and comments from Indos, who complained about the racist attitude of the Dutch. They wondered why they were not allowed to be what they are and do what they want. See also the pamphlet series, Tong Tong, Mousson, The Hague, 1958.

[7] Only recently two researchers, among them one Indonesian-Chinese, made a study on changing patterns in a particular profession (Schijf & The, 1988). (Ethnic) identity has always been of interest to those concerned with Chinese in Southeast Asia. See for instance Gosling & Lim (1983) and the recent volume, Cushman J. and Wang Gungwu (1988).

[8] There may be disproportionate attention given to studies of Peranakan-Chinese which can be seen as a chauvinist bias. They do not supply the necessary theoretical insights or adequate notions, yet they provide useful knowledge of Peranakan Chinese. Addressing the Indonesian Chinese themselves this research serves as an open invitation for internal discussion.

[9] The letters H.T. here are unclear to me; do they stand for Christian names? 'Normally' Chinese names consist of three short names: surname, generation name, personal name. The socio-political and historical forces left a deep imprint in the Indonesian-Chinese migrant community, reflected in the olio of Chinese names with different spelling or in different order, Western or Indonesian names, Christian or Islamic names. Tik Ho Ong deliberately chooses the Dutch order: his family name is Ong.

reasons and causes would go beyond the limits of this paper. Yet the changed socio-cultural pattern in The Netherlands, the state's meddling with ethnic minorities in The Netherlands and the age and retirement of many Indonesian-Chinese have certainly influenced this unforeseen ethnic revival.

Values and norms among young Indonesian-Chinese (20-35 years old, born in Indonesia) shown by Hiang Liem's research and information from interviews by Kees van Galen, are the basis for their description of 'ethnic identity of Perankans'. Regarding their conceptualization of self and their perspectives in terms of integration in and adaptation to Dutch society, the young people seem to 'hope for the best' (Liem & Van Galen, 1987). The Indonesian-Chinese identity at the mercy of socio-economic and socio-political forces is the central issue of E. Winarta's historical study (Winarta, 1989), used in the previous chapter.

Conclusions

In order to analyse the dynamic social reality of Indonesian-Chinese immigrant women in The Netherlands, I have looked for theories which could deal with the link between socio-political history and the acting individual. Mohanty's oppositional agency of individuals and collectives which function within multiple fluid structures of domination, seems a useful analytical tool. Especially immigrant women's position is influenced by the state as she is acted upon as reproducer of the ethnic boundaries; state operations guide and inform women's ethnic identity. Yet immigrant women also contribute to the construction of their own identity.

The sudden change from Indonesian society to Dutch society has not been a radical one for Indonesian-Chinese women. That is to say, when the women give their life-stories they remember the colonial and post-colonial past in Indonesia which is inevitably related to The Netherlands. As a result of history they are not only part of this relation, but also actively contribute to it by producing representations and images of that past. This is clear and direct, when they refer to the Dutch language, important opinion makers or education (Dutch, European schools). 'We lived in Tanah Abang, which still had Dutch names'. 'My mother said that the Chinese school has less future opportunities so you better go to the nuns. My father had had the Dutch Chinese school, so he agreed'. 'Since the (Dutch) teachers were convinced that I would never go to The Netherlands, they considered an Indonesian education better for me, and refused me entrance to their school. But what could I find at an Indonesian school? We spoke Dutch at home'. In this way, the women function in the production of particular and unique historical continuities and give shape to their ethnic identity that was constructed in former times. In doing so, women interact with their direct environment, in a social network of power relations of friends, family and colleagues as well as with the state. Through their choices women function within the power relations and contribute to the production and reproduction of the ethnic group; they are the target of and 'are targeting' the construction and boundaries of the ethnic group. In this way women consciously strategize within a contextual framework of a variety of power relations. Seen from this perspective the subjective actors, while dialectically linked to the wider processes, have started to play the leading part.

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Chapter IV

TWO CONFIGURATIONS OF ANALYTICALLY RELATED LIFE-EVENTS

This chapter is concerned with two configurations of 'defining new domains' as they appeared from the cases that are mentioned in this study. In Chapter 1 these configurations were conceived as a bas-relief in which several lived experiences and daily-life events (as peaks) can be seen against the background of the socio-historical and political context. The two did in no way emerge just accidentally. During my research I was especially interested in the women's education and profession. But only during the process did I become really aware of the enormous impact of Indonesia's nation-building period on the identity construction of the Indonesian-Chinese women. Hence in the first configuration the women's past, rather than the period after migration is emphasized. The second configuration, motherhood and sexuality, cannot be ignored when talking with older Indonesian-Chinese (Asian) women. Only among the younger generations in The Netherlands has 'motherhood' become an issue. But also an important element of their motherhood has been the fear that in chaotic Indonesia their children ran considerable risks and could even lose their lives. This was a significant impertus to move. Hence, women's contribution to the construction of motherhood, domestic work and sexuality was a configuration that 'automatically' emerged.

The relationship between biographical events from the women's lives and relevant historical events is illustrated in the figure at the end of this chapter.

I   Hurrays and hurdles in an educational or professional career

Women are generally socialized with a double aim in life with child care and domestic tasks as their natural and hence first mission in life. Both Indonesian and Dutch society are structured on this tenet of patriarchal ideology. The implications for women are that in order to develop themselves as paid workers or as professionals, the 'hurdles' they have to overcome are enormous, if not insurmountable.[1] Next to these 'mother's-place-is-at-home' hurdles, women do also experience 'hurrays', encouragements towards fulfilling both aims in life.[2] An important condition for this was and still is good formal education. Women's education in the Indonesia of this century was associated with nationalism, was limited to bourgeois women

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[1]   Feminist studies have shown how much this unequal dual aim in the socialization of educated women limits their future possibilities in terms of careers: women's careers stagnate, women tend to resort to part-time and temporary work or to the 'caring' professions, often with the consequence that they end up in weak sectors of the economy or lowly-paid jobs. Moreover, the middle-class ideology of the male breadwinner has shaped woman's wedding day into the start of a life of unpaid labour.

[2]   To be clear: A woman's development as a paid worker and as a worker in the house taking care of children is only a real development when her partner shares equally in domestic work and child care as well as income generation. Yet social reality is far from this ideal. In the context of Dutch social life and in relation to young Indonesian-Chinese women, who are from the higher economic classes, I consider it an important feature of women's development when women can be economically independent.

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and the aim was mainly a supportive one (Jayawardena, 1986, p. 12) as the newly-independent country needed educated wives and mothers. The ethnic Chinese community was also part of this ideological position including those who are the subjects of my research.

The women in the six case studies hence operated within this ideology and became (at least initially) supportive, literate wives and/or mothers; they attended primary and secondary school as well as higher education institutions like university. When the stories of their determination to become educated are linked with the socio-political context (limited to the period 1945-65), a complicated picture arises, where ethnicity, nationalism and patriarchy court the favour of the women. In different places, they all consciously experienced the period of Indonesian nation-building and were engaged in contradictory processes of identity construction, which also questioned their loyalty to their own ethnic group.

For none of the six women was there a question that they should not attend formal primary or secondary schools. The fathers usually encouraged the women, even to go on to higher education. By taking up the challenge of education the women contributed to the continuing creation and re-creation of Indonesian-Chinese self-images. Although none of the women seem to come from 'equalized' families, their socio-economic position, in principle, played an important role in making choices and providing women with proper educational opportunities. But during the period of turbulence and chaos following independence, other factors like ethnicity and geography could take precedence, undermining or destroying any encouragement. All stories about their education are pervaded with repeated reference to the socio-political context. Expressions used include 'unpredictable', 'constantly changing', 'sudden government decrees', 'suddenly we had to speak Indonesian', 'you never know what would happen'. Or: 'a new faculty was opened', 'that was the old university, that was better than the new one'. I notice images of a world in turbulence, with an overwhelming amount of uncertainty and insecurity, unexpected events, a lack of joy about liberation, 'Merdeka', (also from those who finally regretted that they left). Kiem explains how the socio-political circumstances of Indonesia of that time clearly structured her life by telling the story of her unstable school career.

> My schools are completely a mess. First Japanese kindergarten, then my parents moved to
> another city and I went to an Indonesian school as we lived in a nationalist area. Then my
> parents moved back to a liberated (!) area, so I went halfway through primary school to
> the Dutch school, which turned into Indonesian when I was in the last class ... We moved
> to Jakarta when I was at secondary school and I wanted to become a secretary. But my
> school had no provisions for those lessons in economy that were compulsory by a new
> governmental decree. So I had to go to another town. But then my parents came to me
> (my father had lost his job) and proposed to go to Europe. (Kiem, born 1942)

During the Japanese occupation, Dutch schools were closed. Many Indonesian-Chinese children who had attended these schools now moved on to the Chinese schools, a trend that was not reversed after the reopening of Dutch education in 1945.[3] In the chaotic period of nationalist struggle for independence between 1945 and 1950, the geographical region could determine which school was available: in the nationalist areas there were only Indonesian and Chinese schools. During the nation-building period in the 1950s the major part of Indonesia had to start from scratch in terms of primary and secondary schools which were by far not enough for the millions of children. The building of Indonesian educational institutions and the introduction of the Indonesian language was coupled with the abolition of the old Dutch school systems and the closing down of Chinese schools. Universities and faculties had to be established and appropriate curricula designed. Nydia,[4] in the early 1950s, was encouraged to contribute:

> My father told me that economics would be good for me. The government had just set up
> the first economics faculty in our town and my father thought that it would be good for
> reconstructing our country. He had got a job translating Dutch economic expressions into
> Indonesian. ... One could do so much with economics: starting a shop, teaching, becoming
> a secretary. (Nydia, born 1926)

Kiem, and many other women like her, received contradictory signals: her father wanted her to study a proper course. Her mother agreed, but was of the opinion that 'a girl marries anyway'. When asked about her own opinion at that time, the answers vary from 'I didn't think about it' to 'I think that I believed that my mother was right'. Lies had asked her mother once whether motherhood and caring for children was women's goal in life. Her mother had answered: 'it is not necessary, but I must say you can enjoy it'. Beliefs regarding women's 'natural role' are often implicitly present, as if marriage is something inescapable in forming the women's self-definition. But most of the past is explicitly reshaped and re-examined through their constructed ethnic identity as 'aliens' or, in Nydia's case, as an Indonesian 'bangsa'

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[3] Liem speaks about a new wave of 'resinification' (revival of Chinese feelings) resulting from the closing down of Dutch schools and the lack of confidence in Indonesian schools. Friends told me that their parents or other relatives started to learn Chinese again. Restrictive Indonesian measures on Chinese education in the 1950s worsened the relations between Chinese and Indonesians. Within the Confucian tradition, education enjoyed high esteem. Moreover, education gave the Chinese possibilities for social mobility. Hence, the Chinese felt particularly discriminated (Liem 1980, p. 385). Unfortunately Liem didn't analyse this issue in terms of gender relations within the ethnic Chinese minority group. The situation became complicated for Indonesian-Chinese women, as according to traditional values of the Indonesian-Chinese, women shouldn't have (too much) education. On the other hand, it was in the interest of the Chinese ethnic collectivity living among the Indonesians to have educated women as they are the ethnic group members supposed to guarantee the continuation of the ethnic boundaries and maintenance of their class position.

[4] It should be stressed that Nydia is not Indonesian-Chinese. Hence her childhood and upbringing should be seen within the euphoria of Indonesian nationalists who had longed for independence. Because of her marriage to an Indonesian-Chinese, her life became entirely interrelated with the Indonesian-Chinese community. Except for her family and some friends, Nydia lost contact with her ethnic group. Thus it is understandable that she resisted leaving Indonesia for The Netherlands. She hoped that her ethnicity as well as their socio-economic position in Indonesian society would protect the whole family against anti-Chinese attacks. Her husband mentioned migration, but didn't really pursue the issue in the family, probably as he was also in doubt. But when he succumbed to an illness that hindered him in his work, his colleagues urged her to consider leaving.

(people or 'tribe').

Lies (born 1928) finished high school in 1957 towards the end of Indonesia's parliamentary democracy period (1950-58). The central power in Jakarta was weakening as regional military powers on Sumatra and Sulawesi withdrew their support. In 1957, there were mass migrations of ethnic Chinese to the cities especially on Java, due to tough implementation of a 1950 act which forbade foreigners from having enterprises in rural areas. That year the Indonesian government also ruled that Indonesian citizens of foreign descent were not allowed to study at foreign schools. Since many Chinese children with Indonesian nationality went to Chinese schools, the effect was that 1,000 of the 2,000 Chinese schools were converted into Indonesian schools (Suryadinata, 1988). At that time Lies and many of her (Indonesian-Chinese) friends were more incensed at a government redistribution measure concerning the ethnic percentages at universities. In the 1958 academic year Chinese entrance to the university was severely cut: a maximum 10 per cent of the students for medicine and economy were allowed to be of Chinese descent. Later this quota was extended to the other faculties. Lies definitely wanted to become a medical doctor in her country:

When you are young you are an idealist. But my desire to become a doctor had grown. The nuns taught me to work for my fellow human beings. Once I went to a leprosy centre and I saw no Indonesian doctors, since they were afraid of contagious diseases. But there were Spanish doctors and I thought: it is good that there are still idealists ... but everybody told me 'forget about it. You are Chinese and you are a woman'. The dean of studies had indeed said: 'only 1% women, for we cannot allow ourselves to educate women doctors. They will marry and we need all the forces too desperately'.

Indonesia's nation-building rhetoric clearly differed when addressed to women or to men, with clear implications for women's future. Like other important subjects, Lies talked about the quota to her father; but we don't know whether they discussed the implications of the Dean's words for women.

My father said: 'Child, they are right, it's their country. We constitute only three per cent of the population. We should be glad that they allow ten per cent. They are very accommodating. I think the Chinese forget that they are a minority. When the Dutch were here the Chinese got a good position. Then the Dutch left and the Chinese get less possibilities. But they cannot understand that the Indonesians think that their time has finally come. Once they have to make a start'.

Lies agreed fully with her father and thus didn't question the hierarchical ethnic relations between Indonesians and ethnic Chinese in independent Indonesia, nor her relation with her father. Against this background she could develop a relation with Indonesian society in which and with which she wanted to work - and about which she could even state that she 'never noticed discrimination towards Chinese'.

Nevertheless, she concluded her interview with me with accounts of several personal experiences with overtly oppressive Indonesian soldiers which show an uneasy balance between the ethnic and national identities.

The response of Tsui's mother, Swan, to the unstable nation-building period differed. Swan was not satisfied with the neglect of her daughter at the overcrowded Catholic school run by nuns with a majority of Indonesian pupils. The deciding factor for her to establish their own school with other (Indonesian-)Chinese friends circa 1954, was a contagious eye-disease that also affected her child. Main criteria for the new school where both teachers and pupils were (Indonesian-)Chinese, according to her, were good quality of the teachers and serious attention for the children. In 1957 the government decided that Indonesian teachers also had to be appointed in their school. 'But they all liked to speak Dutch', Swan reacts hurt. Like Lies, Swan also didn't challenge the established authorities in Indonesia, yet didn't agree with them. She found a solution using her 'multiple' position: the relative wealth (of her and her friends together) gave her the material base to go on the offensive. Since Swan was educated as a teacher, she was able to make quality assessments on her daughter's education. Finally, as an Indonesian-Chinese, she was able to go onto the defensive by leaving the Indonesian 'mainstream' and use the margin for 'free enterprise'. In Torres' words: both Lies and Swan 'hadn't the ability to speak from a unified, non-contradictory subject position' (Torres, 1991, p. 275). Although they had different positions in society and multiple identity positions, both contributed simultaneously to the construction of perceptions on Indonesian national identity as well as to the construction of their own ethnic Chinese identity. Ironically, these hurdles to a school career served to reinforce the construction of an ethnic Chinese identity in a socio-political environment that shapes the space and margins. This dialectical process of ethnic identity construction could contradict at certain moments that of Indonesian national identity as well as that of the educated and literate wife and mother.

Migration to The Netherlands increased the pressure on educated women to relinquish their careers. The following highlights the narratives of two women who had, directly or indirectly, been affected and inspired by the appeals to Indonesian people to reconstruct a young independent nation. They also had hoped for economic independence. However, the stories of Lies and Tsui show what mechanisms are at work if women do not fully reconcile themselves with their situation. From the fragmented positions where they operate, they each have to look carefully for support.

It had come as an enormous surprise to Lies that she was admitted to the medical faculty despite her minimal chances. Like others who had just finished medical school, she completed her four years Indonesian national duty at a hospital, in support of her country. Her ambition was to study a medical specialization, but she didn't get '...any chance. The places have already been occupied for years. Often by family members of professors or people who work at the university there.' She was in the lucky position to be able to go abroad to study, and the blocking of her professional aspirations made her decide to leave. 'It was a challenge'. She came to The Netherlands at the end of her first study period where she married. This choice finally turned the course of her life completely. Her attempt to work with her husband in Indonesia failed (see biographical notes). '... I am not such a feminist that I can accept that he is without work. That

is an unhealthy situation. I think a man has to be the breadwinner'. The first two years of her marriage, also the first years of her permanent residence in The Netherlands (from 1973), Lies describes as 'very difficult' as she 'had to give up an independent life'. Moreover,

> I had the feeling that I had done everything for nothing. My study, my work, everything. I
> had done it all in order to work over there. ... What do you need here? Everything is here
> already, the welfare system, the medical care.

Tsui (1946) had the same feeling of senselessness when she took up her civil engineering course after her arrival in the cold and windy country.

> I chose civil engineering (I was 19 then) since I had always worried about the food
> problem in my country. When rice harvests failed and the people were hungry, I knew it
> was because the water control systems did not work adequately. I wanted to work on a
> proper infrastructure. But after I came here and went to the technical university in The
> Netherlands my choice became useless. The Netherlands had enough concrete, asphalt,
> roads and bridges.

Apparently Lies and Tsui didn't realize how much nationalist rhetoric demanded that women fulfil a supporting role first. At least they didn't problematize it then. Their statements, nevertheless, reveal how much the two women had chosen their profession in direct relation to their personal environment, a very 'gender-informed' way of choosing professions. Men tend to keep more 'distance' in the choices of their professions, an attitude sometimes called 'more rational'. Suddenly, with their migration to a Western country Lies' and Tsui's basis had gone.[5]

Both Tsui and Lies married Indonesian-Chinese men, but didn't give in fully to patriarchal middle class ideology dictating that they should give up their careers to dedicate themselves to husband and family. Yet in Dutch society the hurdles stood ready to trip them up. From the start of her marriage the household tasks were Lies' responsibility. She postponed having children, initially because she would not have wanted to give up her work. Finally she relinquished motherhood. 'My husband says that I then would have to give up work, and I agree with him. As a child I had all the attention I needed. And one should give children attention.' When the couple came back to The Netherlands after being disillusioned with Indonesia, Lies could get a part-time job while her husband took up a specialization.

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[5]   The medical professions (doctors, dentists, pharmacists), architects and economists are amply represented among Indonesian-Chinese in The Netherlands. In discussions with Indonesian-Chinese friends we often related the choice of these professions to the need to establish channels of escape from their situation of being a threatened (ethnic) minority (in their cases also directly related to their economic position there) in Indonesia. In contrast to those who ascribe this phenomenon to culture (see interviews with Indonesian-Chinese in Schijf & The, 1988), we emphasized the external social forces which influence people's behaviour indicated for example by the statement, 'This profession allows you to work anywhere you end up'. This is, however, a very male-biased or male-oriented conclusion, since it ignores women's way of choosing a profession.

I found a job as medical assistant. They needed me since the doctor was ill. I had studied here and possessed a doctor's qualifications. Yet they did not pay me according to these qualifications. I still had to get Dutch recognition. When I studied, foreigners had to apply for a Dutch diploma. At that time I thought I don't need it, because I will go back to Indonesia, so I only had a certificate ... I asked for the same pay as the quality of my work and my education was no less than that of the others. I had even studied in The Netherlands. But they didn't give it to me, and since I really wanted to work I had to put up with it. (Lies)

When Lies obtained her formal recognition as a specialist, the hospital offered her a contract, but infuriated by the condescending treatment, she resigned. Questions in relation to racism and discrimination arise, as the situation concerns a female specialist as well as a foreigner (even though Lies had learned the Dutch language when she arrived in The Netherlands). Justifications for unjust and unequal treatment are often given with reference to official agreements or constitutions, rules and regulations. Yet this formality is applied with a clear arbitrariness. There are many examples (also among the people I spoke to) where these 'hurdles' were even higher, but could be overcome without much difficulty. But the effect of these experiences reinforces and perpetuates ethnic identity feelings which in this case might have been conflated with Indonesian national identity. Also, the situation works to the detriment of women's development, since it discourages women in the job they are in fact qualified for. Lies and her husband contributed to the prevailing societal consensus through their shared opinion that women should give up their profession when they become mothers. The two also apparently did not question the sexual division of (household) labour, with the consequence, that they relinquished having children. Unfortunately the nature of this research didn't permit further questioning. During this interview I didn't really touch upon the specific subject which might have given a better and more detailed insight into the constraints and options in an Indonesian Chinese woman's life. For I still have not the impression that among Indonesian-Chinese people in The Netherlands (especially of the 'older generations'), a choice to 'not have children' is accepted or really understood.

Also Tsui's story shows a challenge to traditions or traditional forces concerning ethnicity and gender. A wide range of experiences in Indonesia had made her clearly conscious of her Chinese ethnic identity: the religious background of her mother (Catholic), the establishment of the primary school by her mother with friends for mainly Chinese children, and traditional festivities at home like Chinese New Year and Cap Go Meh (festivity after New Year). Migration to The Netherlands undermined in many ways the basis of Tsui's life, certainly her potential future as a professional woman, but made her even more aware of her ethnic identity. Her choice before migration to go to the Technical University reflected her feelings of a genuine link with the young, independent state. She and her best friend, also an Indonesian-Chinese woman, dreamt of Indonesia's bright new future and they made the greatest plans how to support the country's aim of building up a leading nation in Asia. She didn't know that after the frightening anti-Chinese riots in 1963 in Bandung her parents had thought of leaving, and that her plans might never come

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true. As a student Tsui's personal experience of the military coup in October 1965 suddenly turned the focus of her attention to questions like: will we ever be able to finish our studies? Then her fear of anti-Chinese feelings increased so rapidly that defence mechanisms took over ideals and the objective of supporting the nation. Tsui recalls how all students were forced to report to certain militant student groups and had to participate in enormous mass demonstrations, often shouting anti-Chinese slogans. Physical punishment were included in the sanctions if one didn't show support. 'My friend and I looked for all kind of tricks to escape this without being punished'. Tsui's migration was her parent's decision and meant for her a painful separation from her dearest friend, whom she never saw again.

> In the beginning we did correspond, but what do you write if you are not able to share what is really in your mind? We were not allowed to dedicate a word on the situation in Indonesia, because it could bring her in danger. I couldn't write about my life in The Netherlands because that hurt me too much and I didn't want to bother her with my worries.

Tsui assumed that once in The Netherlands, she would continue her studies as her brother would. Therefore, it was a shock to discover that her parents were of a different opinion. Tsui's time was fully taken up by domestic work, initially only for her brother and sister at the house of relatives; later when the family was united, she assisted her mother. In contrast to her brother, her father didn't take steps to get recognition for her Indonesian diplomas.

> My brother has been the most important for my parents. They even postponed emigration until he finished high school. It was not said, but I felt it, for everything was focused on him. My sister and I were less important. When we still lived in Indonesia my father applied for a correspondence course for him in The Netherlands, a radio course. Things like this we never got. My father even looked for a job near my brother's university, so that the family could live in one house. They didn't ask me anything. ... My sister immediately attended a new school, a Catholic one, because in Indonesia we were Catholic. And my parents were of the opinion that one should have at least high school, hence my sister had no domestic tasks.[6] My father went straight to the ministry to get my brother's diplomas recognized so that he could go to the university. ... In fact I had the feeling that they looked after my brother and sister but not after me. I expected that my university education would continue directly after we had arrived here. I saw that everything had been managed: the income, everybody got his or her place, except me. And I thought it strange that they didn't do anything for me. I only got more household tasks.

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[6]   Age is here more relevant than gender: Tsui's sister was still under legal obligation to attend school.

But looking from the parent's point of view, they cared for her perfectly well. Instead of resorting to an educational institute for a structured and 'safe' adaptation to the new situation, the appropriate institution for Tsui at her age was marriage. She already had an Indonesian-Chinese fiancé to whom they had given their consent and she had enough education to play the role of a literate wife and mother. Giving Tsui household tasks allowed her mother not only to adapt more easily but provided Tsui with experience that she would have traditionally learned at the age of thirteen or fourteen. So it was just a question of waiting until her fiancé came over so that they could marry.

To outsiders, and certainly to those living in a northern European society of the 1990s, it is difficult to explain how much an unmarried Indonesian-Chinese girl who is the oldest daughter, can be caught within the confines of the family, even when she is 21. There is a certain self evidence about life; for those involved, there are no questions about 'why and how'. Reflecting on 1967, Tsui saw Dutch society as one huge puzzle that distanced her from its dynamics. She also thought it self evident that she would eventually marry her fiancé from Indonesia; her parents' consent 'prevented' her even questioning it. Nevertheless she wanted to study for a profession. From the moment she arrived she took the initiative to learn Dutch and insisted upon studying at the university. 'In one way or the other I saw a doomed future: only married and no profession. That was not what I wanted.' After a couple of years Tsui married and had children, but never gave up wanting a profession. She changed from a technical occupation towards a 'caring' profession and deliberately became engaged in work that was linked with her ethnic background. Influences from women's movements made her question marriage, partnership, sexuality and motherhood and she found the courage to organize for her and her partner a 'European arrangement' (shared parenthood). She identifies consciously with other people of colour and actively participates in anti-racist movements in The Netherlands. She is aware of the fact that in the dynamic interrelation with her environment, (white) Dutch, Indonesian-Chinese or those of another ethnicity, questions about the 'real Chinese identity' will always keep playing a role.

Motherhood and Sexuality

To my personal knowledge there are no Indonesian-Chinese couples or families who arrived in The Netherlands in the 1960s in which men and/or women fundamentally questioned whether the woman (and eldest daughter) should play key roles in the process of home-building. Single women who arrived alone also considered that a part of their 'natural' task. Back in Indonesia neither the role of housewife nor concepts of motherhood had ever been challenged.[7] Women could go out, study, have their full-time profession and leave the children with the mother(-in-law), nanny or child minder. As long as the children did not make trouble and the women were able to organize, no complaints would be heard about a mother's

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[7]   The usual question to a woman is whether she has children. The answer is consistently 'belum' (not yet). The strength of this ideology of motherhood can lead to absurdity, for example, when I heard even a woman of over sixty giving this answer.

outside activities. 'You could do more (outside the home) in Indonesia, because others did so much for you' (Swan, in relation to motherhood). Yet the 'self evident' link between domestic work and child care and the female sex had to be 'reshaped' after migration. For some of the mothers the arrival in Europe was their first confrontation with doing domestic tasks or work like washing and dressing small children. 'She was used to organize the household, but to run it herself, no' (Tsui about her mother). Those women who were relieved that they had left Indonesia, obviously took the big change as it came. Their down-to-earth way of talking about the first years of their new life portrays the abrupt change as a somewhat insecure but tangible enterprise one had to approach in a practical way. But everything around the house and children depended on the women alone. None of the husbands took any responsibility for the tasks.

When the women recall positive and negative factors in this reconstruction process I noticed two dimensions that deserve attention. Forces in these areas seemed to have strongly guided the process of what is often indicated in so-called neutral terms as 'adaptation'. Yet I prefer to speak in Foucault's terms of disciplining (and punishment) or of compliance, as the results are an outcome of dynamic power relations of gender, class and race to which all acting subjects and institutions contribute. The first dimension concerns the women's own 'shrunken' personal life (in and outside family circles). They came from a large extended family into the situation of a nuclear family, from a life overfilled with representation functions or a wide network of family and friends into the confinement of four walls. From an outreaching life (also thanks to another climate in Indonesia) into concealment, for Dutch family life is a closed life. Domestic work had to be done without the help of a domestic servant or relatives living close by. The first resort to assistance had been, if possible, the eldest daughter. 'There was a division of work with my children. I told the eldest (daughter) to buy bread before I got them from school' (Willemien). The wider exchange with the outside world that the women were used to having, was suddenly limited to the shops or to some relatives and friends, if these happened to live nearby. For women the change is more fundamental than appears at first sight, as it doesn't stay on the level of 'just a rearrangement'. A good friend who migrated from Asia to Britain, once aptly and succinctly expressed the deep impact of the fundamentally differing types of social life. She distinguished between 'to tell' and 'to explain'. 'Back at home', she said, 'adults and children' occupy one world. If I wanted to go somewhere I just told my aunt or somebody else and there were always others (with or without children) who could look after my daughter. Here you have to explain everything; you must not only organize it, but you also have to give an account of why and what for. That is the most tiring of living here as a woman with a child. So after a while you stop going out, doing your things, taking initiative, because you cannot find the strength and the courage any more and there is no one who understands'. It is in this difference between the two cultures that the woman contributes to her 'new' motherhood identity.

The second dimension of the reconstruction process that deserves attention is that of patriarchal middle-class ideology. This ideology which is represented within discourses regarding the husband's position and discourses produced by Dutch institutions, is strengthened in this 'minimized' environment. These two discourses became increasingly important informers of the 'proper mother's (and housewife's) behaviour'.

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More than in Indonesia, Dutch dominant discursive practices define women's position as a housewife as being inside the house. Motherhood means 24 hours availability for children in an individualized society constructed along 'orderly' organized institutions, making it difficult not to submit to 'disciplining' schedules. Public feminist debates about the sexual division of labour and reproductive rights still had to be opened at the end of the 1960s. The strict Calvinist country with a superabundance of rules and regulations, endless demands for official papers and diplomas for any formal activity, had at that time (compared with other European countries) the lowest percentage of women working outside the home (less than 30 per cent). The women themselves contributed to this increasingly narrowing process in different ways: they agreed because they had identical convictions, they gave their consent since they didn't question the traditional sexual division of labour or they gave in because they lacked support and/or options. One shouldn't make the mistake of thinking that this is a categorization of the women. These varying responses to different situations at different moments can also be given by one single woman: the context in which power relations operate is of importance.

The Netherlands is a country where the clock reigns. This coercive but often disguised disciplining force might have been the strongest one in tying the Indonesian-Chinese women (I spoke to) to their tasks as housewife and mother. Foucault's 'discipline and punishment' concept is relevant here. Especially those women with small children had to subject themselves to a strictly regulated schedule:

I constantly had to look at my watch and could never finish in time. In the morning you bring them to school, you must clean your house (oh, that cumbersome Dutch way of washing the dishes), you leave a quarter to twelve to get them from school and give them lunch. At two o'clock their school starts again, then you have to fetch them at four. In the meantime you must cook, and when you have guests you must cook a lot. My husband couldn't help me, for he had his heavy work. I was tied to the children and tied to time. (Nydia)

The fixing forces 'time' and 'rhythm' derived their strength from a pervading patriarchal ideology that was produced and perpetuated by schools and shops, husbands and other household members. Nydia gave a good example of how the family network contributed to buttressing the (Dutch) patriarchal terms under which she had started to live. The preparation of Indonesian food is quite time- and labour-consuming. Nydia confided that during her very first days in The Netherlands she was desperate because she didn't know how to prepare lunch and dinner in time. 'I was so slow', she reproaches herself. 'But then my relative, where we were staying then, told me that as a solution I could resort to Dutch food which demands less time.' Also the male partners proved themselves to be strong forces in reinforcing the conditions for a neat, nuclear family with the mother at home. 'I thought I had a terrible life. But my husband said: "you have to be strong". I felt also isolated. When I proposed to do a course he said that I have to be at home, since the children need me as they are young' (Nydia). 'He was too busy with his

work; he had to listen to the complaints of his patients, so he had not time to listen to my complaints' (Willemien). 'He didn't cook. "That is why I am married", he said' (Lies). The children's school was also ready to discipline her:

> I went to my children's school, because those time schedules were awful. Isn't it strange, that when mothers are still young and may have other small children, or are still able to have a paid job, that the primary school has been scheduled so, that you are completely tied to their hours? I don't understand the Dutch feminists, they should have changed that already long time ago? (Nydia, born 1929)

> A professor started a children's crèche, it was an experiment, because there were no crèches in those days. Of course I immediately participated and put my children there, so that I had time to do my house work. But the Dutch women didn't do that, they considered me a 'unnatural' mother. They stayed apparently always at home and didn't work. I had thought that Dutch women were more progressive. (Kiem, born 1942)

In rebuilding their home life, most of the women stayed within the parameters set by family life. The relevant period was the 1960s, when feminist discourse questioning motherhood had not yet reached general public awareness. When, for instance, Kiem and Nydia reflect on their search for solutions at that time, they started creating distance between themselves, their husbands and the Dutch. The women, and not their male partners had to look for solutions. Kiem 'mobilized' her ethnicity: the distance between her and Dutch mothers gave her space to take part in an experiment at that time, to conclude during the interview that 'only nowadays all the Dutch women bring the children to the crèche'. They had certainly another image of the West: women were 'free', 'liberated', 'progressive', 'tough' and 'strong'. In terms of motherhood, the Dutch women disillusioned the two women. Two other Indonesian-Chinese women, who convinced their husbands and the rest of the family in Indonesia to migrate, as Swan and Willemien did, gave accounts which indicated that they seemed not to have had questions about their tasks. It was, in fact, as if they had already complied in advance with the maternal tasks as they are set and organized in the new country.

The question arises of what might be a progressive (not in the moral sense, but in terms of progress, advancement) force or has a progressive potential for women's development within the institution of motherhood. During the bargaining over whether to migrate, women's concern for their children's future had been the convincing argument. 'For the Chinese, children are everything', Tsui used to say, adding 'especially for sons they do everything'. This double-edged sword of motherhood is well known: children are the strength as well as the weakness of parents, especially mothers. We remember the mothers of Plaza de Mayo; torture of children means torture of mothers.

Only in relation to other dimensions of a migrant woman's life, such as her relation with other

family members, profession and sexuality, does it appear that the above question may be answered. The fact that only the women took care of the children, cannot but be considered as non-progressive. Women's development beyond a conservative type of motherhood might have become heavily dependent on the circles and relations a woman happens to find herself in. The women's awareness about what could be done (for example, changing school hours), as well as the way they talk about their possibilities of acting in the outer world (of Dutch women, maybe state institutions, etc.) provides space for discussion with other women. Those women who could speak Dutch confirmed that such a skill is an advantage in opening up possibilities. The advantage of good education, as became clear during the interviews, is very relative. In the beginning of my research I formulated the concept 'good education or access to good education' as being within the (old colonial) Indonesian society. That is to say that the older women, like Swan, Nydia and Willemien belonged to the small section of elites in the Dutch East-Indies who could go to school. But when they arrived in a country like The Netherlands, their education was not only 'outdated' with references to a socio-culturally and politically different context. They landed in an industrialized country where primary school and secondary school are common property and hence their knowledge and skills were of no advantage. The margins and limitations for migrant mothers to develop themselves as economically independent persons depend much on age and are very time-related. A forty-year old foreign woman who arrived with a family in The Netherlands at the beginning of the 1970s could hardly find paid work outside the household. Lies' experience with (c)overt racism made her decide to work somewhere else. She was in the lucky position of having a very good profession. Another dimension of her personal development is that she married in her thirties and had the experience of being a doctor for women and children; she dropped the idea of becoming a mother since her profession and her new life (both as migrant and as married woman) were demanding enough time. It was not mentioned in the interview, but maybe the emerging discussions in The Netherlands questioning 'motherhood' had an impact on her final decision, as well as the general social and cultural 'space' in The Netherlands which allow married women (more than in Indonesia) not to have children.

But apparently the feminist discourse gained so much strength that it allowed some of the women to speak out critically about their motherhood in the early days. As apparently did Dutch public debates on (female) sexuality as the women didn't shy away from the subject. It hadn't been explicitly touched upon during the talks, but became interesting because of the variation in position related to ethnicity. Swan had considered family planning realistically. 'My father bought me that "Van de Velde" book, which was a famous resource book on sexuality and marriage.' She seemed to be proud about the progressive character of her Chinese father in those early days. Her knowledge was important she said, for she and her husband had agreed not to have children immediately in their marriage because of the insecure period they lived in (Japanese occupation). 'When you talk together then you can agree,' she said simply. On the other hand, one of the dominant images of (Indonesian-)Chinese women is that they are prudish, never show sexual feelings or even talk about it. Parents do not show any affection for each other when children or others are

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around.[8] So increasing openness about (all kinds of) sexuality, which is the case in the contemporary Netherlands challenges female 'Chineseness' in a period when racism and dangerous ethnocentrism generate pressure among ethnic minorities to insist on their cultural roots.

Another dimension forms the mixed marriages. Some mothers 'didn't foresee' that their children might find a partner outside the Indonesian-Chinese group. 'I regretted it for my husband that my son married a Dutch woman'. Or, as a female friend once said: 'My mother wanted me to be able to meet Dutch standards, to have Dutch education, but never to enter into a Dutch life-style.'

In conclusion, one important element of Indonesian-Chinese migration has to be mentioned: fear. One woman told me that old fears, developed during the frightening periods in Indonesia did not immediately leave her after migration. In the evening she never answered the telephone as she had had bad experiences of people who had threatened her and her husband with death.

> Especially when my husband was not at home. I was not used to being alone in a house. Back in Indonesia we were always with many. So in our new place I used to go to bed with the two children, even although it was nine o'clock in the evening in summer time and all the other children were still playing outside. But I told the eldest: if they call, do not open the door, or don't pick up the telephone. We have to be very, very quiet.

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[8]   Nevertheless there were attempts in colonial times to make sexual harrassment a public issue as shown by Olga Han (1936). Her sensitive story of the brutal advances made by a private teacher towards a young Indonesian-Chinese girl shows the girl's resistance. After being harrassed, she finds an escape route by lying about the overwhelming heavy nature of her regular schoolwork, knowing that her parents will give that priority. Hence she uses prevailing norms and values (which can be very strong) to her own advantage.

SIX BIOGRAPHICAL CARTOGRAPHIES

People's lives cannot be verbally recorded giving justice to the wealth of lived experience. Language is far from adequate to show to full advantage those feelings of anger or alienation, happiness or sadness that weave and tie people's personal relations. Academic social analysis often fails in this regard due to a lack of appropriate expressions. I would like to do more justice to the Indonesian-Chinese women whose cooperation made my research possible. Therefore some additional parts of the women's stories in relation to their migration are highlighted below.

Swan: took the firm initiative to move abroad. Her husband agreed due to his own personal experience with oppression. It took her three years to organize their migration, using every channel, friend or organization (like the Catholic Church) she could. When they could leave, however, she insisted on staying a little longer to wait until the only son (second child) had finished his last exams at high school. At the end of 1967 the couple arrived in The Netherlands with two daughters and a son. During the first months the family was split up, staying with different relatives: the children were in another city to the parents. After several moves, they could afford to buy a house near the son's university. After one year her mother-in-law followed.

Swan was born in a small village in east Java in 1918. In her story she lays emphasis on the boyish life she lived as young girl, not lacking initiative. She cycled, did sports and took her older and younger brother as models. 'My father was very progressive, my mother was of course very patient'. For a very short period she went to the Chinese school, then followed Dutch language primary school and high school. She went to teachers college and became a teacher at a Dutch language, 'mixed' primary school: children of Dutch, Ambonese (Moluccan group), Chinese and Indo-European background.

She married in her early twenties during the first years of Japanese occupation (1942). Due to her husband's work they moved to west Java. Because of the uncertain future she deliberately postponed having children. Besides her work at her daughter's school Swan was also board committee member of an orphan institution. To be able to pay for the children's education she complemented her husband's income by trading and other small side-businesses in the 'informal' sector.

Nydia: Despite her strong resistance she arrived with her husband and two little children in 1968 in The Netherlands, initially for a temporary period of two years. Her husband had discussed leaving Indonesia with a small group of his colleagues. While in The Netherlands, the husband felt obliged to choose permanent residence either in Indonesia or in The Netherlands. He risked being dismissed in Indonesia. Because of their age (over 60 and 50) Nydia and her husband decided to stay, although Nydia reluctantly consented. After staying in one room at a relative's place, the family moved several times until they could afford to buy a house. Nydia deeply regretted the loss of her nationality five years after her arrival. She

belongs to one of the Indonesian 'suku' (ethnic groups) and was born in 1929 outside Java. Yet, her marriage to an Indonesian-Chinese had affected her life as much as if she were Indonesian-Chinese.

Nydia's personal aspirations were teaching, languages or working as an editor, but her father influenced her to take up economics. Her mother, coming from a small village on another island had no objection to her studying. As the second daughter of 12 children, Nydia had from time to time special household tasks, since they did not always have servants, besides one male servant. All the girls had to do the washing and ironing. As the children went to school in shifts, her mother did the shopping with one of the brothers. In her teens she went to a Christian, Dutch-language high school. Her public life in Indonesia, with a broad network of family, friends, colleagues, full with representational duties and tasks, diminished significantly when she migrated to The Netherlands.

Willemien: Her arrival in The Netherlands with her husband and four children in 1968, had been her wish. She traces this decision back to an earlier positive experience when, at the age of 17, she was taken by her parents to Europe 'for a holiday'. There she was confronted with her parent's decision to stay in The Netherlands. It was 1949 and Indonesia had its independence.

Willemien was born in east Java in 1932. She attended vocational schools (needlework, hairdressing): 'Everything important to become a good housewife'. Her marriage in The Netherlands in the early 1950s to an Indonesian-Chinese doctor brought her back to Indonesia. Her nationality changed from Dutch subject to W.N.I. (Warga Negara Indonesia). Her parents became Dutch citizens and her father instructed her to manage the family business in Indonesia since she had become an Indonesian citizen. She wanted two children, but since her husband wanted a bigger family they had four. Their education and upbringing was fully her task. She lived in fear for the children, for they had regular fights with Indonesian children. 'My husband knew nothing, he was busy with his work'. Willemien decided it was a good moment to leave when her youngest child was potly trained.

Only after migration to The Netherlands did she tell her children that they would not go back to Indonesia (history repeats itself?). But once in The Netherlands the country gave her a shock. It was the end of the 1960s, hippies were sleeping on Dam square, it was the flower-power period with long-haired boys and girls, the anti-authoritarian and democratization movement, the occupation of the university and anti-imperialist, pro-Vietnam demonstrations. The family rented a flat from a relative, but bought their own house some years later. Willemien dedicated herself completely to the education of the children, teaching them Dutch and engaged especially the oldest daughter in household tasks.

Lies: arrived in 1968 for the first time in The Netherlands to specialize in the medical sector. 'Study abroad seemed to me an exciting experience!' She married at the end of 1972 to an Indonesian-Chinese, 'only because he also wanted to go back to Indonesia'. She easily found paid work in a hospital. But as her husband could not get a job (officially since he had a Dutch foreign passport) they had to come back to The Netherlands in 1973. Lies was severely disappointed at leaving Indonesia, for her main ideal had always

been to build up the country, giving her support by providing good medical help, especially for women and children.

Lies was born on Sumatra in 1938 as the oldest of five girls and went initially to a Chinese school ('when my grandfather was still alive'). Her mother sent her later to the Dutch primary school run by Catholic nuns, where after two years the teaching language changed from Dutch to Indonesian. Her mother and all her aunts had attended university, so her future was self evident. On the initiative of her father, who considered education on Java better, she went halfway through secondary school (1955) to a boarding school at a Catholic convent in Jakarta. In her second year at university her father took her away from the convent, after she had proposed to become a nun. Neither marriage nor money was a problem as he said, but there was one thing he was absolutely sure of about her: 'you are not at all able to obey'. Lies remembers the long and open discussions she and her sisters had with their parents, eliciting remarks from other family members that they were impudent children.

Lies' father educated his daughters in a disciplined way: they had to do all their own washing, ironing, shopping, clean the floor and bicycles and keep the garden in order. The family had servants, but as children they were not allowed to ask the servants to do the work. Later, when Lies and her sisters lived in Jakarta, her father allowed them to have servants. Lies asked him why not in former times? 'You have to learn to be independent. If you marry someone and are in a position where you have to do all the work yourself, you will not complain that you had a better life at home'. The woman describes the first two years of her marriage (also the definitive migration to The Netherlands) as very difficult. She had to give up an independent life and had the feeling that 'everything' (study, aspirations) had been for nothing. The couple lived in the husband's house that he had rented before leaving for Indonesia. She combined a job as doctor with domestic work. In 1978 she applied for Dutch citizenship for practical reasons. Lies still works as a medical specialist.

Kiem: arrived in 1963 in Europe at the age of 21, after her parents sent her off to look for a better future in terms of work. She stayed with relatives. Yet the new circumstances were very oppressive: '...isolated from the outside world' ... 'more traditional than my mother' ... 'sexual approaches'. In fact she 'married to be able to leave'. After marrying she started to live with her Indonesian-Chinese husband in The Netherlands and got two children.

Kiem's school education was changed many times, due to moves of the family. She was born in central Java in 1942, her father had been in a Japanese prison camp. Later, when they had move to west Java, her family's economic situation had worsened. As a result of ministerial decrees her father was replaced by an Indonesian and had become jobless. She started to do English teaching, yet was not very motivated any more. Also her boyfriend at that time discouraged her by saying things like: 'my mother considers your study not appropriate'. She couldn't stand his controlling, limiting, 'traditionally Chinese' behaviour ('he still lives in a clan') and broke the relation, after which Kiem went to Europe.

<u>Tsui:</u> is the oldest child of Swan and arrived in The Netherlands at the end of 1967 when she was 21. She stayed with her brother and sister at an uncle and aunt's place, where she took up domestic work. Her brother went to the university and her sister to a secondary school. Only after Tsui insisted did she go to the Technical University, a logical step after she had studied civil engineering in Indonesia.

Tsui was born in 1946 in west Java, went to a Catholic school and later to the school established by her mother and her friends. Education comes first, yet Tsui did have some domestic tasks, like assisting with preparing the food and cleaning the house. Tsui accompanied her mother when the latter went out to do her work outside the house (trade), and assisted in the maintenance of the garden, since the flowers also provided a small income.

Her fiancé from Indonesia arrived together with her grandmother one year after Tsui's family had come. She married him and moved to another place in The Netherlands. They had two children. She didn't finish her course at the Technical University but took up the profession of welfare worker, a job she still has today.

Another Periodization of History
Six Lives Linked with (Inter)national Socio-Political Events

HISTORICAL CONTEXT EUROPE/NETHERLANDS

Dutch Ministerial Report on Minorities 1983
Chinese not acknowledged as ethnic minority

Founding ACOM 1979
Dutch Ministerial Commission for Advise on Minorities

Decade of Women 1975-1985

Anti-American Vietnam Demonstrations early 70s

Emergence 'Second Feminist Wave' Netherlands 1969

Student Revolts 'Paris '68' 1968

1910   1920   1930   1940   1950   1960   1970   1980   1990

TSUI born: 1947
      West Java

KIEM born: 1942
      Central Java

LIES born: 1938
      Sumatra

WILLEMIEN born: 1930
           East Java

NYDIA born: 1929
       Sumatra

SWAN born: 1918
      East Java

1910   1920   1930   1940   1950   1960   1970   1980   1990

Chinese Schools THHK 1900
Dutch Chinese Schools HCS 1908
Legal Status 'Dutch subject' 1910

Japanese occupation 1942-1945
Closing down Dutch Language Schools

Proklamasi Republik Indonesia 1945

Independence 1949

'Choice' between Chinese, Indonesian, Dutch Nationality

Chinese Entrepreneurship in Rural Areas Prohibited 1953

Student quota for Chinese at Universities 1958

Military Coup - Mass Slaughter 1965

Period of Nation Building
Republik Indonesia

anti-Chinese riots

M = Migration to the Netherlands (Europe)
        School/Education Period
W = Wedding/Marriage

HISTORICAL CONTEXT ASIA/INDONESIA

Chapter V

CONCLUSIONS

Limitations of theory and practice

Coming back to the questions posed in Chapter 1, the last section of this paper links theory with the findings as well as the past with the present. For, how did the Indonesian-Chinese women 'define (their) new domains'? Obviously the question wasn't to be taken literally: my research deals with the problem of the politics of identity, given the abrupt changes caused by migration from Indonesia to Europe. However, without a foundation and a framework such 'new domains' cannot be built. Therefore, Chapter 2 provided the specific historical background of migration and the socio-political conditions under which Indonesian-Chinese female identities could be constructed. In order to catch a glimpse of the interior, Chapter 3 placed some doors and windows around this construction in the form of relevant theories. Then some of the new inhabitants, Indonesian-Chinese women who had arrived in Europe at the end of the 1960s, were invited to speak. From their stories emerged the picture portrayed in Chapter 4. The relationship between school/profession and ethnic identity as well as motherhood/sexuality and discipline were the peaks highlighted in the series of experiences, referred to above as configurations. These configurations delineated parts of those tangible and visible axes of intersecting power relations of race, class and gender that position the women in question in their social realities.

Drawing now from the first four chapters, I would like briefly to discuss three issues by way of conclusion. However, first a few lines dedicated to the theoretical approach. When I started my research I realized that my personal academic development could be sited somewhere in between a couple of theoretical paradigms; each provided concepts, yet neither made me completely happy. Structuralist or positivist approaches didn't satisfy me at all, but their appeal is very persistent because of their so-called cause/effect logic and broad application in terms of common sense. Originally mastering concepts and ideas of the post-structuralists or post-modernists, although attractive, not only seemed too much following the latest academic fashion but also filled me with suspicion as political struggles seemed to have been placed on the most hidden shelves. Moreover, academics are very good in reasoning why political struggles should wait (as if that itself weren't political). However, in the process of my work I couldn't but admit that new concepts like discourse and multiplicity of identities served increasingly better my aim of analysing the complex social realities of immigrant women. In this respect, therefore, my paper might be somewhat asymmetrical as the final part does not strictly follow the promise of the beginning. It is also not my habit to use concepts and ideas only at the level of (written) formal academic language: learning and reproducing words from one paper to another. My preference is to adapt concepts to my own use, also in my personal language and my life outside academic institutions, as formally learned knowledge should serve life and not

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vice versa. In this sense, my research has also been for me a process of academically 'defining new domains'.

1. Room for Women's Development

In my research I hence attempted to avoid a cause/effect analysis of the relation between strategizing subjects and their socio-historical background and their socio-economic and socio-political environment. I tried rather to outline multiple positions from where Indonesian-Chinese women operate. As professionals, as females, as 'aliens', as 'coloured', as member of an 'ethnic minority', as 'wife' or as 'mother' they occupy various places in relation to those around them; places that can be corresponding, conflating, conflicting or contradicting. The analysis showed that dimensions of time and location, associated with 'migranting' assumed increased importance, as they heavily influence the space and margins for strategizing. Women do not stay the girl or young spouse they were at the time they left or upon their arrival. They might have become mothers, widows, nuns or have acquired another nationality. Sumatra's highlands differ fundamentally from Holland's cities, also in the sense that conditions of exposure to hegemonic discourses (information, orientation) can vary enormously, thus demanding different strategies - in timing as well as in type.

The relationality of Mohanty's concept 'oppositional agency of individuals' becomes clear in the case of (international) migration. 'Oppositional agencies' are subjected to two types of transformations. Based on continuities such as the mother-daughter relation or 'Chinese ethnicity' which remain after migration, the 'oppositional agency' undergoes a curve because of the change in hegemonic discourses; or has to cope with a break because of a loss of meaning in the new context. Hence, since 'oppositional agency' by nature cannot avoid dichotomic social relationships, it should, I suggest, be narrowly described in relation to what is opposed as well simultaneously contextualized. The concept becomes most fruitful in its retrospective form: when the women retrieve life-events and re-create or reconstruct their strategic positions in their narratives and stories. Hence, while looking back at their past women point at these moments, simultaneously constructing a new reality.

The sudden move to Europe put the women in concrete relation with a time-dominated and over-institutionalized world. To middle- and upper-class women, Indonesia offers women space, next to a family, to built up a relatively separate, network through paid or unpaid work. Domestic chores and child care were left to domestic servants or nannies, hence hiding patriarchally-informed gender relations between husband and wife. Social relations in Western countries are institutionalized, which can most clearly be seen in an immigrant woman's dependency. Married women (and their daughters and sons) depend for their residence often completely on the 'breadwinner'. Their legal residence is defined as 'staying with the husband', entailing that his death or their divorce would result in her immediately being deported (with only rare exceptions). Although state regulations like these are addressed to (non-national) collectivities, they act upon individuals. Migrant women are aware of this which creates and stresses simultaneously two realities: a) of

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being a member of a non-national group and b) of being directly linked to (and/or dependent on) a male person. Economic or class position is less relevant here than being a married female. This questions the presuppositions underlying the general claim of improvement that emigration to an industrialized country would bring. Becoming disciplined (in Foucault's sense), dependent and increasingly contributing to the support of the nuclear family is the price women pay for their defence, safety and security; in the same way that goods are paid by instalment. Nydia sighs, while referring to Indonesian friends: 'Only now I am old and my husband has passed away, I realize that he left me a secure life.'

Conflicting positions from where by Indonesian-Chinese women operate become clear when they as females refuse to support patriarchal thinking to which they are subjected within the family, and start to oppose the assumed patriarchal logic by deciding not to have children or divorcing. Indonesian-Chinese women meet resistance from an inflexible society that scarcely allows women with children to have a paid job. Or they have to counter on a personal level patriarchal bourgeois ideology concerning the family wage and the male breadwinner. Indonesian-Chinese women's opposition also attacks hegemonic discursive forces relating to 'ethnic minority women', picturing them as (economically and psychologically) dependent and subjugated to men. What is then the Indonesian-Chinese woman? The internal discussions on 'real Chineseness' among the Indonesian Chinese include also oppressive judgments on women who are held responsible for maintaining the collectivity's authenticity. Yet who determines that authenticity? and when? Proper education for women is an important condition in order for them to become, in principle, economically independent: it is a crucial tool in women's struggle for their own development. Ethnic minority women, as in the case of Indonesian-Chinese women, can become caught between patriarchy and the assumed 'logic' of their 'ethnic authenticity'.

2. Politics of Identity

The politics of identity in my research was conceptualized as the growth towards consciousness of one's strength and power at different points which change according to circumstances on the intersecting lines of the power relations of race, class, gender and sexuality. This section is limited to the politics of ethnic identity. From their several positions, immigrant women understand clearly the forces that are mobilized and that they mobilize to place them in an oppressed or oppressive situation.[1] Yet consciousness of the direction of these forces also demands an awareness of how to influence their movement. Indonesian-Chinese women's relation to The Netherlands state shows that a politics of identity eventually requires political choices. Many Indonesian-Chinese families could stay thanks to grants from family members or

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[1]   'I had a rather privileged position in Indonesia, so I couldn't complain about educational opportunities'. 'I thought the Indonesians will know that my husband is married with an Indonesian, so I thought they will not attack my husband. Because of all our relations (and you know how Indonesia is) I thought also that the children will have a future as well'. Or: 'If you don't ask here in the Netherlands they pass you over', 'My sisters-in-law told me to serve my husband. But I said no, he likes to do it himself. Of course I say that differently in The Netherlands than in Indonesia'.

good friends who were (already) well-to-do Dutch citizens. The Netherlands allows these grants on the condition that the new arrivals will never rely on the state's social welfare system. The majority of the migrated Indonesian-Chinese families, belong to the better- or very well-educated. They were confident that they would be able to find work in well-paid jobs, and were hence willing to and could take the risk of migration. In fact, the women of my research didn't really consider migration as a risk. Also the exclusion from state benefits was not a problem as it fitted more with their ideas that one relies on a person instead of on the state. Initially, Dutch education and the ability to speak Dutch fluently made adaptation for the adults easier; it was even a reason for pride. However, that was in the 1960s. When in the 1980s Netherlands discourses on ethnicity started to equate the existence of ethnic minorities with being underprivileged, backward and poor, many Indonesian-Chinese men and women resisted being labelled 'ethnic minority'. Often they proudly stressed their 'economic independence' (sometimes not feeling ashamed of dangerously equalizing this with 'Chineseness'), distancing themselves from other ethnic minorities, conveniently 'forgetting' the specificities of the different group's migration and background. Today, Netherlands' policy on ethnic minorities tends increasingly to insist on representation of the ethnic groups in dealings with the state. Dutch ethnic minority policies should be expressed and formed with the assistance of representatives of the several ethnic minorities. Therefore, ministries aim at the creation of 'discussion partners' (Van Amersfoort, 1991, p. 28). Through official state recognition of representatives it becomes more important for ethnic minorities to keep the 'rank-and-file' as large and close together as possible. Tendencies like these further create conditions for dangerous discursive forces within as well as outside ethnic minorities which start to determine who and what 'is Chinese', with the implicit judgement 'who and what is not Chinese'. Ethnic identity based on parents' origin leaves little choice. However, ethnic identity as a creation of socio-political forces needs a different approach. As is well known among ethnic collectives who are on the defensive, women, as the biological reproducers of an ethnic group are required to 'safeguard' the boundaries of their group. How much negative effect this ethnic fundamentalism can have for Indonesian-Chinese women in The Netherlands will follow from the next section.

3. Defining new domains in the Europe of the 1990s

In the Europe of 1991, the issue of assimilation and integration of ethnic minorities has gained topicality as a result of contemptible racial attacks in the recent past. The greatly lauded freedom of Eastern Europe has also opened a nationalist closet full of racism and hatred of aliens. Coloured migrants and refugees in Germany, France and Italy are the target of violent attacks by neo-nazis, fascists and racists. The Netherlands has also experienced these. European political discourses create false illusions about 'opening up the borders in Europe 1992'. Coloured people only experience an increase of checks at these borders, while rules and regulations are prepared to keep non-Europeans out. In The Netherlands the debate has been

reopened[2] by the public statement of the liberal leader Bolkestein who favours a forced integration of Islamic culture, since he considers Western Christian culture superior. Minister Dales, Minister of Home Affairs, recently announced for 1992 a conference on 'integration and assimilation of ethnic minorities in The Netherlands'. In the concrete situation of today, attitudes and strategies of individuals are of increasing importance. Skin colour is too often the first criterion that people employ when making judgement of others. When physical features are important, nationality becomes of minor importance; ethnicity only serves the 'divide-and-rule' dimension in racism: the darkest skin is identified for discrimination first, the lightest later.

In the twilight of a transformation from a relatively rigid dichotomization of power relations towards a (seemingly?) multiple pattern of scattered power constellations, conscious subjects will form the nuclei from where opposition might grow to this trend. The Indonesian-Chinese individual who reads newspapers, watches television and is in the lucky position to be able to follow local, regional and global developments, has a responsibility to take a position on these developments, not only towards herself or himself, but also towards those he or she is related to (directly of indirectly). The introduction of 'sino-centrism' is not a solution for problems that are created by Western centrism and racism. To paraphrase Chow (1991): to champion 'Chineseness' can only be a hindrance to developing the conditions whereby a person can define his or her own identity, for it compounds deep-rooted patriarchal thinking of which the 'Chinese woman' is the last proof of the continuity of tradition. This emphasis on 'Chineseness' excludes lived relations with the 'Westernization' process and the role played by these relations in their subject-position - however contradictory. Those who experience these contradictions and the ambiguities deriving from the different positions might only overcome potential conflicts by engagement in the discussions and debates that will be of crucial importance in the coming years: on gender, unequal distribution, racism, 'assimilation and integration' of ethnic minorities and hence for the (Indonesian-) Chinese collectivities on 'Chineseness'.

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[2]   In the early 1980s such a public debate also took place in the pages of daily newspapers, when 'scientist' Couwenberg defended 'Dutch national culture against foreign influences of migrants'.

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