Modernization of the Indonesian City, 1920–1960

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This book deals with people, technologies and, above all, place. It explores dimensions of a growing research interest in what has been broadly referred to as ‘colonial modernity’ (Barlow 2012).¹ It focuses on the changing face of the Indonesian city in the mid-twentieth century that reflects the dramatic events of Indonesia’s history in that period and – it is argued here – was a causal factor in those events. It seeks to provide an empirical basis to explore the link between urbanization, modernity, and decolonization. Taken as a whole, the contributions to this volume present a case for asserting that Indonesian cities were not merely the backdrop to processes of modernization and rising nationalism (the canvass, in other words, on which more important historical processes were painted), but that the processes of urbanization, modernization, and decolonization were intrinsically linked. Focusing on specific aspects of these processes, this volume examines the multiple responses to innovations introduced by Western colonialism in what was the Netherlands Indies in the twentieth century. These innovations consisted of new technologies, ideas about new forms of social organization, and images that produced new material, cultural, and social conditions and relationships.

The innovations with which this volume is concerned manifested themselves in such urban contexts as the provision of medical treatments, fresh water and sanitation, the implementation of town planning and housing designs, and contingencies for coping with increased motorized traffic and industrialization. In the colonial context examined here, their introduction was motivated by, or at least rationalized as, efforts to deal with the historically unprecedented large concentrations of people in urban areas generated by new economic conditions. They represented the translation to the colony of existing or emerging policies and technologies already or simultaneously being implemented in metropolitan contexts, confirming the assertion that ‘colonialism and modernity are simultaneous expressions of capitalist expansion’ (Barlow 2012:624).

1 Barlow’s work is not taken here as a model as it has specifically focused on the ‘semi-colonialization’ of China and ‘inter-Asian’ modernity in that region in particular but her recent article (Barlow 2012) provides a useful account of the concept’s genealogy.

Because these technologies reflect foreign principles and their specific reference was to centres of concentrated economic activity dominated by non-Indigenous agents, the novelty of such innovations had their greatest impact on the Indonesian inhabitants of urban centres.² However, Indonesians so affected by exclusion from or inclusion in particular forms of modernization – such as the domestic staff who came to Kota Baru (Fakih, this volume) or the vendors who set up food stalls on the *alun-alun* of Malang (Basundoro, this volume) – could mock the ways of Westerners, attempt to subvert the new spatial order or find ways to use them to their advantage. For urbanites like the Indonesian staff employed by the oil refineries at Plaju (Tanjung, this volume), the new represented opportunities. For others, such as the residents of kampongs subjected to new building regulations and kampung improvement (Reerink, Wijono, this volume), modernization created unavoidable circumstances that demanded new behaviours that became the ‘normal’ way of life.

A recurrent theme in many of the contributions in this book is the way the integration of imported technical innovations often called forth novel social or organizational changes. This in turn often resulted in further technological changes specifically shaped by local circumstances, as noted previously by Joep à Campo (1994:25–26), Brenda Yeoh (1996), Howard Dick and Peter Rimmer (2003:37), Ian Proudfoot (2005), and Marieke Bloembergen and Remco Raben (2009) among others. Innovations once introduced, seemingly took on a life of their own. For example, the introduction of railways and steamships into the archipelago provided the impetus for the development of modern housing complexes, such as the so-called Uniekampong created specifically by Western shipping companies to bind together the labour force of dockers (Veering, this volume). Local adaptation of newly discovered principles of hygiene and sanitation led to significant intervention in housing in terms of the regulation of housing design, new architectural designs adapted to the tropical climate, and under the guise of kampung improvement, kampung construction. The introduction of cars necessitated the development of local driving regulations that recognized the differences in speed and function between cars and oxen and the creation of an associated new occupational category of chauffeur/driver (Khusyairi and Colombijn, this volume). Likewise, the introduction of bicycles led to the development of the *becak* which, like the

2 The words ‘indigenous’, ‘Indonesian’, and ‘native’ are used as synonyms throughout this book, despite their different connotations; each of the respective authors has her or his own preference in this respect. Likewise, authors use Eurasian, Indo-European or *Indisch* interchangeably for people of mixed parentage.

automobile, generated new patterns of behaviour uniquely adapted to the specific conditions of colonial society.

Current literature rejects earlier assumptions of modernization in the colonial sphere as synonymous with Westernization, or that it manifested itself primarily in technological or material changes.³ However, considerable debate continues regarding the extent to which the colonial space witnessed or allowed for autonomous processes of modernization to occur. Despite its detailed and elegant account of modernity, the ironical perspective of Rudolf Mrázek's, *Engineers of happy land* for instance, at base tends to sustain the view of modernity as an unnatural intervention in 'traditional' Indonesia (Mrázek 2002). In presenting detailed studies of specific aspects of such changes, the contributions in this volume share the broader critique of the economic and political dimensions of colonialism, but remain alert to the agency of colonial subjects in their responses to a European modernity. Recognizing the realities of the emerging contingencies associated with population densities, the economic demands generated by urban concentrations, and notions of acceptable levels of morbidity and mortality, the contributors to this volume explore the complexity of these historical circumstances. Their contributions are assembled here in three sections reflecting three broadly defined dimensions of the response to modernity, ranging from passive acceptance, via partial accommodation to selective appropriation.

Modernity did not only materialize in tangible forms such as technology, physical changes to the environment, or even in social structures, but manifested itself in ideas about modern society and the environment, in notions of progress, velocity, control over nature, and so on. Of primary interest to colonial advocates of modernity – and to contributors of this volume – is the aesthetic ideal of order, or structure. Town planning can be seen as an extensive endeavour by colonial authorities to organize urban space, to bring order in what was regarded as chaos. Town planning treatises explicitly equate order and regularity with beauty. Houses should stay within building lines; urban greenery is allowed, even desired, but only when planned and kept within bounds; and trees must be pruned and hedges trimmed, as town planner Thomas Karsten warned. Roads need not be straight but could extend in carefully designed curves (Van Roosmalen, this volume). The presence of Chinese graveyards scattered within the residential areas of Surabaya was considered,

3 Perhaps the most extreme recent instance of an unreflective celebration of modernity as Western technology is suggested by the title which proclaims with unintentional irony *For profit and prosperity: The contribution made by Dutch engineers to public works in Indonesia 1800–2000* (Ravesteijn and Kop 2008).

among other things, an aesthetic problem (Husain, this volume). Contemporaries judged that the ordered lawns of Plaju formed a clear and beneficial contrast to the disorderly city of Palembang (Tanjung, this volume). In kampong improvement projects gutters and paths were straightened, houses in new kampongs constructed in strictly defined relationship to neighbouring dwellings and road frontages. As the influential 1938 Explanatory Memorandum on Town Planning (quoted by Van Roosmalen, this volume) states:

Certainly the beauty of a city, or at least, at a lower level, its maintenance, orderliness, and comfortableness, are external signs of an internal order and harmony; they are a testament to the character of the society.

Even if regulations did not explicitly formulate order as an aesthetic ideal, they did perforce create regularity, standardization, and structure. Traffic rules required drivers and people to keep to the left. People who lived in municipal public housing had to pay the rent on a fixed date. Applications for a building permit used a standard form. The electric tram rode on a fixed timetable. If all these elements are usually associated with the Dutch colonial regime, they hardly differed from regulations later introduced during the Japanese administration and carried on after independence. A Japanese propaganda film depicting the perfect kampong showed inhabitants taking care of their environment such as the image of a man trimming his hedge (*Kesehatan rakjat* 1943). In the 1950s Indonesian government planning calculated the even distribution of medical doctors over urban and rural areas (Murakami, this volume). Those who enforced this order – town planners, medical inspectors, policemen, building surveyors, tram drivers, school teachers, government public servants – did so not only in the belief that these measures were essential for the efficient operation of society but because they recognized the beauty in the regularity. *Ordnung muss sein*.

At a discursive level, the idea of ‘progress’ (*kemajuan*) is even more central to the concept of modernization than is the notion that order is beautiful. Proponents of modernization strongly identified with this promise of progress. Michael Adas (1989) has argued that nineteenth-century European writers framed European colonization in terms of the triumph of science, reason, and modern technological inventions over superstition and tradition. This underpinned the belief in Western superiority which, as well as shaping European attitudes towards Africans and Asians, provided the rationalization for ‘modern colonization’.

As several of the cases presented in this volume show, in the context of the colonial city, the obvious antithesis to modernity in the eyes of European

urban administrators, was the *kampong*. In this equation the urban *kampong* stood for and was for many seen as an extension of, the native village, the cultural and social crucible of 'tradition'. The *kampong* acted, as it were, therefore as the counterpoint to modernity. This raises questions as to who indeed was the imagined or actual audience for this discourse on order? Was the *kampong* used merely as a didactic device in this discourse or did the *kampong* merely provide for these modernizers a 'field for action', a space in which to work and act out the predilections of their professions? To what extent did the concerns of colonial modernizers replicate or differ from those of urban reformers in the metropole for whom the uneducated working classes and their disorderly homes, districts, and families offered comparable scenes of the 'unmodern'?

What is clear is that, as the antithesis of the ideal of a modern city, the *kampong* was mostly defined in terms of what the *kampong* *lacked*.⁴ A *kampong* lacked piped water, building lines (or the building lines were not respected), a regular street plan, and sanitation: in other words, it lacked order. A Dutch author quoted by Mrázek (2002:77) describes the dwellings in *kampongs* as huts 'with shutters but no windows, with no floors but earth, with no bathrooms, no washing place, and no water-closets'. The urban reformer, H.F. Tillema described – and photographed at length – the dwellings in *kampongs* as

extremely smelly, filthy and squalid. Here hovels are built one on top of the other, without any sense of order, without taking the slightest account of hygienic requirements...the hovels [are] dank and dark so that cholera is rife there.

TILLEMA 1913, in COTÉ 2002:334

Even the characteristics that *kampongs* did have represented a lack of something more positive: the dust and mud of the unsealed roads and paths produced a lack of hygiene and a lack of traffic flow; the bare-breasted women who washed clothes in the Molenvliet canal, and who figure as a recurrent theme in films about Jakarta (*Berita film* no. 18 1943; *Nederlands Indië voor 1942* (14) 1939), lacked decency; the autonomy of the *kampong* administration meant being 'sadly' excluded from municipal administration and implicitly, therefore the *kampongs* lacked efficient administration. The persistent concern of administrators about the condition of the urban *kampong* and the efforts at *kampong* improvement represented, then, the symbolic celebration of modernity as the indispensable condition of humanity. Expressed in the

4 Indeed, until today scholars have found it difficult to define *kampongs* with a positive formulation (Colombijn 2010:102–104).

political context that was colonialism, by a self-righteous and self-serving minority, it represented a concern to protect its advantaged position.

Some urban reformers, such as H.F. Tillema, attributed the 'backward' conditions of the urban kampong to the attitudes, values and practices their uneducated and illiterate inhabitants brought with them from their traditional rural villages. Such characteristics and behaviours were both inappropriate and dangerous in the 'foreign environment' of the urban centre. Rather than expecting kampong dwellers to voluntarily change their ways, Tillema believed changes needed to be imposed from above. He therefore, for instance, spent time to design a 'fool-proof' toilet to ensure 'the native' would no longer 'shit at random', and recommended the appointment of housing inspectors as ways of solving the hygiene problem (Coté 2002). But similar criticisms were directed at the communities of poorer kampong-dwelling Europeans, largely of mixed parentage, whose economic and educational characteristics differed little from those of their Indonesian neighbours.⁵

Even for progressive, colonial reformers, modernity was not an undifferentiated condition. As the architect and town planner, Thomas Karsten, most famously argued, even in the modern city difference needed to be recognized, if not in racial terms then in terms of social class. This was, he believed, in the interests of orderly social planning which needed to be reflected in the type, scale, and quality of housing and calculated on the basis of an unquestioned, equally modern, calculus of differential socio-economic capacities. The aim of town planning, indeed, was to regulate the necessary diversities innate to the urban condition. This necessary 'order of things' was tangibly demonstrated at the Colonial Exhibition mounted in Semarang in late 1914. The exhibition was intended as a *'tentoonstelling'* of all things modern: motors, cars, electric light, scientific agriculture, modern machinery, modern telegraphy, modern architecture and the latest in building materials such as asbestos sheets, galvanized iron and steel frames, all of which disseminated the promise of progress. The exhibition specifically modelled 'modernity' for the *inlanders* who passed through its turnstiles, presenting them with model housing constructed from wood and bamboo, didactical models of village agriculture, and modern entertainment in the form of a *lunapark* specifically erected to attract their attendance to this pedagogical wonderland (Coté 2006:12–13).

The efforts to modernize the city went beyond targeting its material aspects: ultimately modernization of the urban environment was intended to affect a change in human behaviour. Traditional behaviour was often seen as unruly

5 Kampongs were actually ethnically mixed neighbourhoods, and the population was more accurately described in terms of class than ethnicity (Colombijn 2010:73–180).

behaviour that needed to be disciplined. The colonized subjects were in all sorts of ways 'subordinated [...] to colonial modernity', and this was particularly the case in cities, where the

domestic and public behaviour [of the indigenous people] had to conform to the scientific standards that safeguarded public health and sanitation, public order and decorum.

COTÉ 2006:7–8

Modernization in a colonial context was therefore, in the first place, also a pedagogical activity in which professionals took the 'traditional' people by the hand. The drive to modernize the city and train indigenous people became the crucial form of legitimization for the colonial presence and therefore an important manifestation of the exercise of its power.

The upshot of its efforts to modernize and order the urban space, and discipline the behaviour of its inhabitants was that the state penetrated deep into 'traditional' places and institutions. This had real consequences on the ground. Quite often the colonial state concluded that objects or behaviours that lacked or protested modernity had to be removed from the cityscape. Sometimes the victims were 'collateral damage', as for example, the trees that were cut to widen roads or to install overhead wires, and dwellings that obstructed trajectories of road widening or drainage projects. In other cases objects that did not befit the modern cityscape were deliberately targeted to be removed from the cityscape: Chinese cemeteries, dairy farms, and complete kampongs became the victims of modernization (Barwegen 2006; Husain, this volume).

If this amounted to social engineering – and it is arguable whether the colonial state intended to produce changes beyond ensuring conformity to its rules – it was, of course, not always meekly accepted by the subjects of this experiment and was often successfully contested (Houben 2008:32; Stoler and Cooper 1997:21–22). The Chinese in Surabaya, for instance, continued to bury their dead in the city centre according to custom. Indigenous people invaded the well-organized space of the Malang *alun-alun* to set up food stalls. Dockworkers still left the Uniekampong whenever they wanted. The colonial efforts at 'developing' the indigenous people were inadvertently subverted by the countervailing weight of the limits placed on indigenous people to access to Dutch language education. As Van Roosmalen observes, the efforts of urban reformers were thus thwarted by the fact that not until the 1930s were town planning regulations translated into Malay. Even then municipal authorities depended on a small cadre of Western educated Indonesian intermediaries, such as Thamrin (Versnel and Colombijn, this volume) to mediate between the

kampong residents and the city government. In the most modern of modern colonial cities, it was not until 1938 that the VORL radio began to transmit programmes about urban planning in Malay in efforts to disseminate the principles of modern urban design to the radio-owning residents of Bandung.

The evidence suggests that colonial administrators who worked hard to modernize the cityscape and educate its inhabitants saw themselves as technocrats who worked for the purported public interest and aspired to work for the public good. Some few, like the architects Henri Maclaine Pont or Thomas Karsten, took time to study indigenous traditions to incorporate these into their planning proposals. For instance, Maclaine Pont advocated that new kampong designs should allow room to facilitate the indigenous custom of adding new housing near the parental home (Van Roosmalen 2008:70). Karsten warned that new houses should incorporate 'the essence' of traditional life style in order to generate attachment to the more modern and hygienic dwelling. More generally, however, the apparent objectivity of science helped underpin unquestioned assumptions of class and race. In the most carefully considered plans a disproportionate share of urban land was reserved for the well-to-do and to accommodate the needs of a dominant economy, or the need of faster traffic.

Whether, as Karsten advocated (and as stated in the seminal Explanatory Memorandum on Town Planning, which is generally acknowledged as being largely his work), this class-based sociological approach actually resolved the obvious racial implications of earlier reforms (Nas 1986), or merely disguised them, became apparent after independence.

Beyond the question of the racist implications of colonial modernity, is the evident self-interest of the new breed of the professional directors of urban reform in the colony – the urban administrators, architects, town planners, doctors, teachers, and even the directors of the Uniekampong and the oil refinery at Plaju. To shore up their position as professionals vis-à-vis their European neighbours and ultimately their position in a colonial administrative hierarchy, they had to establish themselves as 'experts'. It was their ostensible know-how, their science, that legitimated their intervention in and policy recommendations regarding the kampong and the cities at large. Through strategic action they guaranteed the continued demand for their expertise and upheld (and directly contributed to) the universal culture of their professions. Activities like town planning, the issuing of licences to *becak*, the drawing-up of traffic rules, the system of issuing building permits, all ensured that these promoters of modernization were permanently engaged. The founding of local professional organizations like the Vereeniging voor Bouwkundigen in Nederlandsch-Indië (Association of Architects in the Netherlands Indies) in

1898 or the Vereeniging voor Locale Belangen (Association for Local Interests) in 1912, specialist journals for architecture (*Indisch Bouwkundig Tijdschrift*), health (*Geneeskundig Tijdschrift van Nederlandsch-Indië*) or local administration (*Locale Belangen*) and a technical college in Bandung confirmed, and where necessary defended, their privileged position as keepers of modern knowledge. However, the professionals did not have a monopoly on such expert knowledge. Van Roosmalen points to the role of citizen associations like Bandoeng Vooruit and Groot Batavia (founded in 1932 and 1938 respectively), which expressed opinions about the development of their cities. Even earlier, it was informal groups of concerned (European) citizens in Semarang who pressed their new municipal council to implement the proposals identified by the city's medical officers. In the same city Indonesian community leaders demanded representation in these new forms of local level government.

If the modernity that has been the focus of this overview of recurrent themes in this volume has emphasized colonial times, the essays in this volume also make clear that the Japanese occupation (1942–1945), Proclamation of Independence (1945) or transfer of sovereignty (1949) did not form a fissure in the processes of modernization of the cities. The Indonesianization of the urban administration from 1942 onwards did not result in a drastic change in outlook, as many of its bureaucrats had been trained by the previous colonial regime and had internalized the dream of modernization. Town planning principles, for instance, only changed drastically after 1957–1958 when the remaining Dutch experts were expelled from Indonesia and replaced by Americans (Van Roosmalen, this volume). Changes at the oil refineries of Plaju, for instance, were very gradual. The rationalities supporting water supply delivery to the Jakartans changed after 1949, but the differentiation between those urban spaces with and without access persisted (Kooy and Bakker, this volume). Colonial regulations pertaining to town planning, traffic, sanitary measures and so on all remained in force well after 1949.

While the technical or outward aspects of modernity remained very much the same after Independence, the underlying political motives and societal goals of the state-led attempts at modernization changed. This becomes clear, for instance, in the debate about public housing. The seminal Congress on Healthy Public Housing, held in Bandung from 25 to 31 August, 1950 recommended a standard design that closely mirrored colonial, middle class examples. The model house would include a living room, a dining room, two bedrooms, and an annex with a kitchen, bathroom, and a toilet, all with sufficient window openings to allow in sunlight and fresh air. Whilst the design implied the living style of a 'modern' nuclear family similar to colonial notions of the ideal household, the novel proposal to provide a system of finance

through the establishment of cooperative housing associations reflected the new Indonesian sense of solidarity amongst citizens. The policy goal of building decent housing for the masses, in contrast to the much more restrictive targets of colonial building programmes, had the expressed aim of shattering the alleged sense of inferiority that Indonesians had sustained by living in too small houses during colonial times (Colombijn 2010:336–340).

One significant change after Indonesian independence is that the state ascribed more importance to a symbolic recognition of the Republic of Indonesia as a nation taking its proper place among the modern – and therefore autonomous – nations of the world. The construction of Hotel Indonesia and other modernist architecture, the erection of giant statues in Jakarta, and the hosting of events showcasing Indonesia's participation in global sports are well-known examples of this symbolic policy (Brown 2008; Kusno 2000:49–70; Leclerc 1993). Kooy and Bakker (this volume) give the example of the new surface water treatment plant Pejompongan, which had as much the goal to be a symbol of a modern, national capital, than to provide clean water to the masses.

Acceptance, Accommodation, Appropriation, and Rejection

The foregoing discussion has emphasized modernity and urbanization as conditions that interfered with, controlled, and oppressed its targets or particularly advantaged, privileged, and benefited its adherents and practitioners. This largely confirms established critical studies of colonialism (for example Yeoh 1996), except that the particular prism through which the imposition of modernity has been examined in this volume has been the colonial city. But seen from the vantage point of the contributions to this volume, this apparent and typically too readily accepted dichotomy distinguishing between urban administrators and colonial professionals who championed modernization on the one hand, and kampong dwellers who were imposed upon or resisted on the other, does not represent the reality. For one thing, by definition colonial 'reformers' and 'progressives' were opposed by powerful interests within their own community and, as Stephen Legg suggests, by the 'bottom line' of colonialism: the reluctance to expend money (Legg 2007).

Perhaps more controversial in an age of postcolonial discourse is to assert – on the basis of empirical evidence – the voluntarily adoption of modern innovation by the targets of colonial intervention. One piece of evidence pointing to this is the use of public transport: statistics make clear that this was quickly adopted by the Indonesian communities on the periphery of urban centres as the number of passengers travelling third class on the rapidly

expanding tramway systems confirm. It is again exemplified by the uptake of housing made available by the Semarang municipality in the new residential districts of Sompok and Mlaten in the years immediately after the First World War, or who enrolled in the limited number of school places available to *Inlanders*. In these cases it can be assumed that these new opportunities appealed to precisely the same categories in the Indonesian community similar to those in the working classes districts of metropolitan cities who took advantage of comparable developments.

Modernity, of course, was not a package deal, which had to be bought or rejected in its entirety. People endorsed some elements and rejected others; some people wanted and were able to adopt more innovations than others (Eisenstadt 2000:15). The absence of a hegemonic response, indeed, need not necessarily be seen as evidence of colonial incompetence but needs to be examined as the evidence of agency. In the active condition of rejecting and accepting lay the seeds of decolonization. Accepting and rejecting can, by extension, be interpreted as resistance to the colonial project. For, as suggested above, it was not 'modernity' per se that was at issue, but the assumptions and processes in which it was presented. In a society that, over time, had successfully incorporated many foreign influences, the gradually accelerating penetration of Western modernity could be and was in fact often accommodated. However, as Dipesh Chakrabarty has argued in the particular instance of nineteenth-century Bengal, the colonized subject desiring modernity was faced with the problem of how to buy the package without its Western wrapping (Chakrabarty 2000).

The contributors to this volume reveal how selective the 'customers' of Western modernity were. And we argue in this volume that herein – in the acceptance and rejection of aspects of modernity most clearly manifested in the urban space – emerged also the counter-colonial process of defining an alternative modernity, one that the subaltern residents of the cities could own. This alternative modernity did not reject the fundamental ingredients of modernity – technology, the desire for material improvement, progress, a consciousness of the now and the future, a nostalgia for tradition – but challenged the assumption of exclusive ownership. Some of the evidence for this selective embracing of modernity that emerges from the contributions to this volume includes the circumstances where residents of some kampongs requested the intervention of the municipality to improve their neighbourhood, but demanded to maintain their autonomy or be allowed to share in the decision-making process (Versnel and Colombijn, this volume). Indigenous clerical employees of the oil refineries at Plaju eagerly adopted symbols of modernity like the wearing of a necktie, and participated in the modern leisure time

pursuits table tennis and dancing, but sported these as the accoutrements of a new Indonesian middle class (Tanjung, this volume). As Giddens (1991) and Bauman (2000:18–23) have noted in the case of comparable developments in the West, modernization led to abandoning fixed, traditional frameworks, and the need to make individual choices.

The gradual formation of ‘subterranean modernities’ that eventuated in revolutionary processes of decolonization was of course limited and bounded by the contingencies of the colonial environment. People were not free to make their choices. Many manifestations of modernity were accompanied by the creation of boundaries between modern and traditional spaces. The Kotabaru neighbourhood, for instance, was partially separated from surrounding kampongs by a railway and canal but there was also a social boundary constructed from the fear of its modern European inhabitants of a creolization of their cultural space. Conversely, adult testimonies report that in their youth inhabitants of surrounding kampongs were physically afraid to enter the area (Fakih, this volume). In Malang on the other hand, despite the fact that the *alun-alun* was marked out as a European and governmental space by lines of trees and imposing Western buildings, indigenous people were not at all hesitant to trespass across the symbolic boundary of the square (Basundoro, this volume). Was it because, despite its newness, it was nevertheless *their alun-alun*? In the more precisely defined properties of European enterprises, the purposely-built boundaries were specifically designed to keep selected individuals in and exclude others: a guarded gate sealed the oil refinery at Plaju. Practices of hygiene drew boundaries between what was modern and clean and what was traditional and dirty at the level of an individual house, a kampung or a whole city. The waterworks in Batavia, as in other colonial cities, had a certain reach, automatically distinguishing people who had access and people who were excluded from the served area. Across the board, different levels of Western education awarded a conditional pass to a graded set of sites of modernity, the upper reaches of which remained unreachable for Indonesians until with Independence the ultimate power to distribute such awards was snatched from those who had previously dispensed them.

The existence of boundaries was one modality of a crucial general feature of modernization: people had different access to the offerings of modernity. While the contingencies of colonialism played a significant role in the construction of such boundaries, evidence from the postcolonial era reveals how, whether intentionally or not, the embedded symbolism associated with the signs of modernity themselves continued after Independence. In her contribution, for instance, Murakami has sketched the consequences of the limitations of the Indonesian Republic’s health care system in providing modern health

services to its citizens despite its best intentions. Kooy and Bakker use the term the 'splintered city' to capture the unequal access of Jakartans to clean water. Almost inevitability, for quite pragmatic reasons, the boundaries of modernity under the autonomous Indonesian state closely replicated those under the earlier colonial state. The new water treatment plants constructed after Independence reached only certain parts of the city, as before, and merely reinforced colonial divisions in Jakarta. Another division existed between people with and without housing. Urban residents, especially recent migrants, without proper and affordable housing (by their own standards) often resorted to squatting on vacant urban land and building their own dwellings. The post-colonial city administrators almost panicked at the prospect of the seemingly uncontrollable spread of squatter settlements, which subverted their dreams of building a modern city, and by harsh measures tried to rein in, and if possible remove, squatter settlements. The ultimate effort to create a modern cityscape was the development of a satellite town, Kebayoran Baru, built from scratch and separated from all the riff-raff of old Jakarta by a safe five kilometre-wide corridor. This project was initiated by the Dutch, but endorsed and executed by the independent government (Colombijn 2010:207–224, 297–307; Van Roosmalen 2008:183–185).

Urbanization, Modernity and Decolonization

The colonial state was often not directly the most powerful advocate of modernization; more often than not it was the agents of modernization who acted in its name or, where necessary, appealed to higher authorities in the metropole or in the last resort to their centres of professional and scientific arbitration. The local responses to these interventions were ambiguous, be they resistant or accommodating, but inevitably the interventions came to be associated with the colonial state as the foreign locus of power. Processes of modernization thus became highly politicized so that control over their direction and over the instruments of modernization – which ultimately was the state – became the goal of a nationalist revolution.

The ironic connection between colonial modernization and nationalism has often been pointed out in relation to new administrative techniques that helped subjugated people to imagine the nation as an imagined community (Anderson 1991; Rappa and Wee 2006:9–10; Rigg 2007:59–60), stimulated the spread of new ideologies through both formal education and technical facilities that facilitated assembling a broad national movement (Coté 2006:36; Cribb 1994:2; Gellner 1983; Gillen and Ghosh 2007:120–122; Kahin 1952:30–35;

Shiraishi 1990:8–29), or added to the mounting frustration of nationalist leaders that experienced a glass ceiling in their early professional careers (Duara 2004:4–5; Kooiman 2009:222–226; Tilly 1973). The material collected in this volume, however, emphasizes another connection between colonial modernization and nationalism. Modernization made the inequality more and painfully visible and could increase social inequality in the urban setting.

For instance, with the new options of steam tram, electric tram, bicycle, and car available, people who still went on foot, or by *dokar* (horse-drawn buggy) and carts pulled by zebus, had come to be perceived as being relatively more backward, or *ketinggalan zaman* (left behind by the times).⁶ This must have been visible to themselves as much as to other people. Subsequently, the different pace of movement, and the different range of travel gave people unequal opportunities to earn a higher income and gain more knowledge. Likewise, people who lived in sanitized kampongs or profited from water from the mains experienced improved health, which consequently increased their chances to appropriate a higher income, or at least reduce unproductive periods of illness. The relations between modernization and inequality are, of course, far more intricate than we sketch here, but the general point is clear: modernization sharpened social inequality in the cities. And where inequality followed ethnic lines, modernization fed nationalism and ultimately decolonization.

It is no coincidence that the confrontation between modernity and social inequality was most palpable in the cities. Urban centres represent places of concentrated humanity engaged in and confronted by a multitude of circumstances and opportunities. Cities, and especially the port towns, formed the primary point of contact between the colonized world and the West, through which foreign innovations entered the archipelago. In the view of the colonial state, the cities formed the centres where it was most urgent to modernize the human and material conditions. Opportunities for Western education, which were also identified by nationalists with progress and modernization, were also almost exclusively found in the city. Cities, as concentrations of people of all kinds, acted as incubators for many nationalist organizations (Coté 2006:7; Dick and Rimmer 2003:71; Houben and Schrempf 2008:13; Owen et al. 2005:263–265). As Adrian Vickers asserts:

cities represented all that was modern, both good and bad. A sense of the modern, especially the need for progress, was important in forging

6 It is telling how prominently the different modes of transport, moving at different speed, figure in films of city life of that time (*Berita film no. 18* 1943; *Dorp en stad* 1949; *Nederlands Indië voor 1942* (10) 1939; *Nederlands Indië voor 1942* (14) 1939; *Soerabaia* 1929).

nationalism among Indonesians. [...] [N]ationalism was an idea that could only develop in the urban context.

VICKERS 2005:60–1

Henk Schulte Nordholt puts in an important caveat against the teleological view that that modernization kindled nationalism. He argues that the rising indigenous middle class in colonial Indonesia was interested in modernization, but on the whole not in nationalism. Nationalism was too risky and a potential threat to their recently acquired standard of living. They strove for a certain lifestyle, or ‘cultural citizenship’ and not independence (Schulte Nordholt 2009:106–107). Indeed, for miners in the Copperbelt of Zambia, modernization was, among other things, ‘cars, suits, fine clothes, a decent necktie’ (Ferguson 1999:13).⁷ Advertisements in newspapers and journals from the 1950s promoted fashionable clothes and modern kitchenware. Also less tangible things and certain behaviour conveyed the idea of modernity: Western music, *keroncong* music – nowadays considered old-fashioned – American films, sprinkling daily speech with English or Dutch words, drinking lemonade, smoking cigarettes, modern sports like tennis and football, and, especially for women, the use of toothpaste and a fresh breath (Bogaerts 2012:235–236; Kusno 2010:168–181; Maier 1997; Schulte Nordholt 1997:20; Schulte Nordholt 2009:109–110; Shiraishi 1990:30). Recognizing the ambiguous nature of and response to modernity – the conditions created by the processes of modernization – suggests there exists a crucial linkage between urbanization, modernization and decolonization. A study of the Indonesian Revolution must necessarily conclude that the overthrow of the colonial state was undertaken by a combination of those who had appropriated and those who had resisted the processes of modernization. Without the popular resistance of the Indonesian masses, a minority indigenous Western-educated and acculturated elite could not have snatched control of the state. While for some, independence was the logical upshot of the ideal of modern society and the liberal thesis of equality and individual and national autonomy, it was the denial of these conditions of modernity that energized them. For others it was precisely because modernity made apparent the realities of traditional values, social structures, or ethnic – and in particular religious – identities, that the overthrow of the colonial state

7 Ferguson's study of the Copperbelt at a time of economic decline is, by the way, an important reminder, that modernization is not an inevitable, unilinear process. For the miners these emblems of modernity had become more something of a myth from the past seemingly gone forever than a physical reality. Modernization has erroneously become a teleological narrative with a certain outcome (Ferguson 1999; see also Houben and Schrempf 2008).

seemed to offer the possibility of a return to a neo-traditional state, be it Islamic or feudal, which would accord to them, at last, the promise of equality.

A City Tour

The contributors to this volume taken together have begun the task of tracing the empirical links between modernity, urban modernization, and decolonization. Less ambitious in avoiding the theorization that marks much of the present debate on (colonial) modernity, and consciously avoiding the ideological binaries that continue to obscure the investigation of colonialism, they begin to shine a light on real social processes. There is no claim here that ‘the story has been told’; the aim of these contributions is to contribute to the task of exploration in the belief that an understanding of the present world requires a more accurate accounting of the past. Collectively, the articles of this volume tell about the various interconnections between modernization – both technical and social – evident social inequality, colonial state intervention, resistance, and decolonization, which did not take place in a spatial vacuum, but were typical of, and bound to, the urban society in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

The twelve contributions that make up this volume begin to sketch three scenarios. The first section, incorporating the contributions of Murakami, Kooy and Bakker, and Van Roosmalen take a big picture approach, stretching their view across the twentieth century – and thus across both colonial and national states to survey specific elements of modernization. They demonstrate the universality of many aspects of modernity across regimes suggesting that much of what is laid at the feet of colonialism was embedded within modernity’s project itself. This general conclusion can be applied to each of the later, more specific and detailed studies. The subsequent sections look more closely at specific sites in which Indonesians respond in specific ways to the changes that colonialism was introducing.

In the opening chapter of the section ‘State impositions and passive acceptance’, Saki Murakami discusses some of the dilemmas faced by the leaders of independent Indonesia in modernizing their country and decolonizing society at the same time. The government wished to develop a modern public health system based on biomedicine, but had to build on a system inherited from colonial times. It wished to decolonize public health care and put Indonesian doctors in the leading positions, but could still not do without the services of European doctors. Finally, it aimed at doing better than the colonial state by

distributing the provision of health care more evenly between urban and rural areas and between Java and other islands, but at the same time dreamed that the major urban centres could boast of the most modern facilities to boost national pride. For want of an abundant supply of doctors that would go voluntarily to peripheral rural areas or places outside Java, the state tried to provide health care more evenly by regulating the domicile of medical staff by law. This policy was frustrated by medical staff reluctant to give up the freedom of settlement and by residents of the major urban centres on Java who refused to give up anything of their prerogatives in health care.

In the following chapter, Michelle Kooy and Karen Bakker make the same point in a different context: that modern facilities were very unequally available for different groups. Rather than looking at differences between cities and the countryside, they focus on intra-urban differences. They analyse spatial patterns of water supply in colonial and postcolonial Jakarta. Until today, many households do not have access to the system of water mains. The ideal of development experts is an integrated, universal and homogeneous system of piped water supply, and the fact that Jakarta does not have such an integrated system is often interpreted as a retarded or lapsed modernity. Kooy and Bakker challenge this framework of 'failure' and, following the work of Stephen Graham and Simon Marvin (2001), instead propose the model of a 'splintered city'. The splintered city concept abandons the Western ideal of a homogeneous, integrated urban space and offers an alternative analytical framework. In the splintered city of colonial times, the waterworks were concentrated in quarters where Europeans predominated (and a few kampongs) and thus reinforced the distinction between clean, modern Europeans and not so clean, traditional Indonesians. After Independence the state built new water treatment plants, which consciously served only the most modern parts of the city; this limited reach was not a failure, but part of a conscious strategy to create some modern exemplary neighbourhoods to give Jakarta its place among other world cities.

The next two chapters, by Pauline van Roosmalen, and Hans Versnel and Freek Colombijn, deal with various aspects of colonial urban planning and Dutch ideals of a modern city in late colonial times. Urban planning is, of course, a prime example of the modernization of the city because of planners' claim to be able to rationally determine the best fit between means and goals. Their adoption of Western techniques such as zoning and the use of statistics, and the preoccupation with planning schemes implied a clear notion of progress. Planning was not only the product of the modernization of society, but also a major agent in the ongoing modernization of the city. In the view of planners the lower-class neighbourhoods, or kampongs, embodied the opposite of what the modern city should look like: clean, orderly, and prosperous.

Van Roosmalen shows that order was not merely a functional tool in planning, but an aesthetic ideal: order is beauty. Van Roosmalen makes a case for seeing planning as a terrain where decolonization was postponed. The influence of Dutch planning concepts did not decline until 1957, when the Dutch professors in planning at the Bandung Institute of Technology were replaced by Americans, who emphasized the pivotal role of the motorcar.

Hans Versnel and Freek Colombijn open the section on 'Partial accommodation' by zooming in on one particular aspect of planning and state intervention, namely *kampong* improvement. In the eyes of the city administrators the urban *kampongs* were chaotic, disorderly, and unhygienic, in short they disrupted the ideal of cities as centres of modernity. Versnel and Colombijn compare two men who used their social capital trying to improve the living conditions in the *kampongs*: J.J.G.E. Rückert and Hoesni Thamrin. Rückert was a Dutch bureaucrat, who combined many functions in the civil service, arguing for the need to reserve more of the state budget for *kampongs*. Hoesni Thamrin was an Indonesian politician, who operated in several representative bodies to which he was elected. Hoesni Thamrin demanded in heated speeches that the state do more for the *kampongs*. In other words, in this case it was an indigenous political leader who pleaded that the colonial state should modernize the allegedly traditional areas of the town, and penetrate deep into the *kampongs* taking over the administration of the previously semi-autonomous *kampongs*.

The next three articles form a counterweight to the previous studies of top-down interventions. The three articles by Farabi Fakh, Radjimo Sastro Wijono, and Gustaaf Reerink are case studies showing local residents' response to, and sometimes active resistance against, state intervention. Fakh analyses the appearance of housing estates, which were inspired by the garden city concept for their layout and by Art Deco for their architecture. These housing estates formed islands of modernity in the cities. Beneath manifestations of modernity lay the fear of the opposite of modernity, the behaviour of indigenous people in the *kampongs*. Fakh focuses in on one such estate, Kotabaru built in Yogyakarta in 1919. Kotabaru allowed its residents, mostly Europeans, to escape from the social environment of the rest of the city. As we learn from oral history, the fear of the residents of Kotabaru of the *kampong* dwellers around them was matched by the fear of some of the indigenous people living outside the estate who barely dared to enter Kotabaru. Nevertheless, some indigenous people were permitted access to provide services for the residents, so that a significant degree of contact was nevertheless maintained between the residents of Kotabaru and the environs. After Independence, when middle class Indonesian professionals moved into the area, the contrast between modern Kotabaru and traditional environs persisted.

Radjimo Sastro Wijono, who has also interviewed former residents, sketches the life in two kampongs in Semarang. The progressive city government of Semarang, seeing that various measures to improve hygiene in existing kampongs fell short of expected results, took the initiative to build new, healthy housing complexes for low ranking civil servants. The local administration built the housing complex Sompok between 1920 and 1923, based on a plan drawn up by the Semarang-based planner Thomas Karsten. When people occupied the houses in Sompok and another Karsten designed kampung, Mlaten, they adopted new 'modern' habits as well. For instance, unlike the traditional Javanese house, which was not divided into rooms, houses in Sompok were, and this introduced a new notion of privacy. People had to become accustomed to using toilets and bathing facilities in Sompok, but once these facilities were appreciated, residents opted to have a private bathroom rather than making use of the existing public shared facilities even though they had to pay higher rent for this convenience. Thus, modernization led both to growing individualism and social class differentiation. While Karsten specifically intended the new residential district to be 'multi-ethnic', his housing estates were designed to house a definable socio-economic class, in particular to accommodate what he saw as the emerging Javanese middle class who could afford the rental level that applied.

The third article of this set, by Gustaaf Reerink, focuses on the relationship between state and kampung dwellers in Bandung between 1930 and 1960, that is, from Dutch colonial times, through the Japanese period, and the first decades of independence. Reerink builds his case partly at the level of the city of Bandung, and partly at the level of one kampung, Taman Sari, studied in detail. The municipal government characterized kampongs as informal slums and in 1927 launched a programme for kampung improvement. However, as Reerink argues, the municipal government never really gained effective control over the kampongs to effect its policies. During the colonial period, this lack of state control was the result of the so-called '*desa autonomie*', a formal state policy of legal dualism that granted administrative autonomy to kampongs that lay partly or wholly within municipal boundaries. Thus, although urban kampongs gradually lost their autonomy, a process that continued after Independence, kampongs nevertheless managed to maintain a large degree of *de facto* autonomy. In the first years after Independence the government had more pressing matters on its mind than controlling the kampongs. In the 1950s so many people moved from the countryside to Bandung that the city government was overwhelmed by numbers and could do little against the many new residents that squatted on land and built houses without a legal permit. Building codes, consequently, were simply irrelevant to kampung residents and ignored.

All articles thus far have dealt with state interventions, but the next article by Arjan Veering, in contrast, deals with a project instigated by the private sector. Rapid technological developments in shipping and freighting required a new organization of the ports in the Archipelago. Fast and reliable loading of the ships became essential, and this required, among other things, a stable labour force. However, this requirement was jeopardized by the casual nature of the labour force and the enduring problem of scarcity of labour. Therefore the four main shipping lines of the time sought ways to create a stable labour force of dockworkers in the port of Tanjung Priok (Jakarta). They found a partial solution in the provision of housing in the so-called Uniekampong, established and managed by the shipping lines in 1919. The Uniekampong developed into a labour pool that, as envisaged by the shipping lines, broke the traditional organization of labour in the port. The labour pool was less casual and more disciplined than previous organizations of labour. Concern on the part of shipping companies to increase productivity were mixed with ethical motives to create better, more hygienic living conditions that existed in the kampongs where the dockers used to live. The Uniekampong provided better housing, linked to water supply, sewerage, electricity, and paved roads. Despite these facilities, dockworkers were not eager to live in the Uniekampong since in so doing they sensed that they would be sacrificing something of their independence.

The final section deals with four cases of 'selective appropriation'. The first article, by Johnny Khusyairi and Freek Colombijn, focuses on the modernization of traffic. Using material from Surabaya in the 1920s, their main argument is that people had uneven access to the means of transportation and, conversely, some new means of transportation accentuated social difference. Ownership of cars and, to a lesser degree, bicycles was obviously constrained by financial means. Various economic groups also used different means of public transportation. Low-income people tended to take steam trams, which served industrial, port, and market areas, whereas middle class people preferred the more comfortable electric trams that connected suburbs to the city centre. One consequence of the modernization of transportation was a considerable number of traffic accidents, often caused by differences in velocity of the participants. The propensity for accidents in part at least can be attributed to the uneven degree of modernization resulting in some people moving at a higher velocity than others. The accidents and more complex traffic situation invoked a response from the government to regulate the traffic.

The next three articles shift the emphasis from modernization of urban space (with nationalism and decolonization in the background) to nationalism and decolonization (with the modernization of urban space as backdrop).

All three articles analyse the transformations of urban spaces that were heavily loaded with symbolic meanings. Purnawan Basundoro discusses the contested meanings of the *alun-alun* in Malang. Traditionally an *alun-alun* was a square imbued with ritual meaning, but in Malang the *alun-alun* was built by the Dutch with another conception in mind. From its inception in 1882, the square was intended as a colonial space in which was located, as well as a mosque, a church, a jail and the official residence of the representative of the colonial government, the Assistant-Resident. Later were added newer emblems of European society, the *sociëteit* (the European club house), two banks, and a cinema. A second *alun-alun*, built in 1922 and designed by Karsten, while based on a traditional Hindu model but specifically designed to accommodate the needs of a modern colonial society, was even less frequented by the city's Indonesian inhabitants. Ordinary indigenous people could not take part in the modern activities on the *alun-alun*, but they did resist the Dutch appropriation of this urban space. They encroached on the square and began their own activities, such as selling foodstuff from stalls. As Basundoro shows in his account of their various subsequent transformations, through the last decades of colonial rule, during the Japanese occupation and early years of Independence, while the buildings remained the same, the symbolic meanings given to the buildings and square and the use made of the public space changed repeatedly.

Ida Liana Tanjung depicts the symbolic changes taking place in Plaju during decolonization. Plaju is an oil town near Palembang; it is conventionally considered an economic enclave, but in the context of this volume is perhaps better called an enclave of modernity near the very old city of Palembang. By its image of modernity (the high-tech oil industry, the rational spatial planning of Plaju, the high percentage of technical experts living in Plaju, the cosmopolitan composition of its population, and facilities like a tennis court and swimming pool), Plaju is in many ways the opposite of an *alun-alun*. Nevertheless, Indonesians and Europeans to some extent contested the control of this space as they did with the *alun-alun* of Malang. Because of its economic importance, but also because of its symbolic function as showcase of modernity in the whole of South Sumatra, the oil town and refinery became a desirable object during the Second World War and Revolution. The area regularly changed hands and these changes in political control were followed by symbolic changes, such as changing street names. The symbolic Indonesianization of the oil town was a protracted process starting long before 1942 and completed long after 1949.

In the final article of this volume, Sarkawi B. Husain studies what happened to Chinese cemeteries in Surabaya in the 1950s. Finding a decent burial place for the deceased is for Chinese people arguably even more important than for

others. The Chinese cemeteries in Surabaya gradually became an irritant to urban reformers because they hampered an orderly urban development, the more so because indigenous residents squatted on the graves. During the Dutch and Japanese times, the cemeteries were relatively quiet without serious problems. There was still ample building land in the city and the Dutch and Japanese resolutely protected the burial grounds and upheld public discipline. However, after Indonesia became independent, the conflicts between the Chinese and other residents about the use of urban space intensified. Indigenous people used the cemeteries increasingly for housing and resisted new burials taking place. After several incidents with intense negotiations the municipal administration decided to close most of the cemeteries, which were seen as no longer befitting a modern city centre.

Conclusion

Residents of Indonesian cities witnessed the introduction of modern technologies, organizational innovations, and new forms of social life at a staggering speed in the first half of the twentieth century: new means of transportation, the concept of a planned urban development, new notions of sanitation and hygienic housing, new models of urban administration, and the organization of health care, and so forth. Modernization was neither a phenomenon that happened naturally to a society, nor was it an unequivocally positive development as its proponents suggested. Modernization was an ideal striven for by certain actors and contested, perhaps detested, by others. Income, ethnicity, and gender influenced one's opportunities to take part in or to be seen to actively resist, the processes and technologies of modernization.

This volume has aimed at exploring the implications of these broad cultural processes and material changes in Indonesia in the course of the twentieth century. It has sought to investigate how widely accepted theoretical 'models' that have been applied to studies of colonial and postcolonial states operated 'on the ground'. Its contributors have implicitly and explicitly asserted the view that explanations of social, cultural and political change need to be grounded in empirical historical detail. At the same time, they remain convinced that such grounded historical explanations need to be directed by clear theoretical frameworks which must form the basis of historical explanation. Inevitably, detailed localized, empirical studies remain just that: individual samples of a possible larger history. The contributions to this volume therefore can be seen as pointing to a potential rich stream of research that will lay the basis for a better understanding of the rich social history of Indonesia's twentieth century.

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