

The Tielman Brothers as *Wanderer ohne Ziel*: A Post-colonial Perspective on Indorock*

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ABSTRACTS

In recent years, increased attention has been paid to the important role that Indorockers, such as the Tielman Brothers, played in Dutch popular music history by introducing rock'n'roll to the Netherlands. Yet, these accounts lack a critical post-colonial perspective and largely overlook the colonial roots and post-colonial circumstances from which the music genre of Indorock emerged, was received, and disappeared. Analysing a variety of textual sources, this article approaches Indorock as a transnational phenomenon derived from specific colonial and post-colonial contexts. It argues that the history of the Tielman Brothers serves as a microcosm for larger historical trends. By investigating the (post-)colonial history of the Tielman family and the changing cultural landscapes that influenced the music of the Tielman Brothers in the Netherlands and beyond, the history of Indorock is put in a post-colonial framework.

In den letzten Jahren fand die wichtige Rolle, die Indorocker wie die Tielman Brothers in der niederländischen Popmusikgeschichte spielten, indem sie den Rock 'n' Roll in die Niederlande einführten, verstärkt Beachtung. Diesen Darstellungen fehlt jedoch eine kritische postkoloniale Perspektive, und sie übersehen weitgehend die kolonialen Wurzeln und postkolonialen Umstände, aus denen das Musikgenre des Indorock entstand, rezipiert wurde und wieder verschwand. Der vorliegende Artikel analysiert eine Vielzahl von Textquellen und betrachtet Indorock als ein transnationales Phänomen, das aus spezifischen kolonialen und postkolonialen Kontexten hervorgegangen ist. Es wird argumentiert, dass die Geschichte der Tielman Brothers als Mikrokosmos für größere historische Trends dient. Durch die Untersuchung der (post)kolo-

* This article is based on my research master thesis at Utrecht University: I. F. van Dijke, *The Tielman Brothers as Wanderer ohne Ziel. A Postcolonial Perspective on the Rise, Reception, and Demise of Indorock*, Utrecht, 2020. As the limited size of this article does not permit a complete summary of this thesis, theoretical frameworks, historical contextualization, and source material analyses have been condensed..

nialen Geschiede der Familie Tielman und der sich verändernden kulturellen Landschafden, die die Musik der Tielman Brothers in den Niederlanden und darüber hinaus beeinflussten, wird die Geschiede des Indorock in einen postkolonialen Kontext gestelt.

1. Introduction

Even though there is a loyal, albeit small, base of musicians and fans who have not forgotten about the Tielman Brothers, the music genre introduced by this band remains shrouded in myths. Since the 1980s, musicologists have researched the rock 'n' roll music performed by post-colonial migrants of Indo-European, or Indo, descent – known as Indorock – but its impact has only recently received mainstream recognition.¹ Sixty years after the height of the music genre, Indorock is occasionally mentioned in newspapers, documentaries, and talk shows due to the fact that its key performers are now decreasing in number. Nevertheless, there is a notable lack of academic research covering the rise and demise of this musical phenomenon and its cultural impact.² Whereas cultural expressions by Indo people are primarily studied by ethnomusicologists within colonial contexts, historiography on Dutch rock 'n' roll music and youth culture generally maintains a one-dimensional focus on US–European cultural transfers.³ In these works, the crucial role of Indo people in introducing rock 'n' roll music to the Netherlands is acknowledged, but often discussed in terms of the exoticism or natural musicality of its key performers. As a result, the colonial roots of Indorock bands and post-colonial circumstances in which the music genre emerged, was received, and disappeared are largely overlooked and are not critically analysed. Rock 'n' roll was in fact a far more complex, globally intertwined and transnational phenomenon in which the (post-)colonial context is paramount for understanding the genre's historical development.

This article connects the historiography on Dutch popular music and youth cultures with the (post-)colonial history of Indo people. The history of Indorock is put in a much-needed critical post-colonial perspective by focusing on the colonial and post-colonial history of its most famous band. Following Edward Said's notion of orientalism,

- 1 There are many other terms to label this social group. The term *Indo* has been used not only in a pejorative and malign manner, but also in a proud and wilful manner. I do not wish to disrespect members of this group or to make a political statement by using a controversial term. I use the term Indo as it is the most widely used term in Dutch and English academic literature.
- 2 Musicologist Lutgard Mutsaers is one of the few researchers focusing solely on Indorock. Yet, it was anthropologist Lizzy Van Leeuwen who analysed Indo cultural expressions from a critical post-colonial perspective. See L. Mutsaers, *Rockin' Ramona: 'n gekleurde kijk op de bakermat van de nederpop* [A coloured view on the cradle of Dutch pop music], Den Haag 1989; L. van Leeuwen, *Ons Indisch Erfgoed: zestig jaar strijd om cultuur en identiteit* [Our Indies Heritage: sixty years of struggle for culture and identity], Amsterdam 2006.
- 3 C. Meijers, *Kom van dat dak af: geschiedenis van de Nederlandse rock & roll* [Get off that roof: the history of Dutch rock & roll], Amsterdam 2003; G. Tillemens (ed.), *Nuchterheid en Nozems: De Opkomst van de Jeugdcultuur in de Jaren Vijftig* [Sobriety and Nozems: The Rise of Youth Culture in the Fifties], Muiderberg 1990; T. Lambers, *Dijkdoorbraak! Rock van eigen bodem: 1958–heden* [Dike breach! Domestic rock: 1958–today], Amsterdam 2012; T. ter Bogt/B. Hibbel, *Wilde Jaren: een eeuw jeugdcultuur* [Wild Years: A Century of Youth Culture], Utrecht 2002.

this article examines the ways in which the cultural expressions of Indo people have been received and represented through colonial stereotypes.⁴ Critical discourse analysis of colonial discourse can be used as a tool not only for researching colonial power relations but also for investigating cultural exchanges and reciprocal influences.⁵ As this article points out, cultural phenomena such as the Tielman Brothers's music connected colony and metropole in colonial and post-colonial times. The scope of this article does not permit an extensive musicological analysis of the characteristics of the Tielman Brothers's music, but rather focuses on the ways in which historical contexts of changing cultural landscapes influenced the lives of the Tielman family and the career of the Tielman Brothers.

As the title of their 1967 single "Wanderer ohne Ziel" alludes to, the Tielman Brothers spent most of their lives and careers traveling the world without permanently settling down.⁶ The Tielman family lived through the last phase of Dutch rule in the Dutch East Indies colony, the Second World War and the occupation by Japanese troops, as well as the Indonesian War of Independence. After their "repatriation" to the Netherlands, these post-colonial migrants were met with a cold welcome in the Dutch post-colonial society.⁷ This pushed the Tielman Brothers to pursue a career abroad.

As the original members of the Tielman Brothers are no longer with us, this research is based on critical discourse analysis of frontman Andy Tielman's autobiography, Harm Peter Smilde's historical biography on the Tielman Brothers, and interviews with several key performers in the Indorock scene.⁸ These life histories provide insight into and personal reflections on the history of Indorock. In addition to these sources, Dutch newspaper articles and advertisements from 1948 until 1967 provide elaborate historical contextualization and evaluation. In this way, the discrepancies and contradictions found in the academic literature, biographical sources, and contextual sources reveal the interconnectedness of these histories of music and (post-)colonialism.

2. The Tielman Family in Colonial Society

Centuries of colonial rule had a profound impact on the Indonesian archipelago. Racial classification served to secure the homogeneity of the European elite and to assert power

4 E. W. Said, *Orientalism*, New York 1978, p. 1.

5 R. Raben, *A New Dutch Imperial History? Perambulations in a Prospective Field*, in: *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden* (BMGN) 128 (2013) 1, pp. 5–33, here p. 8.

6 The Tielman Brothers, *Single Wanderer Ohne Ziel* (1966), YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0LxrkVl53zU> (accessed 15.10.2021).

7 The term repatriate usually refers to a person that returns to the country where they are from. As the majority of repatriates that arrived in the Netherlands in the decolonization period had never been there before, the term (post-colonial) migrant is more appropriate.

8 A. Tielman, *That's my life*, ed. by R. Dijkstra, Rijswijk 2006; H. P. Smilde, *Helden van toen: The Tielman Brothers en de Nederlandse rock-'n'-roll: 1957–1967* [Heroes of the past: The Tielman Brothers and Dutch rock 'n' roll: 1957–1967], Amsterdam 2017; D. Machin/A. Mayr, *How to Do Critical Discourse Analysis: A Multimodal Introduction*, London 2012, p. 2.

over Indonesians and other “Foreign Orientals”.⁹ This division of colonial society into these three categories, however, was much more complex in daily life.¹⁰ The Tielman family possessed Dutch citizenship, but they were not welcomed into the colonial elite. Indo people often fell between European and Indonesian categories, creating a middle class faced with similar political, social, economic, and cultural struggles.¹¹ As a result, many Indo people mimicked Dutch culture in public life while maintaining a more hybrid culture at home. Cultural expressions such as music show the syncretic ways in which various social groups interacted. Ethnomusicologist Margaret Kartomi summarizes the musical experience of non-European groups as a “constant creative adaptation to changing social and artistic conditions and the search for workable musical solutions to the racial and socio-economic dilemmas which they encountered”.¹² Not only hierarchical power relations but also intracultural borrowing and hybridity characterized colonial society.¹³

Several members of the Tielman family were professional musicians, depending on their ability to entertain audiences despite changing cultural landscapes. The father of the Tielman children, Herman Tielman, was of Dutch-Indonesian descent and served as a private in the Koninklijk Nederlands-Indisch Leger (Royal Netherlands East Indies Army, KNIL).¹⁴ In between jobs, he worked as a travelling musician, performing music genres popular in Europe such as jazz and swing for the Dutch elite and military while playing local hybrid music genres such as *kroncong* on the streets for Indonesian audiences.¹⁵ The advent of the Second World War, however, heralded the demise of Dutch rule. Herman spent the duration of the war in Japanese internment camps as a prisoner of war, although he was allegedly allowed to perform for Japanese guards.¹⁶ The subsequent Indonesian War of Independence from 1945 till 1949 proved to be an even greater challenge. After initial imprisonment by Indonesian nationalist forces, the Tielman family found refuge in Dutch-controlled Surabaya, where Herman rejoined the KNIL as a musician.¹⁷

9 U. Bosma/R. Raben, *De oude Indische wereld 1500–1920* [The Old World of the Indies 1500–1920], Amsterdam 2003, p. 32; H. Meijer, *In Indië geworteld: de twintigste eeuw* [Rooted in the Indies: The Twentieth Century], Amsterdam 2004, p. 9.

10 A. L. Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*, Berkeley 2004, p. 13.

11 A. Cottaar/W. Willems, *Indische Nederlanders. Een onderzoek naar beeldvorming* [Indies Dutch. A Study of Conception], Den Haag 1984, p. 15.

12 M. J. Kartomi, *Indonesian-Chinese Oppression and the Musical Outcomes in the Netherlands East Indies*, in: R. Radano/P. V. Bohlman (eds.), *Music and the Racial Imagination*, Chicago 2000, pp. 271–317, here p. 309.

13 C. A. Lockard, *Dance of Life: Popular Music and Politics in Southeast Asia*, Honolulu 1998, p. 56; S. de Mul, *Colonial Memory: Contemporary Women's Travel Writing in Britain and the Netherlands*, Amsterdam 2011, p. 39.

14 Smilde, *Helden van toen*, p. 120.

15 Tielman, *That's my life*, p. 13.

16 Biographical sources differ considerably on this issue. Andy Tielman's autobiography provides a very optimistic version of these events, stating that Herman could escape regularly to visit his family and smuggle food and medicine into the camp. Tielman, *That's my life*, pp. 16–17. Smilde's biography, on the other hand, claims that Herman spent at least one and a half years of traumatic forced labour on the Pekanbaru death railway. Smilde, *Helden van toen*, p. 124.

17 Tielman, *That's my life*, p. 18.

Herman showed a remarkable ability to adjust to the shifting balance of power, and he made sure that his children – Reggy, Ponthon, Andy, Loulou, and Jane – possessed the same ability. In 1946, Herman started to teach them how to play music instruments, and in 1947 they performed publicly for the first time. The Timor Rhythm Boys – named after their father’s place of birth – quickly gained in popularity.¹⁸ Due to Herman’s military contacts, the band performed in several military front-line outposts.¹⁹ As one of the Nederlands-Indische Welzijnsverzorging Artiesten (Dutch-Indies Welfare Artists, NIWA), they supported Dutch troops by playing not only Dutch tear-jerkers but also *kroncong* songs meant to inspire a nostalgic longing to the colonial “good old times”.²⁰ Notwithstanding these shows, The Timor Rhythm Boys also performed for other audiences.

According to Andy Tielman, the type of performance depended on the audience of that particular show.²¹ Advertisements in Dutch newspapers illustrate the variety of their performances, as the band offered “warrior and national dances in traditional dress”, “children’s jazz”, Hawaiian music, and Dutch songs for various audiences described as “orphans and camp children”, “children of all races”, and “young and old of all races, ranks, and classes”.²² Their shows provided “something for everyone” and in this way “demonstrated what the Great East achieves musically”.²³

When Indonesian independence was achieved, The Timor Rhythm Brothers were one of the few musicians in possession of Dutch citizenship that were able to continue playing in Indonesia. They even closed a contract with the Indonesian military and participated in a music contest attended by president Sukarno.²⁴ Owing to the constant struggle to make a livelihood, the Tielman family repeatedly switched musical preferences in order to fit the needs of the dominant powers. At the same time, working within systems of colonialism and war reveal the family’s agency and the hybrid nature of their music. This context is crucial for understanding the development of the Tielman Brothers – from colonial performers to subversive rock ‘n’ roll youngsters in the Netherlands. Despite their experiences navigating wars, regime changes, and contrasting cultural landscapes, the Tielman family left Indonesia in 1957 for a number of reasons: from financial strain

18 Smilde, *Helden van toen*, p. 122.

19 Timor Rhythm Brothers: Tournée naar Timor, in: *De Vrije Pers: Ochtendbulletin*, 26.1.1949; Timor Rhythm Brothers, in: *De Vrije Pers: Ochtendbulletin*, 13.7.1949; The Timor Rhythm Brothers: Vier broertjes zagen hun kans schoon, in: *De Vrije Pers: Ochtendbulletin*, 29.4.1950; Timor Rhythm Brothers, in: *De Vrije Pers: Ochtendbulletin*, 31.5.1950.

20 B. Barendregt/E. Bogaerts, *Recollecting Resonances: Listening to an Indonesian-Dutch Musical Heritage*, in: B. Barendregt/E. Bogaerts (eds.), *Recollecting Resonances: Indonesian-Dutch Musical Encounters*. KITLV Treatises, Leiden 2014, pp. 1–30, here p. 17; Tielman, *That’s my life*, p. 25; L. Mutsaers, *Roep der Verten. Krontjong van roots naar revival [Call from Afar. Kroncong from roots to revival]*, Haarlem 2014, p. 402.

21 Tielman, *That’s my life*, pp. 28 and 35.

22 All translations are my own, unless otherwise indicated. Timor avond, in: *Nieuwe Courant*, 26.6.1948; Kinder-Jazz. ‘n vrolijk muzikaal uurtje, in: *Nieuwe Courant*, 24.7.1948; Liefde en maneschijn op Timor... Indonesische folklore in Volksvoorlichting, in: *Nieuwe Courant*, 15.9.1948.

23 Timor Rhythm Brothers: Tournée naar Timor, in: *De Vrije Pers: Ochtendbulletin*, 26.1.1949; De Timor Rhythm Brothers, in: *Nieuwe Courant*, 23.9.1948.

24 Smilde, *Helden van toen*, p. 137.

and safety concerns to the family's preference for their Dutch citizenship.²⁵ Yet, their welcome in the Netherlands was colder than expected, as will be shown below.

3. Integration and Racist Encounters

Historians have characterized the Netherlands in the 1950s as a conservative and segregated society facing a set of problems that “left no room for experimentation, political or social”.²⁶ Following Indonesian independence, the Dutch government tried to dissuade the so-called Eastern-oriented Indo people from coming to the Netherlands as they would be “unwanted and asocial elements” unable to adjust economically, socially, and culturally.²⁷ Hence, the Dutch government imposed strict integration and assimilation policies on the 330,000 incoming post-colonial migrants.²⁸ In the late 1950s, governmental reports concluded that Indo integration into Dutch society was silently achieved because of the migrants' willingness and Dutch openness.²⁹ Since then, researchers from various backgrounds have critiqued this notion. Historians Annemarie Cottaar and Wim Willems were one of the first to question this mythical narrative of the Netherlands as a traditionally tolerant and colour-blind country from an historical perspective.³⁰ Recent work by anthropologist Gloria Wekker, historian Diennek Hondius, and sociologist Melissa F. Weiner further reveals how colonial stereotypes and racism persisted in post-colonial times.³¹

The integration policies on housing, labour participation, and education, as well as cultural assimilation policies concerning individual and family guidance, perpetuated the stereotypical characterizations of Indo people based on colonial knowledge systems.

25 Ibid., p. 148–155; Tielman, *That's my life*, p. 48.

26 T. Anbeek, 'Niet het moment voor experimenteren? De twee gezichten van de Jaren vijftig', in: P. Luykx/P. Slot (ed.), *Een stille revolutie? Cultuur en mentaliteit in de lange jaren vijftig* [A Silent Revolution? Culture and mentality in the long fifties], Hilversum 1997, pp. 19–26, here p. 19; F. Wielenga, *Nederland in de twintigste eeuw* [The Netherlands in the twentieth century], Amsterdam 2009, pp. 235, 205–206 and 236; J. C. Hans Blom, *Jaren van tucht en ace: Enige beschouwingen over de stemming in Herrijzend Nederland*, in: *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden* (BMGN) 96 (1981) 1, pp. 300–334, here p. 315; E. H. Kossman, *De Lage Landen 1780–1980, deel II* [The Low Countries 1780–1980, part II], Amsterdam 1986, p. 277; H. Righart, *De eindeloze jaren zestig: Geschiedenis van een generatieconflict* [The Endless Sixties: History of a Generational Conflict], Amsterdam 1995, p. 13–15.

27 Cottaar/Willems, *Indische Nederlanders*, p. 23; W. Willems, *De uittocht uit Indië 1945–1955* [The exodus from the Indies 1945–1955], Amsterdam 2001, pp. 57 and 126–131; Meijer, *In Indië geworteld*, p. 334; Van Leeuwen, *Ons Indisch Erfgoed*, p. 39.

28 For a more detailed overview of the process of migration, see Cottaar/Willems, *Indische Nederlanders*, p. 24–27.

29 Dutch government reports include *De Repatriëring uit Indonesië* (1957) by sociologist J. E. Ellemers, *Allochtonen in Nederland* (1971) by sociologist Hilda Verwey-Jonker, and *The Dutch Plural Society* (1973) by sociologist Christopher Bagley.

30 Cottaar/Willems, *Indische Nederlanders*, pp. 9–10.

31 G. Wekker, *Witte Onschuld* [White Innocence], Amsterdam 2016, p. 9; D. Hondius, *Race and the Dutch: On the Uneasiness Surrounding Racial Issues in the Netherlands*, in: S. Alghasi et al. (ed.), *Paradoxes of Cultural Recognition: Perspectives from Northern Europe*, Farnham 2009, pp. 39–58, here p. 40; M. F. Weiner, *The Ideologically Colonized Metropole: Dutch Racism and Racist Denial*, in: *Sociology Compass* 8 (2014) 6, pp. 731–744, here p. 738.

“Otherness” was combatted by prohibiting Indo people to wear exotic clothes or to “have a low pace”.³² The Tielman family’s successful musical career in the former colony did not exempt them from these experiences. The family was shocked by the cold welcome they received in the Netherlands. Andy Tielman states: “The Tielman family did not have it easy in those first few weeks”.³³ Basic living conditions, financial strain, and strict check-ups by social workers only worsened their culture shock. The family’s Dutch citizenship was also challenged. Shortly after arriving in the Netherlands, the municipality of Breda demanded proof of Herman’s European roots.³⁴ This procedure demonstrates how their Dutch citizenship remained strictly linked to the colonial system, even in post-colonial times.

The Dutch night life proved similarly to be a particularly unwelcoming place. Political scientist Rob Witte and historian Marlou Schrover argue that various migrant communities in the Netherlands experienced exclusion, stereotyping, and racist violence in the Dutch night life throughout the 1950s and 1960s.³⁵ Yet, media and politicians constantly downplayed, trivialized, or refuted the racist character of these incidents. Following days of altercations between Dutch and Indo youth, the headline of *Leeuwarder Courant* newspaper on 13 May 1958 declared “Battle between white and brown over The Hague’s blondes”.³⁶ Responsibility for the fights was placed on Indo people, while the underlying reasons for the fights were either downplayed and claimed to be juvenile quarrels about girls or attributed to the “different lifestyles and cultures” of the Indo people involved. Moreover, Indo people were constantly described in Dutch newspapers in pejorative terms, while the Dutch accomplices were not.³⁷

Interviews with key performers from the Indorock scene in the documentary *Rockin’ Ramona* (1991) echo the exclusion from night clubs, racist slurs, and violence that were part of many Indo people’s daily lives. Indorocker Harry Koster stated:

*It was a difficult time for us. [...] We couldn’t get in everywhere [...] I tested it. I had many Dutch friends who we sent in first. They got in and we didn’t. That was reality.*³⁸

32 J. Schuster, The State and Post-War Immigration into the Netherlands: The Racialization and Assimilation of Indonesian Dutch, in: *European Journal of Intercultural studies* 3 (1992) 1, pp. 47–58, p. 47; U. Bosma, Terug uit de koloniën: Zestig jaar postkoloniale migranten en hun organisaties [Back from the colonies: Sixty years of post-colonial migrants and their organisations], Amsterdam 2009, p. 151; Willems, *De uittocht uit Indië*, p. 122, 186 and 194–197.

33 Tielman, *That’s my life*, p. 60.

34 Smilde, *Helden van toen*, p. 182–183.

35 R. Witte, *Al eewenlang een gastvrij volk: racistisch geweld en overheidsreacties in Nederland (1950–2019)* [A Hospitable People For Centuries: Racist Violence and Government Reactions in the Netherlands (1950–2019)], Amsterdam, 2010, p. 54; M. Schrover, *Om de meisjes, voor de meisjes. Een historisch perspectief op problematisering en bagatellisering van onderwerpen die te maken hebben met migratie en integratie* [About the girls, for the girls. A Historical Perspective on Subjects Dealing with Migration and Integration], inaugural lecture, Leiden University 23.5.2011, p. 7.

36 Strijd tussen blank en bruin om Haagse blondines, in: *Leeuwarder Courant*, 13.5.1958.

37 Weer relletjes in Den Haag, in: *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 16.5.1958; Jeugdterreur in Den Haag van kwaad tot erger, in: *De Telegraaf*, 16.5.1958; Weer relletjes in Den Haag, in: *Provinciale Drentsche en Asser Courant*, 17.5.1958; Weer relletjes in Den Haag, in: *Friese Koerier*, 17.5.1958; Weer relletjes in Den Haag, in: *De Waarheid*, 17.5.1958.

38 *Rockin’ Ramona*, directed by Hans Heijnen, Lagestee Film BV. 1991

Indorocker Woody Brunings added:

*There was so much aggression because those guys were alien. [...] They weren't accepted in Indonesia, came here and weren't accepted here as well. And then they would call you [...] names.*³⁹

On the question if Indo people should have fought back against these violent conditions, Andy Tielman responded:

*Fight back? No, I am in Europe and I don't have the right colour [to fight back]. He [Dutch musician Jan Akkerman] has the right kind of colour, he can open his mouth. I just want to nod and go away.*⁴⁰

As the next section shows, these difficult post-colonial circumstances are vital for understanding the development of Indorock, the reception of the genre in the Netherlands, and the subsequent musical career of the Tielman Brothers as a band.

4. Entangled in a Colonial Cultural Tradition

A few weeks after arriving in the Netherlands, the Tielman children started performing again. They changed their band name to The Four T's and later to the Tielman Brothers as "the Dutch East Indies and Indonesian times are in the past and nobody in the Netherlands knows what Timor exactly is".⁴¹ Furthermore, the biographical sources claim that the band quickly developed "a repertoire of unadulterated rock 'n' roll".⁴² However, a closer look at newspaper announcements and reviews of the band's performances during their first year in the Netherlands reveals a continuation of their traditional colonial-style performance. The review from *Het Nieuwsblad van het Zuiden* on 22 June 1957 is telling: "This is an ensemble from Portuguese Timor that brings music and dance, as well as instrumental shows and exotic dances in traditional costumes".⁴³ Although often misidentified as Indonesian, the band was positively received as long as they performed their colonial-style acts.⁴⁴ When the band started to include more and more rock 'n' roll songs into their repertoire, reviews became increasingly negative. For example, a review in the *Haagsche Courant* on 22 July 1957 stated, "This noise-orgy had at no point any similarity to music."⁴⁵

39 Ibid.

40 Tielman, *That's my life*, p. 67.

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid.; Smilde, *Helden van toen*, p. 178.

43 Tilburgse midzomerfeesten brengen ook dit jaar bijzonder attractieve avonden, in: *Het Nieuwsblad van het Zuiden*, 22.6.1957.

44 Zaterdag 29 juni: concert, in: *Nieuwe Tilburgsche Courant*, 22.6.1957; Midzomerfeesten brachten zang, dans en charmant wijnfeest, in: *Nieuwe Tilburgsche Courant*, 1.7.1957; Negende Midzomerfeest geopend, in: *Het Nieuwsblad van het Zuiden*, 1.7.1957; Tielman Brothers in Dierentuin, in: *Haagsche Courant*, 17.7.1957; Advertisment, in: *Arnhemsche Courant*, 13.2.1958.

45 The Tielman Brothers: veel lawaai, in: *Haagsche Courant*, 22.7.1957.

The reactionary response by the media and authorities, which stigmatized and criminalized the increasingly popular rock 'n' roll youth cultures in the late 1950s, happened not only in the Netherlands but also in the rest of Europe.⁴⁶ However, the fact that Indo people from the former colony were performing this music complicated the situation. The negative reactions to Indo people performing rock 'n' roll music demonstrate how cultural expressions by Indo people continued to be embedded and entangled in a colonial cultural tradition in the unwelcoming post-colonial cultural landscape of the Netherlands.⁴⁷ Prior to decolonization, the presentation of colonial culture in the Netherlands often emphasized exoticism and "Otherness" through orientalist depictions and racial and sexual stereotypes.⁴⁸ As long as Indo musicians such as the Tielman Brothers performed in this conventional format, newspapers reviews remained positive. Paradoxically, although the Tielman family faced strict integration and cultural assimilation policies, the cultural landscape favoured colonial-style performances over rock 'n' roll music.

Hampered by disapproving media and music industries, the Tielman Brothers pursued their career in rock 'n' roll elsewhere. Although their first show abroad at the Expo 58 in Brussels still resembled the traditionally orientalist colonial exhibitions of the previous world expos, it turned out to be the band's international breakthrough, leading to numerous record deals and international tours.⁴⁹ The band performed at the Hawaiian Village, a stage with generic exotic decorations and Hula dance shows, as hiring Indo people was cheaper than flying in Hawaiians. Despite the conventional representation and reception of colonial cultural expressions, the band performed a revolutionary rock 'n' roll show. As anthropologist Gonzague Pluvigne summarizes in his book *Expo 58: Between Utopia and Reality* (2008),

A mirror of society in transition, Expo 58 reflected not only the economic, technological, and urban modernity that heralded the prosperity of the Golden Sixties, but also the

46 D. E. Krantz/E. V. W. Vercruijse, Op zoek naar het beeld van de jeugd, in: Sociologische Gids (1957), pp. 81–88, here p. 82; W. Buikhuizen, Achtergronden van nozemgedrag [Backgrounds of nozem behaviour], Utrecht 1965, p. 2; R. Abma, Nuchterheid en nozems, in: G. Tillekens (ed.), Nuchterheid en Nozems: De Opkomst van de Jeugdcultuur in de Jaren Vijftig [Sobriety and Nozems: The Rise of Youth Culture in the Fifties], Muiderberg 1990, pp. 31–45, here p. 38–42; Ter Bogt/Hibbel, Wilde Jaren, p. 72–74.

47 Van Leeuwen, Ons Indisch Erfgoed, p. 72–74.

48 M. I. Cohen, Indonesian Performing Arts in the Netherlands, 1913–1944, in: B. Barendregt/E. Bogaerts (eds.), Recollecting Resonances: Indonesian-Dutch Musical Encounters. KITLV Treatises, Leiden 2014, pp. 231–258, here p. 231 and pp. 253–254; E. Ezra, The Colonial Unconscious: Race and Culture in Interwar France, Ithaca 2000, p. 2; P. A. Morton, Hybrid Modernities. Architecture and Representation at the 1931 Colonial Exposition. Paris, Cambridge 2000, p. 5–6; H. A. Poeze, In het land van de overheerser. I. Indonesiërs in Nederland 1600–1950 [In the land of the ruler. I. Indonesians in the Netherlands], Dordrecht 1986, p. 19–20; M. Bloembergen, Exotisme en populaire antropologie. Een Javaans dorp op de Wereldtentoonstelling in Parijs (1889), in: Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek 53 (2002) 1, pp. 251–280, here p. 252–253.

49 Film material of the Tielman Brothers's show at the World Expo 58 was recently uncovered and can be seen in the documentary *Klanken van Oorsprong – Poekoel Teroes!*, directed by Hetty Naaijens-Retel Helmrich, Scarabee Filmproducties Nederland. 2018.

*permanent nature of traditional social systems in the relationships between the sexes, between the colonizers and the colonized, and between the generations.*⁵⁰

As this performance by the Tielman Brothers demonstrated, societal transition and musical developments went hand in hand.

In the following four years, the Tielman Brothers became a fully-fledged rock 'n' roll band, performing in night clubs for American soldiers stationed in West Germany during the Cold War.⁵¹ The band made optimal use of this infrastructure of live music bars, which the Netherlands largely lacked. Detached from the Dutch colonial cultural tradition, the band's success derived from their innovative rock 'n' roll performances and showmanship. As the film footage of the Tielman Brothers's first television performance in Germany reveals, the Tielman Brothers performed without references to their colonial past, wore fashionable tuxedos, and solely played rock 'n' roll.⁵² In this particular cultural landscape, the Tielman Brothers swapped their fluid colonial identity and uncertain Dutch identity for a more cosmopolitan artist identity. Their familiarity with playing a variety of music genres and performing for a range of audiences contributed to their idiosyncratic sound. The steel guitar vibrato sounds of Hawaiian music and country, as well as rhythmic and melodic qualities of jazz and *krongcong* compositions, added an upbeat energy to their rock 'n' roll music. Combining this familiarity as well as mixed music styles, the Tielman Brothers developed the eclectic, groundbreaking music genre that would later be labelled as Indorock.

Around 1962, the Tielman Brothers made yet another drastic turn in their career when they started playing German Schlager songs. They gradually turned their backs on the rough rock 'n' roll sound and moved towards saccharine pop music. This increased their mainstream popularity in West Germany and the Netherlands. Andy Tielman states in his autobiography, "[W]ith a *Schlager* song, the Tielman Brothers would attract an audience that was unfamiliar with this rock 'n' roll night club band".⁵³ The band followed the example set by other Indo pop musicians whose music was accessible and unthreatening to the Dutch media and music industry. According to anthropologist Lizzy Van Leeuwen, "[t]alented Indo musicians [...] only became commercially successful in the Netherlands as teenage idols after their switch to a 'Western' repertoire".⁵⁴ These "crossover" artists received media and music industry approval, which Indorockers

50 G. Pluvigne, *Expo 58: Between Utopia and Reality*, Tiel 2008, pp. 12, 26–29.

51 U. G. Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany*, Berkeley 2000, pp. 1–2; Smilde, *Helden van toen*, pp. 196–198; Mutsaers, *Rockin' Ramona*, p. 53; R. Labree, *Rock & roll in rood-wit-blauw: de invloed van Amerikaanse rock & roll op Nederland en de Nederlandse popmuziek tussen 1955 en 1965* [Rock & roll in red-white-blue: the influence of American rock & roll on the Netherlands and Dutch pop music between 1955 and 1965], Amsterdam 1993, p. 92; J. Sneeringer, *A Social History of Early Rock 'n' Roll in Germany: Hamburg from Burlesque to The Beatles, 1956–69*, London 2018, pp. 4 and 52.

52 Footage of the performance can be watched on YouTube: The Tielman Brothers, *Performance at Südwestfunk (SWF)*, YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1bIDY-yRX3w> (accessed 14.10.2021).

53 Tielman, *That's my life*, p. 92.

54 Van Leeuwen, *Ons Indisch Erfgoed*, p. 84.

lacked.⁵⁵ “Crossing over” not only was a decision based on commercial viability but also entailed questions of identity. With their new repertoire, “they were automatically considered to be Dutch artists first and foremost”.⁵⁶ Embracing these “polished” pop music genres also meant embracing their Dutch identity. The number of newspapers and magazine articles positively mentioning the band increased sharply, and the Tielman Brothers frequently returned to the Netherlands between 1965 and 1966.⁵⁷

The Tielman Brothers were vital for the introduction of rock ‘n’ roll music to the Netherlands and one of the first to play the genre live. This inspired Indo and Dutch musicians alike, created venues for live performances, and familiarized conservative media and the music industry with “shocking” music genres and youth cultures. Still, Indorockers could not exploit this cultural infrastructure. They could not compete with the newest phenomenon of beat music, which made rock ‘n’ roll music antiquated. The Tielman Brothers continued to play in different line-ups well into the 1980s, but the typical Indorock sound had disappeared. To this day, Indorock is still being played by a dedicated group of Indo musicians.

5. Conclusion

The tumultuous circumstances of their lives and the dynamic nature of their musical career pushed the Tielman Brothers to constantly readjust and reinvent. The Tielman Brothers can therefore be seen as “wanderers without a destination”, living through a variety of wars and regime changes. The Tielman family navigated the last phase of Dutch colonialism in the Indonesian archipelago, the Japanese occupation during the Second World War, the Indonesian War of Independence, and the Republic of Indonesia while holding Dutch citizenship. Furthermore, they faced strict integration and assimilation policies as post-colonial migrants in post-war Dutch society, whereas it was their colonial-style performances that were well received by the media and authorities. The Tielman Brothers left the Netherlands to perform as cosmopolitan rock ‘n’ roll artists in West Germany during the Cold War. However, a few years later, they returned as Indo pop musicians, seemingly embracing their Dutch citizenship. These developments required remarkable flexibility and put a lot of strain on the brothers’ notions of identity.

Analysing a variety of biographical and contextual sources, this article demonstrates the need to connect and include these colonial and post-colonial histories in the analysis of Indorock. Transcending colonial and post-colonial timeframes and historiographical

55 G. J. Oostindie, *Postkoloniaal Nederland: Vijfenzestig jaar vergeten, herdenken, verdringen* [Post-Colonial Netherlands: Sixty-Five Years of Forgetting, Commemorating, Silencing], Amsterdam 2010, p. 107.

56 L. Mutsaers, *Indorock: An Early Eurorock Style*, in: *Popular Music* 3 (1990) 1, pp. 307-320, here p. 312.

57 Palais de Danse, in: *Haagsche Courant*, 3.6.1965; Palais de Danse, in: *Haagsche Courant*, 1.7.1965; Palais de Danse, in: *Haagsche Courant*, 17.7.1965; Juli-programma, in: *Haagsche Courant*, 30.6.1966; Tielman Brothers tien jaar in Europa, in: *Haagsche Courant*, 12.7.1966; Juli-programma, in: *Haagsche Courant*, 30.8.1966; Tielman Brothers (plus vrouw): een perfect uitgevoerde show, in: *Tubantia*, 5.11.1966; Beat-waar?, in: *Haagsche Courant*, 12.7.1966; Beat-waar?, in: *Haagsche Courant*, 19.7.1966; Beat-waar?, in: *Haagsche Courant*, 26.7.1966.

approaches, this article emphasizes global cultural transfers of music and musicians. Indorock was a transnational phenomenon derived from specific colonial and post-colonial contexts. The history of the Tielman Brothers therefore serves as a microcosm for larger historical trends. This article counters persisting myths of silent integration and colour blindness and reveals the complex social and cultural history of Indo people in the Dutch East Indies, the Netherlands, and beyond. Extending this research by investigating Indorock as musical heritage from an intergenerational memory studies perspective could benefit the third and fourth generations of Indo people as well as other (post-colonial) migrant groups in Dutch society. Certainly, there are more *Wanderer ohne Ziel* that deserve our attention.