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**Education at home: the age-specific pattern
of migration between the Netherlands and
the former Dutch East Indies around 1930**

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Table of Contents

1	Introduction	336
2	Historical background	338
3	The 1930 census and the missing teenagers	339
4	Cohort effect: historical births series	340
5	Age effect: an estimate via stable population theory	344
6	Age effect: children residing abroad	347
7	Dutch East Indies students in the Netherlands	347
8	Conclusions	352
	Notes	355
	References	356

Education at home: the age-specific pattern of migration between the Netherlands and the former Dutch East Indies around 1930

Evert van Imhoff ¹

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Abstract

The 1930 population census of the former Dutch East Indies (currently Indonesia) shows for the European population a striking shortage in the age range 10-20. This paper deals with the possible causes of this constriction in the age structure, in particular, the phenomenon of European children attending secondary education in the Netherlands. Using sample data from the city of The Hague, it is estimated that the proportion of students in the Netherlands born in the Dutch East Indies was about 3 per cent, implying that the teenager gap in the Dutch East Indies was for about half due to a cohort effect and for the other half due to the ‘education at home’ effect.

¹ Due to his sudden and unexpected death in July 2004, Dr. Evert van Imhoff could unfortunately not contribute to the revision of this article after helpful comments and suggestions had arrived from two anonymous reviewers of *Demographic Research*.

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1. Introduction

The colonial era of the Netherlands started in the late sixteenth century and came mostly to an end in the twentieth century with the independence of Indonesia in 1949 and of Surinam in 1975. Today, six islands in the Caribbean (the Dutch Antilles) are the only overseas territories left. By far the most important Dutch colony, by all standards, was the former Dutch East Indies (1), currently Indonesia. The economic and demographic significance of the Dutch East Indies for the Netherlands was immense. Following the Second World War, the Dutch East Indies became the independent Republic of Indonesia in 1949; in the aftermath of the independence, thousands of people of both Dutch and mixed Dutch / native Indonesian descent moved to the Netherlands, establishing the largest migrant sub-population in Dutch demographic history.

The most important category within the total Indo-Dutch population consists of or originates from persons who lived in the Dutch East Indies before and during the Japanese occupation of 1942-1945 and had the legal status of being 'Dutch'. In the available pre-war population statistics, the group 'Dutch' is usually not distinguished separately, but included in the somewhat broader group 'Europeans (including the formally assimilated)', of which the Dutch comprised about 85-90 per cent. Also, detailed demographic data distinguished by *age* for the East Indies are most recently available from the census of 1930. Since age is obviously a crucial variable, any demographic reconstruction of the Indo-Dutch population (2) must start from the 1930 census.

The 1930 census age distribution of the Europeans in the Dutch East Indies is depicted in *Figure 1* and has a very peculiar feature: a shortage in the age range 10-20. This peculiarity not only has several consequences for the demographic reconstruction of the Indo-Dutch population, but also has, to the best of our knowledge, never been described before in the demographic literature. We will denote it by the term '*education at home*' effect, which constitutes the main topic of the present paper. 'Education at home' may be typical for a certain time and context, in particular a colonial context. We will argue that these shortages in the age range 10-20 years in the Dutch East Indies in 1930 are not the result of 'severe demographic circumstances', like a sudden fall in fertility or a sudden rise of mortality or migration due to wartime, epidemic or economic crisis.

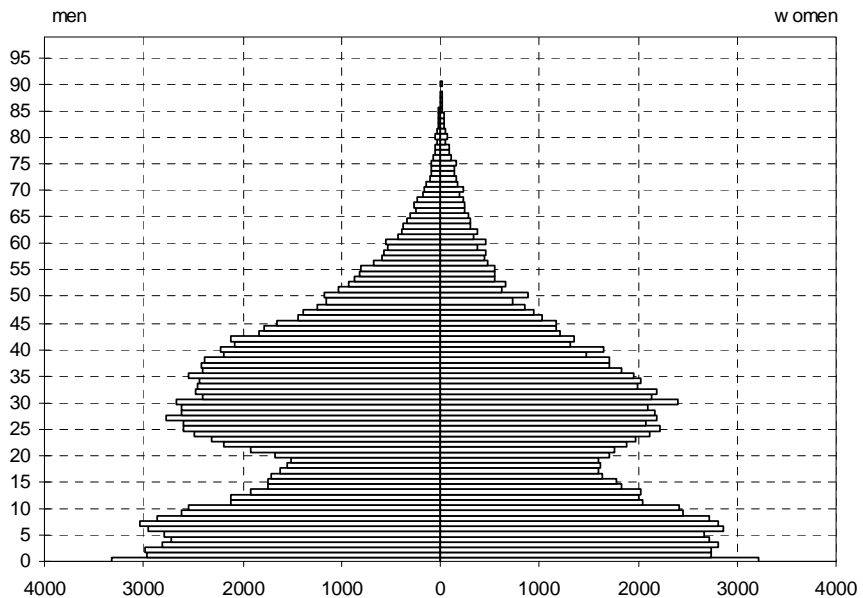


Figure 1: *European population in the Dutch East Indies by age and sex, 1930 (absolute numbers)*

Source: Census of 1930 in the Dutch East Indies (1933).

The structure of this paper is as follows. After some historical background (section 2), the 1930 age structure is presented and discussed in section 3. Subsequently, several possible causes of the ‘teenager gap’ are systematically investigated: historical births series (section 4), stable population analysis (section 5), and a direct census question on children residing abroad (section 6). It appears that a substantial part of the teenager gap is likely to be related to children migrating to the Netherlands at the start of secondary school. In section 7, we investigate what this would imply for the student population around 1930 in the Netherlands, and we analyse some school archives from the city of The Hague to try and quantify the size of the Indo-Dutch student population. Section 8 summarizes and concludes.

2. Historical background

The arrival of the first Dutchmen at the end of the sixteenth century ushered in a period of long-standing relationships between Europe and the Indian Archipelago. In this period, which was characterized by colonization, settlement and trade, much manpower was needed, in great majority from the mother country. At first, military men and traders (mostly staff of the Dutch United East Indies Company (3)) left for the colony, followed by civil servants and persons with other professions. Most of these persons were unmarried men, and those who were married left their wife and family back home in Europe in view of the harsh living conditions. Moreover, the arrival of married persons was almost impossible because of restrictions made by the authorities (Nieuwenhuys 1982). Until the mid-nineteenth century, the majority of the Dutch community in the Dutch East Indies consisted mostly of men. The number of Europeans (military men excluded) was estimated at 2,000 on the islands of Java and Madura in 1814. This number increased to 17,300 in 1852 next to some 4,800 on the other islands. Around 1860 there were some 43,000 European men and less than 1,000 European women.

The shortage of European women was instrumental for the conclusion of concubinages with native women. These mixed concubinages, as well as (to a lesser extent) mixed marriages, were the origin of the Indo-Dutch population in the Dutch East Indies (for a full account, see Taylor 1983). The Dutch United East Indies Company did not accept concubinage and the church council established a list of 'sinners'. Nevertheless, by 1800 concubinage was widespread and in the capital city Batavia (currently Jakarta) it even was part of the city's lifestyle. An unmarried concubine had the same status as a legal wife (Van Marle 1952).

In the early period of the colonization, men came to the Archipelago for their career, to earn money, and to return back home afterwards. These persons are noted as the so-called *movers*. However, over time, part of the Europeans began to consider the Archipelago as their home country, becoming *stayers* who remained for a longer time or even permanently. The core of these stayers consisted of families who settled from one generation to the next. This group increased in number by natural growth, as well as by the arrival of newcomers turning into stayers.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, a range of developments such as the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, the progress in ship-building, and the rise of new Western companies in the Dutch East Indies, gave a boost to the trek of Europeans to the Archipelago. This resulted in more European women leaving for the colony, especially after 1918. Some of these women were married by proxy and joined their newly wed husbands; others came for adventure and work. Legal (mixed) marriages replaced concubinage that was in decline in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. In

1880-1895 there were 500 women for 1,000 men among the European population. Around 1940 the number of men and women was almost equal. The settlement of Europeans became increasingly permanent. In 1900, Europeans and their descendants counted over 91,000, a rapid increase from 44,000 in 1860. By 1920, the size of the European population had increased further to 170,000, and by 1930 to 240,000.

Notwithstanding the improved and expanding infrastructure among which was the increase of the number and types of schools for Europeans as well as native people by the end of the nineteenth century, Europeans preferred to send their children to the home country for the purpose of secondary and higher education. These children were mostly aged 12 to 23 years. After finishing their studies, most children returned to the Dutch Indies to join their parents, to work and make a career. Some returned to the Netherlands after retirement from duty in the tropics (usually around age 50 in those days). Others remained, married to a European or native woman and continued their stay in the Archipelago. It also happened that children did not return to the Dutch Indies after their studies if for example their studies were only finished after the parents had returned from the Archipelago.

In 1942, this pattern of demographic development of the European population in the East Indies was rudely interrupted. In that year, Japan invaded the Archipelago and the Second World War occupation began. Immediately after the war, the nationalist movement took over and after four years of fruitless struggle, the Dutch granted independence to the Republic of Indonesia in 1949. In the wake of the war and the independence, a large number of the Indo-Dutch people and their descendants left for the Netherlands; a significant proportion of them arrived in that country for the first time in their life. Others went either directly or via the Netherlands to another country like the United States of America, Australia, New Zealand or South Africa. Only a small number opted for the Indonesian nationality and stayed.

3. The 1930 census and the missing teenagers

Since the mid-nineteenth century, vital statistics were reported yearly by the colonial administration. These statistics concerned births, deaths and marriages between Europeans and between Europeans and native persons, Chinese or other Asians. However, initially they did not cover the total area of the Dutch East Indies.

Since 1880 a simple count of the population was carried out every five years. Reliability and coverage of these counts left much to be desired. In 1909 it was decided to conduct a population census. The report of the first population census held in 1920 mentioned that this census should be considered as experimental and that the results

were not fully reliable. The results of the second census, held at 7 October 1930 were regarded reliable. In the second half of the 1930s preparations were made for a 1940 census and a test-census was conducted in two districts in 1938 (Gooszen 1994). The census of 1940 eventually did not take place because of the Second World War.

Figure 1, already given above, shows the composition by age and sex of the Europeans according to the 1930 Dutch East Indies census. A very striking feature of this graph is the relatively small share of the age range 10-20 years, i.e. the age category of secondary school students. Two possible explanations for the constriction in the age structure of the Dutch East Indies European population come to mind:

- The constriction is due to a *cohort effect*. The 10-20 year olds in 1930 are born in 1910-1920, and the birth levels in the Dutch Indies during this period were less numerous than before 1910 and in 1920-1930.
- The constriction is due to an *age effect*. The Indo-Dutch teenagers *do* exist, but they are not counted in the Dutch Indies census because they reside outside the Dutch East Indies. The most obvious reason for that absence is, that many children of Europeans (Dutch) attend secondary and higher education in Europe (the Netherlands).

Both these explanations will be scrutinized in the sections to follow.

4. Cohort effect: historical births series

Data on the annual number of births among Europeans in the Dutch East Indies can be found in the so-called Colonial Reports ('Koloniaal Verslagen', 1910-1929) and Dutch East Indies Reports ('Indisch Verslagen', from 1930 onward). *Figure 2* displays the trajectory of births over time in the period 1910-1930, compared to the age composition of 1930 (stock).

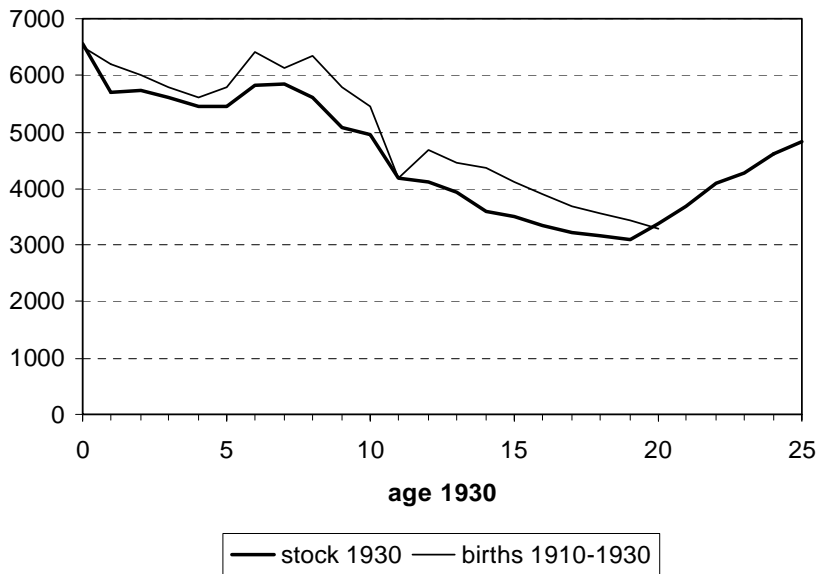


Figure 2: *Europeans 1930 and births among Europeans 1910-30, by age in 1930 (absolute numbers)*

Source: Census of 1930 (stock), Colonial and Dutch East Indies Reports (births).

At first sight, it seems as if the age composition in 1930 corresponds quite nicely with the historical births series among Europeans in the Dutch East Indies. In other words: the constriction in 1930 seems to be a pure cohort effect. However, such a conclusion would be very premature, for several reasons.

First, mortality in the Dutch East Indies was far from negligible, also among Europeans and certainly among young children. Because of the effect of mortality, the distance between the curves ‘stock 1930’ and ‘births’ would have to grow larger with increasing age. This, however, is not the case.

Second, the group of European children not only increased through births, but also through *recognition*. If a man recognized as his own the child of a woman from a non-European population category, the child was automatically transferred to the category of the father. In this way, each year many children from non-European mothers became Europeans. Descendants of these children in the male line were also considered as Europeans. The numbers of recognitions are also listed in the Colonial and Dutch East Indies Reports, and they are quite considerable: during the 1920s recognitions

amounted to about 15 per cent of annual births. Because of the effect of recognition, the distance between the curves ‘stock 1930’ and ‘births’ would have to grow smaller with increasing age, and the curve ‘stock 1930’ could even be located *above* the ‘births’ curve. However, figure 2 contains no evidence of this.

Third and last, we have to seriously question the reliability of the birth statistics from the Colonial and Dutch East Indies Reports. ‘All Europeans (including the formally assimilated) were registered with the department of Justice in Batavia and here also a civil registry of them was kept’ (Gooszen 1994: 55). However, it is not clear whether this civil registry provided truly reliable demographic data, especially before 1920.

To illustrate this problem, *Figure 3* shows for the period 1900-1940 the trajectory of births among Europeans, on the one hand, and the migration between the Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies (4), on the other hand. The settlement of Dutch people in the Dutch East Indies exhibits several remarkable wave movements. Since 1900 the general trend in immigration from the Netherlands is rising but during the First World War migration fell steeply, due to the war activities which hampered travelling. After 1919 a migration wave to the Dutch East Indies took place. At the same time, the character of the migration changed: while *before* World War I the migration to the Dutch East Indies consisted mainly of men who frequently came to the Dutch East Indies on a temporary assignment (either military or civil) and returned thereafter (the so-called *movers*), *after* World War I the settlement in the Dutch East Indies became more and more of a ‘permanent’ character, with increasingly family reunification and family formation migration, including also (young) married women (the so-called *stayers*). After a brief lapse midway the 1920s, this settlement peaked in 1930, after which the worldwide economic crisis caused a drastic fall. By the end of the 1930s, settlement reached again a peak, but after the outbreak of World War II the migration between the Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies again largely came to a standstill.

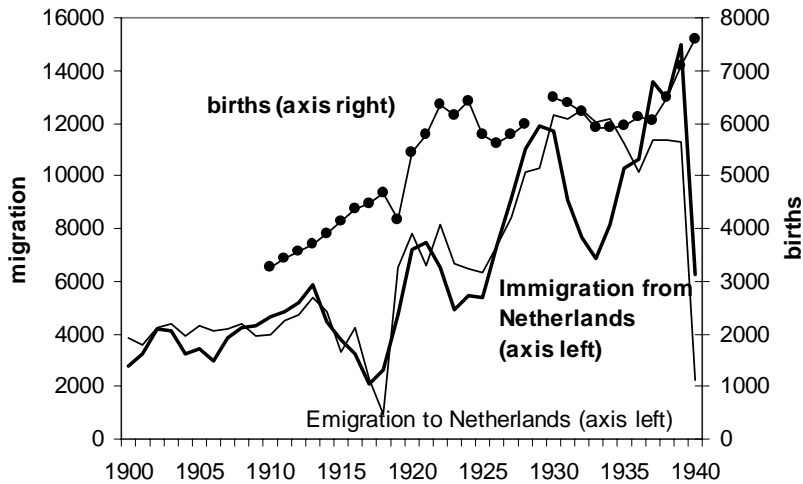


Figure 3: *Migration between the Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies, 1900-40 (absolute numbers)*

Source: Statistics Netherlands (migration: until 1936, 90% of the migration between the Netherlands and total Colonies); Colonial and Dutch East Indies Reports (births).

The trajectory of the births series shows only very limited correspondence to the trajectory of the immigration from the Netherlands. Whether such a correspondence should be there, is dependent on the question where those births originated from: if those births were primarily from Indo-Dutch men, then little correspondence would be expected; but if those births were to an important extent from ‘fresh’ Dutch couples, then much correspondence would be expected. However, the extent of the correlation between immigration and births is quite different, depending on the time period, and this is very hard to understand. The time trend of the migration pattern does not offer a clear explanation for a birth trajectory that until 1920 is almost linearly increasing and after 1920 all of a sudden changes into a structurally higher but at the same time more or less constant level.

These observations raise the question, to what extent the cohort effect that appears so clearly from figure 2 is *truly* a cohort effect, or, alternatively, just a statistical artefact that accidentally coincides in 1930 in the secondary school ages with the ‘teenager gap’. At this stage, we can only conclude that the student shortage is probably in some part

due to a cohort effect, the extent of which is very difficult to assess with these demographic data.

5. Age effect: an estimate via stable population theory

In the previous section, we investigated whether the teenager gap can be a cohort effect. In contrast, the current section explores whether it can be an age effect, and how strong such an age effect would have to be.

It is quite likely that age effects operated in shaping the age structure of the European population in the Dutch East Indies. We know that the general pattern of the migration flows between the Dutch East Indies and Europe (the Netherlands) was highly age-specific: towards Europe by the end of primary school, towards the Dutch East Indies at the start of the labour career, and again towards Europe at the age of retirement. As a result, even with a relatively small *net* migration between Europe and the Dutch East Indies, migration still has a sizeable effect on the age structure of the Europeans.

Unfortunately, a number of problems occur when trying to reconstruct the age-specific migration pattern between the Dutch Indies and Europe (the Netherlands). There are no *direct* observations on the age distribution of those migrants, neither from the Colonial and Dutch East Indies Reports, nor from the Netherlands migration statistics. A possible approach could have been, to take the age structure of the Europeans from two consecutive censuses and to reconstruct the non-migration components (mainly births and deaths) by age for the intercensal period; the remaining difference between the two age structures would then be the age effect of migration. However, the age detail in the Dutch East Indies census of 1920 is insufficient for such an exercise. And even if we could have used the 1920 census, an intercensal period of 10 years is still too long to allow the accurate measurement of an ‘education at home’ effect which operates within a quite narrow age interval.

For these reasons, an indirect approach has been followed. In this approach, the age patterns of the immigration to and emigration from the Dutch East Indies are derived using the 1930 age structure alone. The method is based on three assumptions:

1. In 1930, the European population in the Dutch East Indies was approximately *stable*. It is not very likely that the European population was *truly* stable, but neither do we see reasons to believe that the deviations from stability are substantial. We set the stable growth rate at 1.5 per cent per annum, which is the annual rate of natural growth observed during the 1930s. This implies that each birth cohort is 1.5 percent larger than its immediate predecessor.

2. The European population of the Dutch East Indies in 1930 has been subject to mortality according to the estimated life table for Europeans in the Dutch East Indies around 1930. In the light of the gradual decline in mortality over time, this assumption holds by approximation only.
3. All irregularities in the stable population are the result of age-specific migration. This assumption is not completely acceptable, because for the European population in the Dutch East Indies also other components of age-specific population change were relevant, viz.: (a) recognition (an extramarital child is recognized by the father and as such obtains the status of European); (b) marriage surplus (a non-European woman obtains through her marriage to a European man the status of European); (c) formal assimilation (the government had the authority to grant the legal status of European to persons from other population categories, notably native Indonesians and Chinese). On the other hand, the gross migration flows (i.e. immigration and emigration counted separately) are numerically much more important than the aggregate of recognitions, marriage surplus, and formal assimilations.

From assumptions (1) and (2) one can construct a fictitious 1930 population by age and sex. This fictitious population can be interpreted as the European population in the Dutch East Indies by 1930, as it would have been if there had been no migration between the Dutch East Indies and Europe (the Netherlands). Subsequently, a comparison of the observed and fictitious age distributions yields age-specific surpluses and shortages (see *Figure 4*). The *changes* in these surpluses and shortages from one age year to the next, according to assumption (3), can now be attributed to immigration to the Dutch East Indies (if the surplus increases with age) or emigration from the Dutch East Indies (if the shortage increases with age).



Figure 4: *Observed and fictitious stable population, Europeans in the Dutch East Indies, 1930 (absolute numbers)*

The immigration and emigration numbers constructed in this way exhibit a somewhat ragged age trajectory, obviously because the assumptions on which our method rests are only approximately valid. Nevertheless one can recognize a clear age pattern. Immigration takes place mostly between the ages 20 and 30 (start of the labour career). Emigration is mainly concentrated between the ages 10-15 (secondary school age) and 40-55 (retirement, or at least the ‘end of service in the tropics’). These age patterns are highly plausible.

The observed and fictitious age structures in figure 4 can also be used to estimate the *size* of the teenager gap. In the age range 10-20, about 14 thousand children are ‘missing’ in figure 4 (55 thousand in the stable population, 41 thousand in the observed population). This would imply that about 25 per cent of the European children of secondary-school age were residing in Europe (the Netherlands).

It should be stressed that these numbers (25 per cent relative, 14 thousand absolute) are *over*-estimates of the true situation. The reason is that the method has assumed that the teenager gap is *fully* due to an age effect, while in reality it is quite probably in part also due to a cohort effect.

6. Age effect: children residing abroad

In the 1930 Dutch East Indies census, the questionnaire for Europeans contained the following question: ‘How many *minor-aged* children under your maintenance are residing outside the Dutch East Indies? a. boys, b. girls’. The results for this question (unfortunately, there is no corresponding question in the 1930 census in the Netherlands) give some *direct* insight into the size of the teenager gap, with one important restriction: the question can be answered only in case at least one parent or custodian is present in the Dutch East Indies; thus, the results do not include those students who are residing abroad *together with their full family*, e.g. because the father has been retired.

According to the 1930 Dutch East Indies census, 8 thousand minor-aged children residing abroad are maintained by Europeans residing in the Dutch East Indies (Census of 1930 in the Dutch East Indies, Part IV: 33-35). The census report suspects that this number is an overestimation, because the question has probably frequently been misinterpreted (e.g. many mature-aged students would erroneously have been counted as well). The ratio of boys to girls is virtually 50:50. As to the reasons for the absence of these children, the census report is crystal clear: ‘The lacking of a number of the children of this age range can largely be attributed to the Dutch Indies custom, to send children of secondary school and university age abroad, for the completion of their education, sometimes also for other reasons, *in most cases to the Netherlands*’ (p. 6; italics added).

The phenomenon ‘children outside the Dutch East Indies’ can be encountered, according to the census data, with about one in six of all family heads. In the previous section we gave as our estimated upper limit that 25 per cent of the European children is residing in Europe. In combination with the one in six result, this would imply that of the Dutch East Indies children in Europe, about 60 per cent is residing there *without* parents (i.e. the parents are in the Dutch East Indies) and about 40 per cent *with* parents (i.e. the parents have also migrated to Europe).

7. Dutch East Indies students in the Netherlands

A birth cohort of Europeans in the Dutch East Indies during the 1920s consisted of about 6 thousand children. If 25 per cent of these went to secondary school in the Netherlands, then per birth cohort about 1,500 Dutch East Indies children were present in the Netherlands, or about 1 per cent of a birth cohort in the Netherlands at that time (approximately 150 thousand).

Within the group of secondary school *students*, the share of those from the Dutch East Indies was naturally much larger: to wit, the Dutch East Indies children in the Netherlands almost by definition went to secondary schools, while this was certainly *not* the case for the total Dutch population in 1930. A crude estimate indicates that the participation rate in the more advanced types of secondary schools (5) in the Netherlands in 1930 was about 16 per cent, i.e. 24 thousand per birth cohort. Among these, the 1,500 Dutch East Indies students comprise 6 per cent, i.e. one or two students on average per classroom.

The participation in the more advanced types of secondary education among the Dutch East Indies Europeans cannot accurately be determined, but it was without doubt substantially above the 16 per cent for the total Dutch population. Although the estimated 25 per cent students abroad is an upper limit for the proportion that went to school in the Netherlands, we should not forget to add all those European children who went to school *in the Dutch East Indies themselves*. Especially after 1900, the school system in the Dutch East Indies expanded notably: ‘In 1880, the Dutch Indies already had three HBS institutions with a total of 378 students, by 1920 this number had increased to seven (government-owned) schools with a total of 2546 students. What was lacking in the Dutch Indies was a gymnasium [classical grammar school]’ (Mandemakers 1996: 198). Obviously, the high educational participation rate among the Indo-Dutch can be explained by the fact that the Dutch in the Dutch East Indies were a selective group, with a socio-economic status that greatly exceeded the average for the Netherlands as a whole.

All of the above estimates and calculations on the share of Dutch East Indies students in the Netherlands have been based exclusively on demographic data *for the Dutch East Indies*. This yielded a proportion of Indo-Dutch among all students of at most 6 per cent. In order to test for the likelihood of this number, one could also investigate the population *in the Netherlands* and find out the percentage originating from the Dutch East Indies. However, this is not as easy as it appears. Electronic datasets are hardly available for this time period. A manual search in the municipal population registers would be extremely time-consuming, particularly as a useful entry into these registers (e.g. ‘place of birth’) is lacking. And even if population register data, or individual data from the 1930 census, would have been available, it would still be extremely difficult to extract relevant information on the *backgrounds* of the migration to the Netherlands: what type of education was being attended, where were the parents, what type of housing conditions did one have, and so on.

In order to obtain a first impression, we have conducted a small-scale research into a limited number of school archives. The most important objective was, to find out the proportion of ‘students from the Dutch East Indies’ around 1930 in the more advanced types of secondary education. To this end, data are required on individual students,

including at the very least the place of birth. In order to get a sizeable number of Dutch East Indies students, it is advisable then to select a region with a large density of colonial personnel. The Hague is traditionally the city with by far the largest concentration of Indo-Dutch persons. In 1930 more than one-third of all Dutch people born in the Dutch East Indies lived in The Hague, and the share of the Dutch East Indies born was in The Hague no less than seven times the national average (cf. *Table 1*).

Table 1: *Proportion of population born in one of the Colonies, 1899-1930*

	Total population		of which born in one of the Colonies		percentage born in one of the Colonies	
	Netherlands	The Hague	Netherlands	The Hague	Netherlands	The Hague
1899	5,104,137	206,022	11,846	3,836	0.23%	1.86%
1909	5,858,175	271,280	15,031	5,191	0.26%	1.91%
1920	6,865,314	354,987	20,592	7,578	0.30%	2.13%
1930	7,935,556	437,665	32,616	12,244	0.41%	2.80%

Source: Censuses (the Netherlands).

The Municipal Archive of The Hague contains the archives of several schools in The Hague, of which some are useful for our purpose. All together, 3,717 cards with individual student information have been analysed. These data cover the period of approximately 1925-1939, and include four schools: one gymnasium, and three HBS schools (of which one for girls only).

24 per cent of all students is born outside the Netherlands, almost all of them in the Dutch East Indies. It was rather common that students from the Dutch East Indies (6) attended a school in the Netherlands for a short period only: the father has a year's leave in the Netherlands, after which the family returns to the Dutch East Indies. If we weigh with school duration, the share of students born abroad falls to 20 per cent. If the factor 'The Hague seven times the national average' also applies to the age range of secondary school, this would imply that nationally about 3 per cent of the students in the advanced types of secondary education is originally from the Dutch East Indies. Since earlier we set 6 per cent as our 'age effect only' upper limit, the conclusion would have to be that the teenager gap in the Dutch East Indies is for about half due to an age effect and for the other half due to a cohort effect.

We have tried to reconstruct the family situation of the students born in the Dutch East Indies. Unfortunately, the student cards do not always provide unambiguous information on this, requiring in some cases to make a choice based on other variables (e.g. previous school; length of stay in the school; information on the father; a

handwritten remark on the card). Broadly speaking, the following categories of ‘students from the Dutch East Indies’ can be distinguished:

- ‘Solitary students’: the parents resided in the Dutch East Indies, the student lived in the Netherlands. In most cases, the student lived with a relative, or with a private boarding house.
- ‘Mother students’: the father was working in the Dutch East Indies, the student had returned with his/her mother to the Netherlands. From the student cards, one gets the impression that in these cases the mother typically returned to the Netherlands *because* the child went to secondary school.
- ‘Broken family’: the mother had returned with her children to the Netherlands, following a divorce or the death of the father. The distinction between ‘divorce/separation’ and ‘widowhood’ can quite frequently not be made on the basis of the student cards, which is why both categories have been combined into one. In either case, a compelling reason for mother *and* child to stay in the Dutch East Indies had ceased to hold.
- ‘Short leave’: the student came from the Dutch East Indies with his/her parents and returned after a short while (typically one year). This was especially common among civil servants. Because in the Dutch East Indies there were HBS schools but not a gymnasium, this category does not occur in the gymnasium sub-sample.
- ‘Retired’: the father had retired from his job in the Dutch East Indies and had returned with his family to the Netherlands. The retirement age in the Dutch East Indies was extremely low; in 1930, it was raised from 45 to 50 years (Van Doorn 2002: 23).
- ‘Other’: these are all other cases in which the student was in the Netherlands with his/her parents. Usually, the father had returned to the Netherlands for no ‘special’ reason, e.g. a change of job.

Table 2 summarizes the distribution of the Indo-Dutch students over these categories. The most striking result is, that by far the majority of the students from the Dutch East Indies were living in the Netherlands *together with their parents*. The original idea, that the ‘teenager gap’ in the Dutch East Indies consisted primarily of children who had been sent to Europe by their parents, must be abandoned on the basis of these findings. Of all Indo-Dutch students in the Netherlands, only a minority had one or both parents living in the Dutch East Indies: 15 per cent lived alone in the Netherlands (‘solitary students’), 10 per cent with only their mother (‘mother-students’), and perhaps another 5 per cent had a divorced father in the Dutch East Indies (an unknown proportion of the category ‘broken family’). In the other cases, approximately 70 per cent of the total, it was not only the students themselves who were missing in the Dutch East Indies census, but also their parents. And indeed, the age

distributions in the figures 1 and 4 suggest that from ages 40-50 onward, the numbers of European adults in the Dutch East Indies start to decline quite strongly. In this sense, the departure of the secondary-school aged children from the Dutch East Indies was certainly not always induced by the desire to continue the education in the Netherlands, but rather by the desire of the parents to return to the Netherlands.

Table 2: *Students born in one of the Colonies, by category^a*

Category	Description	Students	Length of stay
Solitary students	parents in Dutch East Indies	15%	15%
Mother-students	father in Dutch East Indies, mother in NL	10%	9%
Broken family	mother in NL, lone parent	11%	13%
Short leave	parents only shortly in NL	11%	5%
Retired	parents in NL, retired	28%	30%
Other	parents in NL, other	25%	28%
N = 100%		907	2518
		students	person years

^a In the column 'students', each student has been counted with equal weight. In the column 'length of stay', each student has been weighed with the number of years of attending the school. Since students with 'short leave' typically spent one year in the Netherlands only, their share in the column 'length of stay' is less than in the column 'students'.

Source: The Hague Municipal Archive: student cards at four The Hague schools, ca. 1925-1939

The low percentage of students with one or both parents in the Dutch East Indies sheds a different light on the number of Europeans who in the 1930 (Dutch East Indies) census reported to have 'minor-aged children under their maintenance outside the Dutch East Indies'. To recall (section 6), this concerned 8,000 children and one in six family heads. However, these numbers appear to be at odds with the combination of the The Hague student sample and the size of the 'teenager gap' in the Dutch East Indies census:

- The student gap in the Dutch East Indies was approximately 25 per cent per birth cohort, in total about 14,000 children.
- The The Hague sample data suggest that the student gap is for half due to a cohort effect (the missing children have never been born) and for half due to an age effect (the children were there, but not in the Dutch East Indies). The student gap is then 12 per cent per birth cohort, in total about 7,000 children.
- The The Hague sample data suggest that in only 30 per cent of the cases in which a student was residing in the Netherlands, at least one parent had stayed behind in the Dutch East Indies. The number of missing students for whom a parent in the Dutch East Indies could answer the census question, then amounts to just 2,100, substantially less than the 8,000 from the census report. The percentage of family

heads is harder to ascertain, because multiple children from one family could be missing. However, by all standards the ‘one in six’ proportion from the direct census question is much higher than can be reconciled with the The Hague sample data.

There are numerous possible explanations for the difference between the 8,000 from the 1930 census and the 2,100 from the combination of other sources. Perhaps (although not very likely) European children went in substantial numbers to *other* countries, not the Netherlands. Perhaps the popularity of The Hague for secondary-school aged children was less than seven times the national average. Maybe the four schools in the sample are not sufficiently representative, even not for the city of The Hague. And another possibility is that several Indo-Dutch adults, being a non-biological parent, reported to have a minor-aged child under their maintenance. However, lacking additional information, we can only largely guess at the causes of this difference.

8. Conclusions

The population census held in the former Dutch East Indies (currently Indonesia) in 1930 shows for the European population a striking shortage in the age range between 10 and 20 years, i.e. the age category of secondary school attendance. This paper has discussed the possible causes of this constriction in the age structure.

First, we investigated whether the constriction can be due to a *cohort effect*. Were the numbers of births in the Dutch East Indies during the period 1910-1920 substantially lower than those in the period 1920-1930? It was concluded that the available time series are such that this effect is very difficult to determine. Presumably, a cohort effect exists, but the extent to which it can explain the student shortage is unclear.

Subsequently, we verified whether the constriction could be due to an *age effect*. In other words: the 10-20 years old Indo-Dutch children did exist, but they have not been counted in the 1930 Dutch East Indies census because they were living elsewhere. The most obvious explanation for that would then have to be, that many children of Europeans (Dutch) were attending secondary and higher education not in the Dutch East Indies but in the Netherlands. If the teenager gap were fully caused by such an age effect, it would have to amount to in total 14 thousand students outside the Dutch East Indies, or about 25 per cent per birth cohort. This is substantially more than appears from the direct question in the 1930 census into the number of minor-aged children residing abroad and maintained by Europeans residing in the Dutch East Indies: this

yielded a number of just 8,000 students, but the reliability of this figure is not fully clear.

If the number of 14 thousand students outside the Dutch East Indies were correct, it would imply that among the population in the Netherlands of students in the advanced types of secondary education around 6 per cent would be of Dutch East Indies origin. Using archives of four schools in the city of The Hague, we have checked whether this implication bears some correspondence to reality. This investigation yielded two main conclusions:

1. The proportion of students born in the Dutch East Indies is more likely to have been around 3 per cent than around 6 per cent. This indicates that the teenager gap in the Dutch East Indies was for about half due to a cohort effect and for the other half due to an age effect.
2. Among the students missing from the Dutch East Indies, those residing solitarily in the Netherlands constituted only a small minority. By far the majority of the Indo-Dutch students living in the Netherlands was missing in the Dutch East Indies because the *complete* family had migrated to the Netherlands, either because of retirement or for other reasons. This appears to be at variance with the large number of 8,000 students from the direct question in the 1930 census. However, without additional research the 'why' of this discrepancy can hardly be answered.

Thus, although the true number of Dutch East Indies born students can be established by approximation only, it can safely be concluded that the Indo-Dutch secondary school student in the Netherlands between the two World Wars was far from being exceptional. This holds in particular for the city of The Hague. From the available research data, we obtain the image of a numerous, and socially and economically privileged group, that in many respects left its marks in the governmental city. The pioneering spirit of the Dutch East Indies migrants is exemplified by various characteristics, including the very high participation in advanced types of secondary education, and the fact that this participation prevailed among boys and girls in equal measure.

An intriguing open question is, to what extent the 'education at home' phenomenon found for the former Dutch East Indies was also common in other colonial empires. To the best of our knowledge, no other quantitative studies exist which would enable our results to be put in a comparative perspective. What does seem certain is, that the educational practice was very much dependent on the colonial policy of the ruling power. For example, the policy of France towards Algeria was directed towards annexation (turning the country into a part of France), while the policy of Belgium towards Congo was one of exploitation (administrating the country from a distance). As a result, the French children in Algeria had ample educational facilities while the

Belgian children in Congo typically all went back to Europe. However, a quantitative assessment of the scale of education-related migration in former colonies is still very much open to future research.

Notes

1. The Dutch *West* Indies, in contrast, comprise Surinam and the Dutch Antilles.
2. Such a demographic reconstruction has recently been undertaken by NIDI, at the request of the Dutch government, in order to estimate the number of people eligible for a financial compensation to the Indo-Dutch community. This financial gesture was originally launched because of ‘presumed deficiencies in the restoration of rights after the Second World War’, and to compensate for ‘the policies of previous Dutch governments which were very indifferent, bureaucratic and formalistic’ (see www.gebaar.nl). For the demographic reconstruction, see Van Imhoff and Beets (2004).
3. The Dutch United East Indies Company (‘Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie’ or VOC) was founded in 1602, as the first company in world history with tradable shares. It marked the start of the worldwide orientation of the Netherlands, and of a period of strong economic and cultural growth. For the Indian Archipelago, however, it signified the start of more than three centuries of suppression and exploitation.
4. The migration statistics between the Dutch East Indies and the Netherlands are thought to be very accurate since they are based on migration data to and from the Dutch population registers (source: Statistics Netherlands).
5. This estimate is based on student numbers by type of school in 1930 (source: Statistics Netherlands) and an assumed average duration per type of school. As ‘advanced’ types have been counted: ‘ULO’, ‘Handelsdagschool’, ‘HBS’, ‘MMS’, ‘Gymnasium’. This notably excludes the various types of basic vocational education.
6. ‘Born in the Dutch East Indies’ is not equivalent to ‘originating from the Dutch East Indies’: after all, there are also children who were born in the Netherlands, subsequently lived for some time in the Dutch East Indies, and later returned to the Netherlands. However, because the student data do not provide the full migration history, these students can in most cases not be identified as such.

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