From colonies to constructs

Navigating power dynamics through Dutch colonial architecture in the Dutch East Indies

Figure 1. H. Udo de Haes, *Edu en Ru Kerkhoven op de voorgalerij in Gamboeng*, 1889, Gamboeng, Stichting Indisch Thee- en Familiearchief Van der Hucht c.s., accessed March 18 2024

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Abstract

This thesis delves into Dutch colonial architecture in the Dutch East Indies, exploring the connection between power structures in colonialism and architecture. This involves examining how colonial architecture is used to exert power and also how, conversely, the land itself can influence this architecture. Through a historical lens, the study explores the shift in architectural styles over time, reflecting changing political landscapes. Environmental influences, particularly the challenges posed by the tropical climate but also the indigenous cultures, are analysed in relation to architectural adaptations. Postcolonial reinterpretations and contemporary identities are also considered, shedding light on how indigenous populations interact with and perceive colonial-era structures. By intertwining historical narratives with architectural theory, this research offers insights into the complex interplay between power, culture, and architecture in a colonial context.

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Introduction

'Faster than he had thought, his house, designed according to his own plans, rose up at the edge of the forest, among the rasamalas. (…) The front veranda, accessible by two small flights of steps on either side, was adorned with a wooden balustrade where climbing plants could be trained. He had ordered glass to be able to install widows in the four rooms, providing necessary shelter during cold and damp weather.' (Haasse, 1991, p. 173) The biographical novel 'Heren van de Thee' by Hella Haasse, based on the archival material of 'Het Indisch Thee- en familie-archief', illustrates the significant changes in the Dutch East Indies during the twentieth century from the perspective of a wealthy Dutch family. Increasingly, a conquest-oriented, masculine Europe clashed with emerging changes. What was always considered manageable, the colony, the landscape, proved capable of resistance. While reading, I noticed the detailed descriptions of the rulers' homes, their relationships with the indigenous people and environment, and the changes that occurred during this time. The question arose to what extent architecture was used by colonists to exert their power over the people and how this is related to the political activities in the Dutch East Indies. This prompted me to not only contemplate the influence of the Dutch colonists on the architecture there, but also the impact of the environment of the Dutch East Indies on the architecture itself. For this thesis, the period under consideration starts from the mid-nineteenth century until the independence of Indonesia in 1949.

How architecture relates to power dynamics and colonialism should not only be seen from the perspective of the past. By also considering current beliefs and developments, an additional dimension is added to the view of architecture as a tool of power. This goes hand in hand with the concept of postcolonialism. Postcolonialism critically examines the impacts of colonialism. It prompts a re-evaluation of how designs perpetuate or resist power dynamics, emphasising cultural identity and the narrative of (post-) colonial societies. Another concept related to colonial architecture is critical regionalism. Colonial architecture is confronted with the challenges that come with building in a foreign and exotic land. Critical regionalism advocates for contextually responsive designs, rejecting universal styles. It seeks to foster a sense of place and local identity, contributing to a nuanced understanding of power dynamics in the built environment.

The architecture built during the colonial period in the Dutch East Indies influences and is influenced from multiple perspectives. The political conditions manifest themselves in the built architecture, and simultaneously, the architecture influences the political situation. Confrontation with colonial architecture evokes various associations, ranging from fear and shame to appreciation and admiration (Van Roosmalen, 2013).

In the architectural world, buildings are described as social objects, with social significance and forming social relationships. Architecture tells the story of inequality and colonial exploitation, thus demonstrating the active relationship with (post) colonial-political effects (Kusno, 2000). The facade of a building is one of the most significant elements in visual observation in architecture, representing the value of a building to its surroundings. In a broader context, the facade of a building can even influence the observer's opinion about the image and architectural quality of the building (Suryasari, Antariksa, Wulandari and Santosa, 2022). For the authorities in the Dutch East Indies, it was important to distinguish themselves from the local population. This was reflected in their homes and buildings, in order to express their identity as rulers and differentiate their position from the indigenous population. In general, the cities built

during the Dutch colonial period were focused on the interests and needs of the Western population (Kirana, Kirdsiri and Alici, 2023). The Indonesian lifestyle gradually disappeared. Western norms and values found increasing ground in the Dutch East Indies and soon manifested themselves in politics and therefore architecture (Akihary, 1990).

Despite the colonists wanting to emphasise their identity and position compared to the local population, they made adjustments and adaptations to both the natural conditions and the local environment (Kirana, Kirdsiri and Alici, 2023). In the early colonial period, houses were built of brick and were considered 'just like those in Holland' by contemporaries. The only difference was that the tropical houses were whitewashed and that the windows were not made of glass but of wire mesh (Van Roosmalen, 2008).

The design of the Dutch East Indies houses is characteristic of their classical appearance. Large columns and cornices appear on the front and rear galleries. This style disappeared in the second half of the nineteenth century (Akihary, 1990). For physical comfort, architects began to use local materials and learn the local architectural language. The Indonesian tropical climate influenced not only the spaces indoors but also those outdoors and in between. This combination formed into the veranda, a recognisable element of traditional architecture in Indonesian homes (Kirana, Kirdsiri and Alici, 2023). The use of wood is most common and is found in most Indonesian traditional buildings because it is local and easily available, as well as being a sustainable material (Kirana, Kirdsiri and Alici, 2023). This contrasts with the previous use of mainly bricks by the colonial rulers. In addition, the use of indigenous constructions and models meant that few adjustments were needed to meet the requirements of both Europeans and non-Europeans (Van Roosmalen, 2008).

The change in the use of different materials and the adaptation to the land is characteristic of the shift in politics, starting at the beginning of the 20th century. The policy focused solely on exploitation during the nineteenth century with strong resistance from indigenous administrators and the population (Van Roosmalen, 2008). The use of Indonesian-style ornaments and constructions was the architectural translation of the ethical policy that aimed for a more equal relationship between the Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies (Kirana, Kirdsiri and Alici, 2023). Although the distinction between Europeans and other residents was never abolished, non-Europeans gradually gained more administrative influence. This gradual shift and democratisation of Dutch East Indies society in the beginning of the twentieth century found its reflection in urban planning and architectural discourse. By appointing the Volksraad and indigenous administrators, attention was also paid to improving the quality of housing for local residents when building new homes (Van Roosmalen, 2008).

This convergence of European and indigenous, colonial and traditional, forms Dutch East Indies architecture into a paradox that comes together in an object. What seems contradictory connects and strengthens each other, thereby creating a new culture and architecture (Kirana, Kirdsiri and Alici, 2023).

In this thesis, the connection between power structures in colonialism in the Dutch East Indies and architecture will be explored. This involves examining how colonial architecture is used to exert power and also how, conversely, the land itself can influence this architecture. This leads to the following main question, which is answered using three themes and sub questions in the following chapters:

How did Dutch colonial architecture in the Dutch East Indies embody the power dynamics between the rulers and the indigenous population and how do different perspectives shape its interpretation?

As much as possible, primary sources are utilised in the research. Drawings and images

from that era provide a comprehensive view of the architecture, alongside personal narratives and books. Two primary sources form the backbone for writing this thesis: 'Heren van de Thee' by Hella Haasse and 'Mijn Indische reis: Gedachten over cultuur en kunst' by H.P. Berlage. Haasse's book is a historical novel based on archival documents from the Dutch East Indies. Berlage's narrative recounts his visit to the Dutch East Indies in 1923. Secondary sources are primarily employed to delve into the theories behind power dynamics, post-colonialism and critical regionalism and to give a background in the political and cultural changes at that time. By also considering current ideas about regional architecture, more can be revealed about the theories behind power and architecture.

The body of the thesis, following this introduction, consists of three different chapters, ending with a conclusion. Each of these chapters focuses on one theme, followed by two sub-questions which serve as the basis for the structure of the chapter. Together, they form the answer to the main question of the thesis. The chapters follow each other as chronologically as possible, based on when certain themes were most prevalent. However, these time spans also overlap and are interconnected, so the order does not strictly adhere to a linear timeline.

Chapter 1 describes the relationship between architecture and the exercise of power and the political developments in the Dutch East Indies. Additionally, it examines how these power dynamics manifest in the architecture itself and how they can be identified. Different secondary sources are used to elaborate on the political situation at that time, which are linked to Berlage's diary. Additionally the book 'Heren van de Thee' by Haasse is used to describe the homes of the colonists and the changes over time.

Chapter 2 delves into the influence of the environment of the Dutch East Indies on architecture. This research is combined with excerpts from Haasse's book 'Heren van de Thee'. The relationship between environment and architecture is linked to the subject of critical regionalism. Berlage is one of the first critical regionalists and arguments why local context is important.

Chapter 3 reflects on the thesis topic from a post-colonial context. Furthermore, it shifts away from the Western perspective and focuses on how the indigenous population experienced and continues to experience this architecture today.

Chapter 4 describes the conclusion and summarises all these topics. It attempts to find an answer to the main question of this history thesis.

Chapter 5 contains the bibliography of the sources.

In the text, the term 'Indisch' is used when referring to artifacts, places, names or terms that originated during the colonial period in the Dutch East Indies, and is therefore truly a combination of Indonesian and Dutch influences. Indonesian refers to something purely originating from Indonesia, without the influence of European colonists.

Chapter 1
Dutch colonial architecture and power dynamics

Architecture that emerged in the colonial period of the Dutch East Indies tells the story of inequality and colonial exploitation, thus demonstrating the active relationship with colonial political events (Kusno, 2000). According to Kusno (2000), an Indonesian professor at York university with a research focus on Indonesia, in architecture, buildings are described as social objects with social significance and the formation of social relationships. The political conditions manifest themselves in the built architecture, and at the same time, architecture influences political situations (Van Roosmalen, 2013). The late colonial period in the Dutch East Indies, the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, was characterised by significant political shifts. This change was reflected in the outward characteristics of new buildings but also in the policies surrounding architecture and urban planning.

1.1 Architecture as an authoritarian tool

The first contacts between the Netherlands and Indonesia began in the late sixteenth century, when the then Republic of the Seven United Netherlands decided to obtain spices from the East Indies. Multiple trading companies emerged with trade in the East Indies, which merged in 1602 to form the Dutch East India Company, known as the VOC. The power of the VOC grew significantly over a century, partly by coercing the local population intro trade or labour. With the bankruptcy of the VOC in 1799, the area continued as the colony of the Dutch East Indies. Large areas were conquered by the Dutch Colonial Army in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries through bloody wars and punitive expeditions.

With the arrival of the Dutch, the Indonesian way of life gradually disappeared. Western norms and values spread rapidly through the Dutch East Indies and merged with politics and, consequently, architecture (Akihary, 1990). The lifestyles and cultures of the Dutch East Indies were tightly connected to political factors, and the colonial political situation necessitated that the authorities had corresponding traditions and lifestyles with the indigenous population. However, for the European authorities in the Dutch East Indies, it was crucial to distinguish themselves from the local population. This distinction was reflected in their homes and buildings, expressing their identity as rulers and distancing themselves (Kirana, Kirdsiri, and Alici, 2023).

In the name of the King of the Netherlands, a Governor-General administered the general governance of the Dutch East Indies. Supporting the Governor-General was the 'Raad van Indië', an advisory body consisting of Dutch members from higher administrative circles (Van Roosmalen, 2008). Responsible for the care, maintenance and repair of the infrastructure, construction and waterworks under the Government's management was the Department of 'Burgerlijke Openbare Werken' (B.O.W.), established in 1866. These works included bridges, roads, irrigation works, government staff housing, government offices and courthouses, schools, postal and telecommunication services, prisons, hospitals, warehouses and other government and trade-related buildings (Akihary, 1990). This means that construction in the Dutch East Indies was largely in the hands of the colonial government and thus left a significant mark on the architecture and development in the Dutch East Indies.

The architecture built by the colonial rulers reflects dominance and superiority by their use of the neoclassical Empire style, introduced in the mid-nineteenth century, and was applied to government buildings and churches. This Empire style is characterised by its galleries with tall columns, cornices and white plastered walls and represents a return to the ideals of ancient Greek

and Roman architecture, as can be seen in figure 2. (Akihary, 1990). While the indigenous population remained in the cities, European occupiers moved outside the city into large, open houses. Haasse describes the contrast between the wealthy colonial Europeans and the impoverished indigenous people when the main character of the book, Rudolf Kerkhoven, wanders through Batavia. Previously, he had only seen white palaces belonging to the prosperous Europeans. As he followed the paths between the gardens of the European houses, he encountered the vast kampongs: "He entered the lower city, (…) with mazes of dense greenery, bamboo huts – sometimes nothing more that a roof on stilts –, fenced fields (…)" (Haasse, 1991, p. 72).

In addition to promoting their health, the colonial homes provided wealthy residents with a way to express their prosperity. The houses had typically one floor and a hipped roof. The characteristic layout included an open front (figure 4) and back gallery connected by a central corridor, where bedrooms and other living spaces were situated. The appearance was also classicist, with tall columns and cornices on the front and back galleries. The back gallery (figure 5) served as a private space for consuming meals, such as the 'rijsttafel', a meal consisting of various dishes served with rice, developed as a colonial meal for the ruling classes. By transforming a local dish into a labour-intensive meal, the Europeans demonstrated their distancing from the indigenous population (Damstra, 2017). In the enormous backyards, there were wells, pumps, 'conveniences,' and slave and servant quarters separated from the luxurious houses (Van Roosmalen, 2008). In her book, Haasse describes how this scene unfolds at one of the family members' homes in Weltevreden, a regal house with a deep, green garden. Here, one by one, the wealthy Dutch take their seats while the Indonesian staff serves them the meal: "In the back veranda, where the afternoon light was filtered through sunshades made of thin bamboo slats, and the marble floor reflected muted gleams, a generous Indonesian meal was served." (Haasse, 1991, p. 67). Through this brief yet detailed description of the event, a clear image can already be formed of how this setting creates a divide between Western and Eastern, rich and poor.

Figure 2. Woodbury & Page, *Societeit de Harmonie*, ca. 1857-1896, Batavia, Nederlands Fotomuseum, accessed March 15 2024, https://collectie.nederlandsfotomuseum.nl/collectie/detail/fc8719df-4d62-2d76-c5c4-0ca65794334a

Figure 3. Photographed by C.B. Nieuwenhuis, *Straatgezicht met bevolking in Soengei Poear*, 1892-1905, Wereld Museum, accessed April 12 2024, https://collectie.wereldmuseum.nl/?query=search=*=TM-60018562#/query/ed8284c2-705f-4a32-919e-3b96c51dfd6b

Figure 4. *De voorgalerij: zowel verkeers- als verblijfsruimte*,1928, in *Wonen in Indië*, E. Wils, 2000. Accessed March 18 2024, https://dekortvanschaik.nl/Wonen-op-de-Indische-galer

Figure 5. *De achtergalerij tijdens het ontbijt*, in *Wonen in Indië*, E. Wils, 2000. Accessed March 18 2024, https://dekortvanschaik.nl/Wonen-op-de-Indische-galer

Figure 6. H.P. Berlage, *De Kali Besar*, March 27th 1923, Batavia, in *Mijn Indische reis: Gedachten over cultuur en kunst*, H.P. Berlage, 1931, page 36

Figure 7. H.P. Berlage, *De Inlandsche Wijk*, March 29th 1923, Batavia, in *Mijn Indische reis: Gedachten over cultuur en kunst*, H.P. Berlage, 1931, page 39

1.2 A new era

Previously, the cities built during the Dutch colonial period focused on Western interests (Kirana, Kirdsiri, and Alici, 2023). However, there was a shift in politics, which began at the beginning of the twentieth century. Politics was solely focused on exploitation during the nineteenth century, which met strong resistance from indigenous rulers and populations. The desire among native intellectuals to advocate for their own regional, cultural and economic interests was a clear signal of political discontent. This led to the establishment of various organisations that fought for the interests of the indigenous population. To address this political interest, the government agreed in 1918 to establish the 'Volksraad', a representative body for the people. Although suffrage was still extremely limited, and the Volksraad barely represented an ethnic and social cross-section of the East Indian society, it responded to the need for more involvement in politics (Van Roosmalen, 2008). European colonists adopted a new attitude by embracing what was identified as local cultures and traditions. Concepts such as 'equality,' 'progress,' and 'modern' became more popular among different groups. This changing perspective on equality also becomes evident in Haasse's book when Kerkhoven expresses his appreciation for his cousin Eduard Douwes Dekker. Dekker, also known as Multatuli, was a Dutch writer who, with his novel 'Max Havelaar' (1860), was one of the first to expose the injustices and exploitation of the indigenous people at that time. This had a significant impact on colonial policy.

This democratisation of Indonesian society was reflected both in architecture and urban planning (Van Roosmalen, 2008). Not only were the homes of Europeans improved, but those of the indigenous population also underwent improvements. This followed the trend of the

'Woningwet' introduced in the Netherlands in 1901 by liberal ministers. This law ensured that in the Netherlands, the improvement of public health and the dire housing conditions were seen as a social issue. The Kampong Improvement Committee found that, despite encouraging results over the past few years, most urban kampongs still did not meet standards (figure 6 and 7). This was partly due to uncertainty about what was right or wrong, as many projects realised for the indigenous population did not meet expectations because officials and designers did not have sufficient insight into the customs and desires of the indigenous population. The purely European approach to designs did not lead to the intended results (Van Roosmalen, 2008). By using Indonesian style ornaments and constructions, the demands of non-Europeans were also met. This was a clear translation of the new ethical political trend, which aimed at a more equal relationship between the Netherlands and its colony (Kirana, Kirdsiri, and Alici, 2023).

The new developments in politics were accompanied by the industrialisation of society, along with increased immigration from the Netherlands. However, this resulted in a greater gap between European and Eastern residents (Damstra, 2017). The European identity was based on whether one was a capable colonist and familiar with Indonesian traditions and networks. This identity reflected in ideas about new modern residences. These new homes still had openness and good ventilation but had to be different from Indonesian homes. Modern homes included elements such as the 'platje,' as can be seen in figure 8, which is a variation of the galleries that characterised traditional Indonesian homes. The ideal late-colonial house in the Dutch East Indies was inspired by a Dutch suburban house with traditional Indonesian elements. By developing a European style based on indigenous culture and modern local art but under European supervision, architects made it clear how the indigenous population could learn from European culture (Damstra, 2017).

Figure 8. *Woonhuis Surabaya met platje aan de voorzijde,*1953. Private collection. Accessed April 10 2024, https://dekortvanschaik.nl/Wonen-op-de-Indische-galer

1.3 Indo–European style

The close relationship between colonial politics and Indisch architecture was also described by Hendrik Petrus Berlage. Berlage, born in Amsterdam in 1856, was an influential Dutch architect and supporter of radical liberalism. In 1923, he travelled to the Dutch East Indies to compile a report on the temples of Prambanan. Additionally, he was commissioned to create an expansion plan for Batavia (Berlage, 1931). In his travel diary 'Mijn Indische reis: Gedachten over cultuur en kunst' he writes critically about Indisch architecture and the policies behind it. Berlage sees architecture in the Dutch East Indies not separate from the political and colonial dynamics that influence the development and design of the built environment. He notes how the residence of the Governor-General is the 'apotheosis among the palaces of various residents' and thus representative of the colonial style, a symbol of the colonial power dynamics between Western colonisers and the indigenous population. Berlage, however, questions the influence of European architects on buildings in an Eastern environment and the challenges this poses. He also critically examines the incorporation of Western architecture in a non-Western context. In his travel diary, he describes the following: 'Let me begin by recalling the historical law that a colonised domination also tries to impose its culture on the dominated people. It is the tragedy of every power that it is abused.' (Berlage, 1931 p. 98).

Berlage advocates for an architectural department for the Javanese population so that architecture is not solely influenced by Europeans. According to him, this will truly create an Indo-European architecture, which is of great importance. He emphasises that the overall development towards an Indo-European style will lead to the purest form of future the Dutch East Indies.

1.4 Conclusion

The chapter 'Dutch colonial architecture and power dynamics' answered the first two sub-questions of this thesis:

1. How did the Dutch colonial rulers use architecture as a means of asserting and perpetuating colonial power in the Dutch East Indies?

2. In what ways did the spatial layout and use of colonial buildings reinforce social hierarchies and power dynamics within colonial society?

The colonial rulers used architecture to express new political situations. The latest developments in technology, materials, and trends were reflected in the homes. The large white palaces of the colonial leaders stood in contrast to the cramped shanties of the indigenous population squeezed in between. The changes in ethics and awareness of satisfying the indigenous people were not good enough to reduce the differences. Their interests were not listened to, and despite the gradual adoption of the Indonesian culture, it went the European way. An example of this is the 'platje' instead of the galleries or the origin of the 'rijsttafel'. The modernisation and industrialisation of society progressed rapidly, resulting in a lag for the local population. This showed that the indigenous population needed the help of Western rulers to keep up with modernisation. The gap that existed since the arrival of the Europeans was perpetuated by colonial architecture. However, Berlage was not in favour of this, and emphasises in his diary the importance of greater indigenous involvement. In his opinion, this achieves the purest form of the Dutch East Indies.

Chapter 2
Environmental influences

The buildings constructed by rulers in the Dutch East Indies went through various phases. Not only did political developments play a role, but also technical, economic, and cultural advancements went hand in hand. Climate, landscape, and culture all had significant influences on this process. It was not only the influence from the Netherlands but also the indigenous land that impacted the architecture. However, these two countries stood in opposition to each other, requiring different architectural demands. Coupled with the changing politics around the turn of the century, various discussions arose among prominent architects and engineers regarding the incorporation of indigenous materials and practices. This led to intriguing developments, ultimately exerting pressure on power dynamics between Europeans and the indigenous population.

2.1 The colonial country house

Batavia was founded in 1619 on the previously destroyed Jacatra by the Dutch Jan Pieterszoon Coen. As an important outpost for the VOC, the Dutch model of a canal city was followed in the construction of the city. Along these canals, houses made of imported Dutch brick emerged (Akihary, 1990). Contemporaries describe the canal houses in the city centre just like those in Holland, with the only difference being that the windows were fitted with screens instead of glass (van Roosmalen, 2008). A similar description is provided in 'Heren van de Thee', when the Dutchman Kerkhoven arrives in Batavia for the first time in 1872: "To his surprise, he saw very 'Dutch' looking roofs with tiles protruding above tropical trees that had large elongated leaves (…)" (Haasse, 1991, p. 59).

In the 18th century, there was a migration among the settlers to the higher hinterlands, such as Weltevreden. This movement started because there was a growing demand for a healthier and more open environment, in contrast to the densely populated Batavia. The migration trend continued into the nineteenth century as it became increasingly evident that the typical Dutch houses were not suitable for the tropical climate. The previously mentioned Empire style, brought over from British India, was loosely translated and adapted into a colonial Indische architectural style. However, it was modified to suit local conditions, climate, and building materials (Akihary, 1990). For physical comfort, architects began to use local materials and learn the local architectural language (Kirana, Kirdsiri, & Alici, 2023). With this changes, the symmetrical eighteenth-century house type evolved into the distinctive Indische residential house.

These houses were mainly found in the outskirts of the city of Weltevreden, on spacious and shady plots (Akihary, 1990). Despite the colonists' desire to emphasise their identity and position relative to the indigenous population, they had to make adjustments and adaptations to both natural conditions and the local environment (Kirana, Kirdsiri, & Alici, 2023). By building only one story high, creating plenty of open spaces, and adding shady areas to the suburban homes, the Europeans found a way to cope with the tropical climate. The lengthwise-facing hipped roofs are characteristic of the Indische architectural style and derived from oriental Javanese homes, as can be seen in Berlages sketch (figure 9), as opposed to the gable ends facing the street, as in the Netherlands (Akihary, 1990). An example of an Indische colonial house where this is applied can be seen in figure 10.

The use of wood is also derived from Indonesian traditional buildings, which is the most commonly used material here. This is due to its abundance and local availability as well as its sustainability (Kirana, Kirdsiri, & Alici, 2023). The use of indigenous materials and adaptations to the climate is depicted in 'Heren van de Thee', where Kerkhovens' house in 1877 is described: "It was constructed from rough wood, the posts resting on

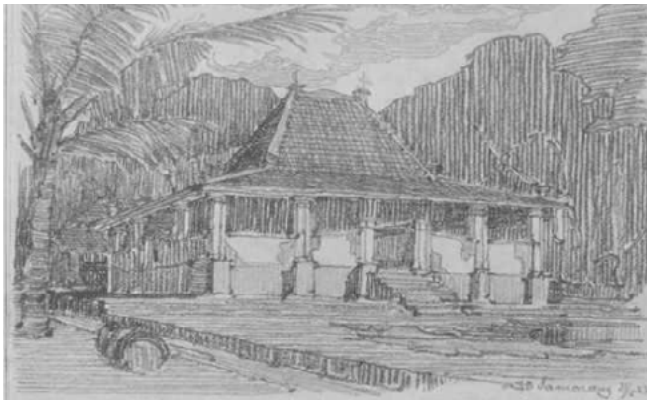

Figure 9. H.P. Berlage, *Oud Javaansch Huis,* May 31th 1923, Semarang, in *Mijn Indische reis: Gedachten over cultuur en kunst*, H.P. Berlage, 1931, page 134

Figure 10. Photographed by V.L. Van de Wall, *Huis in pendopo stijl gebouwd in 1850*, 1932, in *Wonen op de Indische galerij*, accessed March 18 2024, https://dekortvanschaik.nl/Wonen-op-de-Indische-galer

loose flat stones to thwart the ants. The roofing was partly made of native tiles, partly of palm fibers." (Haase, 1991, p. 178). The house featured front, inner and back galleries where thin bamboo mats hung to block out the harsh afternoon light and heat. The front gallerie of this house can be seen in figure 11.

During Berlage's visit to the Dutch East Indies, he writes about how many of these nineteenth-century homes lost their grandeur. Awnings of corrugated iron, supported by curled cast iron brackets, and stone columns replaced by wooden or iron ones, led to a decline in their classical character (Berlage, 1931). Figure 12 is an example of such a house. Consequently, the 'Indische' classicism lost much of its stylistic purity (Akihary, 1990). Berlage criticises the use of iron corrugated sheets, even when applied to indigenous homes. However, he acknowledges that this is the only material capable of withstanding tropical downpours. Nevertheless, aesthetic appreciation

Figure 11. B*ertha Kerkhoven en Karel Kerkhoven samen met baboe Engko op de veranda van het woonhuis in Gamboeng,* 1899, Collectie Stichting Thee- en Familie-archief, Driebergen. Accessed April 10 2024, https://www.dbnl.org/tekst/salv007ikma01_01/salv007ikma01_01_0006.php

Figure 12. *Woonhuis op Molenvliet-west no. 165*, 3th quarter 19th century, Molenvliet, in *Architectuur & stedebouw in Indonesië 1870-1970*, H.Akihary, 1990, page 8

gradually emerged, resulting in the concealment of these corrugated sheets with indigenous 'atap' (Berlage, 1931). Additionally, Berlage describes how an indigenous architectural style developed with many intermediate and transitional cases. For example, there are 'desa' homes, homes of indigenous people living in rural areas, with front galleries and mosques made of bamboo or wood.

2.2 Coping with tropical challenges

Whereas previously, primarily the upper European classes travelled to the Dutch East Indies, at the beginning of the twentieth century, there was a significant migration from the middle class. This occurred as a result of opening the colony to free enterprise and private capital. Members of this middle class settled in the cities, quickly leading to housing shortages. The high demand for housing and land caused a sharp increase in land prices, resulting in smaller plots. Additionally, large estates and private lands were divided and cleared for construction. New houses emerged on the back lots of nineteenth-century homes, leading to both expansion and densification of the centres in the Indische cities (Akihary, 1990).

With the increasing need for more construction, there were also more discussions about the right way to build. Not only for European homes but also for the kampongs where the indigenous population lived. The architectural debate on how to make houses more resilient for the tropical climate led to the publication of the magazine 'Het Nederlandsch-Indische huis: Oud en Nieuw' in 1913. The goal of this magazine was to develop a modern European style in the Dutch East Indies, based on indigenous culture and modern local art (Damstra, 2017). With this, the rural, old-colonial residential house became an example of something 'old' and unstructured that did not fit into the 'modern' Dutch colonial society. As a result, floor plans and functions changed. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the front gallery was transformed into the 'platje' or a patio. This led to the social life increasingly moving indoors (Damstra, 2017). The typical, characteristic Indische residential houses made way for the suburban villa type, which bore many similarities to the villa type built in the Netherlands. The residential areas built for Europeans in the 1920s and 1930s took on a completely European appearance (Akihary, 1990). This appearance led to a return to smaller, multi-story, modern homes (Damstra, 2017).

The densification of the cities mainly led to problems in the kampongs. Pharmacist and city councillor of Semarang H.F. Tillema criticised the unhealthy and deplorable living conditions of the indigenous population. Houses were built too close together, allowing little air and light to enter. According to Tillema, air and light, are necessary for good natural ventilation (Akihary, 1990). Tillema also criticised modern European homes, which he believed did not meet the requirements for a healthy home in a tropical climate. As a supporter of the old Indische homes, Tillema advocated for ventilation, cooling, a constant temperature, and keeping insects out (Damstra, 2017).

Dutch-Indies architect Piet Moojen aligned himself with both the modern movement and Tillema's arguments. He sought simplicity and transparency in the form of construction. The typical nineteenth-century decoration was not suitable for him in what he considered the ideal Indische style and he wanted his work to be based on local conditions (Damstra, 2017). In the rational architecture that Moojen envisioned, there was no place for poorly understood classical stylistic forms. According to him, the style that one should use is naturally indicated by the climate, land, material, and workforce (Akihary, 1990).

Another architect who was very concerned with local conditions was Henri Maclaine Pont. He was of Dutch-Indies descent and returned to the Dutch East Indies in 1911 after studying architecture in Delft. His first building assignment was the headquarters of the Semarang-Cheribon-Stoomtram Mij. in Tegal (figure 13). The principles for this design were, firstly, the climatic requirements, which had to be met purely with architectural and construction means, without the use of artificial interventions. Secondly, as many local building materials as possible had to be used in construction (Akihary, 1990). In addition, the building volume and location were determined by local climatic conditions. The east-west orientation of the building maximised the

Figure 13. *Hoofdkantoor i an de 'Semarang-Chenbon Stoomtram Maat-schappij'*, 1911, Tegal, in *Architectuur & stedebouw in Indonesië 1870-1970*, H.Akihary, 1990, page 45

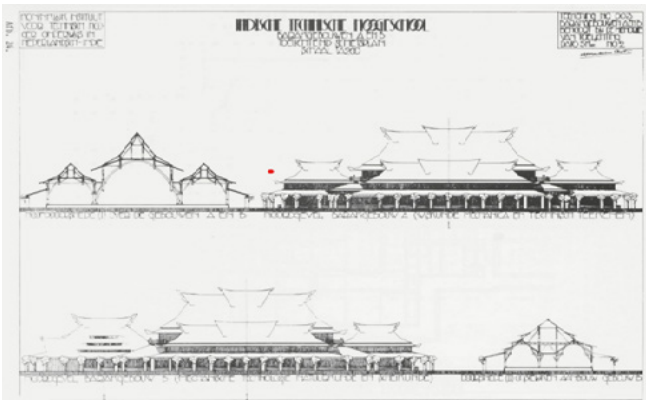

Figure 14. H.Maclaine Pont, *Indische Technische Hogeschool*, March 5th 1919, Bandung, in *Architect Henri Maclaine Pont: Een speurtocht naar het wezenlijke van de Javaanse architectuur*, B.F. van Leerdam, 1994, page 78

benefits of climatic conditions. The northern sea breeze provided cooling during the day, while the southern land breeze ventilated the building at night. To shield against the heat, the building was surrounded by galleries, with a water tower in the middle. Open connections between the different spaces in the building ensured good air ventilation, aided by casement windows near the ceilings to prevent drafts. Plastering was necessary because indigenous brick was used (Akihary, 1990).

Maclaine Pont's most famous work is the technical university in Bandung. Here too, extensive attention was paid to climatic conditions. All spaces of the university are located exclusively on the ground floor. This allowed for maximum utilisation of the ground as a heat absorber, light entry, and air circulation. The site selection, grouping, and placement of the buildings could effectively be applied to mitigate excessive heat gain. Similarly, an east-west orientation of the longitudinal axis was adopted. Sufficient fresh air required the buildings to be grouped alongside a broad, open strip of land. To combat heat within the buildings themselves, the Javanese 'pendopo' was chosen, where the airflow is influenced in such a way that the covered floor remains cool and maintains a comfortable temperature. The intense sunlight, reflected from the ground, could illuminate the light-toned interior of the roof in such a way that it created even and diffuse lighting in the interior space (Van Leerdam, 1988).

Figure 15. W.H. Lizars, *Engraving of a Javanese pendopo*, in *History of the Indian Archipelago*, vol. 1, J. Crawfurd, 1820, page 162

From the mid-1920s to 1940, the New Building or functionalist architecture emerged in Europe. This style was extensively applied and so widely disseminated that it is referred to as an 'International Style'. This trend also found its way to the Dutch East Indies. Similar to other imported Western architectural concepts, those of the New Building were transformed and adapted to meet the requirements posed by the climate and terrain. The Indische interpretation was formalistic: white plastered buildings with flat roofs, horizontally articulated facades, and cubist architectural volumes (Akihary, 1990).

2.3 The emergence of critical regionalism

Adopting indigenous surroundings and practices aligns with the principles of critical regionalism. Critical regionalism is an approach that aims to create buildings rooted in the local context, culture, and climate while also critically reflecting on modern architectural trends and globalisation. It is a progressive approach to design that

seeks to mediate between the global and local languages of architecture (Foroutanian, 2014). This concept was first introduced in the 1970s, but hints of it appeared in the preceding years. This is also evident in the colonial architecture of the Dutch East Indies, particularly around the turn of the century, as political attention increasingly focused on the indigenous population.

Early proponents of critical regionalism include the previously mentioned Berlage and Maclaine Pont. Both architects aimed for a balance between the European and indigenous in architecture. As mentioned in chapter 2.3, Berlage addressed the lack of architectural education in the Dutch East Indies, resulting in only European architects working there. This could lead to a misinterpretation of indigenous customs and desires and a neglect of indigenous culture. According to him, a true Indo-European style could not emerge in this way. Berlage recognised the importance of respecting and adopting indigenous culture, materials, and surroundings.

In his travel diary, Berlage also describes meeting Maclaine Pont. Maclaine Pont, in his work as an architect for the Department of Health, visited kampongs for his studies on Old Javanese architecture. In these kampongs, Maclaine Pont tells Berlage about the Javanese house: '(…) according to him, the most important element in the issue of a possible Indonesian architecture' (Berlage, 1931 p. 43). Maclaine Pont's own house emerged from these studies. According to Berlage, Maclaine Pont's house serves as a mosquito net in its entirety. The structural organism of his house consists of bamboo framework, with mesh stretched between. This results in a large aviary with excellent ventilation. Maclaine Pont had learned, through bureaucratic practice in the kampongs, to treat bamboo with seawater and to use half instead of whole styles to combat rats and insects (Berlage, 1931).

Maclaine Pont's interest in the application of traditional indigenous housing construction was primarily driven by his observation that municipal housing projects had deprived the indigenous population of its autonomy and alienated government and population from each other. It was necessary for Europeans to become acquainted with indigenous building materials and techniques, as Maclaine Pont believed that public housing and improvement could only be sustainable if all layers of the population felt involved (van Roosmalen, 2008). According to Maclaine Pont, it was possible to build small houses with indigenous materials and techniques that also met Western standards of hygiene and comfort. This is why he strongly advocated for the use of bamboo as a building material. Traditionally, this was a commonly used material, abundant in supply, and, if properly processed and applied, highly durable. However, the authorities in the Dutch East Indies insisted that building with bamboo and applying the traditional Javanese pyramid roof could not be allowed for public health reasons (van Roosmalen, 2008).

Also for the design of the technical university in Bandung (figure 16), Maclaine Pont was inspired by Old Javanese architecture. Through extensive studies, he had acquired comprehensive knowledge on this subject. He chose a design characterised by the open spaces between the buildings, fences, and plantings as a starting point for this design. This is shown in the floorplan in figure 17. Such a layout can also be found in the old 'kratons', Javanese palaces, of Solo and Yogyakarta and is therefore typically Javanese. Additionally,

Figure 16. *Indische Beheersing van het detail*, d.u., Bandung, in *Architect Henri Maclaine Pont: Een speurtocht naar het wezenlijke van de Javaanse architectuur*, B.F. van Leerdam, 1994, page 58

Maclaine Pont aimed to source all materials for the project from the local market. This was an unusual way of working at the time, especially for government buildings (van Leerdam, 1988).

Through this approach to construction, Dutch East Indies architecture reached a new phase in its development. The solution for building in the tropics had been found in structural terms. However, a solution in architectural terms had not yet been achieved. This led to an important architectural discussion in the early twenties about the possibilities for developing a specific modern Indische architectural style and the role that indigenous architecture would play in it (Akihary, 1990).

2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter on 'environmental influences,' the following two sub-questions are addressed:

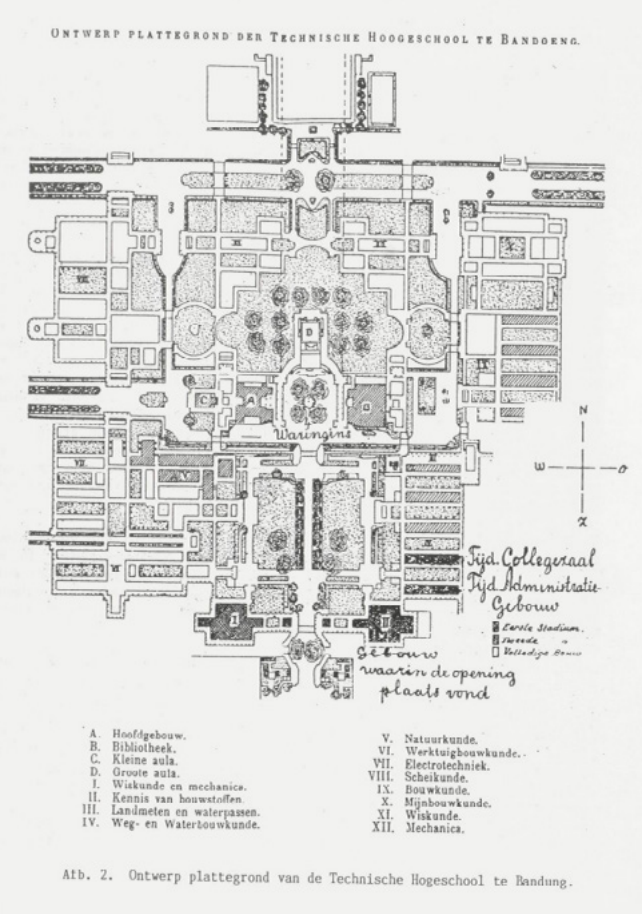

Figure 17. H. Maclaine Pont, *Ontwerp plattegrond der Technische Hoogeschool te Bandoeng*, d.u., Bandung, in *Architect Henri Maclaine Pont: Een speurtocht naar het wezenlijke van de Javaanse architectuur*, B.F. van Leerdam, 1994, page 12

1. How did the natural environment of the East Indies influence the architectural choices including materials, construction techniques and overall design strategies?

2. To what extent did colonial architects incorporate or reject local cultural and environmental elements in their designs, and how does this align with the principles of critical regionalism?

The influence of climate and nature on architecture evolved through various phases. During early colonisation, buildings were mainly constructed in a manner similar to that in the Netherlands. The old canal system and canal houses were adopted. In the nineteenth century, awareness of diseases and health increased, leading to a greater desire for living outside the city. Open single-story houses were built in the classical style, taking into account sun and light. Dutch brick was replaced by local materials. At the beginning of the twentieth century, there was a change again. Due to rising land prices, buildings were constructed closer together, and houses became smaller. This sparked a debate about what approach would be better. Some architects believed it should be done like in the West, modern and with Western influences. Others believed that hygiene would improve only if more indigenous influences such as materials and culture were applied. This way, the demands of the indigenous people would also be better met. Prominent architects like Berlage and Maclaine Pont were strong proponents of this approach and were influenced by the culture and customs of the indigenous population. Thus, they were pioneers of what would later be called critical regionalism. However, they received little support from the government. The blending of European and indigenous, colonial and traditional elements in Dutch East Indies architecture, creates a paradox that merges into one. What initially appears contradictory actually intertwines and reinforces each other, resulting in the emergence of the Indische style.

Chapter 3
Postcolonial reinterpretation and the contemporary identity

In the contemporary, post-colonial society, colonial architecture is a complex and sensitive subject. Postcolonial is seen as the time after the end of colonialism, where focus is placed on the consequences of the colonial encounter between the West and non-West from the 16th century onwards. In postcolonial studies, there is critical examination of the colonial period with an emphasis on looking at things differently (de Boer – Kazemier, 2023). The colonial context evokes ideological and political responses, frequently marked by a mixture of condemnation, disdain, shame and apathy. However, the situation regarding Indonesian built heritage has changed in the last two decades. Colonial buildings are regarded as an accessible and effective medium for visualising the colonial past and acquainting the public with it (van Roosmalen, 2013). As a result, the negative view of colonial architecture has gradually shifted to a more positive attitude, while across the rest of the world awareness has gained ground and political perspectives have shifted. For this reason, it is noteworthy that awareness and appreciation of colonial architecture have risen in Indonesia. This trend is evident in both Indonesia, where the buildings' physical existence serves as an ongoing reminder of past colonisation, and in the Netherlands, where colonial architecture is not necessarily a daily confrontation.

3.1 Postcolonial reflections

Many Dutch people nowadays feel more discomfort than satisfaction about the overseas political and cultural heritage of the Netherlands. The colonial past, a sharp reminder of a controversial period in Dutch history, has long been overlooked due to ignorance and great disinterest. Indonesia's independence in 1949 followed shortly after the end of World War II. The Netherlands was mainly focused on post-war reconstruction in the 1950s and 60s and looked towards the future. With the German occupation and concentration camps still fresh in memory, the overseas territories seemed forgotten. Less favourable aspects of the decolonisation war emerged after a speech by Dutch East Indies veteran Joop Hueting in 1969. However, this never led to a broad debate, and the issue remained largely in the background (de Boer – Kazemier, 2023). Until the 1980s, a romanticised image of the Dutch East Indies was primarily depicted. The Netherlands portrayed the colonial world as an idyllic setting where colonisers and colonists lived peacefully alongside each other. Especially the Japanese were seen as the wrongdoers during World War II. Mostly white Europeans were held captive, making them appear as the main victims in this narrative. Television programs about the Dutch East Indies almost exclusively showed 'white' faces, neglecting the experiences of 'brown' Indo-Dutch people (de Boer – Kazemier, 2023).

It wasn't until the 1980s that stories about the country of origin, wars, and migration came to light. Throughout the 1980s and 90s, Dutch people also began to show increasing interest in colonial built heritage. This renewed interest was fuelled by the efforts of Dutch and non-Dutch scholars. Additionally, architects played a crucial role in stimulating debates about colonial built heritage. A notable outcome of these discussions was an agreement signed in 1987 between the Royal Institute of Dutch Architects (BNA) and its Indonesian counterpart (IAI). This agreement facilitated collaborative projects related to colonial built heritage, despite avoiding terms like "colonial" due to political sensitivities (van Roosmalen, 2013).

However, the positive political atmosphere suffered a setback in 1992 when Jan Pronk, the Dutch Minister for Development Cooperation,

Figure 18. *Huis van Reinier de Klerk op Molenvliet West*, d.u., Batavia, in *Oud Batavia Gedenkboek*, G. Kolff & Co, Batavia, 1922, page 52. Accessed April 12, https://cortsfoundation.org/pdf/web/viewer.html?file=%2Fpdf/OB3.pdf#pagemode=thumbs&zoom=page-fit&page=4

Figure 19. *The former house of R. de Klerk (1777-1780)*, d.u., Jakarta, National Archives of Indonesia Building (Gedung Arsip Nasional), 2013. Accessed April 12, https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huis_Reinier_de_Klerk#/

criticised the human rights situation in Indonesia. This led to a freeze in diplomatic and cultural relations between the two countries. Despite later attempts to revive cultural relations, it took another 20 years for bilateral cultural relations to develop. In 2005, the Netherlands officially expressed regret for the colonial war between 1947 and 1949. However, many Dutch people are still not familiar with issues surrounding colonial heritage, particularly colonial built heritage in Indonesia. This lack of awareness is partly attributed to the limited attention paid in Dutch school curricula to the country's colonial past (van Roosmalen, 2013).

A notable restoration project initiated in 1995, in honour of Indonesia's impending 50th anniversary of independence, illustrates the complexities of postcolonial relations. The Netherlands planned to present a restored country house, once belonging to a high-ranking employee of the VOC, as a gift to the Indonesian National Archives. Figure 18 is before the restoratoin, 19 after. However, the gesture was met with mixed reactions in Indonesia, where many saw it as a celebration of Dutch colonial enterprises in Asia, indicating a lack of awareness among the Dutch regarding postcolonial sensitivities (van Roosmalen, 2013).

3.2 Responses of independent Indonesia

After Indonesia's independence in 1949, the Indo-European style was found too closely associated with memories of colonialism to be continued (Dettingmeijer, 2005). Many regimes that came to power after decolonisation partly sought their identity in modernity, attempting to imitate the Western international architectural style. At the same time, some architects - often of European descent or with a European education - aimed to design as 'locally' as possible (Van der Dunk, 1993). The long-standing confrontation between indigenous building tradition and Western modernity continued in Indonesia, struggling with its identity.

From the emergence of postmodernism in the 1960s, questions arose about excluding contemporary construction. Especially in Asia, there was a growing interest in history and the local region (Dettingmeijer, 2005). In the early 1980s, recognition of the positive aspects of the colonial past, particularly the built heritage, grew among the people in Indonesia. As Indonesia's economy experienced rapid growth and urban development projects expanded, concerns arose among the emerging middle class about the impact of modernisation on Indonesia's colonial heritage. The increasing demolition of buildings from the colonial era led to discussions about preserving tangible remnants of Indonesia's history (van Roosmalen, 2013).

Realising that ignoring or destroying colonial remnants would not erase history but rather complicate it, heritage supporters advocated for the preservation and adaptive reuse of colonial buildings. The first notable public protest for heritage conservation occurred in 1982 when protests failed

to prevent 'De Harmonie' (figure 2), a symbol of the colonial regime in Jakarta, from being demolished. However, these protests led to the establishment of organisations dedicated to preserving Indonesia's colonial heritage (van Roosmalen, 2013). From that moment, grassroots groups initiated various projects to promote awareness and conservation of colonial architecture. One of this renovations can be seen in figure 20. In the late 1990s, there was a significant shift in Indonesians' attitudes toward colonial built heritage, partly driven by the economic crisis of 1997 and subsequent political reforms. This period allowed for a re-evaluation of Indonesia's colonial past, leading to increased awareness, appreciation, and appropriation of colonial heritage (van Roosmalen, 2013).

In the early 2000s, unexpected participants, such as public-private companies like the Bank of Indonesia and the Indonesian Railway Company, entered the arena of heritage conservation. These companies, as direct heirs of Dutch institutions, recognised the need to preserve their properties and archives from the colonial era. Additionally, around 2000, a new trend emerged, with Indonesians visiting shops, restaurants, galleries, and hotels housed in former colonial buildings. However, this trend often led to the rapid transformation of surrounding neighbourhoods into suburban expanses, detracting from the original character of the buildings and their surroundings (van Roosmalen, 2013). In figure 21, we can see how a colonial building has been transformed into housing for commercial activities, thereby erasing its historical character.

3.3 Architectural developments

After decolonisation, there was a shift in how to deal with colonial buildings. However, discussions also arose regarding the approach to newly constructed architecture. As mentioned earlier, Indonesia is a postcolonial country engaged in a struggle

Figure 20. *Lower Court (Landraadgebouw), Bandung: during and after restoration (2005-2007)*, d.u., Bandung. Accessed April 14 2024, http://journals.openedition.org/abe/docannexe/image/372/img-7.jpg

Figure 21. *Factory outlets*, 2000, Bandung. Accessed April 14 2024, http://journals.openedition.org/abe/docannexe/image/372/img-10.jpg

between the colonial and the traditional. This dichotomy between architectural trends forms the basis for contemporary Indonesian architecture.

One year after Indonesia's sovereignty, in October 1950, the "building construction" lesson was opened at the Faculty of Engineering Science at ITB, the former Bandung Institute of Technology. By the late 1950s, as anti-Dutch sentiment increased in Indonesia, all Dutch instructors returned to the Netherlands, and by 1963, the architecture school was entirely under Indonesian control. More architecture schools were established, with graduates from ITB Bandung teaching, all of which were heavily influenced by the Dutch curriculum (Kusno, van Bergeijk, & Hein, 2017).

During the 1980s, a time when Indonesians began to look more positively at the colonial past, several attempts were made to emphasise a typical Indonesian architecture and culture. Multiple questions about tradition, modernity, and the characterisation of Indonesian architecture were raised during conferences. Architecture had not yet adapted to the context of Indonesia and was seen at that time as something of the elite, too focused on international, Western standards. Most Indonesian architects advocated for an architecture that did not solely glorify one culture and saw a challenge for a dual movement in Indonesian architecture. One was to be critical of Western architectural hegemony, the other to be critical of the Java-centric national culture promoted by the state (Kusno, van Bergeijk, & Hein, 2017).

Contemporary Indonesian architects address decolonisation by embracing the colonial legacy rather than ignoring it (Kusno, van Bergeijk, & Hein, 2017). The foundation for shaping an Indonesian culture lies in overcoming the dichotomy between East and West. This is achieved by increasing knowledge about local architecture and focusing on its identity and representation, so that indigenous architecture receives the same platform as Western architecture. Additionally, current Indonesian architecture faces other challenges. Architecture is still very focused on the relationship between client and architect, thus representing only a small part of society. As a result, a large portion of the population is not represented (Kusno, van Bergeijk, & Hein, 2017). In this respect, contemporary Indonesian architecture struggles with the same issues as in the colonial period. Only a small part of the population is presented, with a focus on Western architecture dominating over indigenous architecture.

3.4 Conclusion

In the final chapter, 'Post-colonial reinterpretation and the contemporary identity', the following sub-questions were addressed:

1. In what way do the Dutch reinterpret their colonial architecture in the post-colonial context?

2. How has the local community responded to the presence and symbolism of Dutch colonial architecture in the contemporary context?

The perspective on colonial architecture and the exertion of power has undergone significant changes from a Dutch standpoint. In the initial decades of the post-colonial period, Dutch-Indies history received little attention due to disinterest and a focus on war recovery efforts in the Netherlands itself. Genuine narratives struggled to find a platform for expression. However, in the 1980s, there emerged a growing space for narratives from the "other" side, shedding light on the truth of the Netherlands' role in the Dutch East Indies. Consequently, interest in colonial architecture grew, leading to collaborations between Indonesia and the Netherlands for the preservation of historical architecture. Nevertheless, the relationship remains fragile, with the Netherlands treading carefully due to its sensitive past. Within the Indonesian population, there has also been a shift in perception towards colonial architecture. Following independence, colonial architecture became too entangled with sensitive

memories, prompting a search for a new identity. New regimes grappled with modernity while simultaneously seeking to preserve indigenous traditions. The emergence of postmodernism fostered a renewed appreciation for local heritage and the positive aspects of colonial history. Awareness of historical heritage increased, but the 21st century brought new challenges. Contemporary Indonesian architects now embrace the colonial legacy as part of the national identity, striving for equality between indigenous and Western architecture. However, issues such as elitism and the marginalisation of certain population groups persist within architecture. Nevertheless, contemporary Indonesian architecture aims to transcend the colonial past and create a culturally richer built environment.

Chapter 4
Conclusion

In this thesis, an attempt has been made to answer the main research question:

How did Dutch colonial architecture in the Dutch East Indies embody the power dynamics between the rulers and the indigenous population and how do different perspectives shape its interpretation?

This conclusion will synthesise the key findings from the different chapters, shedding light on how different perspectives have shaped the interpretation of Dutch colonial architecture in the region.

Firstly, the focus is on the general relationship between power dynamics and the Dutch colonial architecture. The colonial architecture in the Dutch East Indies served as a potent symbol of authority and control. Through grandiose palaces and imposing structures, the colonists sought to establish their superiority over the indigenous population. The spatial layout and design of colonial buildings reinforced social hierarchies, with the opulence of European-style homes starkly contrasting the humble dwellings of the local inhabitants. Despite some attempts at incorporating Indonesian elements, the overarching narrative remained one of European dominance. Berlage's emphasis on greater indigenous involvement highlighted a contrasting perspective that challenged the prevailing power dynamics. His advocacy for a more inclusive approach to architecture underscored the importance of acknowledging and respecting the local culture and traditions. This perspective offers a nuanced understanding of how architecture can either reinforce or challenge existing power structures.

Secondly, the study delves into the relationship between environment and architecture, exploring how climate, landscape and local cultures influence colonial architecture. The environmental context played a significant role in shaping colonial architecture and evolved through various phases. The challenges posed by the tropical climate necessitated innovative design solutions. Local construction styles and materials were increasingly adopted to better suit the climate. Additionally, this approach sought to greater accommodation with the indigenous population. However, this sparked a debate about what approach would be better. Some architects believed it should be done modern, others believed that more indigenous influences should be applied. Prominent architects like Berlage and Maclaine Pont were strong proponents of this last approach and were influenced by the culture and customs of the indigenous population. By examining the interplay between environment and architecture, a deeper understanding of colonial power dynamics emerges. The fusion of European architectural styles with indigenous influences speaks to a negotiation of power and identity within the built environment. At the same time, Indonesian influences are twisted in a way that the Western culture still dominates, clarifying that the East is still dependent on the West.

The third and last chapter focused on the postcolonial interpretation. In the post-colonial era, the reinterpretation of Dutch colonial architecture reflects shifting perspectives and narratives. In the early post-colonial period, Dutch-Indies history received almost no attention. Consequently, interest grew, leading to collaborations between the Netherlands and Indonesia. While the Dutch perspective may emphasise historical continuity and preservation, the indigenous population's experience of colonial architecture is often fraught with layers of trauma and resistance. The local community's response to colonial structures reveals a complex interplay of memory, identity, and heritage. New regimes struggled with the development of new architecture, grappled with modernity while simultaneously seeking

to preserve indigenous traditions. Indonesian architects now embrace the colonial legacy, as it is a part of the national identity and heritage. By centring the indigenous perspective in the discourse on colonial architecture, a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of its impact emerges. Alongside the growing appreciation for colonial architecture, there still exists the dominance of the West and thus the struggle with indigenous culture. While striving for equality between Western architecture and indigenous, issues such as elitism persist within the architecture.

In conclusion, Dutch colonial architecture in the Dutch East Indies embodied intricate power dynamics between the rulers and the indigenous population. The architecture served as a tangible expression of colonial authority, while also reflecting the complexities of cultural exchange and resistance. Different perspectives, from colonial rulers to indigenous communities, have shaped the interpretation of Dutch colonial architecture, highlighting the multifaceted nature of its legacy. Moving forward, a holistic understanding of colonial architecture requires a recognition of diverse viewpoints and a commitment to engaging with the complexities of history, memory, and identity in the built environment.

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Figure 8. *Woonhuis Surabaya met platje aan de voorzijde*,1953. Private collection. Accessed april 10 2024, https://dekortvanschaik.nl/Wonen-op-de-Indische-galer

Figure 9. H.P. Berlage, *Oud Javaansch Huis*, May 31th 1923, Semarang, in *Mijn Indische reis: Gedachten over cultuur en kunst*, H.P. Berlage, 1931, page 134

Figure 10. Photographed by V.L. Van de Wall, *Huis in pendopo stijl gebouwd in 1850*, 1932, in *Wonen op de Indische galerij*, accessed March 18 2024, https://dekortvanschaik.nl/Wonen-op-de-Indische-galer

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