Oostindie is primarily concerned with the varied acceptance and acknowledgment of the Dutch colonial legacy, both among the various minority groups from the former Dutch colonies as well as within the larger Dutch population. Oostindie often groups his analysis of the Netherlands Antilles with Suriname, the other major Dutch colony in the Atlantic that was also founded by the West India Company. Differentiating the Dutch colonies in the Atlantic from the Dutch East Indies becomes one of the key elements of Oostindie’s argument, namely that the Dutch and their former colonies remember the two companies, their legacy, and the centuries of colonial experience in fundamentally different ways. As Oostindie concludes in reference to the highly controversial issue of slavery, "As it happens, the VOC was no less involved with slavery and the slave trade than the WIC, but this fact has apparently been forgotten. The broader question then arises as to why certain episodes in colonial history have been forgotten and others remembered, with pride or shame, but seldom neutral."  

Discussing the characteristics of the three colonial migrations Oostindie notes that the migration from the Antilles is substantially different from migrants from Suriname and Indonesia since the Netherlands Antilles did not ratify independence, and thus are still Dutch citizens. This has not slowed the migration to the metropolitan Netherlands, but rather increased the exodus from the Caribbean creating a significant degree of resentment in the Netherlands. Oostindie further notes that where Indonesia has consistently distanced itself from a shared past with the Netherlands, the Atlantic colonies, mainly in response to slave trade, have emphasized the Dutch role and their shared history with the Netherlands. Oostindie states, "One single complaint continues to unite Surinamese and Antilleans on both sides of the Atlantic: 'We always had to know everything about the Netherlands, while the Dutch knew, and know, almost nothing about our history.' Those who live in the Netherlands can also add, 'we are here, because you were there.' As Oostindie’s quote hints, these assertions are again not without a significant degree of controversy, as for centuries the metropolitan Dutch focused almost exclusively on the exploits of the East India Company, while ignoring the more troubled history of the West India Company and the Dutch plantation colonies in the Netherlands Antilles and Suriname.

2 Oostindie, 12.