Building Modernity

Indische Architecture and Colonial Autonomy, 1920-1940

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“When two people meet, each one is changed by the other so you’ve got two new people.”[1]

[1] John Steinbeck, *The Winter of Our Discontent* (New York: The Viking Press, 1961).

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Introduction

> There exist two camps there, the first one claiming that the mother country must transport 'civilization', including art, to the colony. There is too little remaining of the Javanese art to bestow it with lasting value; while the Javanese himself, whose cooperation would be necessary, no longer possesses artistry. Mais, à qui la faute? On the other side there is a camp that argues the complete opposite, and brings the evidence needed to this end.[2]

In the account of his voyage to the Netherlands Indies in 1923, the renowned Dutch architect Hendrik Petrus Berlage (1856-1934) summarizes a contemporary debate on the prospective direction of architecture in the colony and the need for a distinctive "Indische" (Indies) style.[3] During his travels in the Eastern colony, Berlage came into contact with this cultural debate, which was "Indies" in its participants and content, and simultaneously influenced architects in the mother country.[4]

The discourse on the Indische style was dominated by the arguments of Thomas Karsten (Amsterdam 1884 – Tjimahi 1945), who played a key role in the development of town-planning in the colony; Charles Prosper Wolff Schoemaker (Banyu Biru 1882 – Bandung 1949), an important modernist architect; and Henri Maclaine Pont (Meester Cornelis 1884 – The Hague 1971) who built relatively little, but wrote on Indische architecture all the more. Both Thomas Karsten and Henri Maclaine Pont aimed to devise a new Indische architectural style by incorporating principles of traditional Javanese architecture and local construction materials in modern building. In contrast, Wolff Schoemaker argued that Java *had* no architectural history, and that, consequently, "there is nothing we can adopt from the natives."[5]

This debate did not occur in a historical vacuum. Colonies are by nature dynamic societies where ethnic relations, as well as the relation between colony and metropole are constantly reconfigured. From 1900 onwards the discipline of architecture in the Netherlands Indies had experienced professionalization and an increasing autonomy from the mother country.

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[2] H.P. Berlage, *Mijn Indische reis. Gedachten over cultuur en kunst* (Rotterdam: W.L. & J. Brusse N.V., 1931) 99 (my translation).

[3] While "Indische" means "Indies" in English, I will use the Dutch term in this paper as a concept of which the meaning differs somewhat from its English translation. "Indische" architecture concerns the conscious creation of an architectural style in the Netherlands Indies from 1920 onwards that developed independently from the mother country, and sought to synthesize Western and "native" construction methods and principles. Earlier attempts since 1911 to create a harmonious building style can also be regarded as "Indisch". The term "Indies" indicates architecture in the Netherlands Indies in general.

[4] Thijs Weststeijn, "De Indische wortels van het Nederlandse modernisme. Ideeën over oosterse spiritualiteit bepaalden de interesse in Indische kunst", *De Academische Boekengids* 71 (2008) 3-8.

[5] Sociaal-Technische Vereeniging, *Verslag Volkshuisvestingscongres 1922* (Semarang: Stoomdrukkerij Misset, 1922) 35 (my translation).

Simultaneously, a broader cultural interest in the indigenous population developed, which was stimulated by the Ethical Policy.[6] A third development was a rising notion of cultural colonial citizenship, politically manifested in the founding of the *Indische Partij* (Indies Party) in 1912, but also noticeable among segments of the indigenous middle class population.[7]

Until the late 1980s, knowledge of Dutch colonial architecture in Indonesia remained relatively scarce. However, since Huib Akihary's pioneer work *Architectuur & Stedebouw in Indonesië* (1988), there has been an increasing academic interest in the Dutch colonial history of architecture and urban planning. Main examples are C.L. Temminck Groll's *The Dutch Overseas* (2002), Pauline van Roosmalen's PhD thesis *Planning the City* (2000), and Rudolf Mrázek's *Engineers of Happy Land* (2002). With the exception of Mrázek, who examines the Netherlands Indies through the lens of technological developments, these accounts seem to have taken the subject of architecture and urban planning as an end in itself. Existing literature has acknowledged the architectural significance of colonial architects such as Maclaine Pont, Wolff Schoemaker and Karsten, but has hardly focused on the cultural-historical significance of their ideas and works.

Buildings are embodiments of culture. As Chris Gosden and Chantal Knowles have argued, the deep mutual involvement of people and material culture means that much social life is achieved through objects and buildings and their features.[8] Buildings are identity markers and reference points. They were designed to be *seen*. They conveyed messages to Europeans and natives alike, even though the respective messages (and their interpretations) could be different. Adherents to the Indische style presented a structured and highly conscious form of cultural hybridization. This material expression of colonial hybridization processes provides a valuable, but relatively underexplored, area of colonial discourse.

The occurrence and development of an architectural debate where (for some) the "traditional" and the "native" became tools for constructing colonial modernity is tangential to the subject of the relation between metropole and colony on the one hand, and the notion of colonial citizenship on the other. As Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler have argued, "both colonies and metropoles shared in the dialectics of inclusion and exclusion, and in what ways the colonial domain was distinct from the metropolitan one."[9] The tension between cultures of the metropole and the colony deserves to be further explored, without falling for the tempting idea that there is a

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[6] The *Ethische Politiek*, or "Ethical Policy", marked an important change in colonial politics in the Netherlands Indies. Its main characteristic was the wish to develop the "land and people" of the Indies, with an increasing concern for the needs of the indigenous population.

[7] Henk Schulte Nordholt, "Modernity and Cultural Citizenship in the Netherlands Indies: An Illustrated Hypothesis", *Journal of South Asian Studies*, 42 (2011) 435-457.

[8] Chris Gosden and Chantal Knowles, *Collecting Colonialism. Material Culture and Colonial Change* (Oxford: Berg, 2001) 22-23.

[9] Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, "Between Metropole and Colony. Rethinking a Research Agenda", in: Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (eds.), *Tensions of Empire. Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkely, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press 1997) 3.

clear dichotomy between "colonizer" and "colonized". During the period of technological modernization in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the relation between metropole and colony was defined in new ways. As several historians have argued, European inhabitants of the late-colonial Netherlands Indies developed a cultural self-image that was increasingly autonomous from the European mother country.

The main question that rises concerning this architectural debate is: what was the interrelation between an increasing cultural autonomy, a new interest in "native culture", and the development of the Indische style in the Netherlands Indies between 1920 and 1940? This paper explores the answers to this question. It will begin with a concise history of architecture in the Netherlands Indies, revolving around the question what structural and institutional forces made the professionalization and autonomous position of the Indies architectural discipline possible. This will be followed by an analysis of the debate on the Indische style in the 1920s. What arguments did Maclaine Pont, Karsten and Wolff Schoemaker deploy to defend their respective positions? The third chapter concerns the role and place that the Indische style occupied in the colonial landscape of the 1920s and 1930s. It will focus on the possible connection between the Indische style and the notion of cultural colonial citizenship. Was the Indische style supposed to bind colonial subjects to the colonial state, or was it mainly a way for those Europeans who felt more connected to the colony than to the Dutch metropole, to express their colonial cultural identity in their material surroundings? This chapter will also touch upon the question whether colonial architecture and urban planning between 1920 and 1940 strengthened the ethnic divide in the colony, as both Rudolf Mrázek and Farabi Fakih have argued.[10] The case of the Indische style might call for a revision of this idea; perhaps the concept of "cultural hybridity" is a more viable approach to the Netherlands Indies society than the "colonial divide". Both Maclaine Pont and Karsten had a relatively great and genuine interest in the colonized population, while being simultaneously deeply involved in the European colonial community. Is the aim of these architects, which was to achieve a synthesis between East and West, between colonizer and colonized, even possible?

[10] See: Rudolf Mrázek, *Engineers of Happy Land. Technology and Nationalism in a Colony* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002) 43-84. And: Farabi Fakih, "Kotabaru and the Housing Estate as Bulwark against the Indigenization of Colonial Java", in: Freek Colombijn and Joost Coté (eds.), *Cars, Conduits, and Kampongs. The Modernization of the Indonesian City, 1920-1960* (Leiden: Brill, 2014) 152-171.

Chapter I

Architecture and Colonial Autonomy

In 1870 the Dutch parliament in The Hague passed two important laws regarding the Netherlands Indies: the Sugar Law and the Agrarian Law. The first marked the end of the Culture System, which had been in place since the 1830s.[11] The latter opened the colony to private business, which could now invest in agriculture, trade and industry. As a result Dutch companies and citizens set out for the Eastern colony in increasing numbers. Many offices and affiliates settled in the three large Javanese port cities: Batavia, Semarang and Surabaya, which would become independent municipalities in 1905.[12] Large numbers of buildings needed to be constructed to house these companies and their owners. This demographic transformation, together with the advent of the Ethical Policy in colonial politics during the first two decades of the twentieth century, led to the professionalization of architecture as an autonomous Indies discipline, with an increasing attention for the needs of the "native". This would pave the way towards the development of a modern building style that was firmly grounded in local circumstances: the "Indische" style.

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the transformations that preceded the Indische style in the light of transformations in the relation between metropole and colony. As Ann Stoler and Frederick Cooper have argued, "Europe's colonies were never empty spaces to be made over in Europe's image or fashioned in its interests; nor, indeed, were European states self-contained entities that at one point projected themselves overseas."[13] Stoler and Cooper have instead pointed out the mutual influence between metropole and colony. This intertwined and contingent metropolitan-colonial connection has remained relatively under-examined for the Netherlands and its colonies.

The Ethical State

As several historians have argued, Dutch colonial policy and Indonesian colonial society underwent the most significant change of direction at the turn of the twentieth century.[14] In

[11] The Culture System (*cultuurstelsel*) basically amounted to an obligation of the indigenous population to use part of their land for the cultivation of export crops. This policy was in place between 1830 and 1870. For more information on the "Culture System", and the growing resistance to it, see: M.C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia, ca. 1300 to the present* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993) 155-160.

[12] The process of urbanization continued into the twentieth century: between 1900 and 1925, Surabaya grew by 80 percent, Semarang by 100 percent, Batavia by 130 percent, and the inland situated Bandung even by 325 percent. Numbers derived from: Mrázek, *Engineers of Happy Land*, 59.

[13] Cooper and Stoler, "Between Metropole and Colony", 1.

[14] Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, 193. And: Marieke Bloembergen and Remco Raben, "Wegen naar het nieuwe Indië, 1890-1950", in: Marieke Bloembergen and Remco Raben (eds.), *Het Koloniale Beschavingsoffensief: wegen naar het nieuwe Indië, 1890-1950* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2009) 7.

addition to increasing contact and migration between the metropole and the Netherlands Indies, there were the developments of urbanization and subsequent town planning practice, reinforced interest for "native" culture, and, connected to all of these, an ideological transformation under Dutch colonialists. This new colonial ideology is usually referred to as the "Ethical Policy". Although historians generally agree that the Ethical Policy began around 1900, the debate remains open on when it came to an end. A compelling argument has been made by Esther Locher Scholten, who argues that the official program of native "development" flowered between 1905 and 1920, and was supplanted with a consolidative "conservative ethical trend" from 1920 to 1942.[15] It is in this last period that the actors of the Indische style debate operated, although with some of them, as we will see, "progressive" ethicism seems to have survived the formal shift in policy.

Proponents of the Ethical Policy envisioned it to be the Netherlands role to "guide" the Indies towards economic growth and Western-style modernization. The paternalistic approach towards the indigenous colonized population becomes clear from the 1901 essay *De Ethische koers in de koloniale politiek* (The Ethical direction in colonial policy) wherein the Indies journalist Pieter Brooshooft defines the new direction as "the noble-minded impulse of the stronger one to treat the weaker one justly."[16] Others spoke of a "Debt of Honor" resulting from the vast amount of money extracted from Java since the "batig slot" (budget surplus) had been attained in 1867.[17] For most, strengthening the economic position of "the Javanese" was the primary goal. Historian M.C. Ricklefs has drawn attention to the fact that the Ethical Policy was the product of an alliance of both humanitarian and economic interests, since an increased income also generated higher tax revenues.[18]

What is generally understood as the Ethical Policy – a concept that is used to define the late-colonial period – moves beyond the official policy of economic development. Remco Raben suggests that the late-colonial period (1900-1942) can be considered as a "lengthy period of re-orientation and thought formation on the organization of the Indonesian society and the modern world," a re-orientation in which not only colonial officials but large segments of the Netherlands Indies society took part.[19] The ethical turn was reflected outside politics in the goals of newly organized associations, and in the discourse that now saw frequent use of the terms "ethical" and

[15] E.B. Locher Scholten, *Ethiek in fragmenten: Vijf Studies over koloniaal denken en doen van Nederlanders in de Indonesische archipel* (Utrecht: HES Publishers, 1981) 212-213.
[16] P. Brooshooft, "The Ethical direction in colonial policy, 1901", in: Chr. L. M. Penders (ed. and transl.), *Indonesia. Selected Documents on Colonialism and Nationalism, 1830-1942* (Brisbane: Academy Press, 1977) 66.
[17] C.T. van Deventer, "Een Eereschuld", *De Gids* 63 (1899) 205-257.
[18] Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, 197.
[19] Bloembergen and Raben, "Wegen naar het nieuwe Indië", 21.

"moral".[20] Marieke Bloembergen and Remco Raben have tried to make explicit the cultural hierarchies that the Ethical Policy implicated. Following Locher Scholten, they place the Ethical Policy in the international context of the European imperial "civilizing missions".[21] The late-colonial aim to develop the "land and people" and to "modernize" the colony implied that it was Europeans who would bring something to the colony, while Indonesians were on the receiving end.

An important program of the Ethical Policy, therefore, was educating the indigenous population. In absolute numbers the Ethical Policy had greatly enhanced the possibility of European education for the colonial subjects. With the opening of the *Bandoeng Technische Hoogeschool*, the Technical College of Bandung (designed by Maclaine Pont), in 1920, university-level education became available to all ethnic groups (see figure 6). Despite these "improvements", the group of Indonesians that received a Western education remained marginal. In 1930 some 84,000 Indonesians took part in the European school system below university level, only about 0.14 per cent of the population. At university level the percentage dropped to 0.0003 per cent with only 178 Indonesian students.[22] The project of "developing" the native people went beyond Western education and was apparent in almost all aspects of colonial life. As will be demonstrated later, colonial architecture and urban planning can also be understood as such a project of "development".

The Open State

In his essay *What was the Late Colonial State?* the British historian John Darwin presents "the open state" as one of the central characteristics of the late colonial state. This notion is crucial for understanding the fundamental changes between the nineteenth-century colony, when "the lines of communication ran to the metropole and back," and the late colonial state of the early twentieth century.[23] The latter became increasingly open to external influences; examples are the influences

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[20] Locher Scholten, *Ethiek in fragmenten*, 179.
[21] Bloembergen and Raben, "Wegen naar het nieuwe Indië", 7-8.
[22] Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, 203.
In contrast, in the Netherlands the *Leerplichtwet* (law of compulsory education) was established in 1900 which, legally at least, obliged primary education for children between the ages of 7 and 12. Yet already between 1890 and 1900 about 90% of Dutch children regularly went to school. The Dutch higher education counted around 9,000 students in 1930, which amounted to 0.114 percent of the total population. Although in light of present day education figures this number seems small, it still is 380 times higher than the percentage in the Indies.
For statistics on Dutch education in the twentieth century, see: G. Th. Jensma and H. de Vries, *Veranderingen in het hoger onderwijs in Nederland tussen 1815 en 1940* (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 1997) 21. More information on the *Leerplichtwet* can be found in: J.H. de Graaf, "Ontstaan van de leerplichtwetgeving. Van Houten's Kinderwet en de Leerplichtwet van 1900", in: *Leerplicht en recht op onderwijs: een onderzoek naar de legitimatie van de leerplicht- en aanverwante onderwijswetgeving* (Nijmegen: PhD dissertation, 1999) 27-59.
[23] John Darwin, "What was the late colonial state?", *Itinerario* 23 (1999) 73-82.

of Pan-Islamism and Pan-Asianism in Indonesian anti-colonial thought.[24] In trade too, the metropole lost its monopoly: during the First World War the colonial state itself abandoned the principle of excluding all foreign influence by diverting the Netherlands Indies trade from the Netherlands to the United States (a consequence of the obstructed seaways to Europe.)[25] During these turbulent years – in which the Netherlands remained neutral – the administration of the Netherlands Indies largely defined its own course. Communication with the mother country was difficult and the virtual absence of Germany (and the omnipresence of Great Britain) in South-East Asia meant that the colonial government had to deal with the situation with its own resources and based on its own knowledge.[26]

The publications of the Indische architects Maclaine Pont, Karsten and Wolff Schoemaker bear witness to a broad international orientation: their knowledge of literature in the field of architecture went beyond Java and the Netherlands, and included countries such as the Philippines, Japan, and most prominently, America.[27] Indeed, the United States of America was one of the major non-Dutch influences in the late colonial Netherlands Indies society. Governor-general J.P. van Limburg Stirum (r. 1916-1921) considered America the land of the Indies' economic and military future. Architects too, often looked in the direction of the United States for answers to modern times, for example in the modernist designs of American architect Frank Lloyd Wright.[28] Multiple articles in the Indies Architecture Journal (*Indisch Bouwkundig Tijdschrift*) reported on trips in the United States, often referring to the extensive use of asphalt and vertical building in America.

Decentralization and Colonial Autonomy

Roughly simultaneous with this development of "opening up" to the international world, was the administrative process of decentralization, from The Hague to Batavia, from Batavia to the regions and cities, and from the Dutch to the Indonesians.[29] Together, both internationalization and decentralization provided the colony with an increasing sense of autonomy from the mother country. Political decentralization included the formation of a proto-parliament in the Dutch Indies: the *Volksraad* (People's Council). At the official opening of the Council in 1918, governor-general Van Limburg Stirum articulated his prospect of a future autonomous colony:

[24] Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, 220.
[25] Locher Scholten, *Ethiek in fragmenten*, 64.
[26] Ibidem, 110-113.
[27] Tjerk Ruimschotel, "Indische stedebouw, architectuur en het moderne bouwen", *Spieghel Historiael* 28 (1993) 322.
[28] The influence of Lloyd Wright was especially significant in the work of Indo-European architect C.P. Wolff Schoemaker. Other modernist architects such as C. Citroen and A.F. Aalbers were more influenced by European functionalism, such as the German *Bauhaus* and the Dutch *Het Nieuwe Bouwen*. See: Huib Akihary, *Arhitectuur & Stedebouw in Indonesië, 1870-1970* (Zutphen: De Walburg Pers, 1990) 55-56, 84.
[29] Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, 203.

> Entered to be no longer departed from, is the road to the goal to which we endeavor, that is, an accountable government in the Netherlands Indies itself, which in cooperation with the *Volksraad* will be entitled to take final decisions on all affairs that are not of general national interest.[30]

Members of the *Volksraad* were not exclusively European, finally providing the indigenous population with some form of political representation.[31] However, with the Council lacking real political power, its members being only partially elected, and the electorate totaling just 2,228 individuals in the entire Indonesian archipelago, historians such as Ricklefs have argued that government in practice remained centralized and thoroughly European.[32] Still, it seems that the *Volksraad* did strengthen an increasing *cultural* sense of autonomy from the mother country, apparent in the founding of the Indies Party in 1912, and the culturally hybrid architecture that became discernible from 1911 onwards.

Paradoxically, this colonial autonomy was partly the product of intensified contact and migration between colony and mother country. Starting in the late nineteenth century, more Europeans came to the Netherlands Indies, and more Indonesians went to the Netherlands to study.[33] In 1869 the Suez Canal had been opened in Egypt, considerably reducing the travel time to the Indies.[34] Between 1854 and 1881, the number of Europeans on Java had risen from 18,471 to 30,713.[35] In addition to the Suez Canal, a radio connection between Kootwijk in the Netherlands and Bandung on Java was established in 1920, and KLM flights operated on a reliable weekly basis from 1930 onwards. The traveling time (for some) had now been reduced from months to days.[36] The influx of Europeans intensified the organization of Indies society in the private and public spheres, and therefore made administrative decentralization possible.

Colonial Architecture: The Maturation of a Discipline

When European businesses and citizens came to the Indies in increasing numbers from 1870 onwards, the assignments for constructing the necessary buildings were initially given to architects (and architect firms) in the Netherlands, while the building contractors were located in the Netherlands Indies. An important example is the office of the *Nederlandsch-Indische Spoorweg Maatschappij* (NIS) in Semarang, designed by J.F. Klinkhamer and B.J. Ouëndag in

[30] Cited from: Locher Scholten, *Ethiek in fragmenten,* 72 (my translation).
[31] Bloembergen and Raben, “Wegen naar het nieuwe Indië”, 11.
[32] Ricklefs*, A History of Modern Indonesia,* 203.
[33] Bloembergen and Raben, “Wegen naar het nieuwe Indië”, 11.
[34] Jeanine Deckers, “De opbouw van de kolonie: Indische ontwikkelingen in de 19e eeuw”, *Spieghel Historiael* 28 (1993) 306.
[35] H.J. Krijgsman, *Koloniale Architectuur in Nederlands-Indië, 1816-1870* (Utrecht: PhD dissertation, 1990) 52.
[36] C.L. Temminck Groll, *The Dutch Overseas. Architectural Survey* (Zwolle: Waanders Uitgevers, 2002) 103.

1902 on their desks in Amsterdam (see figure 2).[37] Almost all their building material too, had "been brought over from Europe," Klinkhamer wrote in 1917. "All had been carefully designed, modelled, and pre-made over there (…) readied so well that not a single piece of the stone had to be recut when it arrived in the Indies."[38] Dutch architect H.P. Berlage also designed offices in Batavia and Surabaya, before ever having set foot on Indonesian soil (which he eventually did for the first and last time in 1923).

At the start of the twentieth century an increasing number of architects went to the Netherlands Indies, and increasingly, they planned to stay for good. When Dutch architects arrived they were often amazed at the lack of what they saw as "good architecture". The engineer-officer Ch. Meyll defined nineteenth-century colonial architecture as "the beauty-products of Netherlands Indies doghouse renaissance."[39] Speaking of the (lack of) possibilities for the contemporary architect, the newly-arrived architect P.A.J. Moojen described the situation in the Indies in 1903 as follows:

> Room for an architect, who does not act as building contractor, and who indeed meddles with aesthetics, was according to general opinion not available in the Indies and the best advice that one could give was: 'Take the first boat to Holland!'[40]

The strengthened connection between metropole and colony, together with the Ethical Policy led to a Europeanization of Dutch Indian society. Western buildings were constructed and Western values and principles were dispersed through the schools that some of those buildings housed. Architecture historian Huib Akihary states that "in their doings they [Europeans in the Netherlands Indies - MV] were and remained oriented towards the West."[41] This must not lead to the conclusion that the connection between the Netherlands and Indonesia was one-sided. If ever, this was certainly not the case for the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The flow of ideas and people *from* the colony to the Netherlands also increased heavily, in the form of Indonesian students attending Dutch universities. Cultural influence from the colony, although underexposed in collective memory and historiography, was crucial in the Dutch art scene. As Dutch art historian Thijs Weststeijn has made clear, the Dutch avant-garde around 1900 was heavily influenced by Eastern philosophy and artistic developments in the Indies. The building of the Netherlands Trading Society (NHM) in Amsterdam was completed in 1926 by Karel de Bazel and held a distinct set of Indies influences, such as the application of a kala-head on the safe

[37] Akihary, *Architectuur & Stedebouw,* 16.
[38] Cited from: Mrázek, *Engineers in Happy Land,* 61.
[39] Cited from: Akihary, *Architectuur & Stedenbouw*, 14-15 (my translation).
[40] Cited from: Idem (my translation).
[41] Ibidem, 9.

deposit, to guard against evil demons (see figure 4). For European newcomers too, the tropical environment and culture of the Indies proved of great influence for their personal and cultural identities. Indo-European architect Wolff Schoemaker, for example, culturally identified with the colony. He converted to Islam, made the pilgrims journey to Mecca, and possessed a live black panther and a few poisonous snakes in his home on Java.[42]

One of the most consequential administrative reforms of this period is the Decentralization Law that was issued by the Dutch government in 1903, transforming a number of Javanese cities into self-governing municipalities (*gemeenten*). Urban planning and public housing, former responsibilities of the colonial government in Batavia, were decentralized and became municipal affairs.[43] In 1905, the list of independent municipalities was extended by royal decree and included amongst others Batavia, Bandung, Semarang, Surabaya and Tegal.[44] It is important to note that – in contrast to contemporary Holland – these municipalities did not form a serried network.[45] They remained decentralized urban enclaves in a centrally-controlled non-urban Java.

In addition to the construction of private enterprise offices, the increasing need for government buildings brought about by the Ethical Policy stimulated constructive thinking about architecture. The colonial government now needed buildings for new government institutions, telephone services, the prison system, and schools to educate Indonesians and Europeans. Because a large number of buildings had to be built in a relatively short time period, the decision making process was shortened by the introduction of standard designs. These so-called *normaalontwerpen* could be varied upon and were often the basis for new government constructions. To monitor the heightened building intensity and the higher architectural demands, the colonial government installed S. Snuyf as "architectural engineer" in July 1909. Together with a number of supervisors and some indigenous personnel he constituted the newly-formed Architectural Office at the Department of Civil Public Works (BOW).[46] In the period 1909-1912 this office was responsible for the first important products of public building in a distinctly Indische style.[47] The post-office in Medan (1909) is a good example (see figure 3).

These new designs marked a significant break with the earlier colonial architectural tradition of the Empire Style, or what Temminck Groll has called "international tropical

[42] Weststeijn, "De Indische wortels van het Nederlandse modernisme", 3-8.
[43] Akihary, *Architectuur & Stedebouw*, 9.
[44] These new municipalities were predominantly Javanese coastal cities and in 1906 included one non-Javanese city: Palembang on East-Sumatra.
[45] Pauline K.M. van Roosmalen, *Ontwerpen aan de stad. Stedenbouw in Nederlands-Indië en Indonesië, 1905-1950* (Delft: PhD dissertation, 2000) 12.
[46] The BOW Department was set up in 1866 as the successor of the Directorate of the Civil Public Works, which had existed since the administrative reorganization of 1855. Especially after 1909 the Department of BOW had a profound impact on architectural developments in the Indies. The department existed until 1921 when it merged with the Department of Government Enterprise into the Department of Transport and Water Affairs.
[47] Akihary, *Architectuur & Stedebouw,* 18-23.

classicism", which had been prominent during most of the nineteenth century.[48] The palace of governor-general H.W. Daendels (r. 1808-1811) is illustrative of the French influence that would persist in official colonial constructions for the remainder of the century (see figure 1).[49] During this period buildings were valued primarily for their functionality. Due to the lack of experienced architects and the confusion about the function of the colony, there was practically no attention for aesthetics in official constructions until after 1870. Budget savings too, led to an atmosphere where there were few aesthetic demands of architecture. Indeed, as Jeanine Deckers has asserted, practically no discussion on architectural style existed in nineteenth-century Indonesia: everyone followed the neo-classical format. Architecture of the same period in the Netherlands, on the other hand, was characterized by lively debates and a hodgepodge of (neo-) styles, such as neo-gothicism and neo-renaissance.[50]

With the still-existing trade monopoly of the Netherlands Trading Society, it was practically impossible for individuals to invest or build in the colony. Consequently, the designers and builders of Indies' buildings were engineers employed by the government. The colonial architecture of the nineteenth century is therefore often regarded as "engineer-architecture". Architects with an aesthetic education only began to enter the Dutch Indies from the start of the twentieth century.[51] The director of the Department of Civil Public Works, J.E. de Meijer, wrote in 1906, reminiscing of the late nineteenth century:

> There is little of importance to be mentioned about the buildings (...) since weight was merely attached to efficiency and they don't undertake endeavours to beauty, which would, due to the demands of the climate, [and] the nature of the materials (...) lead to disproportionate high costs.[52]

This passage shows that engineer-architects of the late nineteenth century were still fighting *against* the Indonesian environment, and were not yet undertaking (or envisioning) a fruitful synthesis between Eastern and Western construction techniques and materials.

Throughout the nineteenth century architects lacked attention for and knowledge of the culture and climate of Java.[53] This manifested itself in the graduation requirements of future engineers in the Netherlands Indies who had to pass an engineer exam that demanded no extra knowledge of the Indies environment.[54] They were in fact trained to transplant Europe's

[48] Coen L. Temminck Groll, "Inleiding", *Spieghel Historiael* 28 (1993) 290-291.
[49] Huib Akihary, "Daendels als Napoleontisch bouwheer (1808-1811)", *Spieghel Historiael* 28 (1993) 299-303.
[50] Deckers, "De opbouw van een kolonie", 304-307.
[51] Krijgsman, *Koloniale architectuur in Nederlands-Indië*, 13.
[52] Cited from: Ibidem, 9 (my translation).
[53] J.A.A. van Doorn, *De Laatste eeuw van Indië. Ontwikkeling en ondergang van een koloniaal project* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Bart Bakker, 1994) 115.
[54] Deckers, "De opbouw van een kolonie", 306.

modernity into the tropics. In contrast, several questions of the architecture exam at the Technical College in Bandung in 1923 did presume knowledge of local building materials.[55]

Professional organization of architects in the Indies began in the second half of the nineteenth century. In 1850 the Royal Institute for Engineers (*Koninklijk Instituut voor Ingenieurs*) developed a branch in the Indies, with its own journal: The Engineer in the Netherlands Indies (*De Ingenieur in N-I)*. This association focused on engineers, and was thus of a practical and mostly non-architectural nature.[56] In 1898, almost half a century later, the Association of Architects in the Netherlands Indies (*Vereeniging van Bouwkundigen in Nederlandsch-Indië*) was established, also publishing a journal: the Indies Architecture Journal (*Indisch Bouwkundig Tijdschrift*). This association initially focused on defending the interests of affiliated architects, and only after the addition of the Architectural Office to the Department of BOW in 1909 discussions on an independent architectural style started. Publications on the Indische style frequently appeared in this journal.

Still, professionalization had its limits. Although architects in the early twentieth century increasingly became designers, rather than builders, as late as 1924, J. Th. Kienecker appealed to building contractors to come to the Indies, so that they could take over the contractor-function from Indies architects. In the 1920s, the practice of "architect-contractors" in particular applied to the countryside and the Outer Territories. The professionalization remained essentially confined to urban centers and to the island of Java.[57]

As Pauline van Roosmalen has shown in her PhD dissertation on the modernization and professionalization of urban planning in the Dutch Indies (2000), the stimulus of the Decentralization Laws also resonated in the area of urban planning: "it did not take long before administrators, engineers and architects acknowledged the need for coherent, social and aesthetic town plans."[58] After initial problems with finances and the lack of experienced personnel, Semarang became the first municipality in the Netherlands Indies to present an urban extension plan in 1916. From the mid-1920s onwards, municipalities received financial support from the colonial government. Some affluent municipalities had their own architects in service; others hired experts such as Thomas Karsten to advise them.[59] The developments in Indies architecture and urban planning advanced quickly. It is remarkable, Van Roosmalen states, that "this field of study developed in relative short time from a nearly non-existent discipline into a discipline which could keep up with developments in Europe and the United States, and at some stage even moved

[55] Eds., "Architects Examen 1923", *Indisch Bouwkundig Tijdschrift* 26 (1923) 316-317.
[56] Deckers, "De opbouw van een kolonie", 306.
[57] J. Th. Kienecker, "Hoe men de technici in het moederland omtrent den toestand in Indië inlicht", *Indisch Bouwkundig Tijdschrift* 27 (1924) 297-298.
[58] Van Roosmalen, *Ontwerpen aan de Stad*, 226.
[59] Akihary, *Architectuur & Stedebouw*, 29-30.

beyond."[60] Still, it remained an isolated field of architecture: even in the Netherlands few were aware of the key developments that took place in the Indies.[61] On his return to the Netherlands in 1923, Berlage reckoned that Indies architects deserved far more acknowledgement than they received. At a lecture in The Hague, he therefore proposed the organization of "choice exhibitions" to display Indies' architecture in the Netherlands, and vice versa, in order to further intensify the entanglement of metropolitan and colonial modernity.[62]

Autonomous colonialists

In his publications, architect and urban planner Thomas Karsten opposed the practice of ethnic "zoning" that strengthened spatial ethnic division in Netherlands Indies cities. As Van Roosmalen argues, colonial ethnic differentiation was "cynically convenient" for most urban planners, because ethnic differentiation often overlapped the socio-economic division, and thus corresponded with the principle of socio-economic zoning, popular in contemporary European urban planning. Still, Van Roosmalen warns for a simplified derived view that urban planners were "convinced colonialists". She concludes: "Indications that projects were designed to consolidate the Dutch dominance over the archipelago are non-existent."[63]

However, as Gosden and Knowles argued in *Collecting Colonialism, "*Colonial rule was the product of all parties involved in it, and cannot be understood in terms of the top-down imposition of power and bottom-up resistance to it."[64] Indeed, from the correct observation that these planners were autonomous professionals, Van Roosmalen draws the rather naive conclusion that this means they were completely autonomous from colonial practice. To be sure, urban planners got their assignments from the colonial government, either Batavia or the decentralized municipalities. Historian Anthony King has defined colonial urban planning as part of a broader process of colonial differentiation, where the drive for "orderly development […] according to the standards deemed appropriate to the various segregated populations in the city" was based on "historically and socially derived concepts […] that evolved in the metropolitan society and applied to the indigenous environment and people […] as part of the overall situation of colonial power."[65] In relation to *kampongverbeteringen* (improvements of indigenous neighborhoods), Jacques van Doorn states, "by rebuilding the residential environment to Western criteria, they

[60] Van Roosmalen, *Ontwerpen aan de Stad*, 127 (my translation).
[61] Pauline K.M. van Roosmalen, "'We zullen het ze vertellen': Het vergeten Indische werk van Nederlandse architecten", in: Radboud van Beekum, David Geneste, Jan Vredenberg (eds.), *Tjeerd Boersma. Laverend op koers* (Rotterdam: BONAS, 2007) 108-113.
[62] B.J.K. Cramer, "Dr. Berlage over moderne Indische bouwkunst en stadsontwikkeling", *Indisch Bouwkundig Tijdschrift* 27 (1924) 77-79.
[63] Van Roosmalen, *Ontwerpen aan de stad*, 227.
[64] Gosden and Knowles, *Collecting Colonialism*, 24.
[65] Anthony D. King, *Urbanism, colonialism and the world-economy: cultural and spatial foundations of the world urban system* (London: Routledge, 1990) 54.

[government officials - MV] expected a strengthening of Western authority."[66] This "strengthened authority" was the assignment to urban planners. Indeed, while Thomas Karsten hoped economic zoning would break the cultural determinism that underlay racial categories,[67] when he actually developed plans for urban expansion in Semarang, he built a spacious European neighborhood (New Tjandi) on the cooler mountain, and a more dense Indonesian "kampong" right at the bottom of this mountain, where it was hot and cramped.[68] Karsten too, although it was not his own conviction, had to respond to the expectations of the ordering party and to colonial society where ethnic differentiation was the norm.

Van Roosmalen finds further support for her argument that places urban planners outside the colonial in the postcolonial practice of Indonesian town planning:

> Had the Dutch Indian approach to town planning not been autonomous but colonial, surely post-colonial town planners would, if not immediately at least after some time, have abandoned it. As this did not happen, it seems fair to assert that Dutch Indian town planning was (…) an autonomous discipline.[69]

Firstly, Indonesian town planning only partially continued along the same lines, as Van Roosmalen suggests, since the formal racist principles underlining the ethnic division were indeed abandoned after Indonesian independence. More importantly, Van Roosmalen presents a false dichotomy: autonomy and coloniality are both matters of graduality and are not each other's diametrical oppositions. There is something like an autonomous colonialist. In fact, all architects discussed in the next chapter can be characterized as such.

[66] Van Doorn, *De Laatste Eeuw van Indië*, 156 (my translation).
[67] Joost Coté, "Thomas Karsten's Indonesia. Modernity and the End of Europe, 1914-1945", *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 170 (2014) 77.
[68] Karsten's urban plan was situated in a trend of tropical suburbanization where Europeans moved away from city centers to settle on higher and healthier grounds. See: Pauline K. van Roosmalen, "Familiar, yet different. Indische architecture and town planning", *Groniek Historisch Tijdschrift* 174 (2007) 76.
[69] Van Roosmalen, *Ontwerpen aan de stad*, 228.

Appendix I

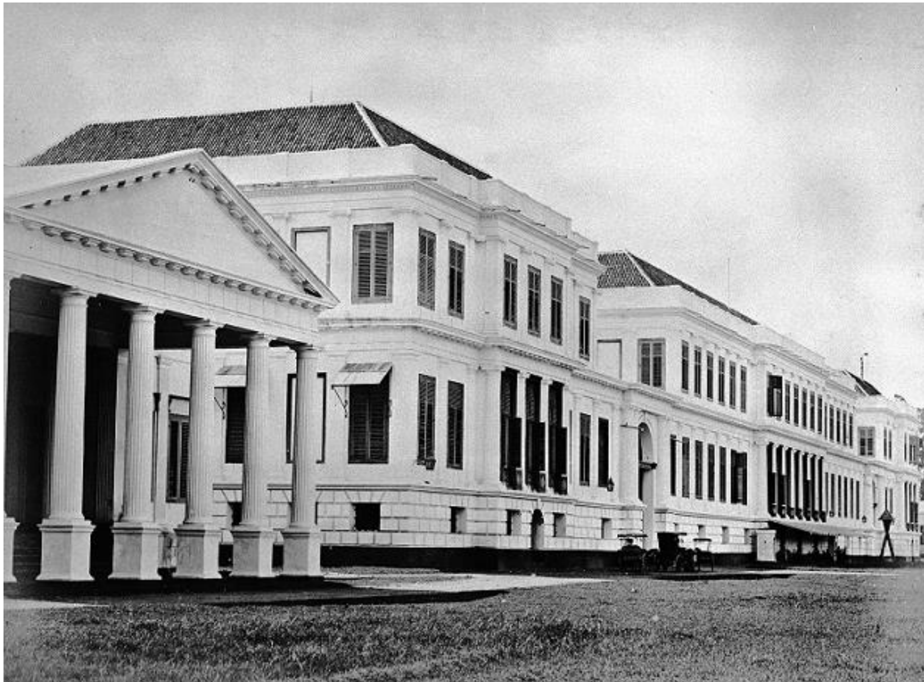

Figure 1 - Palace of governor-general H.W. Daendels in Weltevreden (Batavia), 1809 (Collection Dutch Royal Tropical Institute).

Under: Figure 2 - Main office of the *Nederlandsch-Indische Spoorweg Maatschappij* (NIS) in Semarang, J.F. Klinkhamer and B.J. Ouëndag, 1902-1907 (Collection Netherlands Architecture Institute).

Above: Figure 3 - Post office in Medan, S. Snuyf, 1909 (Collection Dutch Royal Tropical Institute).

Right: Figure 4 - Safe Deposit in the office of the Netherlands Trading Society in Amsterdam, Karel de Bazel, 1919-1926 (Weststeijn, "De Indische wortels van het Nederlandse modernisme", 6).

Figure 5 - Borobudur complex during its restoration by Theodoor van Erp, 1907 (Collection Dutch Royal Tropical Institute).

Chapter II

The Indische Style: the role of the "native" in modernity

The prevailing image of European architecture in the Indonesian archipelago, where Western-style buildings stand in stark contrast with the surrounding nature and where there has been no attempt to find connections with the native world, is only partly true. [70] The Indische style meant a regionalization of Western architecture, which assimilated to local climate, environment, construction techniques and architecture traditions. This meant an increasing attention and praise for indigenous culture, but its value was defined in Western terms and the "native" methodology had to be transformed and "developed" under Western guidance. As Bloembergen and Raben have argued, developmental notions such as "progress", "modernity" and "civilization" are vehicles of colonial discipline and exclusion, and function as ideological justifications of colonialism itself, up until today.[71] Have "the Europeans" not given the Indonesians their roads, train tracks, harbors, cities and knowledge? This "developmentalist" framework remained active in historiography on colonialism until the 1970s.[72] Instead of using "modernity" as an a-priori concept, it should be understood in its historical context: we should study how the concept was used and why.[73] The debate around the creation of an Indische style is just such a situation where concepts of "progress", "civilization" and "modernity" were redefined in the colonial context.

Re-developing the "native"

The creation of this new architecture style is ambiguously connected to the broader Western civilization offensive that went with the Ethical Policy. On the one hand, similar to the ethical programs, the practice of urban planning and Indische architecture meant an aggravated Dutch intervention into the history and the living sphere of the colonized population. On the other hand, the development of a hybrid style where West and East would synthesize, was fueled by a cultural counterpart to the Western civilization offensive that saw this unequivocal Western sense of "civilization" as a problem.[74] Many Europeans became fascinated by the otherness of native culture; some, like Maclaine Pont, undertook scientific investigations of the specific elements of

[70] Rudolph Mrázek, for example, argues that the cities in the Netherlands Indies were marked by buildings that "did not take the least notice of the location where it stood." See: Mrázek, *Engineers of Happy Land*, 83.
[71] Bloembergen and Raben, "Wegen naar het nieuwe Indië", 10.
[72] Cooper and Stoler, "Between Metropole and Colony", 15.
[73] Bloembergen and Raben, "Wegen naar het nieuwe Indië", 11.
[74] Ibidem, 13.

Javanese history and culture.[75] In a similar way, Thomas Karsten argued that the maps of old indigenous towns should be examined, and – because they were examples of "a perfect synthesis between the people's feeling and tradition" – they should serve as inspiration for contemporary cities in the Indies.[76] In short: modernizing efforts coexisted with, and indeed, were often interwoven with an increasing interest in the old and contemporary culture of the indigenous colonial population.

The increasing interest and concern for the "native" thus moved beyond living human beings, and focused on their historical built up areas too. The attempt to "re-develop" ancient native history occurred most prominently with the Hindu-Buddhist antiquities on Java. Fascination with these Javanese historical artefacts had grown during the nineteenth century and, although a modest investigation of the Borobudur complex in Central Java began in 1827, was institutionalized in the early twentieth century.[77] The year 1901 saw the inauguration of the Dutch Indies Committee for Archaeological Research on Java and Madura, which transformed into the Archaeological Department in 1913.[78] The full restoration of the Borobudur was realized by the Dutch architect Theodoor van Erp between 1907 and 1910 (see figure 5). An ambitious project to rebuild the Prambanan temple (again Central Java) was undertaken by V.R. van Romondt in 1931, and was finally completed in 1957.[79]

The formal commitment to study and conserve ancient native archaeology lead historian Marieke Bloembergen to conclude that "somehow, it could be justified that expensive colonial politics could be pursued focusing on Hindu-Javanese antiquities, while the government was simultaneously focusing on the modern development of the colony."[80] Drawing on Anderson's idea that there exists "a link between the musealisation of antiquities and colonial state formation", Bloembergen shows that the cultural knowledge production beginning in the late nineteenth century coincided with, and arguably reinforced, colonial efforts "to reform indigenous societies along Western lines."[81] Indeed, the colonial government could now present itself not only as the bringer of modernity, but also as the guardian of indigenous history.[82] This process of "discovering" indigenous history shows that perceptions of modernity, civilization and citizenship

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[75] Starting in 1925, Henri Maclaine Pont conducted excavations and scientific research in Trawoelan, the center of the 14th century Hinduist kingdom Madjapahit on East-Java. He thought that the construction principles discovered in those old settlements should guide Indies urban planners in their public housing plans for indigenous people.

[76] Thomas Karsten, "Preadvies: Indiese Stedebouw", *Locale Belangen* 7 (1920) 159.

[77] Temminck Groll, *The Dutch Overseas*, 186.

[78] Marieke Bloembergen, transl. Beverly Jackson, *Colonial Spectacles. The Netherlands and the Dutch East Indie at the World Exhibitions, 1880-1931* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2006) 164-165.

[79] Temminck Groll, *The Dutch Overseas*, 109, 186-188.

[80] Bloembergen, *Colonial Spectacles*, 165.

[81] Ibidem, 166.

[82] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 181.

are interconnected and mutually influential.[83] The Indische style can be seen as a "civilizing mission", but it was a project where Western "guides" thought it was necessary to educate the indigenous population in its *own* "native" civilization.

The Debate: adherents and adversaries

In his study on the late-colonial state J.A.A. van Doorn has characterized the civil service official and the engineer as each other's rivals in the colonial administration; where the first had more sympathy for "native" institutions and traditions, the latter transformed the landscape of the colony by introducing Western modernity in infrastructure and buildings.[84] Although themselves no colonial officials, these two figures are embodied in the different architects Henri Maclaine Pont and C.P. Wolff Schoemaker. Like Maclaine Pont, Wolff Schoemaker was born on Java. Both men returned to their native land after their study in Europe. Wolff Schoemaker graduated from the Royal Military Academy in Breda in 1905 and began with a military career as lieutenant-engineer. Only in 1911 did he become an architect and in 1918 he established his own architecture firm.[85] His technical worldview and arguably related lack of sympathy for indigenous construction traditions become clear from his publications in the Indies Architecture Journal, where Wolff Schoemaker opposes statements made by Maclaine Pont on the usefulness of Javanese construction techniques.

Henri Maclaine Pont graduated from the Technical University of Delft in 1909. Two years later Maclaine Pont moved back to the Netherlands Indies and in 1913 he established his own office in Semarang. His first assignment was the design of the headquarters of the Semarang-Ceribon Steam Tram Company in Tegal (see figure 9). Here, Maclaine Pont adapted his construction to the climatological demands of the tropics.[86] The geographical location of this building further expresses the ambiguous and hybrid character of Indies architecture in the 1910s: as it was situated between Semarang and Cheribon, between the new train station and the *alun-alun* (the centre of the native town), it constituted the middle ground between the European neighborhood and the indigenous kampong.[87] According to architectural historian Huib Akihary, modern architecture in the Netherlands Indies had arrived at a new "phase in her development"

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[83] Bloembergen and Raben, "Wegen naar het nieuwe Indië", 13-14

[84] Van Doorn, *De Laatste Eeuw van Indië*, 145-156.

[85] C.J. van Dullemen, "Charles Prosper Wolff Schoemaker en de Architectuur in Nederlands-Indië", *Bulletin KNOB* 6 (2005) 219.

[86] This was mainly achieved through the placement of the longitudinal axis along the East-West direction, causing minimal heating and maximal ventilation. Maclaine Pont also adopted the principle of the second façade and placed two towering elements in the middle of the building that functioned as water towers. In addition to these climatological considerations, he used an indigenous workforce and employed local building materials where possible. See: Akihary, *Architectuur & Stedebouw*, 43-45.

[87] Ruimschotel, "Indische stedebouw en het moderne bouwen", 324.

with this building: the *constructive* (technical) solution to building in the tropics had been found, the search for an *architectural* (cultural-aesthetic) solution continued.[88]

Thomas Karsten was asked by his study friend Maclaine Pont to work at his office in Semarang in 1914. The two had been roommates in Delft. Nine years later Karsten published *Indiese stedebouw* (Indies urban planning) where he presented his view on the dynamic relation between society and urban form:

> Urban planning is to be the shaping of a city, a village into an organic whole (…) and with all those oppositions that [the city or village] houses in itself, it constitutes a certain unity, a coherent organism.[89]

The organic nature of the city meant that urban planning should be based on and inspired by local topographic, historical and social circumstances.[90] Following his principle, he argued that Western solutions were not applicable to Javanese problems. An example of such a "non-solution" would be the garden city: its frequent usage only further stretched out the already sprawling Indies cities.[91] He further believed that the fundamental contrast between Western architecture, which saw "the beautiful only as an (…) unnecessary veneer imposed by the exterior", and Eastern architecture where "good form" was an "intrinsic aspect of a design" could be overcome through a synthesis of their respective principles.[92] Henri Maclaine Pont opposed the full transportation of Western concepts into the Indies environment in architecture as well as urban planning. He for example proposed to use bamboo material and employ the traditional pyramid-shaped Indonesian roof in public housing projects. These ideas were well-received under colleagues, but opposed by the Service of Pest Control (*Dienst der Pestbestrijding*) for public health reasons. The use of local construction techniques and materials were deemed "unhygienic". [93]

For Maclaine Pont, the use of traditional "native" construction techniques and materials went beyond architectural aesthetics or constructional practicality; it also served an ideological purpose. In his view, the municipal neighborhood projects and the earlier development of colonial building regulations had deprived the Javanese of their own power and independence, and had alienated the indigenous population from the government. One of the failures of earlier kampong improvements was the use of symmetric street patterns, which did not resonate with the cultural "needs" of their native inhabitants.[94] Maclaine Pont to some extent reverses the ethical civilizing

[88] Akihary, *Architectuur & Stedebouw*, 46.
[89] Karsten, "Indiese Stedebouw", 146-251.
[90] Van Roosmalen, *Ontwerpen aan de stad*, 120-121.
[91] Karsten, "Indiese Stedebouw", 170.
[92] Ibidem, 150.
[93] Van Roosmalen, *Ontwerpen aan de stad*, 71.
[94] Maclaine Pont, "Stedebouw in Indië I", *Java-Bode*, 8 May 1920, 107.

mission: his advice to architects and urban planners was not to teach the Javanese the Western way, but instead, to scrutinize more and better the indigenous modi vivendi and their construction characteristics.[95]

Wolff Schoemaker posed several objections to the ideas of association presented by Maclaine Pont. Wolff Schoemaker was aware that building in the colony posed problems for Western architects; but those problems were, in his view, mostly of a practical and often of a climatological nature, and could be overcome with the proper use of Western engineering. A more complicated difficulty for young Indies architects that Wolff Schoemaker observed was the absence of architectural precedents. There was no unified cultural history wherein the new artist could easily find his way. The architect had to rely on himself:

> The society, the voice of nature, the spirit of society, the beauty impressions, they are so very different here than in the country from which the Indo-European artist originates (...) The joint expressions of architects, industrial artists, sculptors and painters cannot, as in his own country, teach and revive him. His knowledge of style, his instructed sense of building, [and] his architectural intuition are the near only pillars for his designing spirit.[96]

While Schoemaker thus believed that the circumstances in the tropics necessitated the European architect to rely on himself and his Western education, Maclaine Pont and his friend Thomas Karsten thought this situation called for association between European and "native" culture. The debate between these architects primarily focused on the question whether there still existed a living architecture tradition on which a modern Indische architecture could be based. Maclaine Pont believed that there existed a long tradition of folk architecture, which should form the example of future architecture in the colony. Thomas Karsten agreed. Wolff Schoemaker opposed this view: the indigenous population offered no viable architecture traditions, at least not on Java.

Closely related to this discussion, was the different points of view these men held towards the origin of the people who built the ancient Hindu-Buddhist monuments on Java.[97] Wolff

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[95] Maclaine Pont's plea to base the material environment of the indigenous population on their own needs and traditions to increase the success of colonial development programs, was also expressed outside the field of architecture. In an advice to the Director of Education in Weltevreden in 1927, mr. P. Post argued that village schools needed to be adapted to local demands and culture, asserting that "building the school in the form of a pendopo" would make it an "extension" of village life, and better suited to the demands of the indigenous population than the closed-off European buildings. This would increase the status of the new school in the village. See: P. Post, "The need to adapt village schools to local demands and culture, 1927", in: Chr. L. M. Penders (ed. and transl.), *Indonesia. Selected Documents on Colonialism and Nationalism, 1830-1942* (Brisbane: Academy Press, 1977) 168.

[96] C.P. Wolff Schoemaker, "Indische Bouwkunst en de ontwikkelingsmogelijkheid van een Indo-Europeesche architectuurstijl", *Indisch Bouwkundig Tijdschrift* 26 (1923) 190 (my translation).

[97] Both Thomas Karsten, Maclaine Pont and Wolff Schoemaker were members of the Commision of Advice Concerning the Restauration of Hindu-Javanese Monuments.

Schoemaker argued that temples like the Borobudur were built by Hindus from the South of India, and not by the native Javanese.[98] He supported this thesis with remarks on the architectural and stylistic similarities between the Javanese monuments and Hindu constructions in South India.[99] With this attempt to mark the Hindu-monuments "non-indigenous", Wolff Schoemaker implicitly denied that the Javanese had *ever* been capable of building such terrific sites. Schoemaker's conclusion that these complexes were Indian import productions, and that there was "no architecture tradition" on Java, logically meant that the only reasonable way to construct the colony was along Western lines.[100] Maclaine Pont and Karsten, on the other hand, argued that these monuments were indeed constructed by the native Javanese, thus providing Javanese architecture with both history and dynamism.[101]

Another argument that Wolff Schoemaker employed against Maclaine Pont's call to incorporate "native" construction traditions was that the different Indonesian islands and population groups could not be taken together and reduced to "Native Architecture" because they were so different of character.[102] He therefore criticizes the architecture of the Technical College Bandung – in which he would work as professor from 1922 onwards – for being designed "with adoption of some features of the Minangkabauan [Middle-Sumatra] building style, which stands on foreign soil here in Java."[103] Rather than superficially using Indonesian elements, Wolff Schoemaker propagated a style that would utilize Western materials and techniques in order to meet technical, climatic and social demands of the Javanese tropics.[104]

The discussion on the usefulness of Javanese architecture finally came down to the assessment of the "pendopo", which was regarded as the most fundamental Javanese building structure. The pendopo was a rectangular roof construction, supported by pillars and open to the external environment. It originally only appeared as the public, frontal part of aristocratic houses.[105] Both Maclaine Pont and Karsten showed enthusiasm regarding this simple, yet in their eyes perfect structure. The latter appraised: "Contrary to European constructions, in the pendopo the climax of spatial effect is fully accomplished. (…) I deem this an extraordinary example of complete unity of form and content, of expression and function."[106]

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[98] The view that the actual builders of these monuments were of another "race" than the Javanese was entertained by several Dutch scholars up until the 1930s. See: Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 181.
[99] Van Dullemen, "Charles Prosper Wolff Schoemaker en de Architectuur in Nederlands-Indië", 222.
[100] Abadin Kusno, *Behind the Postcolonial: Architecture, Urban Space and Political Cultures in Indonesia* (New York: Routledge, 2000) 47.
[101] Maclaine Pont conceded that it might have been possible that Hindus from India cooperated in the building process. See: Ben F. van Leerdam, *Architect Henri Maclaine Pont: een speurtocht naar het wezenlijke van de Javaanse architectuur* (Delft: PhD dissertation, 1995) 42.
[102] Van Dullemen. "Charles Prosper Wolff Schoemaker en de Architectuur in Nederlands-Indië", 222.
[103] C.P. Wolff Schoemaker, "Indische Kunst", *Indisch Bouwkundig Tijdschrift* 25 (1922) 376.
[104] Van Roosmalen, "Familiar, yet different", 80.
[105] Van Dullemen, "Charles Prosper Wolff Schoemaker en de Architectuur in Nederlands-Indië", 222.
[106] Thomas Karsten, "De waarde van de latere Javaansche bouwkunst", *Djawa* 5 (1925) 208 (my translation).

A polemic in the Indies Architecture Journal between Pont and Schoemaker revolved around the matter of ingenuity of Javanese methodology in the pendopo construction. The question that colonialists rarely asked themselves, but that is worth asking in retrospect, is: what counts as knowledge? Maclaine Pont distinguished in the first entry of this polemic the "seemingly illogical fashion" of Javanese architecture – who used the beam flatly, instead of placing it on its side (as was common in Western engineering). However, Maclaine Pont remarked, when theoretically tested to Western engineering, this construction actually proved to be "stronger", especially in the case of earthquakes, than the European usage. This essential technical difference in construction methodology between Java and Europe could be accounted for (and thereby normalized) with European technical theory. When concluding that "European theory supports the Javanese people," Pont makes clear that only through European technological justification, the Javanese method becomes valid. The presupposed universality of this theory is not subject of debate.

Moreover, Maclaine Pont states that the efficiency of the Javanese construction method has "obviously" not taken shape through theoretic "reasoning" but through practical experience. The Eastern way is thus practical and not intellectual. When writing that the Javanese are "led greatly astray" by the rationality of Europeans, which they "stand perfectly helpless towards", Maclaine Pont invokes old orientalist notions and discusses the Javanese as if they are infantiles.[107] They may deserve sympathy and admiration, not so much because they are mentally equal to Westerners, but because they have achieved so many great things *despite* their innate backwardness. However, the argument has been made that Indische architects deconstructed Orientalism, by transforming the "passivity" and "static" character of the East into a dynamic tradition, thus reversing the orientalist "static" and dynamic" labels.[108] Still, Maclaine Pont did not move outside the paradigm that viewed East and West as each other's antithesis; he differed from many other colonialists in his positive evaluation of these "essential" differences. He believed that the Javanese had something to offer to the West: they could complement each other. Pont also perceived the Javanese to be passive and irrational in their inability to make their own history: they had to be guided. This view at the same time makes his thoughts on human difference less racial-biological, and more cultural. If explained in terms of the "nature-nurture" debate, Maclaine Pont, as many other ethicists, believed that the "native" could be developed to his full potential:

[107] Henri Maclaine Pont, "Beginselen der Javaansche Bouwconstructie", *Indisch Bouwkundig Tijdschrift* 26 (1924) 171-180.
[108] Kusno, *Behind the Postcolonial*, 60.

> We have grown up with the vault construction. It has become an indelible part of our aesthetic feeling, and we find ourselves in certain difficulty to learn to appreciate the typical Javanese construction forms […] Let us however reflect on the fact, that for this people exactly the opposite applies from what applies to us.[109]

The dichotomy between East and West could and should be bridged. And, "for the time being," Maclaine Pont states, "it is us [the Europeans - MV] who have to learn their constructions, not them, who should be taught its illogicality."[110] The indigenous population had to be actively involved in this process; "the natives" had to be pulled out of their current "stage" where "they show nothing else than complete blunt, indifferent feelings towards their own housing [and] their own environment."[111]

In his reply to Maclaine Pont's remarks, Wolff Schoemaker made a proposal that suggested that universal Western technology and science would be the neutral arbiter that would decide who "won" the debate. "In support of his assertion," Maclaine Pont would have to "make a significant number of representative trials (…) [and let these] be subjected to the test of strength" in the Bandung laboratory. Were his hypothesis confirmed, then Wolff Schoemaker would gladly be prepared to pay the costs incurred, and his admiration, he continued, "towards the technical keenness of the Javanese would be sparked by this [demonstration]." Further expressing his technical worldview, Wolff Schoemaker remarked that the "truth" should be determined "by experiments, not by statements."[112]

The proposed experiments were never carried out, and in the end, the debate dried up because both parties had not come close enough to each other to synthesize their respective arguments and there was no large platform where other architects presented their points of view. Still, the debate had generated significant change, since the trust in the own capacities of Indies architects had been strengthened by the discussions. Architects in the Netherlands no longer received assignments, which was a big departure from architectural practice at the start of the century. Modern architecture had found a regionalized version on Java, and architecture in the Netherlands Indies had become a discipline that was autonomous from its metropolitan counterpart, containing its own multiplicity of co-existing visions for the future. Despite their stylistic differences, the buildings of these three architects and their colleagues clearly represent an *Indische* character. Karsten would use the pendopo form as basis for the design of the Sobokarti public theater in 1930 (see figure 8). And even Wolff Schoemaker, who wrote very

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[109] Maclaine Pont, "Beginselen der Javaansche Bouwconstructie", 179 (my translation).
[110] Idem (my translation).
[111] Henri Maclaine Pont, "Javaansche bouwbeginselen (vervolg)" *Indisch Bouwkundig Tijdschrift* 27 (1924) 385 (my translation).
[112] C.P. Wolff Schoemaker, "Beginselen der Javaansche bouwconstructie?", *Indisch Bouwkundig Tijdschrift* 27 (1924) 395-396 (my translation).

unsympathetically about the pendopo, would use its roof construction in the 1933 design of the Mosque at the Nijlandweg in Bandung (see figure 7).[113]

It thus seems appropriate to argue that both camps envisioned a new Indische architecture*,* that is an architecture that was independent of and autonomous from the mother country, but the goals and strategies of their respective styles differed. Wolff Schoemaker was oriented towards Europe and the United States: the foundation of Indische architecture should lay in Western construction methods, ornamented with elements from Javanese architecture to connect the construction with the Indonesian environment.[114] Henri Maclaine Pont and Thomas Karsten located the basis of Indische architecture in the architecture tradition of Indonesia itself, which would be enriched with the technical attainments of Western building.[115] On his visit to the Netherlands Indies in 1923, H.P. Berlage openly criticized what he saw as a superficial supplement of Eastern ornaments to Western constructions, as applied by Wolff Schoemaker. These buildings "cannot satisfy in principle because those buildings could just as well have stood somewhere in Europe," argued Berlage. "For even the employment of a kala-head [trademark of Wolff Schoemaker] or Makara-ornament does little to change that fact."[116] Berlage's critique of European-like architecture in the tropics makes clear that the quest for a harmonious Indische architecture was in the first place the wish of Europeans: it had to break with European traditions to become an alternative to Western modernity.

Thomas Karsten: association and cultural synthesis

The contrast that exists between modernizing the built up landscape of the Netherlands Indies following a Western model, with advocates such as Wolff Schoemaker, and attempts by Maclaine Pont and Karsten to locate the impetus for change in Javanese culture itself, is part of the broader paradox of the Ethical Policy: the development of "the native" under guidance of Europeans. The ideas of Thomas Karsten exemplify this ambiguous approach towards colonial development.

In 1917 Karsten co-established the journal *De Taak* (The Task) in Semarang.[117] An important term in ethical discourse, and also an important ambition of The Task, was "association": cooperation on the basis of equality between the native population and Europeans.[118] The prominent Indologist and expert of Islam C. Snouck Hurgronje presented "the ideal of association" in 1911. Through education the "natives [should be lifted] up to a higher

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[113] Van Dullemen, "Charles Prosper Wolff Schoemaker en de Architectuur in Nederlands-Indië", 223, 225.
[114] C.J. van Dullemen, *Op zoek naar de Tropenstijl. Leven en werk van prof. ir. C.P. Wolff Schoemaker, Indisch architect* (Utrecht: PhD dissertation, 2008) 236.
[115] Ibidem, 221-222.
[116] Eds., "Dr. Berlage en de Indische Architectuur", *Indisch Bouwkundig Tijdschrift* 26 (1923) 305-306.
[117] This journal was founded by a number of progressive engineers and social democrats. The editors were: A.M. Harthoorn, M.G. van Geel, Sam. Koperberg, Chr. P. van Wijngaarden, J.E. Stokvis, and Thomas Karsten.
[118] Locher Scholten, *Ethiek in fragmenten*, 184.

level of civilization in line with their innate capacities."[119] In other words, "natives" were essentially equal to Europeans, but their Islamic culture had set back their capacities. The "only real solution to this problem" lay in the association of Indonesians with the Dutch, which, instead of enforcing Western-style modernity, was focused on finding grounds where the two cultures could meet, creating a "cultural unity" between them which would in turn "obliterate the importance of religious differences in the political and social sense."[120]

Association was a colonial project: its purpose was to annex "the natives to our state and nationality more firmly than hitherto has been the case."[121] Snouck Hurgronje envisioned a harmonious Dutch empire where different races stood next to each other:

> [If] by means of association […] the stage is reached where both the Javanese and the Netherlands have achieved the greatest possible common intellectual ground, then there will be no need to speak about gratitude to foreigners because what was foreign will have become part of oneself; there will be only Eastern and Western Netherlanders, who politically and nationally form a unity, irrespective of the difference of race.[122]

Association did not mean that East and West were not essentially different. It suggested that Westerners and Easterners were equal in their difference, and often that they could complement each other. Despite this view, true equality between the "races" did not exist, for associationist ideas almost always implied orientalist hierarchies. The Indische Style adherents, for example, appreciated Eastern architecture because it was more occupied with "feeling" than modern West-European art, but the hierarchical nature of the presented East-West dichotomy of emotions versus reason remains standing.

In his article "*Vreemd en Eigen*" (Foreign and Domestic, 1923) Karsten sets out to distinguish the essential difference between East and West. He actively resisted the universalization of Western ideas, values and culture and advocated "promotion" of "Javanese culture development."[123] Responding to someone who envisioned a "Westernization" of the urban indigenous middle class, Karsten exclaimed that:

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[119] C. Snouck Hurgronje, "The ideal of association, 1911", in: Chr. L. M. Penders (ed. and transl.), *Indonesia. Selected Documents on Colonialism and Nationalism, 1830-1942* (Brisbane: Academy Press, 1977) 157.
[120] Snouck Hurgronje, "The ideal of association", 158.
[121] Ibidem, 160.
[122] Ibidem, 164.
In a similar way, Maclaine Point suggested in 1923 in the popular journal *Djawa*: "[when] the invading people [the Dutch] ultimately have an eye for the culture of the conquered [the Javanese] and may prove receptive to it (…) Then no clash, no demonstration of supremacy is necessary, and the peoples draw together." See: Henri Maclaine Pont, "Javaansche architectuur", *Djawa* 3 (1923) 112-127.
[123] Thomas Karsten, "Vreemd en Eigen", *Djawa* 3 (1923) 72.

> … it would be of essential ideological interest for Europe, if in education, also outside the realm of geography, its own continent were not treated as the world itself, which at the moment is one of the main causes of the typically European racism.[124]

Indeed, Karsten severely criticized the racist assumptions that underlined colonial practice. In 1917, three years after his own arrival in the colony, Karsten attempted to account for the unconscious "tendency towards racism in the Westerner" in his essay *Rassenwaan en rassenbewustzijn*. Karsten made a distinction between racism (*rassenwaan*) and racialism (*rassenbewustzijn*: lit: racial consciousness). He displayed a seemingly reversed version of the "colonized" experience of which Frantz Fanon would famously write almost four decades later.[125] Karsten explains that a Dutch person entering the tropics feels his "Dutch" identity being shattered. When a Dutchman, who had possessed little racial feeling in Europe, comes to the Indies, he finds himself in a:

> fatal internal contradiction, factually or morally – because colonizing, no matter how objectively logical and inevitable, remains subjectively unnatural and unjustified. Thus he feels himself *threatened*, consciously or unconsciously, in his own values.[126]

Here, Karsten implies that colonialism in fact conflicts with the Dutch "national character". According to Karsten, racism takes shape when a Dutchman, after experiencing the shattering of his identity, tries to pick up the pieces. His lost criterion for understanding the world around him is found in the – either negative or positive – judgment of the Other race: "He [again] feels himself affirmed and accounted for." Karsten believed that if the European is fully conscious of racial difference, he is able to arm himself against the potential outcome of racism, thereby making possible the appreciation of the value of the other race.

In his study of both publications and the private archive of Karsten, Joost Coté argues that Karsten developed a critique of Western civilization and imagined a realization of post-colonial town planning where East and West would be united. In his utopian view of the future, both Europe and Indonesia had to become equal participants in a universal modern culture. Even so, his efforts should be seen as an attempt "to transform, but not to overthrow, colonialism."[127]

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[124] Karsten, "Vreemd en Eigen", 73 (my translation).
[125] See: Frantz Fanon, transl. Charles Lam Markmann, "The Fact of Blackness", in: *Black Skin, White Masks* (London: Pluto Press, 2008) 82-108. Originally published as *Peau noire, masques blancs* in 1952.
[126] Thomas Karsten, "Rassenwaan en rassenbewustzijn", *De Taak* 1 (1917) 205-206 (my translation – original emphasis).
[127] Coté, "Thomas Karsten's Indonesia", 68-70.

Karsten saw in an enlightened colonial state the possible road to a new world where this unity of human kind could be realized.[128]

In the first edition of the journal The Task, the editors called for a transformation of colonial practice: the wishes and cooperation of the population should be incorporated in ethical reforms.[129] This did not entail the indigenous population to be in charge; in an ambiguous formulation of benevolent guidance, the editors state that “European population groups will have to guide, without taking leadership.” They believed to know the right path for the native population better than the population it concerned, a notion recurring again and again.[130]

Karsten was afraid that with the rise of an indigenous urban middle class, the traditions of the Javanese – which he thought expressed their innate feelings as a people – would deteriorate just as had happened in modern Europe. Following his understanding that modernization in architecture would provide the inhabitants with psychological change, Karsten argued that the “sentiment of the people” had to be derived from careful study of the Javanese lifestyle, and should be consequently applied to the design of the physical environment of these urban Indonesians.[131] Contemporary architecture should learn from Javanese constructions, because these forms satisfied the “emotional life” of the Javanese people, and “awareness of the mystical unity in things in the first place penetrates the consciousness through feeling”.[132] Karsten’s plea for colonial state patronization of Javanese traditional music was a similar attempt to “save” the Javanese traditions from modernity.[133] The attempt to conserve and restore indigenous traditions has been interpreted by Benedict Anderson as a “conservative education program”, a response to the fear that ethical education programs would have as result that the native no longer stayed “native”.[134] The difference between colonial subjects and colonial superiors had to remain visible.[135]

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[128] Coté, “Thomas Karsten’s Indonesia”, 82-83.
[129] Committee of Editors, “Begin”, *De Taak* 1 (1917) 1-2.
[130] Idem.
[131] Coté, “Thomas Karsten’s Indonesia”, 74-75.
[132] Karsten, “De waarde van de latere Javaansche bouwkunst”, 205-207.
[133] Thomas Karsten, “Praktiese zorg voor Javaanse kunst”, *De Taak* 1 (1918) 572-574.
[134] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 181.
Karsten admitted as much when he called for a “conservative approach of the good kind”: a care-taking of tradition that was not meant to implant a new dynamic in an old tradition, but precisely to conserve it’s oldness. See: Karsten, “Praktiese zorg voor Javaanse kunst’, *De Taak* 1 (1918) 573.
[135] The ambivalence of colonial discourse , which moves back and forth between recognition and disavowal of cultural difference, comes to the surface in the writings of Indische style adherents. On the one hand, a construction of the indigenous Other as essentially different is noticeable: the East and West are presented as diametrical oppositions. However, the “native” (and his culture) is simultaneously “knowable” to the Westerner, and thus the fundamental difference is disavowed. See: Homi K. Bhabha, “The Other Question. Stereotype, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism”, in: *The Location of Culture* (New York and London: Routledge, 1994) 94-120.

The Ideology of the Indische Style

The Indische style represented a new sense of colonial autonomy, and might be interpreted as a way to uphold the colonial system. In the case of Karsten, the ideas of "association" and colonial "unity" stood in service of his own sense of alienation with Western culture. The advent of colonialism had brought the "modern problem" to Java. Karsten believed that the Javanese could still be "saved" from the emotional downfall of the modern urban experience, by connecting their inner spirituality to the material reality of the modern world. In his notes, Karsten quoted psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung who argued that the canalization of "the psychic energy into an object" through external "channels" was crucial in transforming unconscious behaviour.[136]

Another influential aspect of Jung's thought was the concept of universal "archetypes" that formed the "collective unconscious." Modern man needed to become conscious of the "collective unconscious" to advance in modern society. Armed with Jung's ideas, Karsten conceived it to be the goal of Western leaders to guide the cultural evolution of the indigenous people by making psychological tensions more logically coherent in the material environment, and as a result make them conscious of their collective unconscious. Karsten seemingly believed the Westerner to have access to a collective character that even the people in question were unconscious of.

Karsten was not alone in his ambition. Maclaine Pont similarly formulated his goal to be "nothing different than to awaken in the Javanese people the interest for its own architecture, to develop its insight there-in."[137] Maclaine Pont, too, sees the archetype of the Javanese population not in their present situation but in their more glorious past. It was the task of urban planners to make the Javanese as they were: their *real* selves. This attitude confirms colonial power, for it made clear to the colonial subjects that maybe a long time ago they had been able to produce "greatness", but they had degenerated since, and needed colonial guidance.

[136] Coté, "Thomas Karsten's Indonesia", 80-87.
[137] Henri Maclaine Pont, "De tegenwoordige toestand der Javaansche architectuur, haar historische afleiding en vormgeving", *Indisch Bouwkundig Tijdschrift* 27 (1924) 57-59.

Appendix II

Above: Figure 6 - Technical College in Bandung, Henri Maclaine Pont, 1920 (Collection Dutch Royal Tropical Institute).

Above, left: Figure 7 - Mosque at Nijlandweg in Bandung, Wolff Schoemaker, 1933-1934 (Van Dullemen 2005, 223).

Above, right: Figure 8 - People’s Theater Sobokarti in Semarang, Karsten 1930 (Akihary 1990, 50).

Left: Figure 9 - Headquarters of the Semarang-Cirebon Steam Tram Company in Tegal, Maclaine Pont, 1911 (Van Leerdam 1995, 199).

Chapter III

Material Culture and Cultural Colonial Citizenship

In 1920 the first institute of academic education in the Netherlands Indies opened its doors: the Technical College in Bandung (see figure 6).[138] The building was designed by Maclaine Pont and arguably marks the epitome of the Indische style. With its function to make possible the training of engineers in the atmosphere of their future work environment, the Technical College formed a step on the stairs towards the goal of Indische architects, that is, in the words of Thomas Karsten, when the "native population itself, but then educated in skills and consciousness, would take up the act of building."[139] The building's design accurately shows the co-existence and intermingling of modernity and the search for native history. As Abadin Kusno has pointed out, Maclaine Pont constructed the idea of the "translocal 'national' culture of Indonesia" in the Technical College by using architectural elements from several places in the archipelago and composing them into one structure where they were harmoniously united.[140] The building adopted the roof of the indigenous Minangkabau house and was furnished with indigenous equipment, but also had Western constructions that underlay the roofs. Moreover, the incorporation of "native" culture in Pont's design was restricted to its visual appearance.[141] In this process of hybridization, indigenous objects, such as the Minangkabau roof, were detached from earlier symbolic and religious meanings, recombined, and ascribed the new cultural signification of colonial unity in the archipelago. In a similar way, Karsten represented the Javanese pendopo in the Sobokarti Theater (see figure 8), but also transformed, or "modernized", the traditional construction to increase sight lines and make it a more "rational" space.[142]

The Indische style, with its endeavour to bring multiple cultures together, closely relates to the politics of inclusion and exclusion in the late colonial state. In addition to the new synergetic architecture, the aim towards inclusivity most prominently appeared in the Indies Party, founded in 1912. A co-existing development was the rise of colonial cultural citizenship in the autonomous colony. How did these cultural phenomena relate and what part did these inclusive practices play in the polarized colonial society of the 1920s and 1930s?

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[138] The fact that the first scientific institute in the Indies was of a technical nature highlights the prominent place that was accredited to engineers in the colony. Jacques van Doorn has argued that these engineers felt themselves to be *the* carriers of the colonial development project. See: Van Doorn, *De Laatste Eeuw van Indië,* 119-122.
[139] Thomas Karsten, "Bij de 1e Indiese Architektuur Tentoonstelling II", *De Taak* 35 (1920) 327.
[140] This example of the Indische style by Maclaine Pont was highly valued by people of Bandung, and also well-received by colleagues. See: Gerrit de Vries and Dorothee Segaar-Höweler, *Henri Maclaine Pont (1884-1971): architect, constructeur, archeoloog* (Rotterdam: BONAS, 2009) 32.
[141] Abadin Kusno, *The Appearances of Memory: Mnemonic Practices of Architecture and Urban Form in Indonesia* (London: Duke University Press, 2010) 68, 75.
[142] Kusno, *Behind the Postcolonial*, 59.

The Indies Fatherland

The rise of the Indische style as a cultural phenomenon is closely related to the increasing sense of cultural autonomy in the colony. Since the late nineteenth century, Indo-Europeans often saw themselves more as part of an imagined "Indies fatherland" rather than citizens of the Netherlands.[143] As the Ethical Policy was not meant to harm the European population and its interest, Locher Scholten has argued, so too, the "desire for a more autonomous Indies was in the first place a European wish."[144] One of the first and most influential conceptualizations of this Indies fatherland was by E.F.E. Douwes Dekker. He founded the Indies Party in 1912 together with Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo and Suwardi Surjaningrat, two Western educated Indonesians. The future state they envisioned was a modern, independent, secular, and not least, a multi-ethnic Indonesia.

In 1913 the Dutch colonial government organized massive festivities to celebrate the centennial liberation of the Netherlands from French domination, in which the native population had to participate. In response, Suwardi Surjaningrat wrote the famous article "Als ik eens een Nederlander was" (If only I were a Netherlander):

> If I were a Netherlander, I would not celebrate the commemoration of independence in a country where we refuse to give the people their freedom (...) [But] I am not a Netherlander. I am only a brown-coloured son of this tropical land, a native of this Netherlands colony and I would therefore not protest.[145]

In this satirical piece, Suwardi turned the Dutch language and history against the Dutch. Furthermore, as Benedict Anderson has argued, "by the imaginary transformation of himself into a temporary Dutchman (...) he undermined all the racist fatalities that underlay Dutch colonial ideology."[146] Its claim to independence was supported, the Indies Party argued, by the self-proclaimed temporality of the colonial state. The mother country itself had announced independence, since the Ethical Policy was ultimately aimed to move the Netherlands Indies in the direction of self-government (although modelled on the West and developed under Dutch

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[143] Cooper and Stoler, "Between Metropole and Coloy", 9.

[144] Locher Scholten, *Ethiek in fragmenten*, 200 (my translation).

[145] R.M. Suwardi Surjaningrat, "If only I were a Netherlander, 1913", in: Chr. L. M. Penders (ed. and transl.), *Indonesia. Selected Documents on Colonialism and Nationalism, 1830-1942* (Brisbane: Academy Press, 1977) 232-234.

[146] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 117-118.

leadership).[147] Some (Indo-)Europeans hoped this would eventually result in an independent multi-racial Indonesia.

The inclusive character of "Indies" nationalism can be illustrated with Suwardi's statement in 1918 that an "Indiër" was "anyone who considered the Indies or Indonesia as his fatherland, irrespective of whether he was pure Indonesian, or whether he has Chinese, Dutch, or general European blood in his veins."[148] The sense of unity was based on a shared experience of colonial domination, resulting in the ironic view that the "Indies", a geographic unity that was created by the Dutch, was their historical fatherland that had to be liberated from Dutch colonialism. The architecture and urban planning of the early twentieth century also formed a discourse that unintentionally enabled the indigenous population to imagine a future "Indonesian" nation, because it combined elements of various Indonesian areas (for example in the Technical College Bandung), and at the same time interconnected these islands through the placement of similar buildings throughout the archipelago. Seemingly unaware of the colonial construct that was the basis of the idea "Indonesia", Douwes Dekker explained his sense of fundamental unity through shared colonial experience:

> Finally, we now feel that we stand not *against* each other, we, Indiers, not even *next* to each other, but *in* each other (...) All at once everything has become so sharp and clear to us: We are brothers: we are one.[149]

Due to its rejection of colonial rule, the Indies Party was refused legal recognition by the colonial government, and dissolved as a result. After the dissolution, ethnic and racial configurations on the "essence" of the new Indonesian state became more prominent in anti-colonial movements. The ideal of "association" was the first casualty of the tendency towards cultural independence, in Indonesian anti-colonial thinking. According to R.E. Elson, the idea of Indonesian unity was coupled in the 1920s with a "rejection of everything that is white."[150]

The synergetic political movement of the Indies Party shared the essential objectives of the Indische style, with an ideal of a synthesis of East and West and an autonomy from the metropole, but its inclusive association ideal was decidedly anticolonial, where the Indische style operated within the colonial framework. Despite their different attitude towards the colonial state, both cultural phenomena can be interpreted as signals of a rising sense of cultural colonial

[147] E.F.E. Douwes Dekker, "The Indies Party, its nature and objectives, 1913", in: Chr. L.M. Penders (ed. and trans), *Indonesia. Selected Documents on Colonialism and Nationalism, 1830-1942* (Brisbane: Academy Press, 1977) 228.
[148] Cited from: R.E. Elson, "Constructing the Nation: Ethnicity, Race, Modernity and Citizenship in Early Indonesian Thought", *Asian Ethnicity* 6 (2005) 153.
[149] Cited from: Ibidem, 149.
[150] Ibidem, 160.

citizenship under (Indo-)Europeans in the colony: people who felt more closely connected to the tropics than to the metropole and considered the Indies their fatherland.

Colonial Difference and Cultural Citizenship

In the context of an increasing autonomous colony, the gradual emergence of a Netherlands Indies version of a modern Western lifestyle can be noticed. Bloembergen and Raben observe that "here something like a cultural colonial citizenship took shape – tentative, contradictory and contested, but undeniable."[151] This idea offers the possibility to discern the bounded inclusivity of seemingly universal metropolitan values.[152]

The Indian sociologist and historian Partha Chatterjee distinguishes the "rule of colonial difference" as the essential characteristic of the colonial state.[153] The late colonial state built on the constructed difference between the foreign administrative class and the native population in colonial discourse and practice.[154] The "rule of colonial difference" determined who was deemed appropriate for modern values, such as self-government and citizenship. Chatterjee thus shows that there existed a discrepancy between these principles thought to be universal, and the inherent politics of difference in the colonial state.[155]

At the same time, there was no racial dichotomy in place in the colony, nor a clear-cut division between colonizer and colonized.[156] "Ambiguity" is a better concept in characterizing colonial discourse in the Netherlands Indies.[157] The ambiguous nature of colonial difference is also expressed by the historian Jürgen Osterhammel who argues that indigenous collaboration – the situation where the interests between parts of native society and colonial authority converge –

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[151] Bloembergen and Raben emphasize the paradoxical nature of this colonial citizenship that, as discussed in chapter one, concerned a "colonial elite that preached development and autonomy" but became themselves "stronger oriented on the Netherlands than ever before." See: Bloembergen and Raben, "Wegen naar het nieuwe Indië", 18.

[152] Cooper and Stoler have made the argument that the colonies "constituted an imaginary and physical space in which the inclusions and exclusions that were built into the notions of citizenship, sovereignty, and participation were worked out." See: Cooper and Stoler, "Between Metropole and Colony", 3.

[153] Partha Chatterjee, "The Colonial State", in: *The Nations and its Fragments. Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) 14-43.

[154] Cooper and Stoler, "Between Metropole and Colony", 2.

[155] Chatterjee, "The Colonial State", 18, 32.

[156] In the legal system there was made a clear division (but no dichotomy) between Europeans, Foreign Orientals [V*reemde Oosterlingen*] and Natives [*Inlanders*]. On the ground, colonial practice did not correspond to the dichotomy between colonizer and colonized that is often adhered to in (and constructed by) the racial discourse of colonial officials. Freek Colombijn, for example, offers an account on the multi-ethnic character of the Javanese kampongs (instead of being "just" indigenous neighbourhoods). See: Freek Colombijn, *Under Construction. The politics of urban space and housing during the decolonization of Indonesia, 1930-1960* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2010) 126-139.

[157] For an extended argument on the ambiguity of colonial discourse and racial stereotypes, see: Bhabha, "The Other Question", 94-120.

was essential in upholding the colonial system.[158] Indeed, with the European ruling group numbering only 0,35 percent of the entire Indies' population the need for native collaboration becomes apparent.[159] Henk Schulte Nordholt extends the argument of Osterhammel by providing insight into the employment of advertisements by European businesses to bind parts of the indigenous middle class to the colonial state. These middle class Indonesians were actively invited to become cultural citizens of the colony.[160] This argument is in line with Antonio Gramsci's concept of cultural hegemony. For Gramsci, all states are involved in the "manufacture of consent" – producing truth claims (for example on racial categories) and setting cultural criteria for citizenship. This also happens through the education of "desire", in this case the desire for modernity.[161] Importantly, Schulte Nordholt tries to disconnect the indigenous quest for modernity from the political goal of Indonesian independence: not all middle class Indonesians supported Indonesian national sovereignty.

The already "hybrid" urban middle class Indonesians, who often had a Western education and spoke Dutch, were also the main focus of Indische urban planners who aimed to present a hybrid building style for Indonesians. They, however, feared for the Westernization of these native urbanites and "invited" them to remain "native".[162] The cultural agreement between the indigenous middle class and the foreign administration class, as put forward by Schulte Nordholt, could be viewed as a masking of actual power relations which remained embedded in the "rule of colonial difference." It shows the subtlety of the colonial project and colonial power in the early twentieth century, which cannot be reduced to economic exploitation or cultural domination, since persuasion is also part of the colonial situation.[163] The middle class was tied to the colonial state by holding out a carrot: they were offered the perspective of modernity which was ultimately not achievable within the construct of the colonial state. The political values of modernity, such as political citizenship and self-government were unattainable in light of the "rule of colonial difference", and modernity was reduced to lifestyle.

[158] Jürgen Osterhammel, transl. Shelley L. Frisch, *Colonialism. A Theoretical Overview* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1997) 63-67.
[159] Of the total Indies population of about 60 million people, the European segment numbered 240,000 (of whom 87 percent were Dutch citizens). Numbers derived from: Bea Brommer, "Nederland en Indonesië, een overzicht", *Spieghel Historiael* 28 (1993) 292-293.
[160] Schulte Nordholt, "Modernity and cultural citizenship in the Netherlands Indies", 435-457.
[161] Cooper and Stoler, "Between Metropole and Colony", 20. The major work of Gramsci is *Prison Notebooks*, written in the 1930s and published posthumously after the Second World War.
[162] Coté, "Thomas Karsten's Indonesia", 91.
[163] Peter van Dommelen, "Colonial Matters. Material Culture and Postcolonial Theory in Colonial Situations", in: Christopher Tilly and others (eds.), *Handbook of Material Culture* (London: SAGE, 2006) 110.

The Colonial Mimic Men

The question arises how the cultural agreement (or attempt to achieve one) between European and indigenous population groups functioned. The writing of postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha on racial discourse and practice in the colonial encounter is enlightening in this respect. Although post-colonial theory seldom gives attention to the historical, social, and material context in which colonial texts and colonial discourse was formed, it offers valuable starting points to examine colonial societies.[164] Bhabha calls into question the strong opposition between colonizers and colonized, emphasizing the common ground that connects the alleged "colonial divide." Armed with the notion that colonial discourse is fundamentally ambiguous, Bhabha explores what he calls the "third space" of the colonial encounter, where new spaces of meaning are created in the processes of colonial interaction.[165] This ambiguity brings out that the otherness of colonized persons was not static nor stable, and that permeability of the "color line" was possible.[166] In these "in-between" third spaces, the idea of society itself is defined through the articulation of cultural differences.[167]

Bhabha further discusses these interactive processes in terms of "hybridization." He points out that hybrid cultures are inherent aspects of colonial situations. This enables us to relate the ambivalence in colonial discourse to social practice and material culture. It could be argued that processes of cultural appropriation and mixture constitute a dialectic that is fundamental to the colonial equation. In the case of the Indische style, there was a conscious and highly structured form of appropriation of the Other culture; in other cases it might have been unconscious or unwanted. Nevertheless the process occurred to various degrees because, in the words of John and Jean Camaroff, the colonial encounter "altered everyone and everything involved."[168]

An important colonial strategy that informs this hybridization is "mimicry", containing the imitation or mirroring by both the colonized state and the colonial subject of the Other's behavior. As a colonial strategy, mimicry involves the desire for a reformed, recognizable other, "as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite."[169] It is a colonial strategy that

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[164] Especially since the 1990s, postcolonial theory shows a noticeable bias towards literary studies. Moreover, the postmodern emphasis on the autonomy of colonial discourse from its authors and the external world threatens to lose sight of the intimate connections between colonial discourse, material culture, and political power. Still, scholars such as Peter van Dommelen have convincingly argued that postcolonial theory might prove valuable for research on the material culture of colonial societies. See: Van Dommelen, "Colonial Matters", 104-124.

[165] Ibidem, 107.

[166] Charles Coppel even argues that colonial Java might be interpreted as a "mestizo society". See: Charles Copper, "Revisiting Furnivall's 'plural society': Colonial Java as a mestizo society?", *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 7 (1997) 562-579.

[167] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994) 2-7.

[168] Cited from: Van Dommelen, "Colonial Matters", 111.

[169] Homi K. Bhabba, "Of Mimicry and Man: the ambivalence of colonial discourse", in: *The Location of Culture,* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994) 122.

"appropriates" the Other; in the Indische style, the East is mimicked to bring in the spirituality that the West lacks. Both directions of mimicry (of and by the colonial subject) are limited by the colonial equation. Mimicry as a colonial strategy threatens to displace the civilizing mission, with its tendency to present the colonial subject as somehow similar to Europeans.[170] Mimicry as a strategy adopted by the colonial subject mocks colonial power, but the possibility of emancipation is ultimately limited by the dependency of the colonial state on the construction of cultural difference. The constant tension between inclusion and exclusion can be summarized in the proposition that to be Europeanized is emphatically not to be European.[171]

A Colonial Divide?

The practice of urban planning and architecture in the late-colonial Netherlands Indies has been regularly interpreted as a process that strengthened the "colonial divide". In *Engineers of Happy Land*, Rudolph Mrázek focuses on the "insecurity" and "discomfort" felt by the Dutch in the new modern, urbanized environment of the Netherlands Indies in the twentieth century, where "modern natives (...) were increasingly living uncomfortably close to the Dutch".[172] Mrázek also draws attention to the late-colonial phenomenon of *bungalow-itis* (meaning "bungalow epidemic"), signifying the European flight towards suburban neighbourhoods in the hills around the cities. These neighbourhoods were almost exclusively European, both in character and inhabitants.[173] In a similar fashion, Farabi Fakih argues in his study on the housing estate Kotabaru in Yogyakarta that modernization and town planning in the Indies resulted in a strengthening of ethnic separation.[174] Both Fakih and Mrázek relate colonial building practices to European anxieties: fear of the climate, fear of homeliness, fear of the native, and fear for indigenization. While many Dutch might be subject to a "culture of feeling to be out of place", as Mrázek argues,[175] the Indische style shows us another possible outcome of the increasing interaction between the Dutch and the Javanese. Thomas Karsten was also afraid, but he feared *for* the "natives": that they would go down the same road to perdition as modern Europe. He and Maclaine Pont responded to the modern urban phenomena not with their face fully towards Europe, but also faced towards the indigenous world, seeking integration, and, in the process, mimicking both aspects of European and Javanese life.

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[170] Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man", 122-124.
[171] Focusing on British India, Bhabha originally states that in colonial mimicry "to be Anglicized is *emphatically* not to be English." Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 125 (original emphasis).
[172] Mrázek, *Engineers of Happy Land*, 55.
[173] Ibidem, 68.
[174] Fakih presents the housing estates as an "escape from the colonial encounter". These estates seemingly embody the opposite of the association ideal. See: Fakih, "Kotabaru and the Housing Estate as Bulwark against the Indeginization of Colonial Java", 152-171.
[175] Mrázek, *Engineers of Happy Land*, 55.

It is in the tendency of the colonial state as the ultimate “mimic man” – since it always imitates either the metropole or the indigenous world – that both the fear for indigenization, which Mrázek and Fakih discuss, as well as the fear that the native would stop being “native”, which is apparent in the Indische style, emerges. Karsten and Maclaine Pont want the indigenous urban middle class to “partially” adopt Western values, and simultaneously hold on to their own traditions. They have to become imitators of both cultures; continuing both traditions partially. A double process of mimicry thus becomes visible: Karsten and Maclaine Pont consciously imitate indigenous culture and employ “native” construction methods in harmony with Western building forms in a new “hybrid” architecture style; while the urban middle-class Indonesians “mimic” Western values and consumer culture. If these indigenous urbanites were to live in the Indische constructions, as proposed by Thomas Karsten, they would become the fully appropriated colonial subject: mimic men as authorized versions of otherness.[176]

The End of Association

The vision of synergism became increasingly difficult to maintain in the polarizing political landscape of the Netherlands Indies in the 1920s. The journal *De Taak* ceased to exist in 1925 and the undermining of the “ideal of association” speaks from the final edition, in which the editors wrote: “The European supporters [of the journal] have drifted to the right and the majority of the native [supporters] increasingly to the left […] The colonial relations have become so sharply divided that the ‘site of coming together’ now lies deserted.”[177] At the same time, the inclusive formula for Indies citizenship would largely disappear from the political arena, as anticolonial movements became more ethnically exclusive. Consequently, with the rise of violent nationalist anticolonialism in the 1920s, the Ethical Policy became increasingly “conservative”, first in Europe, then in the colony itself.[178]

The building of Indische constructions continued well into the 1930s and thus survived the political decay of both progressive ethicism and the ideal of association. Because the Indische style operated within the colonial framework but outside the formal colonialist politics, it was able to carry the idea of cultural association longer. Still, the achievements of the Indische style were insufficient to fundamentally alter the colonial society. Thomas Karsten himself remarked in 1930 that, in the area of urban planning, “of all larger cities only Bandung (in concept!) had dared” to stick to the plan of economic zoning.[179] He complained of the wish of Europeans, as described by

[176] Bhabha, “Of Mimicry and Man”, 126.
[177] Cited from: Coté, “Thomas Karsten’s Indonesia”, 74.
[178] Locher Scholten, *Ethiek in fragmenten*, 113-115.
[179] Thomas Karsten, “Stedebouw”, in: F.W.M. Kerchman (ed.), *25 Jaren Decentralisatie in Nederlandsch-Indië, 1905-1930* (Weltevreden: Kolff, 1931) 140.

Mrázek and Fakih, to construct modern, Western enclaves in the cities of the Netherlands Indies.[180] His plans to construct harmonious cities were not fully implemented. In the end, the demise of the Indische style debate began about 1925 and its material manifestations remained confined to a set of individual buildings that were culturally significant but strongly limited by both the polarizing climate from the late 1920s onwards, and the mechanism of colonial difference that would bring true synthesis between East and West out of reach within the colonial framework.

[180] Mrazek, *Engineers of Happy Land*, 248.

Conclusion

Meanings of culture, history and modernity are redefined and revalued through representations. The material representations of colonial discourse that were set up in the Indische style redefined and revalued the role of indigenous culture and its history in the construction of colonial modernity. The "native" was necessary for the colonial project, but indigenous culture was valued for what it could contribute to the West. As a result, its value was defined in Western terms and Western leaders should guide its "modernization".

When the Indische style is examined with regards to the historical conditions of late-colonial Netherlands Indies society, it becomes clear that the rise of Indische architecture was the material embodiment of a broader undercurrent of colonial cultural citizenship. The development of this distinctly Indies form of architecture was made possible by an increasing cultural autonomy of the Indies, which was interrelated with intensified contact between the colony and the Dutch metropole since the late nineteenth century. Together with the Ethical Policy this resulted in a professional Indies architecture discipline, in which architects were able to formulate different co-existing views on the prospective direction of architecture in the colony, closely mirroring their respective visions on colonial society itself. Attempts to build colonial modernity and conserve indigenous history existed side by side in the aim to develop a distinctive "Indische" architecture. The synergetic Indische architecture represents the vision of a post-colonial, multi-racial Indonesian state. It was firmly grounded in a society where several groups increasingly vowed for the need for colonial transformation and colonial independence, and should thus be seen as part of a growing cultural autonomy that the Netherlands Indies experienced in the early twentieth century.

The Indische architecture shaped colonial practice, since it gave meaning to the physical co-existence of the colonizers and the colonized. What becomes clear from the case of Indische architecture, is that a different response to colonial modernity was possibly than the one that is generally described in accounts of architecture and urban planning in the colony. These studies characterize late-colonial Indies society as a place that saw an increasing "colonial divide". The synergetic Indische form of architecture that mimicked both European and "native" culture, indicates that it might be more appropriate to speak of a hybrid society where new forms of culture – new ways of understanding the world – unfolded. The colonial divide could not be bridged, as a result of the inherent construction of difference in the colonial state, but there did exist a middle ground. European modernity was not projected onto the tropics. The relationship between colony and metropole was not unilateral and the colonial encounter always triggered hybridization processes on both sides of the alleged "divide".

The emergence of the hybrid Indische style mainly functioned as the material expression of those new "autonomous colonialists" who felt more connected to the Indies fatherland than to the Dutch metropole. Paradoxically, while aiming to help emancipate the native population, the Indische architects might in practice have helped maintain and justify the colonial system by employing hybrid, associationist architecture that masked colonial power relations. Since all colonial projects contain a tension between incorporation and differentiation, the inclusivity of the Indische style, too, was bounded. In building colonial modernity, the Indische style injected indigenous architecture with dynamism and vitality, but ultimately assigned the "natives" to passivity because their culture needed Western guidance to become fully adapted to the modern world. Henri Maclaine Pont, Thomas Karsten, and C.P. Wolff Schoemaker did not take into account what colonial subjects themselves envisioned to be the ideal future "Indonesia". Furthermore, their aim to limit total cultural "imitation", by making the indigenous urban middle class conscious of their "native" unconscious, would prevent these "natives" to undermine the colonial state with the mimicry of potentially subversive "modern" Western values, such as self-government. For the Indies to become a harmonious multi-racial society, each "race" had to play its part. And the question who played what part was not to be answered by the colonial subjects.

From the late 1920s the synergetic vision of the Indische style, and other forms of association, ground to a halt in the climate of increasing ethnic polarization. The limited form of synthesis between East and West that was the Indische style abruptly came to an end with the Japanese invasion in 1942. After Indonesian independence the ideal of synthesis between East and West was quickly replaced by an internationalist building style that was aimed towards the future. The Indische style was regarded as a visual mark of cultural imperialism. In the end, the ideals of the Indische style were never realized. It was an utopian project. The project of colonial synthesis was fundamentally undermined by the "rule of colonial difference" and further crippled by the polarization that the late-colonial Netherlands Indies endured.

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