

# CHANGING RELEVANCE OF SPACE IN TIME: COLONISATION, GLOBALISATION AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CONNECTIVITY

An examination on the impact of technologically improved means of  
transportation and communication on the relationship between the Netherlands  
and the Dutch East Indies, 1870-1930



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Key words: capitalism, colonisation, connectivity, communication, distance, empire, globalisation, governance, identity, nation, perception, relativity, space, time, technology, transportation

Abstract:

**“Time and space are modes by which we think and not conditions in which we live.”<sup>1</sup> – Albert Einstein**

One of the basic starting points for performing this research was Albert Einstein’s theory of relativity where he stated that energy equals mass times the speed of light squared ( $E = mc^2$ ). This theory brought about a major change in man’s perception of the world. Einstein not only caught the relation between mass and energy but also that between time and space in this formula, since the speed of light is given in meters (distance) per second (time). Due to technological developments in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, connectivity improved intensely, making it easier to bridge the cumbersome problems related to time and distance. Since Einstein in fact proved that time and space are related to each other and to the way in which the world is perceived, it can be derived that increased means of connectivity made possible a better handling and management of time and space and thus influenced the relation between nations separated by a vast distance.

This paper seeks to analyze how means of connectivity altered time-space perceptions in the context of the relationship between the Netherlands and their colony of the Dutch East Indies (DEI) in the period 1870-1930. In this era, characterized by a plurality of emerging transportation and communication networks, connectivity and interdependency presumably play a prominent role in how the world became to ‘operate’ and thus how the relationship between a mother country and its colony was perceived. The hypothesis of this research is that technology enhancing faster and increased connections between the Netherlands and the DEI, changed perceptions of the world and thus also of the Dutch views towards their relationship with the DEI.

Changes in the relationship of the Netherlands towards the DEI were primarily defined by governmental policies and commercial interests in this period. For this reason statements and reflections are analysed of those people who were politically and economically involved in developments concerning the DEI, and influential intellectuals who reflected upon these developments. Investigated sources include books containing information about postal roads, telegraph – and telephone lines, and outlines and schedules for shipping companies and the railways. Examined is how new means of connectivity were introduced and implemented between the Netherlands and the DEI as well as within the DEI. In addition to this, a large part of the research consists of an analysis on the content of articles and journals that discussed news and developments in the DEI to see how topics

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<sup>1</sup> Aylesa Forsee, *Albert Einstein, Theoretical Physicist* (New York: Macmillan, 1963), 81.

on technological developments were perceived at the time. An important source used is the liberal journal *De Gids*.<sup>2</sup> In the period investigated, the editorial of this magazine consisted continuously of influential ‘Indian experts’ who filled the magazine with travel stories, book discussions and political essays.<sup>3</sup> Another significant source for the information on technological developments on ‘traffic and conveyance’ in and between the DEI is *De Koloniale Roeping van Nederland (Holland’s Colonial Call)*.<sup>4</sup> This collection of articles was published by the Dutch government in 1930 in both English and Dutch. The chapters on various technological developments were specifically aimed to show the Dutch achievements in the DEI and to invoke an interest into the developments within the DEI from people in the mother-country.<sup>5</sup> Besides the fact that this extensive book offers concise information on the developments of means of transport in and between the DEI and the Netherlands, it is hence also an interesting insight into the Dutch perception of the significance of connectivity.<sup>6</sup>

The research shows that increasing means of connectivity changed Dutch perceptions of time and space, and in accordance, of the possibilities and their position in the DEI as a colonial power. During the time span examined, a number of changes in Dutch colonial politics, trade and law indeed occurred, in which enhanced connectivity appeared to have played a significant role. Among the most prominent of these changes are the Dutch expansion of their authority into the outer regions of the Indonesian archipelago, the increasingly liberal and humanistic character of colonial policies, and the emergence of the DEI as an international trade network which changed the position of the DEI with regard to the Netherlands and the rest of the world. These developments provide more insight into the underlying objective of this research namely to gain a better understanding of the definition of – and way in which – the process of *globalisation* unfolds with regard to changing time-space perceptions.

However, regarding the (colonial) relationship with the DEI, the impact of connectivity on the relationship between the Netherlands and the DEI that was found in this research was smaller than initially thought. Dutch perceptions on the relationship between the Netherlands and the DEI appeared to show little change despite the technological and political developments. Without neglecting the centrality of connectivity to the process of globalisation, the relative small impact of connectivity in the period examined here indicates a number of insights with regard to the research topic. Firstly, a colonial relationship based on economic and political grounds is not likely to change if little cultural exchange takes place. Secondly, a more profound understanding (and widening) of the time span is presumably needed to ‘capture’ the consequence(s) of changing time-space perceptions more fully. And furthermore, the results indicate that the relationship between a nation, or ‘a people’ and the geographical territory they belong to is both real and imaginary.

Analysing the significance of connectivity for the Dutch relationship with the DEI in order to trace the way in which the world came not only to work, but to be seen as, a ‘global village’, is a new topic of research in Dutch history. Despite the variety of sources, the present approach is by no means comprehensive. This research should therefore be seen as a pilot for future research on the importance and impact of connectivity on changing perceptions of geographical space.

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<sup>2</sup> Journal *De Gids*, complete online collection of all volumes from 1837 - 2001: [http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/\\_gid001gids01\\_01/](http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/_gid001gids01_01/), assessed: 03-08-2011.

<sup>3</sup> Marieke Bloembergen, *Colonial Spectacles: The Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies at the World Exhibitions, 1880-1931* (Singapore University Press, 2006), 31.

<sup>4</sup> A.W.F. Idenburg et al., *Holland’s Colonial Call: Means of transport in the Dutch East Indies* (The Hague: Dutch-British Publishing Company, Ltd., 1930). [In Dutch: *De Koloniale Roeping van Nederland: de Middelen van Verkeer in Nederlandsch-Indië* (Den Haag: N.V. Nederlandsche-Engelsche Uitgeversmaatschappij, 1930).]

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> All quotations from the Dutch sources examined in this paper are translated into English; the original text is shown in the footnotes between brackets.

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## ***1. Introduction: colonisation, globalisation and time-space perception***

In the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century the Western world experienced rising wealth and productivity, while it increasingly dominated the world by expanding property and authority in overseas colonies. This period, described by the British historian Eric Hobsbawm as ‘The Age of Empire’ featured an overall optimistic belief in science and progress.<sup>7</sup> Due to improved technology a number of far-reaching innovations were made in this period, making connections between vastly separated parts of the world progressively attainable. The term *connectivity* in this paper denotes both the communication and transportation lines and networks which increasingly annihilated time and space (making geographical distance increasingly less significant). The international trade market for (mass) products and the massive deployment of labour, obtained or exploited to a large degree in the colonies, was increasingly determined by privately owned companies. Thus, at the same time as the quest for labour and goods from colonial ‘possessions’ took place, growing capitalism led to increasing interconnectivity and awareness of the interdependence between states, companies and people over the world. While the former seems to have caused increasing inequality between the Western and non-Western states because of the inherent opportunity of exploitation of commodities and labour from the colonies, the latter seems to have caused a change in the political goals and function of (Western) nations.<sup>8</sup>

A key term to describe how Western overseas colonialism and growing capitalism changed the world is *globalisation*, understood here as the process in which the world progressively functions as a single community instead of a series of distinct communities or nations.<sup>9</sup> Changing perceptions of the globe relate to the working of capitalism and industrialization in an age where progress is the dominant ideology (the period discussed here being determined as the third part of ‘the long nineteenth century’ as described by Eric

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<sup>7</sup> Eric J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire: 1875-1914*, (New York: Random House, 1989).

<sup>8</sup>“Capitalism” *World Encyclopedia*. Philip's, 2008. *Oxford Reference Online*. Oxford University Press. Utrecht University Library. 19 October

2011 <<http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t142.e1974>

<sup>9</sup> Linda Weiss, "Globalisation" *The Oxford Companion to Australian Politics*. Ed Brian Galligan and Winsome Roberts. Oxford University Press 2008. *Oxford Reference Online*. Oxford University Press. Utrecht University Library. 1 August

2011 <<http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t250.e149>>

Hobsbawm).<sup>10</sup> Besides a widening of the global network in which parties operate and become increasingly interdependent, this age also seems to show a redefinition of the meaning of the nation and that of national and private capital and power. One could speak of an increasing ‘fragmentation’ of power divided over increasing numerous companies and enterprises. This development takes place at the same time as those in power become increasingly interdependent and, curiously, as the nation state as a political and cultural unit becomes increasingly important. This indicates that globalisation, as understood in the above mentioned definition, does not show a linear progression regarding an increasing sense of a ‘world community’, but presumably shows ‘counter- development(s)’ as well. In terms of individuals’ perception of the world, this era seems to provoke an increased focus on both a national identity as well as a global identity. The way in which the perception of the world as reflected in political and economic ideas on the relation between states and colonies changed, likely provides more insight into the process of globalisation. By this research is sought therefore is to create a clearer ‘framework’ of the complexity of different developments taking place within the same context and time, which comprises the process of globalisation.

The world appears to become more unified economically, culturally and politically. The way in which the world ‘coalesced’ into a smaller and seemingly more comprehensible ‘entity’ is often explained using the terms ‘global consciousness’ and ‘global village’. The term ‘global village’ was coined by the Canadian scholar Marshall McLuhan in his book *The Gutenberg galaxy: the making of typographic man*.<sup>11</sup> The *Oxford Dictionary of Media and Communication* describes it as follows: “A term popularized by McLuhan, long before the World Wide Web, for a world that has been phenomenally shrunk by communication technologies and transport systems so that news and information spreads rapidly across the planet and those with direct access to such technologies feel more interconnected, as if they were members of the same community”.<sup>12</sup> To be (or feel) interconnected seems thus to be at the core of globalisation. If globalisation is a process that increasingly transcended the national and political borders of the nation during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the perception of the way geographical territories were interlinked undoubtedly must have

<sup>10</sup> E.J. Hobsbawm’s trilogy includes: *The Age of Revolution: 1789-1848* (first published: London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1962), *The Age of Capital: 1848-1875* (first published: London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1975), and the third part *The Age of Empire: 1875-1914* (first published: London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1987).

<sup>11</sup> Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg galaxy: the making of typographic man* (University of Toronto Press, 1962).

<sup>12</sup> "global village" *A Dictionary of Media and Communication*. First Edition by Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday. Oxford University Press Inc. *Oxford Reference Online*. Oxford University Press. Utrecht University Library. 16 July

changed as well. This claim leads to the expectation that transport- and communication connections brought about changes in how the relationship between a geographical area and the people that belong to it were perceived, and how the political imagery about the self and ‘the other’ was reshaped.

A key factor in the transformation of ideas on the relationship between the ‘mother’ states and their colonies is the technology which made faster and direct connections possible. Technological inventions changed the importance of the (absolute and relative) meaning of distance, enabling existing processes to be done faster and more efficiently but also creating new possibilities and challenges. As the distance to travel from one place to another seemed to shrink due to (faster) transportation, the significance of distance practically disappeared due to devices as the telegraph and the telephone. In this paper, I investigate how the relationship between the Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies (DEI) was perceived by Dutch intellectuals involved in the various economic, scientific and political concerns regarding the DEI. The focus hereby lies specifically on the significance of the changing time-space perceptions due to innovative means of transportation and communication.

## 1.2 Theoretical framework

The ‘world’ and the ‘nation’ are concepts susceptible to multiple meanings and interpretations, depending on the context in which they appear. These concepts can be viewed as both a *reality*, to ‘identify’ a geographical place and the people belonging to this place, as well as a *construction* to explain the relation(s) between places and people. This incongruity of meaning and use of these terms in what we perceive to be the world or the nation is exactly why globalisation as a process is a complex concept to define.<sup>13</sup> Whether one speaks of economic, political or cultural concerns: today’s decisions and actions are characterized by human possibilities to communicate and influence events at a geographically distant place. As indicated above, some scholars signify an increasing importance of the nation state and of national identities, despite the fact that the globalisation process deprives economies and

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<sup>13</sup> See for example: Jeremy Packer and Craig Robertson, *Thinking with James Carey: essays on communications, transportation, history* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2006), 180. Craig Robertson stresses the distinction that James Carey makes between geographical space and symbolic space, the latter being according to James Carey the most significant with regard to a national identity in modern nations. Robertson points out that: “As Carey’s example of the geographic space of the nation illustrates, it can only exist with any useful consequences if state agencies are able to police who can enter and leave. This is achieved through state monopoly over the authority and means for identification. In this sense geographic space can only exist, and is in effect created, through the mechanisms that police it.”

nationalities of their independence and authenticity.<sup>14</sup> Communication and technology in the later twentieth and twenty-first centuries have advanced to a great extent, resulting in ‘transnational’ communities. Concepts as virtual and social space and global, national, local and even personalized time are employed to explain how the world is perceived within the complex web of interactions spanning the globe.<sup>15</sup> Identity seems more ‘fractured’ than ever, consisting of political, cultural and social layers while transcending local, regional and national borders. One could argue that the same applies to the (government of) the nation state. To investigate how globalisation as a process ‘unravelling’ and how it changed and effected people’s actions seems therefore crucial to understand the meaning, importance and influence of the perception of both the global and the national today.

The ideas of American historian Stephen Kern serve as a general inspiration to explore the significance of changing time-space perceptions. Kern stresses the fact that the perception of space and time underwent significant changes when technology annihilated former boundaries of human perception of the world. In the course of the nineteenth century, a series of technical innovations altered the speed and means of transportation and communication, first in the West and later in the rest of the world. This brought about a significant change in people’s awareness and understanding of the local, regional, national and global perception of their place and (political) position in the world. In *The Culture of Time and Space: 1880-1918*, Kern explores the ways in which writers, philosophers, artists and physicists reflected on - as well as questioned - the nature of time and space during this period. Changes in cultural outlook occur when conventional ideas about time and space can no longer explain reality, and people question the nature of these concepts. In his introduction Kern writes: “Technological innovations including the telephone, wireless telegraph, x-ray, cinema, bicycle, automobile and airplane established the material foundation for this reorientation; independent cultural developments such as the stream-of-consciousness novel, psychoanalysis, Cubism, and the theory of relativity shaped consciousness directly. The result was a transformation of the dimensions of life and thought.”<sup>16</sup> Kern bases his arguments on

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<sup>14</sup> Studies which highlight the relation between nation states and globalisation are for example: Robert. J. Holton *Globalisation and the nation-state* (Macmillan Press LTD: 1998). And: Ruth Wodak, Rudolf de Cillia, Martin Reisigl, *The discursive construction of national identity* (Edinburgh University Press, 1999).

<sup>15</sup> An interesting article in this regard is written by Kristóf Nyíri who explores changing notions of time in the twentieth century with regard to communication where he discusses different ‘type’ of time namely: social time, global time, timeless time, mechanic time, organic time and eventually personalized time in the ‘era of the mobile phone’. Kristóf Nyíri, “Time and Communication” in *Time and History* (Piscataway: Rutgers University, 2006), 301-316.

<sup>16</sup> Stephen Kern, *The culture of time and space, 1880-1918* (Library of Congress in Publication Data, 2003), 1.

the conviction that time and space are the (universal) essential aspects of how people perceive reality and how they understand their place in the world. The point has been made by other scholars such as sociologist Anthony Giddens in *The constitution of society: outline of the theory of structuration*,<sup>17</sup> and communications theorists James Carey in *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society*.<sup>18</sup> The centralization of time-space perception regarding political and cultural change in the nineteenth- and twentieth century is therefore the starting point for the arguments in this paper.

Another work which is quite extensively used as ‘guideline’ in this paper is a study by the political science scholar Duncan S.A. Bell in his article ‘Dissolving Distance: Technology, Space, and Empire in British Political Thought, 1770-1900’. In this paper, Bell examines the influence of distance (and time) related scientific inventions as reflected in British political thought on the relation between the homeland and the (English speaking) colonies of North America, Canada and Australia. In his view, globalisation is not merely the linear process of capitalism which interconnected - and made the different countries of the world - interdependent. He argues that the transformation of the perception of distance was a vital part of this process. He states: “As distance was dissolved in the minds of observers, so the sense of temporality itself was transformed (...) the time taken to communicate, the time elapsing between events separated by expanses of space, the time to formulate political decisions was apparently compressed; as the world appeared to shrink, so it seemed to accelerate.” Bell stresses that the central aspect of globalisation was thus a change in perception of time and space. He concludes after this that, because of the changing perceptions of time and space “political possibilities were reimagined also”.<sup>19</sup> The technological inventions of the nineteenth century changed the (political) possibilities and position of the British Empire, while the changing perceptions of time and space, and with that of the world, changed the political goals or ‘political imaginary’ as well.

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<sup>17</sup> Anthony Giddens, “Time, Space and Regionalization” in *The constitution of society: outline of the theory of structuration* (University of California Press, 1986), 110-145.

<sup>18</sup> James Carey, *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society* (Routledge, New York and London, 1889).

<sup>19</sup> Duncan S.A. Bell, “Dissolving Distance: Technology, Space and Empire in British Political Thought, 1770-1900” *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 77, No.3, (University of Chicago Press, 2005), 562.

Analysing how the process of globalisation ‘unfolded’ in history is of key importance to gain more insight into how the world came to be perceived as a ‘global village’.<sup>20</sup> As the nineteenth century saw a growth in imperialism and capitalism, it also witnessed the ‘rise’ and development of the modern nation state, and a corresponding national identity. The nation came to define and (and to a certain degree created) the identity of a people bound together within a politically (and geographically) fixed area. Not only relationships between nations but the relationships between nations and their colonies are of particular interest for the history of globalisation and the role which changing perceptions of time and space played in this process. This paper seeks to examine how connectivity changed perceptions of time and space and how this affected (Dutch) thought about the political, economic and cultural views on the relationship of the Netherlands with the DEI during the last part of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century. Ultimately, this paper aims to show how these connections changed perceptions of the world and altered (political) ideas about the place, meaning and function of the nation. By looking at the way in which the Dutch governance over the DEI made use of – and was influenced by – technological innovation provides insight into how perceptions of the world and relations of political (power) changed over time. The connection between the motherland and the colony as well as between the different islands in the Indonesian archipelago intensified as faster communication and transportation over land and sea increased. Moreover, the technology that provided a faster and more efficient agrarian production developed and intensified the economic importance and ‘value’ of the DEI. This in turn made the DEI increasingly important within the international trade market; the DEI became part of a ‘global trade network’.<sup>21</sup>

### 1.3 Central focus & Structure

Bell’s article serves here as a point of departure for a pilot study on the importance of connectivity regarding the relationship between the Netherlands and the DEI. One important difference between Bell’s research and the analysis I offer in this paper is the degree to which the mother country and the colonies were considered to be a political (and cultural) unity. Bell

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<sup>20</sup> "Global village" *A Dictionary of Media and Communication*. First Edition by Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday. Oxford University Press Inc. *Oxford Reference Online*. Oxford University Press. Utrecht University Library. 16 July

<sup>21</sup> Wim Ravesteijn, “Between Globalisation and Localization: The Case of Dutch Civil Engineering in Indonesia, 1800–1950” in *Comparative Technology Transfer and Society*, (John Hopkins University Press, April 2007), Vol. 5, No.1, pp. 32-64.

examines the relation between England and the English speaking colonies (North America, Canada and Australia) which shared linguistic, cultural, political, and to a certain extent, historical features. Bell's examination sheds light on how the concept of distance played a vital role in the perception of England and the English speaking colonies as a *unity*. The present research examines the impact of connectivity on the relationship between a mother country and its colony, and the implications this had for the Dutch perception of the world and their position regarding the DEI. This relationship is a less dynamic one than in the case of the British and the English-speaking colonies, for changes in the DEI were mostly induced from one side.<sup>22</sup> However, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, the relationship between the Netherlands and the DEI underwent a series of changes. From a purely profit-based relationship, a shift took place towards increasing government interference in the wellbeing, jurisdiction and education of the Indonesian people. Besides implying greater responsibility and control over the DEI and its inhabitants by the Dutch government, this also meant a restructuring of the relationship between the different islands and 'residencies' within the DEI. The latter opens up an interesting way to trace the importance and effect of connectivity both outwards, between the Netherlands and others (economically) involved with the DEI, and inwards, between the by origin (culturally) different 'nations' within the Indonesian archipelago.

Bell divides his research into three periods covering the period from 1700 to 1900. The third period he describes runs from 1870 to 1900 in what he calls the 'age of scientific utopianism'.<sup>23</sup> In this period, the most significant developments in technological innovation concerning means of connectivity took place. In the Netherlands, most changes occurred later and often at a slower pace than in the British Empire and other colonial powers. Therefore, the period examined here runs from 1870, the year that the first telegraph line was established between the Netherlands and the DEI, until 1930, when connectivity networks were fully established. The central question I seek to answer is: *How is connectivity reflected in Dutch thought on the relationship between the Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies between 1870 and 1930?*

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<sup>22</sup> Bell does not examine the relationship between England and India in the period of colonisation for instance, which would make the Dutch case as a whole a viable and precise comparison. Here Bell's study is mainly used to highlight the importance and significance of time-space perception regarding the (power) relationship between two separated geographical areas under the governance of, to a more or less extent, one political unit.

<sup>23</sup> Bell, "Dissolving Distance", p. 549.

In the first two chapters, the introduction, implementation, development and use of means of connection (postal services, telegraphs, steamships, trains, telephones, radios, cars and airplanes) in the period 1870-1930 are discussed. Which means of connectivity between the Netherlands and the DEI were developed, implemented and used between 1870 and 1930? Here I want to ascertain when, where, to what extent and for what purposes the technologies were implemented and how this changed over time. I expect that changes in the perception of the world and the geographical position of the DEI will be reflected in the policies which the Dutch government formulated and implemented in this period. Therefore, the third chapter deals with the reflections of politicians and others involved in the decision-making concerning these policies. I follow Bell's method in tracing these opinions, by looking at books and reviews on state decisions about economic and political matters between 1870-1930. The last chapter deals with the way in which the relationship between the Netherlands and the DEI relates to national identity. This involves an analysis of how connections are reflected through (public) representations (world maps, world exhibition, religious and cultural texts) on the relationship between the Netherlands and the DEI in the period 1870-1930.

## ***2. Connectivity between the Netherlands and the DEI***

In the course of the nineteenth century, innovative technologies influenced organisational structures of traffic and business throughout the (Western) world. Transportation and communication shortened the distance between the Netherlands and the DEI, as well as distances between towns and posts within the DEI. The Dutch governance in the DEI was increasingly influenced by other colonial powers seeking profits from the DEI, and (indirectly) by international private entrepreneurs seeking business with farmers in the inlands of the DEI. A distinction is therefore made between connections *to* and *within* the DEI. This chapter discusses which developments in connections between the Netherlands and the DEI took place, followed by a discussion on how various means of connectivity developed within networks within the DEI.

Before the invention of the telegraph and wireless devices as the telephone and radio, direct communication over great distances was impossible. Time-space perceptions changed due these new technologies, and the examination on introduced and implemented means of connectivity therefore also serves as an analysis on the ‘versatile nature’ of the concept of connectivity. Before the telegraph, communication between two persons at a larger geographical distance happened in the same way as the transport of goods from point A to point B. A vital change that took place in time-space perceptions therefore can be explained by the difference between transportation lines on the one hand and communication lines on the other hand. As James Carey notes in his chapter “Technology and Ideology” as the most important fact about the telegraph: “it permitted for the first time the effective separation of communication from transportation.”<sup>24</sup> Direct communication and increasing means of transport created new demands of organisation: former ‘organisational structures’ were transformed due to accelerating and new possibilities. The following seeks therefore to show how connectivity changed ideas about time, space and the organisation of space.

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<sup>24</sup> Carey, “*Communication as Culture*”, 203.

## 2.2 Transportation lines over sea

Present-day Indonesia was subjected to European colonial occupation since the sixteenth century. Following the Portuguese, the British and the Dutch arrived in the archipelago in the early seventeenth century. The Dutch established a colonial company, the East India Company (VOC) in 1603 and soon became the ruling European power in the Indonesian archipelago. Before 1870, the connection over sea between the Netherlands and the DEI consisted exclusively of sailing ships that sailed a passage route along the south-western tip of Africa, the Cape of Good Hope.<sup>25</sup> Until 1929, when the first intercontinental airline connection to the DEI came in use, goods and passengers were exclusively transported by boats from the Netherlands to the DEI and between the different islands of the DEI. At the time of the VOC, it took seven to eight months to sail from Amsterdam to Batavia with a high risk of shipwreck, and even in the first half of the nineteenth century the journey still took four months with ‘improved’ sailboats.<sup>26</sup> Two factors greatly contributed to a faster and active connection between the Netherlands and the DEI: the invention of steamboats that could traverse great distances over sea in the mid-nineteenth century and the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869.<sup>27</sup> These developments considerably shortened the distance over sea between Europe and Asia and therefore greatly reduced travel time. This fostered initiatives to set up Dutch shipping companies to established steamboat lines between the Netherlands and the DEI.

Several shipping companies were founded in the later part of the nineteenth century. The steamship companies that were active with the transportation of cargo from the DEI since their foundation were the *Stoomvaart Maatschappij Nederland* (SMN) founded in 1870 and based in Amsterdam, and the *Koninklijke Rotterdamsche Lloyd* (KRL) founded in 1875 and based in Rotterdam. The journey from Amsterdam to Batavia with a steamboat reached an average length of 40 days in 1899. Two major steamboat lines had been established by then: the lines from Amsterdam to Batavia and from Rotterdam to Batavia. A line from Amsterdam via Liverpool (England) to Batavia also became important, taking 60 days in 1899. In 1914 the journey was further reduced to 34 days, and by 1924 to 23 days.<sup>28</sup> In the last part of the

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<sup>25</sup> The first Dutch steamship company the *Nederlandse Stoomvaart Maatschappij* (NSBM) was founded in 1823 and mainly used steamships for relative short distances within Europe.

<sup>26</sup> Th. P. Van den Berg, “Draadloze verbinding met schepen” in *“Holland’s Colonial Call”*, 134.

<sup>27</sup> Jean-Paul Rodrigue, Claude Comtois and Brian Slack, *The geography of transport systems* (Routledge: 2006), 49-50.

<sup>28</sup> Information obtained from Dutch atlases most widely used, by P.R. Bos, *Schoolatlas der geheele aarde* (Groningen: J.B. Wolters U.M., 1899, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1923).

nineteenth century, the shipping companies had established an increasingly faster and busier connection of transportation for both goods as well as people between the Netherlands and the DEI.

In 1888, another steam shipping company, the Koninklijke Pakketvaart Maatschappij (KPM) was founded in Amsterdam, which became the most important company for maintaining connections to- and within the DEI.<sup>29</sup> The KPM was initially an English fleet called the Koninklijke Indische Pakket Maatschappij (KIPM), albeit with Dutch captains, crew and flag. This meant that in the case of war these ships could not be used to serve the Dutch military in order to control the uprisings on various Indonesian islands.<sup>30</sup> Also, most shipping routes had Singapore, the important English possession in Asia as their destination, which made the trade in goods from several islands in the DEI impossible since these areas could not be reached by boat. This urged the Dutch to turn the company into an exclusively national Dutch shipping company. By cooperation and support from the companies SMN and the KRL, as well as the Dutch government, the Nederlandse Pakketvaart Maatschappij officially accepted its role as a national shipping company in 1891. The manager of the Indies, Op ten Noort, was charged among other things, with the task to make possible: “a as vividly as possible freight- and passenger traffic, connecting the interests of the Company closely to that of the trade and production in the Dutch East Indies, and to the significance of the Dutch East Indian ports, including the transit traffic with the Netherlands and other countries.”<sup>31</sup> In this way, the prominent Dutch steamship company became a leading factor in connecting the Indonesian harbours as well as harbours in the DEI with harbours in the Netherlands.

### 2.3 Governmental interference: maritime subsidy and treaties

Towards the turn of the century, the frequency of journeys to and from the DEI greatly increased. The KPM consisted of about 42 ships in 1890, each with a ship size or, capacity load, between circa 300 and 1400 tons.<sup>32</sup> The PKM remained the prominent means of transportation to and within the DEI until the beginning of the twentieth century, even though

<sup>29</sup> Jules van Buylen - eds., *Maritieme Encyclopedie*, 1970-1973, (Bussum, 1970).

<sup>30</sup> Jan. A. Somers, *Nederlandsch-Indie: Staatkundige ontwikkelingen binnen een koloniale relatie* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2005), 114-119.

<sup>31</sup> [“een zoo levendig mogelijk goederen- en personenverkeer de belangen van de Maatschappij ten nauwste verbinden aan die van den handel en van de productie in Nederlands-Indie en aan de beteekenis van de Nederlands-Indische havens ook voor het transitoverkeer met Nederland en andere landen”] M.G. de Boer, “A Sketch of the Shipping Trade in The Indian Archipelago” in *“Holland’s Colonial Call”*, 99.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, 97.

competition grew over the years. As early as 1867, the Dutch government arranged a contract in which they agreed to subsidise a determined amount of sea miles traversed by Dutch ships to major harbours in the Indonesian archipelago. This was driven by a demand of a more efficient and greater trade market in the Indonesian archipelago, as well as for better governmental (military) control over the area. Every shipping company, including foreign ones, could determine the amount of the subsidy in cents per nautical mile. Naturally, companies which asked the least were most likely to trade with the DEI and thus a competitive market economy evolved around the DEI. In *Holland's Colonial Call*, a graph is shown which shows the relationship between the governmental subsidies and number of sea miles made to the DEI. The graph compares the number of 'contractual' and 'non-contractual' traversed miles over time, and shows that until 1883, the number of total traversed miles is only a little more than the contractual miles. When the government extended the contract with ten years around the turn of the century, this encouraged the KPM to make major investments in more and larger ships. In 1906, ships with a load capacity of 2000 to 3000 tons were built, and by 1914 ships with a capacity of over 5000 ton-capacity sailed to and from the DEI. The number of non-contractual traversed miles grew exponentially after 1883: by 1915 the number of non-contractual miles was almost six times as much as the miles made under contract.

Besides the subsidy granted for traversed sea miles, the Dutch government also had drawn up several treaties which determined the rights in the 'waters' within the DEI. One of these treaties for instance allowed local principalities within the DEI, in consultation and agreement with the government, to have their own ships and the right to procure 'sea passes' for traders, provided they carried the Dutch flag (on top) of the ships.<sup>33</sup> By the 1870's, free trade and the protection of traders was guaranteed in several (international) contracts and laws.<sup>34</sup> Connections over sea were primarily seen as important for economic reasons though proved to have political effects as well. The faster boats and shorter route also attracted many other European traders and entrepreneurs to the DEI. The Dutch steamship companies became an important link in the transportation of goods with foreign traders with harbours elsewhere in Europe or in the Pacific. In the outer regions outside Java, the Dutch government pursued a

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<sup>33</sup> Karel E.M Bongenaar, *De ontwikkeling van het zelfbesturend landschap in Nederlands-Indië: 1855-1942* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2005), 187.

<sup>34</sup> Bongenaar, "De ontwikkeling van het zelfbesturend landschap in Nederlands-Indië", 186-190.

policy of abstention (onthoudingspolitiek).<sup>35</sup> This meant that the outer regions were officially under Dutch control or ‘ownership’ but remained self-governing entities. This indicates that although the Dutch government increasingly expanded its authority over these regions towards the turn of the century, local principalities still remained significantly powerful in the nineteenth century.

Increasing connectivity enabled the Dutch government to execute stronger control and authority in the outer regions. In the introduction of *Holland’s Colonial Call* is stated (by the then Ex-Minister of the Colonies) J.C. Koningsberger: “The development of the means of conveyance in the Dutch East Indies has, during the last decades, led to the formation of a net of connections (...) the future development of the Indies can safely be entrusted to the Dutch government”.<sup>36</sup> Steamships, a shorter route and the possession of a national fleet all contributed to a faster and more intense connection within the DEI and with the rest of the world. Hence, the Dutch government had to act tactful in order to secure their business with the DEI. A larger and better accessible area of the DEI increased trading possibilities as well as a larger market. Due to the established connections, local Indonesian principalities could enlarge their market and received greater opportunities for trading. Another contributing factor in transportation lines was the foundation of the Koninklijke Luchtvaart Maatschappij voor Nederland en Koloniën (Dutch Royal Airlines) (KLM) in 1919. The first inter-continental flight from Amsterdam to Batavia was made in 1924. Yet, it took until the 1920’s until transportation ‘through the air’ became a significant means of moving commodities and regular flights for persons to the DEI. This increased substantially between 1930 and the Second World War.<sup>37</sup>

Contrary to what might seem as a logical consequence of a growing influence of private entrepreneurs in the world economy, the Dutch government appeared to have sought more control and authority over the DEI towards the twentieth century to increase and keep the profits in hands of the Dutch state. The historian Karel E.M. Bongenaar points out that in the nineteenth century, the Dutch government still practised a strong centralising function concerning matters in the DEI. The provisions in political contracts and treaties which provided local principalities with sovereign rights for instance, were withdrawn and deleted

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<sup>35</sup> Maarten Kuitenbrouwer, “Het imperialisme-debat in de Nederlandse geschiedschrijving” in *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, Vol. 113 (1998), 59.

<sup>36</sup> J.C. Koningsberger, “Introductions” in “*Holland’s Colonial Call*”, viii.

<sup>37</sup> Official KLM website: Milestones in KLM’s History, <http://www.klm.com/corporate/en/about-klm/history/index.html>, assessed: 5 August 2011.

from treaties in the first years of the twentieth century.<sup>38</sup> Thus, against the expectation that the DEI would become increasingly decentralised due to increasing connections over sea in an emerging international market, the Dutch actually intensified and centralised their control and authority in the DEI.

## **2.4 Passenger transport to the DEI: migration and tourism**

The steamboat connections thus intensified the economic relationship between the Netherlands and the DEI, and created an economic trade network. The availability and growing number of ships created a larger demand for goods from, and of passengers to, the DEI. Administrators were needed for the loading and unloading of goods at the harbours. A special commission was established, the ‘Nederlandse Havenraden’ (Dutch Port Council), to decentralise governance and control over the various harbours.<sup>39</sup> The growing shipping connections made the DEI more accessible and, in this sense, brought it closer to the Netherlands. The connections made an increase in the production and exchange of goods possible, which intensified economic and therefore also political ties with the DEI. Despite the growing accessibility of the DEI to travellers, the connections over sea appeared to have mainly served political and economic goals. One important factor which played a major role in this were the wars that the Dutch fought against various indigenous communities to bring their territories, spread over the islands, under Dutch authority. These wars occurred especially during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, after expansion of the Dutch control over the outer regions.<sup>40</sup>

The Indonesian archipelago was characterized by instability due to the wars fought for authority and military control over the region. For this reason, migration flows to the DEI were presumably very low and most immigrants were soldiers serving in these wars.<sup>41</sup> In a study of Dutch long-distance migration, Jan Lucassen comes to the (unexpected) conclusion that there was a net migration of women from the DEI to the Netherlands at the end of the nineteenth century. This was presumably because soldiers who resided in the DEI for a long period married Indonesian women and took them with them on their return home. Lucassen

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<sup>38</sup> Bongenaar, “*De ontwikkeling van het zelfbesturend landschap in Nederlands-Indië*”, 189.

<sup>39</sup> C.I. Wouter Cool, “Nederlandsch-Indische Havenraden” in *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch Indië*, Vol. 4, No.1, (1920), 1-26.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Migration flows were not very well documented during this time, presumably due to the unstable and often uncertain state of Dutch governance and control over the islands.

does conclude that with the exception of migrating soldiers, sailors and labourers, “The Dutch Empire in Asia in the nineteenth century, despite its size and undoubted economic importance, was dependent on surprisingly few settlers from the Netherlands and Europe”.<sup>42</sup>

Most passengers traveling to the DEI were therefore soldiers, labourers, administrators and scientists, that is, professionals.<sup>43</sup> The faster and increased connections of transport to the DEI did progressively attract tourists to the DEI. Special accommodations and facilities on board the cargo ships were designed to provide passengers with modern comfort. Even ships solely for passenger transport were used to arrange the ‘toeristenvervoer’ (tourists transportation), particularly because passenger transport was a significant source of income. It seems likely that, when people visited the DEI for leisure and cultural interest, cultural ties between the Netherlands and its colony intensified also. For the relationship between the Netherlands and the DEI this meant that the possibility for a greater cultural appreciation and acceptance potentially increased. Hence, even though tourism to the DEI had no direct political or economic goal, it did ‘open up’ the DEI for a cultural exchange with the Netherlands. In *Holland’s Colonial Call* the writer notes: “The stranger is thus enabled, in a most pleasant way, to get acquainted with the wonderful work that our people have achieved in the tropics because they see that our country has obtained something more than windmills and wooden shoes”.<sup>44</sup> This statement indicates that the valuable features of the DEI that ‘mattered’ were the things that the Dutch now owned and had achieved there. Thus, rather than a reckoning and appreciation of the Indonesian culture and features, the DEI was ‘Dutchified’ as a possession of the Netherlands. This illustrates a colonial relationship based on the dominant Dutch authority, rather than an exchange between the Dutch and Indonesian culture(s). Connectivity brought the DEI closer to the Dutch, but the inequality between the cultures in a colonial relationship culminated in the colonised culture being ‘absorbed’ rather than ‘transferred’ to the dominant coloniser.

Due to the increasing transportation lines and improved means of transportation the distance to the DEI was shortened and the DEI became more accessible in many respects.

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<sup>42</sup> Jan Lucassen, “Dutch Long Distance Migration: A Concise history 1600-1900” in *IISG Research Papers 3*, (Amsterdam, 1991), 52 pp.

<sup>43</sup> Another study which confirms this is one by Ulbe Bosma: “Sailing through Suez from the South: The Emergence of an Indies-Dutch Migration Circuit 1815 –1940”, *International Migration Review*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (2007), 511-536.

<sup>44</sup> [“De vreemdeling wordt aldus in staat gesteld op de aangenaamste wijze kennis te maken met het mooie werk, dat ons volk in de tropen heeft verricht, zij zien daar dat ons land nog iets anders heeft opgeleverd dan molens en klompen.”] M.G. De Boer, “A Sketch of the Shipping Trade in the Indian Archipelago”, in *“Holland’s Colonial Call”*, 106.

These connections through which goods and people moved and were exchanged between the Netherlands and the DEI for instance made possible that a growing amount of Indonesian products and culture became familiar to the Dutch. Because very few Dutch people actually settled in the DEI and tourists and Dutch settlers did not ‘mingle’ with the Native inhabitants, instead of cultural exchange the opposite seem to have been taken place. Differences were emphasized, and Indonesian commodities and the creation of the market and transportation and production centres in Indonesia became Dutch possessions or achievements, not the merging of the Dutch and Indonesian cultures. Despite its greater accessibility, the perception of the DEI as a Dutch colony apparently hardly changed in this period. In the last chapter we will take a closer look at the role of cultural aspects regarding the relationship between the Netherlands and the DEI. Now we will first turn to connectivity via means of communication and the way in which this changed time-space perceptions.

## **2.5 Communication lines: telegraph**

The first long-distance means of communication before the introduction of telephony were the postal service and the telegraph. In the mid-nineteenth century a route between the Netherlands and the DEI over land was realised with the opening of a ‘mail road’ over the Isthmus of Suez which reduced travel time for sending information (by letters) to the DEI to two months.<sup>45</sup> Even then it took at least four months before a question from an administrator in Amsterdam received an answer from an administrator in Batavia. The construction of the *Groote Postweg* (Great Postal Road) on Java in 1808 was the start of the modern postal service within the DEI. The construction of the road of approximately 1000 kilometres stretching from west to east along the north coast of Java was led by governor Herman Willem Daendels.<sup>46</sup> The road, built by forced labour of the Indonesian people, was primarily constructed to serve military goals to make governmental administration and military defence against rival European colonial powers more efficient. The difference between this road and former roads for travellers and messengers is that it was a state project which main function

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<sup>45</sup> Elsbeth. B Locher-Scholten, “De koloniale verhoudingen in de 19de en 20ste eeuw” in *Spiegel Historiae: Magazine voor geschiedenis en archeologie*, Vol. 35, No.14, (2000), 479. (Note: this magazine is no academic source. However, the author of the article is a renowned scholar and specialist on the field of research regarding the relationship between the Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies. The source is included because no alternative article containing the specific information was found.)

<sup>46</sup> Peter J.M. Nas Pratiwo, “Java and de groote postweg”, In: *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, Vol. 158, No. 4, (Leiden: 2002).

was *speed*. The road was a system of bridges and posts (where messengers or military could change their horse) to reduce the time to travel across Java. Eliminating obstacles of the geographic features of the landscape and enhancing the natural ‘endurance’ of horses, the Great Postal Road reduced the travel time from the west to the east from forty days to only six days.<sup>47</sup> Some towns were even ordered to ‘move’ closer to the Great Post Road in order to provide another direct post along the road. The Great Post Road was therefore designed to overcome former limits of distance and locality, requiring what Barkers calls a ‘trans-local speed’.<sup>48</sup> Curiously, the development and placement of telegraph poles and lines was similar to that of the Great Post Road. The telegraph poles were situated along the already established Railroads and the Great Post Road. A colonial observer at that time stated that as “Daendels previously required a post-road for the quick and reliable conveyance of letters to rule Java effectively (...) the Governor in a later stage of this development required the telegraph for the same purpose”.<sup>49</sup> The first telegraph lines in the DEI thus primarily functioned as a means to control the islands in a faster and more efficient way. The Dutch government used forced labour under the supervision of militaries to establish a fast, state serving and controlled communication network between the administrative apparatuses of the Dutch government within the DEI.<sup>50</sup>

## 2.6 Inward and outward telegraph lines

While the first inland telegraph line was introduced and used in 1856, the connection with the Netherlands was made possible in 1870 by a submarine line to Singapore.<sup>51</sup> This connection integrated the DEI in the world telegraph net. Interestingly, a table in Holland’s Colonial Call consisting of an overview of the number of send and received telegraph over the years 1870-1960 shows an increase in number of telegraphs while the amount of words per telegram significantly decreases over the years. In 1870, an average of only 280 telegrams was send

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<sup>47</sup> Joshua David Barker, “Telephony at the Limits of State Control: “Discourse Networks in Indonesia” in *Local Cultures and the “New Asia”: The State, Culture and Capitalism in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Seng Lee Press. Ltd., 2002), 158-183.

<sup>48</sup> Barker, “Telephony at the Limits of State Control”, 161.

<sup>49</sup> S.A. Reitsma, “The Rail- and Tramways of the Netherlands Indies” in “*Holland’s Colonial Call*”, 22. (S.A. Reitsma was the Former Head Official of the State Rail- and Tramways of the Dutch East Indies.)

<sup>50</sup> Benjamin White, “Demand for Labor and Population Growth in Colonial Java” in *Human Ecology*, Vol.1, No.3, (1973), pp. 217-237.

<sup>51</sup> Merle Calvin Ricklefs, *A history of modern Indonesia since c. 1200*, (California: Stanford University Press, 2001), 193.

from the DEI to Europe, with an average number of 24 words. In 1885 almost 22000 telegraphs were sent with an average of 9 words per telegram. In 1914 almost 13000 telegrams were sent with an average of 7 words per telegram. After 1914, telegrams in exclusively Dutch, English or French language were allowed. This led to a decrease in telegrams in 1915 and 1916 of circa 70000 telegraphs per year and an average of 13 to 14 words per telegram.<sup>52</sup>

In ‘Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch Indië’ (Journal of the Dutch East Indies) of 1870 an article is devoted to the latest news on the developments of telegraph lines in the Indonesian archipelago and Europe. The writer (mentioned as Théophile) gives an outline on the latest governmental plans for the construction of telegraph lines that connect Europe with the DEI and connect the different islands, or ‘residencies’ of the Indonesian archipelago. Théophile stresses the importance of the Dutch government to join and invest in the telegraph network that was made possible by recently established British telegraph companies connecting Europe and Australia with British India, China and Japan by submarine telegraph lines. His main concern seems to be about the Dutch Governor-General Sloet van de Beele, suggesting a plan to connect West- and Easter Sumatra. By this, Théophile notes, the ‘natural boundaries’ between the separate parts of the area would elapse.<sup>53</sup> The Dutch minister of Colonies in 1870, Engelbertus de Waal, decided against the implementation of the DEI in this network. Théophile states that de Waal certainly sees the advantage of the telegraph lines, though in fact tries to ‘isolate’ Singapore. Théophile stresses that, by isolating the wealthy and important British centre in the Indonesian archipelago the minister “withholds the DEI to be part of an excellent telegraphic community and it eliminates the (point of) time whereupon the two most prominent islands of the DEI can be joined into a direct telegraph connection with Europe.”<sup>54</sup> His focus on this case indicates the importance of connecting the islands of the archipelago as well as the connection between the DEI and Europe. He concludes his argument by questioning (clearly expressing his disbelief) if the minister would truly gut off the DEI of the ‘telegraph community’ only to be freed from international duties which he

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<sup>52</sup> [author unknown], *Verslag omtrent den Post-, Telegraaf- en Telefoondienst in Nederlandsch-Indië*, (Rijswijk-Weltevreden:1875).

<sup>53</sup> Théophile, “De telegraaf-verbinding van Nederlansch Indië met Europa” in *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch-Indië* Vol.3, no. 4, part 1, (Zalt-Bommel: Joh. Noman en Zoon, 1870), 114.

<sup>54</sup> [“belet Nederlandsch Indië partij te trekken van eene uitmuntende telegrafische gemeenschap, (...) en het verwijderd evenzeer het tijdstip, waarop de twee voornaamste eilanden van Nederlandsch Indië aan eene rechtstreeksche telegraaf-lijn met Europa zullen kunnen aansluiten.”] Ibid, 113.

adds, “are the indisputable consequences of the telegraph line.”<sup>55</sup> Instead Théophile states: “What intelligent nations above all fear nowadays, is isolation. Tremendous sacrifices are made to partake in the ‘general traffic’ by ways of railroads, steamships and the telegraph. The issue is not how one can lead away these ‘streams of activity’ around ones borders, but how one can search for these outside and incorporate these within and over ones borders.”<sup>56</sup> This article at the start of the construction of the telegraph lines shows that this technology was clearly seen as an advantage; enabling the DEI to become part of a (trading) network. What the article also shows is that the decisions on the use and implementation of the telegraph lines were from very start concerned with controlling the area and the Dutch position. The reluctance of the minister of Colonies to implement the telegraph and incorporate the DEI in the telegraph network indicates an early awareness about the consequences of a shared communications network. The telegraph enabled faster and more direct control of the DEI but also led to a growing dependence and involvement of others in the Indonesian archipelago. These developments thus complicated the (colonial) relationship between the Netherlands and the DEI.

Long distance communication proved very convenient for a faster and intensified trade with the DEI. Technology not only created better and faster one-to-one connection between the Netherlands and the DEI, but also established a network in which several ‘parties’ were connected. These parties not only consisted of foreign traders, but increasingly of privately owned companies. In this sense, the connections enhanced a process in which the Netherlands, as an economic and political entity, became increasingly fractured. The distinction between what the Dutch as a nation state accomplished and what was accomplished by privately owned (national or transnational) companies more and more faded and ‘fused’ into projects based on collaboration. The DEI becomes less dependent in the sense of a colonial possessed area and more amenable for foreign (other than Dutch) interference. Construction, maintenance and financing of the transportation- and communication connections increasingly required the cooperation between governmental and private companies. However, it appears that the Dutch government sought to control the connections from the very start to maintain and expend their colonial power over the area, rather than

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> [“Hetgeen de intelligente volken boven alles duchten, is isolement. Ontzaglijke offers worden tegen- woordig gebracht om op allerlei vtijzen, door spoorwegen, stoomvaart, telegrafie, in het algemeen verkeer te geraken. De quaestie is, niet hoe men den stroom van dit vertier langs de grenzen zal afleiden , maar hoe men dien buiten de grenzen zal opzoeken om hem over eigen dreven te doen vloeien.”] Théophile, “De telegraaf- verbinding van Nederlansch Indië met Europa”, 115.

letting the increasing interdependence influence their relationship with the DEI as their possession.

## 2.7 Wireless connections: Radio & Telephone

The introduction and implementation of the telephone did not follow the pattern of the post road and telegraph. After the first implementation of a telephone line in 1883 on Java, it were mainly private enterprises that built and maintained the telephone lines in the first two decades of the telephone in the DEI. Joshua Barker notes that the telephone in this first stage was primarily used for short-distance, inland calls.<sup>57</sup> He stresses that the Dutch government followed later in fully using the device, integrating it in their policy of controlling matters in the DEI. Barker mentions that at first, telephony was simply seen by the government as a better version of the telegraph because “telephone operators were trained in writing down ‘spoken telegrams’”.<sup>58</sup> When in 1906 a private company attempted to connect various local telephone networks on Java, the Dutch government interfered and claimed all telecommunications. Thus the ‘hierarchy’ of the communication networks that already existed regarding Dutch governance in the DEI was not actively disrupted by the telephone.

Radio transmission on the other hand, was from the start seen and used as a means of long-distance communication. Experiments were brought about with radio transmission to establish direct ‘links’ between the Netherlands and the DEI. Barker mentions that the radio, as used by the Dutch government, functioned in the same way as the telegraph, and was actually utilized to become less dependent on the English telegraph lines. For the Dutch people settled in the DEI, radio appeared to be a ‘bridge’ between life in the DEI and the mother-country. Philips, a Dutch electronics company founded in 1891 in Eindhoven, established the first direct radio link between the Netherlands and the DEI.<sup>59</sup> A Philips representative describes in 1927 that “the tremendous distance – 12000 km – which separated the listeners in the tropics from Holland, no longer existed (...) everyone now wanted to hear this voice from the mother-country, this mysterious voice from Eindhoven which bridged oceans to speak to the sons of Holland in the distance Indies”.<sup>60</sup> The effect of radio-telephony

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<sup>57</sup> Barker, “Telephony at the limits of state control”, 162.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, 163.

<sup>59</sup> Th. P. van den Bergh, “Marine Wireless”, in *“Holland’s Colonial Call”*, 138-39.

(Van den Bergh was Manager Director at the time of the N.V. Netherlands Telegraph Company “Radio Holland”.)

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 139.

in bridging the distance between the Netherlands and the DEI was clearly noticeable. However, the way in which these connections functioned on the level of the political relationship with the DEI seems harder to trace. Barker notes that the Dutch and their “emerging diaspora nationalism had no future in the Indies”, and argues that it is therefore hard to find out whether the use of the radio was indeed bringing the Netherlands and the DEI closer to each other, or if the radio was merely used as an escape of ‘everyday reality’. Thus it is not evidently clear if one can speak, in Benedict Anderson’s expression, of a sense of an ‘imagined community’ spread over geographical separated territories.<sup>61</sup> Even though the implementation of new means of connectivity show an incomprehensibility about the consequences at the start, expectations about how technology would influence the connection and accessibility towards the DEI in the future existed as well. As the director of the N.V. Nederlandsche Telegraaf Maatschappij (Dutch Telegraph Company) “Radio Holland” expresses his expectation in a text discussing the wireless connections with ships: “It is to be expected that on board the ships in the near future, radio broadcasting, radio telephony and image transfer applications will be applied and thereby that ‘wireless connection with ships’ will further contribute to bring the Netherlands and India closer together.”<sup>62</sup> This statement clearly demonstrates the belief that improved communication possibilities would shorten the distance between the Netherlands and the DEI. The question remains though whether bringing the Netherlands and the DEI closer together, also meant an increasing sense of community between the separate geographical areas.

As a comparison view, Bell points out in his article that direct communication between England and the English speaking colonies was seen as “the means of intensifying and perpetuating the sympathy that is the basis of union”. Bell herewith highlights a sense of union that was enabled by direct communication. Barker does make an interesting remark about a similar ‘symbolical nature’ of telephony and radio. He mentions that towards the 1930’s, the discourse networks over telephony and radio were all held under state control.

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<sup>61</sup> “imagined community” *A Dictionary of Critical Theory*. by Ian Buchanan. Oxford University Press 2010. *Oxford Reference Online*. Oxford University Press. Utrecht University Library. 17 August 2011 <http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t306.e347>  
In *Imagined Communities* (1983), Benedict Anderson defines the nation and states that the nation is an “imagined political community”. This community is imagined because it is impossible for individuals to know every person within this nation. But this does not mean that the nation is not real, but that the conception of belonging to a nation is “the unselfconscious exercise of abstract thought”.

<sup>62</sup> [“Het is te verwachten, dat in de naaste toekomst aan boord der schepen ook radio-omroep, radiotelefonie en beeldoverbrenging toepassing zullen gaan vinden en daardoor de ‘draadloze verbinding met schepen’ verder zal medewerken om Nederland en Indie dichter bij elkaar te brengen.”] Th.P. van den Berg, “Development of Radiotelegraphy and Telephony in Netherlands-India”, in “*Hollands Colonial Call*”, 135.

Besides the state control of telephony from the start of the twentieth century, the radio was increasingly used as a medium to celebrate Dutch nationalist identity. The radio especially, was used to “unite its ‘sons’ under the Queen of the ‘mother-country’”.<sup>63</sup> No mention is made about the union of ‘Indonesian’ people with the Dutch however, and this is where Bell’s research differs from the relationship investigated in this paper. Communications can be seen as connecting and unifying people of areas separated by (vast) geographical distances, though the ‘nationalist function’ of the communication suggest a union between Dutch (nationals), rather than forming a closer community with *all* the people of both the Netherlands en the DEI. Furthermore, migration towards the DEI was relatively low until the 1930’s; hence there were not many people in the DEI with whom people from the Netherlands had family- or cultural ties with.

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<sup>63</sup> Barker, “Telephony at the limits of state control”, 170.

### **3. Connectivity within the DEI**

Connections over land within the DEI were as important as connections over sea with the Netherlands for the economic and political development of the DEI. As shown in the former chapter, connections between the Netherlands and the DEI were mostly made possible by international developments and cooperation. Whether it concerned the route through the Suez Canal or the availability of ships and a telegraph network, connections between the homeland and the colony were enabled by cooperation or implementation into international (connectivity) networks. The Dutch possession and control over these connections appeared to have played an important role in connections *between* the Netherlands and the DEI. For inland connections, initiatives of private entrepreneurs and subsequent interaction with the government seem to be of major significance in the developments of connections *within* the DEI. Connections to and from the DEI turned the archipelago into an international trade network, and enabled a greater Dutch control over the area at the same time. The latter in turn, also *unified* the DEI as a whole. This chapter explores how changes in connectivity relate to the economic and political role of the Dutch government in the DEI.

Fundamental to the Dutch rule over the Indonesian archipelago were the profits made from the natural resources, commodities and goods produced to a large degree by forced labour of the indigenous inhabitants.<sup>64</sup> The possession of overseas areas and the enlargement of the Dutch empire seem to have followed, rather than leading up to, Dutch wealth and power from Indonesian products. Dutch control during the majority of the period of colonial occupation was rather insignificant outside the large coastal ‘trading bulwarks’ of the archipelago, of which Batavia as the capital city of Java was the most important. The Dutch dominance of what are now Indonesia’s borders extended there only in the late nineteenth and- early twentieth century.<sup>65</sup> The process of Dutch national expansionism starts around 1800 after the VOC went bankrupt, when the Dutch nationalized their occupied area and established the Dutch East Indies (DEI).<sup>66</sup> One of the reasons for expanding and establishing Dutch governance and control of the Indonesian archipelago was the need to protect their colony against other colonial powers seeking to extend their empires.

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<sup>64</sup> Adrian Vickers, *A history of modern Indonesia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 131.

<sup>65</sup> Adam Schwarz, *A nation in waiting: Indonesia's search for stability* (Colorado: Westview Press, 2000), 3-4.

<sup>66</sup> Merle Calvin Ricklefs, *A history of Modern Indonesia since c. 1200*, (California: Stanford University Press, 2001).

### 3.2 Railways

Like the introduction of steamships for transportation overseas, (steam) trains were of crucial impact for the transportation over land. Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, railroads had been the most important means of transportation in America, Europe, and even in British India where it had proved to be of great advantage for the transportation of goods. Historian Wolfgang Schivelbusch in *The railway journey: the industrialization of time and space in the 19th century*, points out that the implementation of rail (networks) were responsible for a change in transportation and the creation of industrial capitalism. He also mentions that trains played a prominent role in creating a “business of organisation”.<sup>67</sup> Only in the second half of the nineteenth century a start was made with the construction of railways in the DEI. Before the introduction of railways in the DEI, transport connections between plantations, cities and harbours consisted of (mostly unpaved) roads. Goods were primarily transported by carriages and other vehicles pulled by buffaloes or horses.<sup>68</sup> The late introduction of rail- and tramways to the DEI was due to financial, political and especially, technical obstacles.<sup>69</sup> Similar to the development of railways in many countries, the question whether the government or private enterprises would take the lead in the construction of railroads proved to be an issue. In the DEI this appeared to have been the main reasons of the late realisation of the much desired means of transportation. The way in which the railroad construction differed in the DEI as opposed to the Netherlands and other colonies is of importance to understand the difference of (technological) development within a nation and that of a colony. The process of the construction of railways in the DEI shows the uncertainty about the costs and consequences before and at the start of the railroad construction. Right after the start of the process of railroad construction, authorities and companies soon started to realise that the train networks greatly increased the speed and efficiency of production. Precise maps and charts of the country of the inlands did not yet exist, however, and even by close approximation a clear assessment of the costs of railroad construction could not be made. Concession requests of private entrepreneurs did reach the government because a guarantee of interest from the government was needed in order to realise the construction.<sup>70</sup> A

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<sup>67</sup> Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The railway journey: the industrialization of time and space in the 19th century*, (University of California Press, 1986), xiv.

<sup>68</sup> Marie-Louise ten Horn-van Nispen and Wim Ravesteijn, “The road to an empire: Organisation and technology of road construction in the Dutch East Indies, 1800–1940” in *The Journal of Transport History* Vol. 30, No.1 (Delft: University of Technology, 2009), 47.

<sup>69</sup> S.A. Reitsma, “The Rail- and tramways of the Netherlands Indies” in “*Holland’s Colonial Call*”, 3.

<sup>70</sup> Horn-van Nispen and Ravesteijn, “The road to an empire”, 48.

number of private enterprises initiated the construction and establishment of a railroad company, though results of this undertaking proved to be dissatisfying. Commissions were set up by the government to investigate the magnitude of construction and total costs, with disappointing results as well. The enormous investment costs discouraged the government to invest in railroads, which was losing much money in the Atjeh War at the beginning of the 1870's. In *Hollands Colonial Call* is mentioned that, besides investment costs, there was also great uncertainty about the costs of exploitation (working and construction costs) and the magnitude of the traffic that would arise. As late as the 1870's, the government even supported less expensive 'old-fashioned solutions' to transport goods to the harbours as the import of camels and by increasing the buffalo breeding in the DEI.<sup>71</sup>

### 3.3 State railways versus private enterprises

The uncertainty about the costs and consequences of railroad construction and the dependence of private entrepreneurs for governmental financial support eventually led to the establishment of a railroad network that exclusively consisted of state-owned railways. Some supporters of capital construction did succeed in receiving a concession grant of the government for the construction of railroads. The most important one is the foundation of the De Nederlandsch-Indische Spoorweg Maatschappij (NIS) (Dutch Indies Railway Co.) who received a concession grant in 1864. Due to unsatisfactory financial results however, the system of lines of the NIS was taken over by the Dutch government in 1875, a change which happened according to the writer in *Holland Colonial Call* not on principal theoretic grounds but was the result of "pure opportunism".<sup>72</sup> The supporters of concessions realised that the railroads were of key importance and that control over the lines also meant that the government was responsible for the exploitation on maintenance and new roads. Results were thus very advantageous for private entrepreneurs. An article on the 'Indische Staatsspoorwegen in de Tweede Kamer' (Indian State Railways in the House of Commons) in *Journal of the Dutch East Indies* of 1924 discusses the reasons for the origins of the state railways on Java in 1875. The writer states that even the opponents of state construction as the Ministers of colonies Bosse and Franssen van de Putte came to the conclusion that "the much needed improvement of communication in Java could only be obtained through the

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<sup>71</sup> Reitsma, "The Rail- and tramways of the Netherlands Indies" in "*Holland's Colonial Call*", 3.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid*, 18.

intervention of the State”.<sup>73</sup> When results of the railways proved very lucrative, the government did not grant concessions to private entrepreneurs anymore at all.<sup>74</sup> As with the steamboat connections therefore, the financial advantage of these connections to the Dutch government proved the prominent reason for the construction and control of transport networks.

Railways were constructed for the faster and safer conveyance of great quantities of goods from the inlands to the harbours for export. When means of connectivity increased, the intensity of production and the way of life of the all people involved greatly altered as well. Reitsma mentions that at the same time when railroads were constructed and taken in use, the demand for passenger transportation in and to the big cities and harbours increased as well.<sup>75</sup> As the possibilities for Dutch and ‘outside’ business men increased, this also counted for the native inhabitants. Business men could travel fast and relatively cheap to plantations to select and negotiate about the products offered, and native inhabitants could travel to the harbours to offer their goods to ‘white buyers’. Besides enlarging the market, the railways also provided native inhabitants seeking employment with job opportunities, although much construction work was done by unpaid labour.<sup>76</sup> Reitsma remarks about the change for native inhabitants: “the old saying that a native experienced no desire to travel because he was more than satisfied with his presence surroundings was soon belied by facts”.<sup>77</sup> Consequently, these developments opened possibilities for native inhabitants, while forced labour gradually decreased. However, historian Benjamin White notes that this did not inherently mean that the situation for the native inhabitants of the DEI actually improved.<sup>78</sup> He refers to anthropologists Clifford Geertz and Van Gelderen who state that a growing need for labour and increase in paid labour did not inherently result in a profitable position or arrangement for the native inhabitants. White quotes Geertz and Van Gelderen: “if forced labour is replaced by paid labour, if land is rented rather than its use appropriated as a form of taxation [here referring to Culture System], and if private entrepreneurs replace governmental managers.

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<sup>73</sup> [“hoognoodige verbetering der communicatiemiddelen op Java alleen door ingrijpen van den Staat te verkrijgen zou zijn”] [Author unknown], “De Indische Staatsspoorwegen in de Tweede Kamer” in *Tijdschrift van Nederlands Indië*, Vol. 7, No.1, (1923).

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Reitsma, “The Rail- and tramways of the Netherlands Indies” in *“Holland’s Colonial Call”*, 26.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Benjamin White, “Demand for Labor and Population Growth in Colonial Java” in *Human Ecology*, Vol. 1, No. 3, (1973), 217-237.

Then, it is a matter of holding down money wages and avoiding the formation of a true proletariat without the productive means with which to provide its own subsistence.”<sup>79</sup> The changes that were brought about by increased and improved means of transportation apparently did not directly change the relationship between the Dutch and the native inhabitants of the DEI.

The demand for passenger transport grew and the number of people traveling by tram, initially pulled by horses, within the city grew exponentially. Interestingly, after a concession was granted in 1928 for steam tramways in the DEI, nobody seemed to know precisely how this means of transport should operate. Many thought, including the Minister of Colonies of that time that the trams should take “the form of a vehicle differing from the existing types of conveyance in that steam locomotion would be used and that the rails should be laid out on or alongside the ordinary roads”.<sup>80</sup> It soon turned out that the trams, despite their small size and slow speed capacity were primarily used for the transportation of goods and were connected to the train’s networks. The main reasons for this were the need of traversing great distances of hundreds of kilometres, the transport monopoly in certain areas (of which this was a consequence), and the fact that the tramlines joined up with the main railways.<sup>81</sup> In this sense, the trams became in fact a version of the railways.

### 3.4 Organisation of Space

Even though the introduction and implementation of railroads in the DEI was developed independent from the railroad construction and use in the Netherlands, the initiative and coordination of the railways in the DEI were controlled by – and used for - the Dutch government. The latter, and the fact that profits were of first importance in the DEI, appear to be imputable to the fact that connections in the DEI were different as in other (western) countries. The train networks appeared to have changed perceptions about the space and control over this space in the DEI, as this did in other country where railways were introduced and used. Ideas on the influence of connectivity for the economy and the consequences for businesses as well as for (the lives of) native inhabitant in the DEI changed after the introduction of the railways. Starting as faster and safer transportation lines from the inlands

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid, 228.

<sup>80</sup> Reitsma, “The Rail- and tramways of the Netherlands Indies” in *“Holland’s Colonial Call”*, 25.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

to the harbours, these railroads became ‘voedingslijnen’ (power lines’) to which other railways and roads were connected, creating a network between cities, plantations and harbours. At every place, be it a town, post or plantation in the DEI’s landscape where trains stopped, prosperity grew and initiated larger networks. Trains assembled people and businesses and incorporated and connected otherwise difficult to reach areas into the network. The railways therefore not only made possible a faster and more intense conveyance of goods, but can also be seen as changing the landscape, or, space of the DEI. The railways also changed ideas on power needed for ‘movement’. Whereas the endurance of horses was formerly a natural limit (as the wind had been with sailing ships), steam power was inexhaustible. Due to almost unlimited power of movement, space became changeable and manageable to a degree never achieved before.

The increasing connections did demand an increasing need for the organisation of space. Management of the rail- and tramways companies were seated in the Netherlands and attached to the Department of Government Undertakings. The head of the State Railways in the DEI was also the Head Inspector of the private companies in the DEI. The Dutch government had thus a large control over the rail- and tramways in the DEI. This situation began to change after 1928 when the supervision board was reorganized and concessions were granted again for private companies to construct their own railways.<sup>82</sup> The function of the train (network) in the DEI was, as late as the end of the 1920’s, mainly focussed on business and political matters. There appear to be very little passenger transportation as ‘residential traffic’ or tourism in this period. Reitsma notes in 1930 that “the attractions of the Dutch Indies from a sight-seeing point of view have not yet met with the international recognition they deserve”.<sup>83</sup> According to Reitsma, the expansion of the railways would attract more tourists, although he also notes that by then tourists preferred to travel by auto busses which provided them a much more comfortable journey and better view than the ‘freight equipped’ trains. Despite the latter, the train stations formerly characterised by simple and functional barracks gradually did turn into beautiful modern station buildings from the 1930’s onward.<sup>84</sup> The latter seems to indicate a change from pure functionality to representation as ‘entries’ of the cities.

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 26.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 57.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, 39.

The expanding transport connections greatly increased the economic development of the DEI and railways transformed the space and organisation of capital in the DEI. Compared with most Western nations including the Netherlands, the rail- and tramways in the DEI were mainly used for the transportation of goods, rather than for persons. The structure in the DEI at the late nineteenth and early twentieth century appeared to chiefly been designed for the transport of goods and business men, not to attract Dutch or other European people to settle, or even visit the DEI. Passenger transport for business or political matters did increase however. The introduction of the car at the beginning of the twentieth century was a major improvement for passenger transport. Transport by car expanded quickly and subsequently roads and institutions for road-building activities arose.<sup>85</sup>

### 3.5 Cars and Roads

Cars proved very convenient for business men who could travel quicker and relatively easy between the different plantations, cities and harbours. Cars were also increasingly used by Dutch civil servants and officials with the responsibility of managing and supervising various governmental matters in the DEI. At the same time as areas became more accessible for business, they became more controllable for the Dutch government. The car became the prominent means of passenger transport in the DEI in short a time. This required a great extension of the organisation of the transport network. Construction, maintenance and control were necessary to secure the quality and accessibility of roads. Road-building activities and the construction of bridges quickly intensified, which was managed by an inspector for traffic routes.<sup>86</sup> Works on infrastructure in the DEI were executed and implemented by the governmental service of by BOW (the department of Civil Public Works) which was in fact already founded in 1854.<sup>87</sup> After 1920, the traffic increased to such an extent that legislation regarding vehicles and roads became necessary. In the “The Road to Empire” the writer notes that before 1920, water, land, rail and tram connections were unrelated and had different rules: “Almost everything regarding road transport became organised: from traffic rules, vehicle requirements and driving licences to public transport and regulations concerning the actual roads themselves. Licensing systems were introduced for private transport and for

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<sup>85</sup> Horn-van Nispen and Ravesteijn, “The road to an empire”, 42.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, 43.

freight transport (...) issued at both local and regional levels.”<sup>88</sup> Authorities began to speak of ‘traffic issues’ and started to understand that a thorough organisation of all traffic was needed in the DEI for both safety and economic goals.<sup>89</sup> However, roads appeared to have been less significant for long distance transportation than shipping did. The latter was due to the fact that the DEI consisted of many small islands. To control the whole region, transportation and communication over water was thus more important than separate inland connections over land.<sup>90</sup>

Without a doubt, the economic development of the DEI greatly increased due to the established connections over sea, land and ‘through the air’. The means of transportation and communication changed the extent to which the Dutch government was aware of – and could interfere in – military and economic matters in their colony. At the same time, the DEI became more and more accessible for foreign trade and private enterprises to establish businesses and economic monopolies in the DEI. The DEI became a complex system in which communication and transportation networks changed the lives of the native inhabitants as well as foreign trade and the Dutch presence in the DEI. It seems that every new means of connectivity was first used as an ‘improved way’ of the former means of connection. The distance between the Netherlands and the DEI was reduced, while economic and political interference intensified. As with the connections within the DEI, the railways and (postal) roads ‘transformed’ the actual (geographic) space by moving villages closer to the posts (stations) and by connecting areas to the networks that were formerly apart and hardly accessible. With the changing perception of the space between and within the DEI did the perception on the relationship between the Netherlands and the change as well? One development which surely was made possible by the new means of connectivity is the expansionism of Dutch authority in Indonesia’s ‘outer regions’. It is this development and the (political) consequences of this expansionism to which we will now turn.

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid, 51.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Robert Cribb and Audrey Kahin, *Historical Dictionary of Indonesia*, (Scarecrow Press, 2004).

#### ***4. Effects of connectivity on the Dutch governmental and economic role in the DEI***

The nationalisation of the DEI as a *Dutch* possession and the expansion of Dutch governance in the outer regions in the later part of the nineteenth century can be regarded as the ‘creation’ of the area of modern Indonesia. Besides a source of income, the DEI becomes a part of the Dutch kingdom. In this sense, a change in the relationship between the Netherlands and their colony in the Indies took place. Due to the possession of the DEI and the ruling economic position over this area the Netherlands was the second colonial power (after Great Britain) in the middle of the nineteenth century.<sup>91</sup> By *nationalising* their colony, the Dutch government became more involved in what happened in the DEI. Although the profit from goods and labour seems to remain the main objective in the DEI, attention was increasingly focussed on a rightful guardianship of the native inhabitants of the DEI. Policies and laws defining the relationship between the mother country and the colony became more important and applied in the period 1870-1930. As a colonial possession of the Dutch, the DEI had to be protected and defended against rival colonial powers, as well as developed into an orderly and controllable entity. This required a clear Dutch colonial political policy of which several were implemented during the existence of the DEI. How did increased connectivity between the Netherlands and the DEI play a role in this process?

#### **4.2 Expansion into the outer regions**

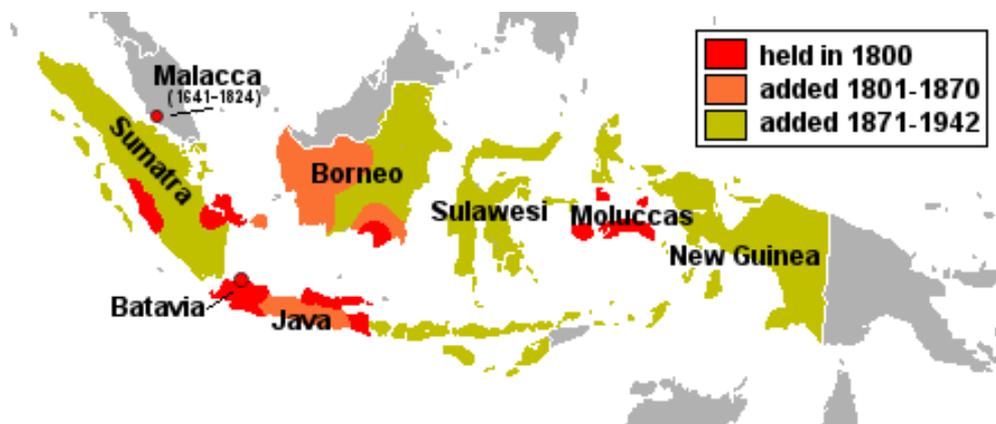
The last part of the nineteenth century was characterized by complications between the British and the Dutch over the possessions of the Indonesian outer islands due to the increasing urge for expansionism. The Dutch waged a series of wars to extend their dominance into the outer regions, or, ‘buitengewesten’ of the DEI. These outer regions concerned areas outside Java and the western part of Borneo of which the most important regions were the east side of Borneo, Sulawesi, Sumatra and New Guinea.<sup>92</sup> Java and the capital city of Batavia (present day Jakarta) remained the most important centre of Dutch control, though the expansion into the outer regions enlarged and intensified the Dutch presence, responsibility and degree of

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<sup>91</sup> Minori Kogur, *National Prestige and Economic Interest: Dutch Diplomacy Towards Japan 1850–1863* (A dissertation submitted to the University of Leiden, Maastricht: Shaker Publishing, 2008).

<sup>92</sup> A.H.P. Clemens and J.TH. Lindblad, *Het belang van de Buitengewesten: Economische en koloniale staatsvorming in de buitengewesten van Nederlands-Indie 1870-1942* (Amsterdam: Neha, 1989).

military and political control. It took several decades of Dutch expansion and wars over control of the outer regions before these areas came under full Dutch governance.



“Map of the Dutch East Indies showing its territorial expansion from 1800 to its fullest extent prior to Japanese occupation in 1942”. Source: D. R. SarDesai, “Evolution of the Dutch East Indies” in *Southeast Asia: Past and Present* (Westview, 1997), 88.

A.H.P. Clemens and J.TH. Lindblad write in *Het belang van de Buitengewesten* (The importance of the outer regions) that the European settlements in the outer regions for a long time had the character of ‘classical frontier’ communities.<sup>93</sup> Many local rulers showed resistance for an intensification of Dutch authority. The longest and most difficult area to bring under Dutch rule was the Province of Atjeh on the northern part of Sumatra. According to Lindblad, this war was characterized by a misconception and underestimation of the power of ‘native rulers’, and the strength of ideological (religious) motives behind the Atjeh’s resistance.<sup>94</sup> The Atjeh war started in 1873 and lasted until 1914. This raised questions in the home land whether the Dutch military were capable of gaining control over Atjeh. The Commandar General of the Dutch army states in 1875 in his defence why the mission in Atjeh is proceeding so slow: “But have these gentlemen ever imagined, what degree of manoeuvrability is demanded of an army which is organized in a European manner (...) which has nothing of what is necessary to set it in motion, nor ridden roads or bridges over waters, nor means of transport to supply all the necessaries.”<sup>95</sup> At the beginning of the war the

<sup>93</sup> Clemens and Lindblad, “Het belang van de Buitengewesten”, 6.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, 117.

<sup>95</sup> [“Maar hebben zich die heeren wel eens voorgesteld, welken graad van beweegbaarheid een leger hebben kan, dat op Europeeschen voet georganiseerd (...) niets heeft van hetgeen noodig is om het in beweging te

unfamiliar terrain of Atjeh and lack of roads and ways that enabled the accessibility of the area were argued as a reason for the difficulty to bring the area under control. Historian Maarten Kuitenbrouwer notes that the Dutch inability to bring a quick end to the Atjeh war, as well as the policy of abstention with regard to the outer regions remained the same until late nineteenth century.<sup>96</sup> After 1890 the ‘completion’ of the Dutch dominion over the outer regions accelerated. With the end of the Atjeh war, the Dutch policy of restrictive governance or ‘onthoudingspolitiek’ (abstention policy) over Atjeh and the most important posts on Java came to an end also.<sup>97</sup>

Jan A. Somers mentions in his book regarding developments in colonial politics in the DEI that neither the constitution nor the governmental regulations contained a clear geographical positioning of the Dutch territory in Asia in 1887. Many un-clarities existed about the actual sphere of influence of the Dutch. The government claimed ‘Dutch sovereignty’ for many islands and areas in the outer regions of the Indonesian archipelago. But the suggestions about the extent of their authority in the entire DEI towards the ‘outside world’ appeared often far less veracious than the actual position they had in the majority of the islands. Moreover, Somers mentions that what was seen and acknowledged as Dutch national possession by the Dutch themselves, often differed greatly with how the actual situation was on many islands in the archipelago and how native inhabitants of the DEI perceived their authority.<sup>98</sup> The expansion of Dutch authority into the outer regions impelled the unification of the different islands of the Indonesian archipelago. However, this proved to be a long and often far from successful process. After 1870 the ‘onthoudingspolitiek’ thus quickly turned into increasing governmental interference in the whole of the DEI, in the liberal period after the 1870’s towards ethical politics after 1900.<sup>99</sup>

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stellen; noch wegen die bereden kunenn worden, noch bruggen om over wateren te trekken, noch vervoermiddelen om al het benoedigde aan te voeren?”] De Stuers, “Nog iets over Atjeh”, in *De Gids*, Vol. 39 (Amsterdam: P.N. van Kampen & zoon, 1875).

<sup>96</sup> Maarten Kuitenbrouwer, “Het imperialisme-debat in de Nederlandse geschiedschrijving” in *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden – The Low Countries Historical Review*, Vol. 113, No. 1, (1998), 56-73.

<sup>97</sup> Clemens and Lindblad, “Het belang van de Buitengewesten”, 8.

<sup>98</sup> Somers, “*Nederlandsch-Indië: staatskundige ontwikkelingen binnen een koloniale relatie*”, 112.

<sup>99</sup> Clemens and Lindblad, “Het belang van de Buitengewesten”.

### 4.3 Colonial policies: Liberal & Ethical politics

The first political policy clarifying the relationship between the Netherlands and the DEI was the so called *Culture System*, implemented in 1830. The Culture System entailed that all Indonesian farmers were obliged to grow certain crops on a portion of their land paying this as tax to the Dutch government.<sup>100</sup> The year 1870 marks a change in the political and economic relationship with the DEI. From 1870 until 1900 in the so called ‘liberal period’, the DEI became increasingly seen as an economic market, both by the Dutch as well as internal traders and private entrepreneurs.<sup>101</sup> The Agrarian Law (Agrarische Wet) introduced by the minister of Colonies, Engelbertus de Waal, determined the disposal over farmland by private entrepreneurs. The dominant trend of liberalism in Dutch politics at that time imagined a situation of freedom for private entrepreneurs and a minimum of state interference in the Netherlands’ most prominent colony. The Agrarian Law drew many private entrepreneurs to the outer regions and islands of Indonesia, especially because high expectations existed regarding the tobacco cultivation in these regions.<sup>102</sup> Growing private capitalism influenced the Dutch colonial policy as imposed by the Dutch government, who was in 1873 still reluctant to assert authority in the newly cultivated areas outside Java. However, the increased English claims in 1878 on the island of North-East Borneo provoked an intensified defence and control over the Dutch possessions in the DEI.<sup>103</sup> Whereas the Culture System mainly accounted for a regulation of direct profit from the DEI to the Netherlands, the Liberal Period saw a growing influence of the liberal political party in the Netherlands, enlarging possibilities for private entrepreneurs seeking business in the DEI.

In a famous piece called ‘Eereschuld’ (Debt of honour) of 1899, lawyer and publicist for the DEI Conrad Th. van Deventer argues that the Dutch policy after 1870 was in fact still entirely based on profit from the DEI. The financial and economic situation of the DEI would be much favorable van Deventer argues, “if the Netherlands, regarding its colonial territory, had not for many years practised the same kind of government, with which England had already broken in the past century.”<sup>104</sup> Instead of ‘communal interests’ between the

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<sup>100</sup> Roger Knight, “Sugar, Technology, and Colonial Encounters: Refashioning the Industry in the Netherlands Indies, 1800–1942” in *Journal of Historical Sociology*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (1999).

<sup>101</sup> Ricklefs, “A history of modern Indonesia since c. 1200”, 193.

<sup>102</sup> Clemens and Lindblad, “Het belang van de Buitengewesten”, 3.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.* (In 1873 still, governor-general J. Loudon proposed in all seriousness to sell the Dutch claims on the Western part of New-Guinea to Italy.)

<sup>104</sup> [“indien Nederland ten opzichte van zijn koloniaal gebied niet jaren lang een stelsel van regeering gevolgd had, waarmede Engeland reeds in de vorige eeuw voor goed brak.”] Conrad Th. van Deventer, ‘Een eereschuld.’ In *De Gids*. (Amsterdam P.N. van Kampen & zoon, 1899), Vol. 63, p. 215.

Netherlands and the DEI, van Deventer stresses that the Netherlands received great sums from DEI profits, though refused to help the DEI when at that time, it was dealing with several difficulties. He argues that the Dutch government should change their policy according to the changing circumstances which had arisen due to increasing connectivity: “The vastly changing circumstances that created new demands, as a result of the opening of the Suez Canal and the establishment of a telegraphic community, set in sharp relief, how much we were behind almost every area.”<sup>105</sup> Van Deventer argues herewith that the new developments led to a more direct involvement and consequently, to a larger Dutch governmental role in the DEI. According to Van Deventer, the initial reluctance of the Dutch to fully implement and use these means of connectivity in their colony was a illustrative for the their lack of forming a mutual supportive unity that a mother country should form with its colony, which he claims, is what a modern colonial policy should be concerned with.<sup>106</sup>

The beginning of the twentieth century ushered another turn in Dutch colonial politics concerning the DEI, known as the period of ‘ethical politics’. These ideas started when in the ‘troonrede’ (queens’ speech) Queen Wilhelmina proclaimed a moral vocation of the Dutch regarding the DEI in 1901.<sup>107</sup> In this, the Queen announced: “As a Christian power, the Netherlands is obliged to carry out a governmental policy in the Indies in the consciousness that the Netherlands has a moral duty to the people of these regions”.<sup>108</sup> The wellbeing and economical independency of the native inhabitants became more important and seen as the responsibility of the Dutch government. This meant the end of the *koelie-ordonnatie* (worker ordinance) in which was set that entrepreneurs were granted to function as police and judge, being legal to punish certain actions as laziness, insult or run away from the plantations. Towards the twentieth century, these ordinances had increasingly led to conditions in which many native workers were abused and exploited. The term ‘ethical politics’ was coined by P. Brooshooft, chief editor of the newspaper of the island of Semarang called the *De Locomotief*.<sup>109</sup> Brooshooft stated in an article of 1901 titled ‘De ethische koers in de koloniale

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<sup>105</sup> [“De zich al zeer spoedig, als gevolg der opening van het Suez-Kanaal en het tot stand komen eener telegrafische gemeenschap, totaal wijzigende omstandigheden stelden nieuwe eischen, deden scherp uitkomen, hoe zeer wij op bijkans elk gebied ten achter waren.”] Van Deventer, “Een eereschuld”, 215.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Harry J. Benda, “The Pattern of Administrative Reforms in the Closing Years of Dutch Rule in Indonesia”, in *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (1966), 592.

<sup>108</sup> Cribb and Kahin, “*Historical Dictionary of Indonesia*”, 139.

<sup>109</sup> E.B Locher-Scholten, “Mr. P. Brooshooft: een biografische schets in koloniaal-etisch perspectief”, in *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* (Leiden, Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde: 1976).

politiek' (The ethical course in colonial politics) that one of the great shortcomings of the government was the 'insufficient supervision' on the treatment of 'koelies'.<sup>110</sup>

There are several reasons for why this new moral policy became the guiding principle of Dutch colonial governance. Ethical politics, according to some scholars, are in part the consequence of the 'debt-of-honour' in the period of the Culture system.<sup>111</sup> Interestingly, the Dutch historians J.C. Blom and E. Lamberts write that the ethical policy was a "Dutch version of modern imperialism."<sup>112</sup> They stress that Dutch colonial dominance and authority and a 'moral mission' were two goals that were in fact intertwined because beneficial developments for the native inhabitants in the DEI would only be possible by an effective control of the colony. Furthermore, the costs of carrying out the ethical policy would be covered from taxes received from business in the DEI. The various businesses in the DEI would on their turn be advantaged by a good infrastructure in the DEI.<sup>113</sup> It appears that the goals and consequences of the ethical politics were not stated overly clear and were under discussion at the time. In a piece discussing the period of the 'ethical course' in colonial politics the economist J.H. Boeke writes in 1940: "The technique, that shortens distances, has also in the Indies led to political, social and economic concentration, concentration in the western business world which in its organisations spans the entire Archipelago, a concentration in government intervention with, through, and next to that business. (...) It is no coincidence that the opening up of the outer islands was reserved for the twentieth century, due to which the Indies became a coherent whole."<sup>114</sup> Boeke's view reflects the perception that technology enhancing connectivity between the Netherlands and the DEI was seen as a means to unify the DEI as a whole. The concentration of governmental interference and cooperation with businesses increased, in his view, due to technical innovation that made distances more manageable. In this sense, connectivity changed both the accessibility and controllability of space. To compare this with Duncan Bell's case, increased connectivity initially meant that a stronger relationship between England and the English speaking colonies occurred over a vast

<sup>110</sup> P. Brooshooft, *De etische koers in de koloniale politiek* (Amsterdam, J.H. de Bussy: 1901).

<sup>111</sup> Bloembergen, "Colonial Spectacles", 40-46.

<sup>112</sup> J. C. H. Blom and E. Lamberts, *History of the Low Countries*, (Berghahn Books: 2006), 426.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> ["De techniek, die afstanden slecht, heeft ook in Indië geleid tot politieke, sociale en economische concentratie, concentratie in het westersche bedrijfsleven, dat in zijn organisaties den geheelen Archipel omspant, concentratie in de overheidsbemoeyenis met, door en naast dat bedrijfsleven. (...) Het is geen toeval, dat de openlegging van de Buitengewesten aan de twintigste eeuw voorbehouden bleef, ofschoon eerst hierdoor Indië één samenhangend geheel werd."] J.H. Boeke, "De ethische koers in de koloniale politiek" in *De Gids* (Amsterdam: P.N. van Kampen & zoon, 1940,) Vol. 104, 32-33.

geographical distance. The development regarding the relationship between the Netherlands and the DEI seems contradictory in this respect. Connectivity strengthened the economic and humane conditions *within* the DEI, while at the same time it enabled that the Dutch authority actually extended which reinforced the *colonial* relationship with the DEI.

#### **4.4 Changes in governance: who is responsible?**

The result of direct communication was not only that processes could be done faster. Governance of the processes could be organised in a way that influenced the function of the governors stationed at administrative posts in the DEI. In an article discussing the function of administrators, politician L. Lenting points out to the questions that arose regarding the responsibility of decisions made by the Dutch in the DEI. When the telegraph enabled that messages took only three to four days from the DEI to the Netherlands, the administrator could ask the minister in the Netherlands about the issue and receive orders in how to handle the case. Lenting argues that the telegraph connections enabled a much faster course of giving orders and briefings to and from the Netherlands and the DEI. He also stresses the change that a faster communication brought regarding the function of the governor, stationed at a post in the DEI: “Rightly is pointed out [in the article] to a telegraph cable. But is it not exactly because of the introduction of this fastest means of communication that new considerations arise about political authority, for which until now solely our governor at Buitenzorg is responsible?”<sup>115</sup> He continues by stating that the submarine telegraph lines that connect Java with the land telegraph lines of the Netherlands have changed the kind of decisions a governor in DEI was allowed to make. He stresses that due to faster communication over the telegraph, these statutory provisions regarding the responsibilities of Dutch officials were adjusted. This meant in fact that the actions of a governor in the DEI became less authoritative because he could much faster give a briefing about the case to the minister in The Hague, who would subsequently tell him what to do.<sup>116</sup> However, Lenting also stresses that despite the fast communication “a government that provides and monitors everything perfectly from the ministerial department, is and remains rather difficult, even though the telegraphic cable has

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<sup>115</sup> [“Terecht wordt in de eerste zinsneê op een telegrafischen kabel gewezen. Maar is er juist niet na of ten gevolge van de invoering van dat snelste communicatie-middel eene andere beschouwing ontstaan omtrent 't staatkundig gezag, waarmee dusver onze landvoogd op Buitenzorg bekleed is?”] L. Ed. Lenting, “Schets van het Nederlandsche Staatsbestuur en van de overzeesche bezittingen” in *Tijdschrift voor Nederlands Indië* (Amsterdam: G. L. Funke, 1874), 342.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

significantly reduced the distance to the colonies”.<sup>117</sup> The minister in the Netherlands was increasingly burdened with many more matters he was not directly involved in. Before this, the administrator had the responsibility in case of issues that needed fast and immediate action. But faster communication meant faster and more decision-making in a shorter period of time “whereas nor in the Indies or the Netherlands, the man is assignable who carries full responsibility in a moral sense”.<sup>118</sup> Lenting therefore pleads for a change in the function and governmental provisions for the governor in the DEI, without restricting the governor’s freedom to make decisions though also without depriving him of responsibilities.<sup>119</sup>

Although reluctantly at first, the above shows a number of instances which testify of a growing awareness that faster means of connectivity brought about – and needed - a change in policy- and decision making regarding the DEI. However, as time-space perceptions changed the way in which colonial territory could be enlarged and managed, the Dutch perception of their colony did not seem to change. Even though the Netherlands felt and acted increasingly responsible for its economy and citizens, it remained separate from the Dutch economy and people. Despite the reduced distance, the DEI did not become a ‘extended part’ of the Netherlands but remained an overseas possession. However, the DEI as a ‘geographical space’ did start to draw closer as a whole as a consequence of enhanced connectivity.

#### 4.5 Science and Technology

Growing transport- and communication lines and networks demanded an adjustment and propagation of supervision within the organisational structure in the DEI. This required the placement of more officials at different posts and institutions in the DEI. The latter is most clearly evident in the Decentralization Act of 1903 and the Decentralization Resolution of 1905, which shifted responsibility from the central power of the Dutch government to lower, local governmental councils in the DEI. Roads, railways, telegraph- and telephone lines were

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<sup>117</sup> [“eene volkomene en in alles voorziende regeering, van het ministerieel departement uit, is en blijft zeer moeielyk, al heeft de telegrafische kabel den afstand der koloniën tegenwoordig aanzienlijk verminderd.”] Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> [“zonder dat óf in Indie óf in Nederland de man aanwysbaar is, die de volle verantwoordelykheid in zedelyken zin draagt”] Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> “Lenting explains the case as follows: “Sometimes there is a necessity to act instantly and this requires a great deal of independence from the governor. His freedom of action should not be paralyzed, and his responsibility can not be thwarted.” (In Dutch in the original text: “Er is soms noodzakelykheid om oogenblikkelyk te handelen, en hiervoor wordt eene groote mate van zelfstandigheid van den landvoogd gevorderd. Zijne vrijheid van handelen mag niet verlamd, en zyne verantwoordelykheid niet verijdeld worden.”). Ibid, 314.

thus increasingly management, maintained as well as funded by regional or local councils.<sup>120</sup> One of the important sources for funding the road came from taxes. The use of unpaid labour for road-building was still frequently applied, although under influence of the ethical politics this gradually disappeared. On Java, unpaid labour was officially abolished in 1916, whereas on the other islands where relations were still more traditional, road building and maintenance continued much longer to be carried out through unpaid labour. According to Marie-Louise ten Horn-van Nispen and Wim Ravesteijn, the construction of roads in the DEI demonstrates a process of a colonial ‘local modernisation of technology’.<sup>121</sup> Because the DEI differed so much from the Netherlands in geographic and natural features, science and technology required a specific approach specific to the properties of the DEI.

Technological inventions regarding various ways of connectivity became a major economic and strategic importance in the nineteenth century in the Netherlands, as much as in the rest of the world as the demand for transportation grew significantly. Especially at the beginning of the twentieth century, after the introduction of the car and commercial vehicles, roads necessitated a demand for a better organisational and technological construction of road (networks).<sup>122</sup> Road building was, at least until 1920, directed by engineers who were educated in the Netherlands. The different geographical structure and location of the DEI increasingly required an adaptation of knowledge. Engineers in the DEI were constantly searching alternative solutions and creating new scientific knowledge about the construction of roads and bridges specifically designed for the landscapes in the DEI. An interesting development, as ten Horn-van Nispen and Ravesteijn point out, is that in the early twentieth century the knowledge and skills about road construction in the DEI was in fact ten years ahead in comparison with these developments in the Netherlands.<sup>123</sup>

The expansion into the outer regions evoked the need to determine the exact geographical territory of the DEI to ‘secure’ the Dutch possessions in the DEI. The Dutch government greatly invested in scientific ventures to measure distances and to have cartographers to capture features of the area of the DEI on maps. Other research projects were financed and set in motion as well, such as research on the soil, flora and fauna of the DEI, and on climate and the specificities of the waters within the archipelago.<sup>124</sup> Scientists of

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<sup>120</sup> Horn-van Nispen and Ravesteijn, “The Road to an Empire”, 47.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.* 48

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>124</sup> Lewis Pyenson, *Empire of Reason: Exact Sciences in Indonesia 1840-1940* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1989).

different specializations in the exact sciences in particular were drawn towards to the DEI for the contribution of the development of knowledge needed to realise various means of connectivity in the DEI. Scientific research in the DEI that was carried out specifically to improve connections was the triangulation and soil research on Java and the outer regions to measure precise distances. This was needed for determining submarine and land-telegraph lines on and between the islands and to map these areas as Dutch territory.<sup>125</sup> Also, technology, radiology, eco- and biological science and astronomy all contributed to a greater knowledge of the Dutch overseas' riches.

Universities and research centres were established at several cities in the DEI which increasingly draw scientists from the Netherlands there to pursue a scientific career. The structure of the authority between directors or professors and their assistants remained just as it was so in the Netherlands. This also brought opportunities for (elite) Indonesians, who could enter university programs and join in research projects. However, in a study named *Empire of Reason: exact sciences in Indonesia 1840-1940* Lewis Pyenson notes that the difference was that a scientist in the DEI could not 'climb up' to become a professor or enter a university chair as the Dutch in the DEI could, because "the pinnacle of colonial hierarchy was reserved for Dutch citizens".<sup>126</sup> In his study, Peynson spends a great deal investigating the relationship between political goals and policies carried out in the DEI regarding research projects and the (contingency) goals of scientists and the outcomes of these scientific projects. The Dutch government funded the science projects in order to receive greater insight and control over the overseas possession. Pyenson focuses on the perception and ideology of scientists, rather than on the perception of political agents. He argues that despite the fact that scientist were funded to contribute to - and make possible - the extension of Dutch power in the DEI, their goal was to genuinely explore the laws of nature and specific features of the islands in an area very different from their own homeland. This brings him to an explanation of an interesting view in this regard which he links with the concept of cultural imperialism when he states: "The prosecution of exact sciences in the East Indies did not derive from colonial power; rather, power resulted from pure knowledge."<sup>127</sup> According to Pyenson, cultural imperialism is not the deliberate tactics of a colonial power to extend or deepen their rule. He argues instead that cultural imperialism follows from the nineteenth century belief in

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid, 185.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid, 180.

science and advancement of learning. He builds the former argument on the assertion of English scientist and statesman Francis Bacon that “knowledge of the world implies practical mastery over it”.<sup>128</sup> In the context of the relationship between the Netherlands and its colony, the former shows that enhanced connectivity enables the accessibility and controllability of the area. For a colonial power seeking to remain its authority over a colony, it seems logic that a strong emphasis was laid on the controllability of the (accessibility) of space. Initial goals were easier to achieve, but moreover, that goals changed and new ones were created. Time-space perception is a conception of the structure of reality and the inherent possibilities within this system. When time-space perceptions change, so do possibilities. Goals are always set for the future, and thus a certain prediction on how these goals can be achieved under the circumstance of the future. When time-space perception accelerate during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, speculation, uncertainty, but also excitement about future developments arise. Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, leader of the artistic and social movement of futurism (a movement heavily associated with ideas of speed, technology and the object of transportation) states: “Those people who today make use of the telegraph, the telephone, the phonograph, the train, the bicycle, the motor cycle, the automobile, the ocean liner, the dirigible, the aeroplane, the cinema, the great newspaper . . .do not realise that these various means of communication, transportation and information have a decisive influence on their psyches”.<sup>129</sup>

A scholar who regularly commented on - and was closely involved in - matters concerning the DEI is the zoologist Johan Frans van Bemmelen (1859-1956), who moved to the DEI in 1890.<sup>130</sup> In ‘Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch-Indië’ of 1899 an article is included in which the content of a commemorative book *Nederlandsch' Indië onder het regentschap van Koningin Emma, 1890—1898* (The Dutch East Indies under Queen Emma’s regency, 1890-1989) is discussed. Van Bemmelen’s share in the discussion primarily aims at developments within the DEI, stressing that the society of the DEI is increasingly based upon European standards due to improved means of transportation, electric light and education. The writer of the article argues that the traffic between the archipelago and the mother country

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Dorthe Gert Simonsen, “Accelerating modernity Time–space compression in the wake of the aeroplane”, in *The Journal of Transport History*, Vol. 26, No. 2, (Manchester University Press, 2005), 100.

<sup>130</sup> J.W. Ilzerman, chief engineer for the State Railways invited van Bemmelen to take part in an expedition across Sumatra. After this he wrote many scientific articles for magazines and journals. His largest Indian publications in this time are itineraries, including a ‘Reisgids van Nederlandsch-Indië’ (Travel Guide for the Dutch East Indies) in 1896, which he compiled at the request of the Koninklijke Pakketvaart-Maatschappij (Royal Packet Company) (KPM).

became livelier and faster, due to a fast and shorter sailing time, for the purposes of the postal service by steamship companies Nederland and the Rotterdamsche Lloyd.<sup>131</sup> He quotes van Bemmelen who, according to him, rightly regards the expansion and acceleration of traffic as a very important factor in the development process of colonial life in the DEI: “The greater the opportunity to mentally and physically experience time and again the cooler climate and more intense social and spiritual life of Europe, the stronger the attraction the colonies will exercise.”<sup>132</sup> This quote seems to suggest that a scientist as Van Bemmelen, had the expectation that a closer connection with the DEI would ‘make’ the DEI more Dutch, and as a consequence could enable a closer relationship between the Netherlands and their colony.

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<sup>131</sup> J.F. van Bemmelen, “Nederlandsch' Indië onder het regentschap van Koningin Emma, 1890—1898” in *Tijdschrift voor Nederlands Indië*, Vol. 3, (Amsterdam: H.J.W. Becht, 1899).

<sup>132</sup> [“Hoe grooter de gelegenheid wordt om zich telkens geestelijk en lichamelijk te sterken door een bad in 't koelere klimaat en 't intensievere maatschappelijk en geestelijk leven van Europa , hoe sterker aantrekkingskracht de koloniën zullen uitoefenen.”] Ibid.

### ***5. Space, time and the nation: connectivity in representations***

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the ethnic origin and ‘cultural cohesion’ of the nation became increasingly more important. As a consequence, the national identity of a people and the nation state were emphasized and often redefined.<sup>133</sup> It can be argued that, with the changing perception of the world, the perception of ‘the nation’ presumably changed as well. What role did connectivity play in altering ideas and importance of the nation and national identity? Or in other words: to what extent do the specific properties of a geographical territory determine how a people experience a sense of belonging to ‘the nation’?

“A short span of time and the conflict which is in the foreground of all civilized countries, the dispute concerning the sphere of the state, will soon also entirely dominate practical politics”.<sup>134</sup> Liberal politician P.W.A. Cort van den Linden starts his piece discussing the meaning and occupation of the (modern) nation state with this quote from the statesman and professor Hugo Krabbe from his inaugural reading in 1894. Van den Linden stresses that “the power, which the mind derives from the rapid imitation which the improved means of transportation make possible, is in less and less healthy proportion with respect to individual perceptions, which still have a limited horizon. Mankind learns to make plans that have far-reaching consequences, which he executes through the leverage of common consciousness.”<sup>135</sup> Van den Linden seems to signal a disorientation or loss of control occurring in society which relates to changing worldviews and possibilities to control and change existing processes. Technology caused life in all its processes and organisation to accelerate, as networks became increasingly more complex. A growing importance of the awareness of ‘the other’ and of the simultaneity of events increased and therefore changed the perception of the world. From the world as a ‘system’ with two major actors; the ruler and the subject, globalisation seemed to change the world into a system in which not only

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<sup>133</sup> Philip L. White, “Globalisation and the Mythology of the Nation State”, in A.G. Hopkins et al., *Global History: Interactions between the Universal and the Local* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 257-284.

<sup>134</sup> [“Nog een korte spanne tijds en het geschilpunt dat in alle cultuurlanden op den voorgrond treedt, het geschilpunt omtrent den werkring van den staat, zal weldra ook de praktische politiek geheel beheerschen.”] P.W.A. Cort van den Linden, “Staat en Gemeenschap” in *De Gids* Vol. 58. (P.N. van Kampen & zoon, Amsterdam 1894), 239.

<sup>135</sup> [“de macht, die het bewustzijn ontleent aan de snelle nabootsing, die de verbeterde verkeersmiddelen mogelijk maken, staat hoe langer hoe minder in gezonde evenredigheid tot den nog steeds beperkten individueelen gezichtseinder. De mensch leert plannen maken van ver reikende gevolgen, die hij in het werk zet door den hefboom van het gemeenschappelijk bewustzijn.”] Ibid, 261.

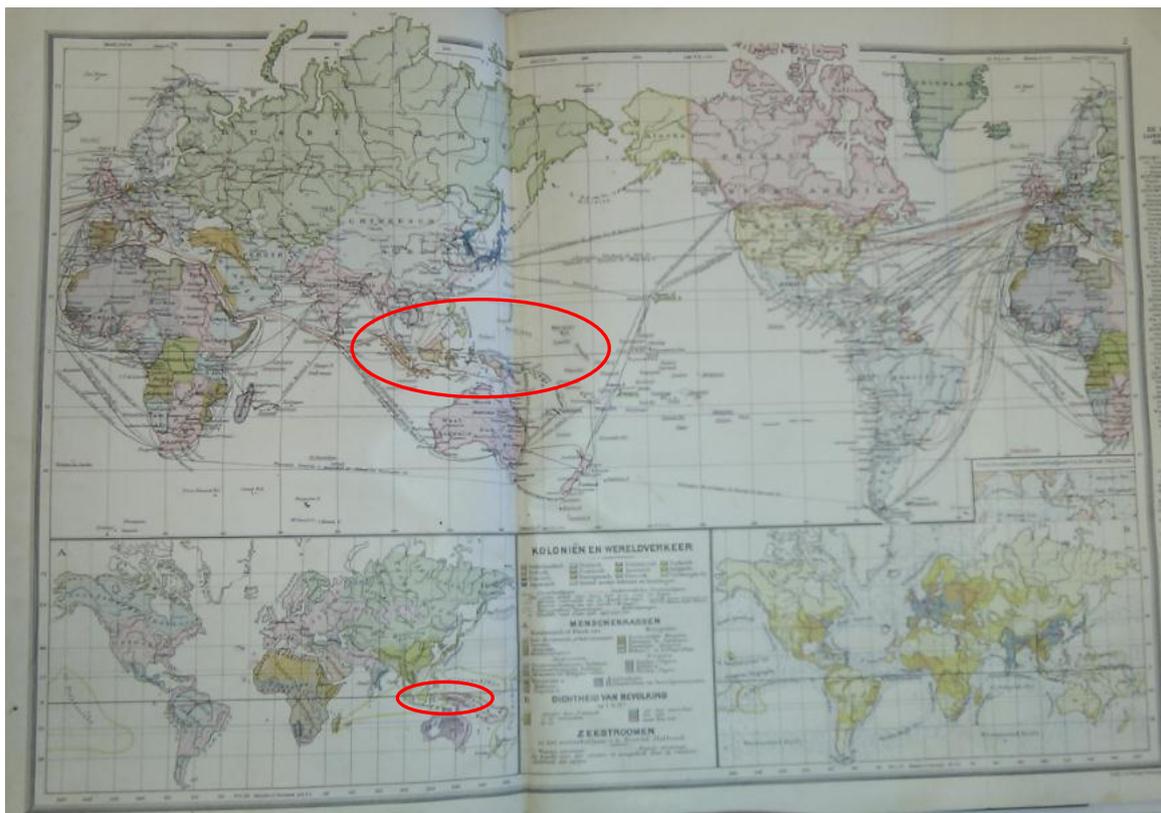
governments (nations) were dealing with each other, but increasingly had to deal with private entrepreneurs and individual rights.

## 5.2 World maps

One way of looking at presentations of connections between the Netherlands and the DEI is by the way in which these areas are interlinked through connections as depicted on world maps. How were connections within the DEI and the connections between the Netherlands and the DEI are represented on maps (by telegraphic, trade and marine routes)? Maps show the position, and therefore relative importance of the Netherlands and the DEI in relation to each other and to the rest of the world in a single presentation of the globe. However, in the period 1870-1930 surprisingly few world maps were produced in the Netherlands. Contrary to this; many detailed maps of the Indonesian archipelago were drawn by scientists in the period 1870-1930 with the aim of defining Dutch authority in the outer regions as discussed in the former chapter. The connections as depicted on maps between the Netherlands with respect to the DEI show very little change in the period investigated. Sea routes for ships were, after the opening of the Suez Canal, all depicted via the same lines. Although the number of lines increased over the years (which shows the accumulation of connections), very few changes are visible regarding the *position* of the Netherlands and the DEI. Connections (trade routes) between the DEI as well as with other parts of the world increased. Telegraph lines, and later airplane routes were drafted on maps in a similar way as shipping routes. When looking at the position of the DEI with respect to the Netherlands very little appears to change also. The most remarkable difference seems to be on what was showed as the centre of the world map. When showing wind directions and currents and depths of the sea, the DEI is often placed in the middle of the map. The same holds for maps showing trade routes, all international connections to other continents. A world map of an atlas made in the same period showing ‘mensenrassen’ (human races) Europe is placed in the middle.<sup>136</sup> This seems to suggest that the cartographer, when considering ‘people’ or nations, saw Europeans to be at the centre of the world.

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<sup>136</sup> P.R. Bos, *Schoolatlas der geheele aarde* (Groningen: J.B. Wolters U.M., 1915).



*“Kolonien en Wereldverkeer” (Colonies and World traffic).*

*Map in a Dutch atlas of 1915, the DEI is centred in the middle-left. The lines depict the sea routes on which the number of days is written to show the length (in days) of the sea routes. The small map in the lower left depicts “menschenrassen” (human races) and has Europe at its centre.*

Source: P.R. Bos, *Schoolatlas der geheele aarde* (Groningen: J.B. Wolters U.M., 1915).

Notwithstanding, it appears precarious to draw conclusions from the way in which the DEI is depicted on world maps, due to the often practical purposes for which world maps were drafted. Presumably, the Dutch used English maps to navigate to and from the DEI by ship. Detailed maps of the archipelago were used to determine their territory and to navigate between the different islands. Direct connections between the DEI and the Netherlands on maps seem purely be made to show trade routes. Thus, world maps of this period do not reveal much on how the perception of the relation between the Netherlands and the DEI was perceived and changed over time. However, the number of maps produced and distributed did increase over the years. In that sense, especially the extensive collection of maps of the DEI appears to reveal more about the relationship between the Netherlands and the DEI. In *Imagined Communities*, American political scientist Benedict Anderson established a link

between what he calls ‘musealisation’ and colonial state-building.<sup>137</sup> Anderson stresses that maps, museums and census were the prominent instruments with which a colonial state established the contours of its domain and the geography of the dominated country, of the nature of the people that it controlled and of the legitimacy and history of its authority.<sup>138</sup> Through these instruments, the ‘colonial world’ became more concrete and insightful as well as reproducible and representable for a larger public, so that people from the mother country could get acquainted with the colonial domination. In this sense, technology strengthened, rather than loosened, the differences and distance between the Netherlands and the DEI.

### 5.3 The Dutch International Colonial and Export Trade Exhibition of 1883

A brief disquisition is here therefore included on the representation of the relationship between the Netherlands and the DEI during the Internationale Koloniale en Uitvoerhandel Tentoonstelling (International Colonial and Export Trade Exhibition) or *Exposition Universelle Coloniale et d'Exportation Générale* of 1883.<sup>139</sup> The exhibition was the only world exhibition that has ever been held in the Netherlands.<sup>140</sup> Dutch historian Marieke Bloembergen in her study *De Koloniale vertoning: Nederland en Indie op de wereldtentoonstelling (1880-1931) (Colonial spectacles: the Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies at the world Exhibitions 1880-1931)* explores how the exhibitions were a means of highlighting the relationship between Dutch imperialism, colonial imaging and the development of Dutch national consciousness.<sup>141</sup>

Scientific and technological innovations regarding transport and communication not only meant better connections between the Netherlands and the DEI, they were part of the Dutch colonial achievements. The flyer of the world exhibition of 1883 proudly introduces the exhibition: “A glorious page in the history of our country indeed (...) enjoying the sympathy of the whole civilized world (...) the undeniable importance of trade and industry, science and fine arts, civilization and progress.”<sup>142</sup> The world exhibitions were seen as a

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<sup>137</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> Bloembergen, “Colonial Spectacles”, 1.

<sup>140</sup> [author unknown], *Officiële wegwijzer Internationale Koloniale en Uitvoerhandel tentoonstelling* (Amsterdam: Stoomdrukkerij De Brakke Grond, 1883).

<sup>141</sup> Bloembergen, “Colonial Spectacles”, 13.

<sup>142</sup> [“Een roemrijke bladzijde inderdaad in de geschiedenis van ons vaderland (...) de sympathie genietende van geheel de beschaafde wereld (...) in het onmiskenbare belang van handel en nijverheid, wetenschap en

serious and “international contest in the realm of progress”.<sup>143</sup> Bloembergen notes that the colonies were part of the Dutch ‘imagined community’.<sup>144</sup> On the other hand however, she also stresses that the departments of colonial ‘treasures’ at the exhibitions were created to clarify to the public how great the distance was between the ‘primitive and exotic’ world of the DEI and the Dutch modern civilisation.<sup>145</sup>

In the flyer, the writer speaks of a ‘surprising sight’ when visitors walk into the Indonesian department of the exhibition, describing it as “the realization of a fairy tale from ‘Thousand and One Nights’”.<sup>146</sup> The natural and cultural features of the DEI are emphasized by their strangeness compared with the Dutch nature and culture by highlighting the typical bamboo houses which are built without nails but with lashings, the appearance of the Javanese in their typical clothing and the many beautifully decorated buildings.<sup>147</sup> Also the strange “afgodsbeelden” (idols) are mentioned to stress the enormous cultural and religious difference with the Netherlands. The writer does remind his readers that all that is shown at the exhibition resembles the time “when all of this was still young and unseen”.<sup>148</sup> In this sense, the exhibition seems to serve as evidence that the Dutch changed this land, its nature, culture and its inhabitants by becoming its ‘owner’. Bloembergen stresses the congruity, or dualism, of the Dutch governance in the DEI between association and assimilation.<sup>149</sup> She points out that the Dutch governance during the *Culture System* could be seen as a process of *association*, whereby the Dutch could keep as much distance as possible from the (responsibility on the welfare) of native inhabitants while gaining as much profit from the area as possible. The increasing pressure of inland rebellions during the expansion into the outer regions and the costs of military intervention, urged the Dutch government to pursue a different approach. Ethical politics after 1901 generated equal rights for people in the DEI, which Bloembergen indicates as a form of *unification*.<sup>150</sup> Bloembergen states that the “drive

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schoone kunsten, beschaving en vooruitgang”] [author unknown] “Officiële wegwijzer Internationale Koloniale en Uitvoerhandel tentoonstelling”, 5-6.

<sup>143</sup> Bloembergen, “Colonial Spectacles”, 10.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid*, 14.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid*, 16.

<sup>146</sup> [“de verwezenlijking van een sprookje uit ‘Duizend en een nacht’”] [author unknown] “Officiële wegwijzer Internationale Koloniale en Uitvoerhandel tentoonstelling”, 6.

<sup>146</sup> Bloembergen, “Colonial Spectacles”, 8.

<sup>147</sup> [author unknown] “Officiële wegwijzer Internationale Koloniale en Uitvoerhandel tentoonstelling”, 13.

<sup>148</sup> [“toen dit alles jong en nieuw en ongezien was.”] *Ibid*, 14.

<sup>149</sup> Bloembergen, “Colonial Spectacles”, 17.

<sup>150</sup> Bloembergen, “Colonial Spectacles”, 45.

to introduce unification can be seen as the Dutch variant of assimilation”.<sup>151</sup> Part of this drive originated from the awareness that “improvements in transport and infrastructure in the Dutch East Indies intensified contact between the different groups, making the coexistence of different rules of law more impractical.”<sup>152</sup> Connections within the DEI initiated the unification of the DEI as a ‘national entity’, while assimilation between Dutch and the Native inhabitant of the DEI was mainly based on tactical and pragmatic considerations.<sup>153</sup> Assimilation took place with the creation of equal political and economic rights for the native inhabitants of the DEI, though it seems questionable whether this inherently meant cultural equality between the DEI and the Netherlands. It appears that the world exhibition in fact served to demonstrate the difference between the Dutch and Indonesian civilisation to show “what remarkable and rare, all treasures from the far strange [in Dutch: ‘verre vreemde’ meaning the unfamiliar and strange things at a far distance], strange still, even though we come in contact with it so often.”<sup>154</sup> The writer fails to mention the name of ‘the far strange’, thus does not identify the DEI and therewith emphasises the treasures of the DEI, as strange and unfamiliar as they are, as Dutch belongings. “Rightly waves here, from this beautiful building in the middle of the Indian park, Holland's flag on top of the highest pole.”<sup>155</sup> This is how the author of the pamphlet concludes his contemplation, emphasising the Dutch accomplishments and ownership of the treasures of the DEI.

#### **5.4 People, territory and borders: organic notion of the nation**

A prominent Dutch intellectual of the last part of the nineteenth- an early twentieth century is the theologian, politician, journalist and statesmen Abraham Kuyper. His ideas have been very influential throughout his time.<sup>156</sup> In ‘Ons Program’ (Our Program) written in 1876, Kuyper outlines the foundation for his Party, of which a considerable part is devoted to his opinion on the Dutch interference and relationship towards the DEI.<sup>157</sup> In his description of

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> [“wat al merkwaardigs en zeldzaams, wat al schatten uit het verre vreemde, vreemd nog steeds, al komen wij zoo vaak er mee in aanraking.”] Ibid, 19.

<sup>155</sup> “Officiële wegwijzer Internationale Koloniale en Uitvoerhandel tentoonstelling”, 14.

<sup>156</sup> [“Te recht wappert hier van het schoone gebouw midden in het Indische park Neerlands vlag aan den allerhoogste mast”] Ibid, 18.

<sup>157</sup> In 1879, Abraham Kuyper founded the first nationally organised political party in the Netherlands: the ‘Antirevolutionaire Partij’ (Anti Revolutionary Party).

<sup>157</sup> Abraham Kuyper, *Ons Program* (Amsterdam: Hoveker & Wormster, 1876).

the nation, Kuyper uses an organic metaphor: “So is the state to us like an organism, in this sense that the people, and the distinction of these individuals and their connections and relations (...) correlates to the soil on which they live (...) not being accidentally brought together, but in origin have been placed together, and thus by virtue of their nature and essence belong together.”<sup>158</sup> In Kuyper’s understanding, the people of a nation are in ‘their nature’ and through legislation (constitution) closely linked to each other. Kuyper sees the nation as a given, a non-artificial unity based on a logic development in natural (ethnic) and political (legislation) features. In this view, a geographic area and a community are thus interwoven and historically belong together: “the laws, by which life and developments of this whole obeys, could not arbitrarily be established, but that they are given in the nature of political life.”<sup>159</sup> In this view, the Netherlands and the DEI could impossibly form a unity as one nation.

In a chapter named “De Kolonien behooren aan, niet tot het Rijk” (The colonies belong *to* the Kingdom, they are not part of it) he further outlines his ideas on Dutch colonial policy, the question of sovereignty and the bond between mother country and colonies. Kuyper argues against the constitutional, revolutionary thought that the colonies are a part of the Dutch Kingdom. Against this conception he again uses an organic notion of the relationship between the Dutch Kingdom and the colonies. In his eyes, the kingdom of the Netherlands is a self-existing, ‘closed’ kingdom, in possession of overseas territories. This possession is inhabited by different people, with an independent history and their own national character (‘volksgeest’) and thus where a completely different ‘life is lived’ as in the Netherlands.<sup>160</sup> He expresses his critique on the (in his view revolutionary) ideas of the constitution in which representatives “dare to underpin the fiction that without a national or organic connection, even regions which do not touch each other, can be bind together as one nation.”<sup>161</sup> Besides the historical and ethnic differences, the geographical distance from the

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<sup>158</sup> [“Zoo nu ook is voor ons de Staat daarom een organisme, overmits de personen, en het onderscheid van die personen en hun verbindingen. en de daaruit ontstaande betrekkingen, en alle sociale krachten, die in deze personen schuilen, óók in verband met den bodem waarop ze leven, en geheel de stoffelijke omgeving waarmeê te rekenen valt, vooreerst niet toevallig bijeenkwamen, maar in hun oorsprong op elkaar zijn aangelegd ; en krachtens hun aard en wezen aldus bijeen hooren] Ibid, 62.

<sup>159</sup> [en dat voorts de wetten, waaraan het leven en de ontwikkeling van dit geheel gehoorzaamt, niet naar willekeur konden worden vastgesteld, maar in den aard van het staatsleven, behoudens de noodige correctieven, gegeven zijn”.] Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> Abraham Kuyper, “‘S’ Rijks bezit over Zee” In: *Ons Program* (Amsterdam: Hoveker & Wormster, 1876), 325.

<sup>161</sup> [“de fictie aandurven, dat zonder national of organisch verband, zelfs gewesten, die elkaar niet raken, tot één rijk zijn saâm te binden. Maar zulk een tegennatuurlijke, onhistorische, in-revolutionaire gedachte mag noch kan ooit duurzaam wortel schieten.”] Ibid, 326.

mother country to the Dutch colonies is clearly seen by Kuyper as aspects that make a sovereign Kingdom with these colonies impossible. “But such an unnatural, unhistorical, revolutionary idea can nor should ever permanently take root (...) even less because there, where it concerns regions which state boundaries do not touch each other, where each mutual point is missing any geographical or ethnographical relationship”<sup>162</sup> Among a common history and ethnicity, Kuyper stresses the need of having a ‘geographically unified territory’ for a nation state to be perceived - and thus to exist- as such. Were these ‘organic ideas’ of the nation revolutionary at that time? It seems no coincidence that Kuyper wrote this at a time when means of communication and transportation exponentially increased. One could argue that if there was a moment in which the formation of a nation over a territory separated by a vast distance became a realistic possibility, it was exactly in this time in which space becomes increasingly manageable. Kuyper’s emphasis on this organic idea of the nation seems to indicate a relationship between increased connectivity and the meaning of the nation state. In this sense, one effect of globalisation could be seen as erasing former boundaries between nations as well as emphasising differences between these entities. This, consequently, seems to invoke a need to define oneself with respect to ‘the other’ nations in terms of ethnicity and culture, and in terms of power (possession). Defining the space to which a nation belongs by a confined geographical entity, literally keeps the ethically and historically ‘other’ at a distance.

Dutch lawyer and politician Cort van den Linden uses a similar organic metaphor in an article of 1893 named “Staat en Gemeenschap” (State and Community). In this article he describes the changing perceptions of society in a world in which geographically separated areas increasingly became connected and technology plays a crucial role in altering these perceptions: “The world then begins evolutions in full consciousness, whose consequences cannot be overlooked (...) likewise there are representations, inventions and discoveries that cross the whole world and initiate actions and reactions of centuries, spreading from one area to another and changing the whole appearance of society. Communities melt away and others grow and after a longer or shorter time they are again adapted to the human appreciation – and way of dealing with - the new world of ideas, that science had opened to her.”<sup>163</sup> This

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<sup>162</sup> [Te minder nog waar het gewesten geldt die de rijksgrenzen niet aanraken, en die onderling elk punt van geographische of ethnografische verwantschap missen.”] Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> [“De wereld begint dan in volle bewust zijn evoluties, wier gevolgen niet worden overzien (...) evenzoo zijn er voorstellingen, uitvindingen, ontdekkingen, die bewegingen na zich sleepen over de geheele wereld en acties en reacties inleiden van eeuwen lang; overslaande van het eene gebied op het andere en wijzigende het geheele aanzien der maatschappij. Gemeenschappen smelten weg en andere groeien en na langer of korter tijd

statement clearly indicates the effect of innovation and technology on societies and people's perception of the world. Along this line of thought, it seems logic that a new definition of the nation arose due to changing time-space perceptions and the growing availability of knowledge of what is going on in distant parts of the world.

### 5.5 Foreign Colonial Policy

S. Ritsema van Eck writes in 1919 (in a book about Colonial Political Studies in the period 1912 to 1918) that the Netherlands at that time was facing more issues concerning the colonial policy as ever before. He outlines the current situation and anticipates how the relation between the Netherlands and the DEI will develop in the future. According to him, the DEI would increasingly become independent and autonomous with only a 'weak connection' with the mother country. Ritsema van Eck states that the times that the Netherlands had to protect their colonial possession against other 'European contenders' are over. He describes the DEI at that time as "aanhansel van het rijk" (appendix of the Kingdom) without its own vitality, and unsuitable as an active element in the Dutch colonial policy. Ritsema van Eck stresses the fact that due to the closer and more intensive connections over time, people in the colonies are developing their own common ideals and (political) goals. He argues that the latter is a consequence of the great contrast between the Dutch sovereign independency and the adherence of the DEI, the differences in civilization and culture. According to him, these differences are caused by the position that the Netherlands occupies as the coloniser of an area a great distance away from the home country. Ritsema van Eck therefore advocates a 'foreign colonial policy', especially for a country "who is separated of her colonies by a great distance and cannot expand herself in the colonies."<sup>164</sup> Geographical distance appears herewith one of the main reasons why the Netherlands and the DEI could not 'operate' as one realm, or, nation state. Ritsema van Eck further explains that the foreign colonial policy is needed because of the 'dual hazards' that the DEI risks from outside. The first danger concerns a violent threat that competitors could 'extract' by means of military power, the colony from the Netherlands and claim it their own. The other danger is the 'soft influence' of other (non-Western) nations near the DEI, that would influence the inhabitants of the DEI by sharing

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is weder het waardeerings- en handelapparaat der menschheid geadapteerd aan de nieuwe wereld van voorstellingen, die de wetenschap haar had ontsloten." Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> ["die door een grooten afstand van hare kolonien is gescheiden en zich zelve in die kolonien niet kan uitbreiden"] S. Ritsema van Eck, *Koloniaal-Staatkundige Studies 1912-1918* (Commissie tot Herziening van de Grondslagen der Staatsinrichting van Nederlandsch-Indië, 1919), 41.

nationalistic ideas that would endanger the Dutch power position in the DEI. Thus the foreign policy entails that the DEI no longer should be occupied and governed by a coloniser, but should instead be granted more power and a unity (nation state) of its own, so that it is both secured from the outside as well as from the inside. Ritsema van Eck elaborates on this, what he calls, ‘separate principle’ in a chapter called ‘Het karakter en het dualisme van de koloniale werkzaamheden in Indie’ (The Character and Dualism of the Colonial Activities in Indie). In this, he states: “It is not the separation itself, which creates difficulties, but it is the principles by which the separation takes place, which are wrong and from out of which difficulties arise.”<sup>165</sup> The principles that Ritsema van Eck refers to are those of race, civilisation, ethnology and nationality. According to Ritsema van Eck, these kinds of principles, as well as the multiplicity of these principles are wrong assumptions. He argues that the close ties between persons and people in the ‘present circumstances of the world’ does not allow for such distinctions. The reason for this is that the world: “because of its means of transportation and greater safety of life, by the milder notions about the interrelation between nations is increasingly moving beyond the boundaries of race and religion.”<sup>166</sup> Ritsema van Eck highlights the ambiguousness of the meaning and functioning of race and religion. His solution, and with that his argument on how the Dutch foreign colonial policy should operate, is the ‘creation’ of the unity of people that is foremost and basically determined by the geographical area to which these people are united and to which they belong. The protection and ‘consolidation’ of borders is only possible by providing a clear geographical area and allocating communities to this specific territorial area. The idea of a geographical area as means by which the DEI’s position is secured (and controlled) appears a way to reform policies to deal with a world that is increasingly interconnected.

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<sup>165</sup> [“het is niet de scheiding op zich zelve, die de moeilijkheden doet ontstaan, maar het zijn de beginselen volgens welke die scheiding plaats heeft, welke verkeerd zijn en waaruit de moeilijkheden voortvloeien”]  
S.Ritsema van Eck, Koloniaal-Staatkundige Studies 1912-1918, 73.

<sup>166</sup> [“door zijn verkeersmiddelen, door de grootere veiligheid van het leven, door de mildere begrippen omtrent omgang tusschen volkeren, zich in toenemende mate buiten de grenzen van ras, van religie, beweegt.”]  
S.Ritsema van Eck, Koloniaal-Staatkundige Studies 1912-1918, 74.

## 6. Conclusions

This paper has sought to show the significance and effect of connectivity on the relationship between the Netherlands and the DEI as reflected in Dutch thought in the period 1870 – 1930. The starting point for this research was the presumption was that when in lifeless nature time and space are fully intertwined with ‘the rest’ of the world, this might also be the case in living nature to which mankind and presumably also its thinking belongs. This resulted in the (preliminary) conclusion that the relation between time, space and thinking is not or not fully comparable with the Theory of Relativity. This might be explained by the fact that living nature is more complex than lifeless nature and needs more parameters to be properly described. However, it has not been proven that such relation does not exist since there are multiple signs it does exist. From a Scientific point of view the time span investigated (1870 – 1930) might be too short and therefore statistically irrelevant. More research would be necessary in order to investigate: a) if the time span as considered was statistically relevant and b) till what extend might other parameters play a role and what is their significance? It is assumed that indeed the time span investigated was probably too short since gut feelings tell that when globalisation further increased after the second half of the twentieth century and time and distance lost even more significance, also the Dutch perception changed. However, this has not been further researched and needs further investigation.

Nonetheless, this research has led to several conclusions and findings on the significance of space-time perception and the relationship between state, colony and geographic space. Technology enabled new and faster connections between the Netherlands and the DEI, which brought about a number of important changes in the way in which the Dutch governed the DEI. During the period investigated, new and faster means of transportation intensified the exchange of goods and persons *between* the Netherlands and the DEI, as well as *within* the DEI. New and faster means of communication enabled a much greater awareness and manageability of events occurring (simultaneously) at distant places. Connections also enabled the Dutch expansion into –and control over- the outer regions. Transportation and communication lines within the DEI intensified and changed the organisation of goods, people and towns; shaping the space of the inlands. The latter also created new possibilities of direct control of the area of the DEI as a faster and more efficient organisation became exceedingly obtainable by long distance communication. The change in production and trading possibilities inevitably influenced the Dutch governmental interest and

decision making. Capitalism further ‘interconnected’ the interests of the different players within the international market.

However, the effect of increased connectivity on the *relationship* between the Netherlands and the DEI appears quite limited in the period here analysed, much smaller as initially thought. While connections made possible that the DEI turned into a global trade network, the Dutch presence and authority expanded and intensified within the entire area of the DEI. The relationship between the Netherlands and the DEI in the period 1870-1930 predominantly remained a *colonial relationship*. Thus, looking at the connection between the Netherlands and the DEI in terms of unification, one can hardly speak of a growing sense of a (imagined) community or a relationship between ‘equal nations’. Rather, one could state that the relationship between the Netherlands and the DEI has been one which foremost remained based on economic goals, with the mother country serving as the guardian of the people and businesses in the DEI. For the Dutch state, economic and political goals seemed to have been the prominent actor for bringing about changes in the relationship towards the DEI. Dutch colonial policy did undergo significant changes: new colonial policies were implemented and decision making became increasingly more ethical with a greater focus on the welfare of the native inhabitants. Thus towards the 1930’s, liberal and moral considerations arose, which seem to have started to surpass (although gradually) the economic and political interests. As Dutch authority spread over the outer regions, scientists were increasingly drawn to the DEI, and this was certainly even more so for private entrepreneurs. Many businesses and trading networks were established within the DEI, albeit with a decreasing but still considerable dependence on the Dutch government until the 1930’s. The Dutch government continued to pursue a dominant, state controlled position in the DEI, owning much of the transportation connections as the railroads and roads for vehicles, as well as a monopoly on communication lines (telegraph, telephone and radio).

The interesting aspect of focussing on the way in which new technology ‘relativized’ time and space, is that it highlights the significance of *distance* regarding the relationship between a mother-country and its colony. Changing time-space perceptions did, as is shown by the changing colonial policies and organisation of the DEI greatly altered the economic and political situation within the DEI. This indicates a change in how the relationship between a people and geographical space are perceived and subsequently, how separated geographical areas were interlinked. Globalisation unfolded as a process that interconnected nations and companies over the world. As is reflected by a number of prominent Dutch intellectuals, it

was quite inconceivable to think of the unity of ‘the nation’ between separated geographical areas as well as between people with different historical, ethical and cultural features. This indicates that globalisation interconnected nations in an economic manner, but that this does not inherently count for a political or cultural association between the different nations involved. This is not to say that the latter does not happen *due* to globalisation, but this process does not necessarily happen according to a linear process. In conjunction with the latter, one can conclude that the time frame in which ideas on the relationship between nations changes (regarding the influence of to changing time-space perceptions), depends on the influence of different processes taking place at that same time. Moreover, globalisation seemingly evokes at least one counter movement namely that of the increased importance and ‘creation’ of *the nation* confined to a geographically ‘bounded’ territory. When a greater interconnectness and interdependence between nations arose, differences between these nations seem to have been emphasized instead of fading into a coherent whole. Changing time-space perceptions evoke a change in the perception of the relation of one’s identity (or, the ‘self’, whether as an individual as a nation) with a geographical space (place of belonging). In this sense, globalisation can be seen as a non-linear process which actuates the redefinition and ‘re-understanding’ of the world (worldview), in accordance to that of the self (identity) in time (perception of the past and present) *relative* to both the frame of reference and extent of control one has over a particular space.

Connectivity influenced the accessibility to – and Dutch awareness about matters in - the DEI. Migration towards the DEI between 1870 and 1930 was very low, however, and (cultural) exchange happened on a small scale, if at all. Thus with only few Dutch people settling in the DEI, cultural exchange was very limited. Connectivity brought the DEI closer to the Netherlands, but the inequality between the cultures in a colonial relationship culminated in the colonised culture being ‘absorbed’ rather than ‘transferred’ to the dominant coloniser. The Dutch nationalised their territory, seemingly without including the inhabitants and their culture in this process. As long as the DEI was seen as a Dutch possession, it presumably intensified Dutch nationality, rather than evoking a bond or unification between the Dutch and Indonesian people. Greater interdependence meant a growing uncertainty about who carried responsibility and could be addressed in what cases concerning political or economic matters. Accordingly, the perception of what confined ‘the nation’ came to be perceived in a different light. What is the world, urges the question what are (a) people, and in accordance: what is the relation between people and the space they inhabit or control?

Ultimately: the relationship between a ruler and its colony is one in which the space is owned by the ruler and connectivity proved to be a convenient means of doing so.

The Netherlands, although being a prominent colonial power in the nineteenth- and first half of the twentieth century, exhibits a number of differences as an 'Imperial Empire' in comparison with the British, French (and later Prussian) colonial empires. By focussing on the perception of the globe by those 'in power', more light is shed on how the influence of the government came to be perceived as growing capitalism caused the capital to be increasingly in the hands of individuals in a developing 'liberal market' economy. Thus, in light of colonisation and colonial possession, the concept of space seems to have played a crucial role in the Dutch perception of 'the nation' in relation to the process of globalisation and the relationship towards their colonies. Would the relationship between the Netherlands and the DEI have been different if the process was not as much disrupted by (international) events is counterfactual to ask, though it could lead to further investigating 1): the particularity of Dutch (conditions) of imperialism as opposed to other colonial powers, and 2): the relation between colonisation and globalisation in an increasing interconnecting world.

In this research I have followed several scholars in their theories and arguments on time-space perception. I presume with Duncan Bell, that time-space perception is central to the unfolding of globalisation.<sup>167</sup> Secondly, I follow Stephen Kern in his conviction that time-space perceptions accounted for a change in the (cultural) perceptions of the world. If the world is understood as a 'system', this system operates and is changing due to human (inter)action, as well as knowledge about the mutual influence and simultaneity of events. One could derive from this that the perception of the world thus determines actions, and that the consequences of these actions change our perception. In this sense, the world and 'the perception of the world' in terms of time and space are alike. From this then follows that when time-space perceptions change, the world itself as it appears actually changes. If colonialism and imperialism can be perceived as a stage in the 'unfolding process of globalisation'<sup>168</sup>; and if as Bell notes, a "profound shift" in perceptions of time and space are central to the unfolding of this process; than from this would follow that colonialism and changing time-space perceptions relate to each other. Thus in the history of globalisation, the Dutch perception of the nation and of national identity appeared to be significantly determined by geographical borders. When space became more manageable, borders and

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<sup>167</sup> Bell, "Dissolving Distance", 562.

<sup>168</sup> Ravesteijn, "Between Globalisation and Localisation", 32.

territory seem to become more important, despite all the time-space annihilating technology. The increasing interconnectedness not only led to a transcending of the former boundaries of nations in a globalising world, but the relationship between people and the geographical area they inhabited were at the same time redefined, and, with that, consolidated.

“We entirely shun the vague word “space,” of which, we must honestly acknowledge, we cannot form the slightest conception (...) it is clearly seen that there is no such thing as an independently existing trajectory but only a trajectory relative to a particular body of reference.”<sup>169</sup> – Albert Einstein.

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<sup>169</sup> Albert Einstein, *Relativity: The Special and General Theory* (New York: Henry Holt And Company, 1920).

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