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Batavian Apartheid:

Mapping Bodies, Constructing Identity

ROBERT COWHERD

Abstract

In 1619 the Dutch East India Company (VOC) adapted European models of the fortified canal port town in its plan for Batavia, Java (Jakarta, Indonesia) as its Asian base of operations. Beyond its Dutch features, Batavia's overseas Chinese officials structured the town as a grid of segregated residential enclaves (kampung) of distinct occupation-specific work gangs. A 1667 map of Batavia operated as a blueprint for both the physical and social order with European households named by address, Chinese officers named by position, and entire neighbourhoods of work gangs left unidentified and mute. The map and urban form operated together as mutually constitutive phenomena.

Over time, the reflexive interplay between urban form and colonial order led to a series of socio-spatial restrictions in which connective infrastructures of canals and bridges came to constrain non-European circulation as moats and checkpoints. By costuming each body according to artificially constructed census categories, sumptuary codes sorted and tagged every colonial subject according to their proper place and time in that order. Late 19th- and early 20th-century maps persisted in depicting European institutions and homes in great figure-ground detail. In contrast, while segregated kampungs were rendered green like vestigial segments of

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forest to be cleared, the first aerial photographs show them as high-density and home to most Batavians. As both projective blueprint and navigational directory of the resulting colonial order, maps proved instrumental to the operation and reproduction of Batavia's specific apartheid system.

But in the suffocating hull of a ship called the White Lion, bound for where they did not know, those who refused to die understood that the men and women chained next to them in the dark were no longer strangers. They had been forged in trauma. They had been made black by those who believed themselves to be white. And where they were headed, black equalled "slave". So these were their people now.¹

– Nikole Hannah-Jones, "The 1619 Project"

In Batavia, the Dutch discerned, according to their preconception, a Chinese minority. This mixed group did not consider itself Chinese.... Once the Dutch discerned this ethnicity, however, they institutionalised their administrative fiction. They set about territorialising the "Chinese" quarter, selected "Chinese" officials, set up local courts for customary Chinese law as they saw it, instituted Chinese schools, and in general made sure that all those falling within this classification approached the colonial regime as Batavian "Chinese". What began as something of a figment of the Dutch imperial imagination took on real sociological substance.... And voilà!—after sixty years or so there was indeed a self-conscious Chinese community. The Dutch had...manufactured what they could not discover.²

– James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*

The Dutch East India Company constructed the fortified port town of Batavia based on an ideal prototype designed to maximise the flow of goods inside the smallest possible fortified area. The less obvious origin of Batavia's form and operation lies in the long-standing model of the overseas Chinese trade port. The early *Kapiteins* (Chinese mayors) of Batavia oversaw an elaborate hierarchy of ethnicity- and occupation-based work units. This system of identity categories was reinforced in language, dress and urban form as a coordinated regime of command and control that proved as, or more, instrumental to the survival and success of the company than anything

brought from Holland. This article examines the Dutch construction and development of Batavia and its associated infrastructures as an oppressive set of formal, spatial and institutional arrangements engineered to serve the larger colonial project. Throughout, the strategies for controlling space and movement, social relations and identity, land and labour, worked in part by becoming an unconscious but ever-present set of structures impacting the *de facto* practices of everyday life.

The primary evidence examined here is found in the interplay between urban form and cartographic representation as illuminated by their structural alignments with census categories, dress codes, laws and other mechanisms developed for the successful administration of the colony. Specifically, this work foregrounds the question: which came first, the map or the territory? Like “the chicken and the egg”, a definitive origin proves both elusive and subordinate to an understanding of the reflexive relationship between two mutually constitutive components of a single integrated whole. Each emerges as both cause and effect of the other. Specifically, the maps of Batavia are both a manifestation of the built reality after the fact and a blueprint used to produce that reality. Once built, cartographic representations reinforce and reproduce the intended colonial order operating within the world system of colonial resource extraction and its concomitant mindsets.

Writing on the architectures and urbanisms crossing paths in Java since the 17th century begins by acknowledging the long-standing networked condition of trade stretching from Japan to East Africa and eventually to Venice and Europe long before the first arrival of Portuguese ships in the 16th century. Any question of a “global turn” in the context of the Indian Ocean exchange must sooner or later contend with the late arrival of Europeans to an already crowded community of trading partners. Trade networks were bringing goods from and through Java across the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean from at least the turn of the Common Era.³ The Dutch and other Europeans were at first understood in this context as trading partners from across the same seas joining a polyglot cast of characters from an already expansive network.⁴

Any history of the social and physical construction of late colonial Java must overcome two systematic omissions in the historical record. First, the record is dominated by the continuous commitment by the colonising powers to preserve for historical consideration every action of the bureaucratic state in the most positive light. Despite over half a century of scholarship devoted to problematising hegemonic norms, we have yet to significantly resurface much of the non-European histories rendered virtually invisible by those norms.⁵ Second, where histories of Singapore benefit from a growing collection

of records from local clan houses and the biographies of prominent Chinese figures, recurring anti-Chinese purges on the island of Java have largely succeeded in destroying documents written in Chinese languages.⁶ This work benefits from scholarship working across deliberate gaps in the record by examining Javanese literary traditions previously considered unworthy of treatment as history.⁷

The history of Batavian apartheid in the service of colonial extraction is explored in four moments. First, the wholesale embrace of the overseas Chinese port town system proved to be a remarkably effective strategy for fulfilling the needs of the Dutch Company. Second, as the embrace grew into a full partnership, the peculiarities of Dutch colonial requirements compelled a hardening of boundaries in which buildings became walls, canals became moats, and bridges and gates became checkpoints. Within these urban structures, individual bodies were sorted and tagged by dress codes into distinct identity groups, held under lock and key in segregated enclaves, and controlled by threats of Company-sanctioned violence. Third, the 18th-century emergence of the plantation economy and Dutch envy of the rising Chinese comprador class drove them to undermine the very system that had proven so successful. Finally, the 19th century brought the apartheid system developed in Batavia to towns across Java. By the early 20th century, a flourishing colonial modernisation was on full display along the boulevards of the city and captured in great detail in the maps around the turn of the century. These maps show scaled architectural detail of the Dutch city framed by large dark green areas and symbols suggesting a scattering of trees and occasional structures. The graphic abstractions on maps were matched in built reality where walls concealed the “Native” *kampung* and Chinatowns where the vast majority of Batavians lived. The thoroughness of colonial social-spatial engineering was confirmed with Furnivall’s ethnographic “discovery” in the 1930s of the very traits imagined and subsequently produced by the diagrammatic simplifications imposed by Dutch colonial policy.

Overseas Chinese Port Town in Dutch

Despite the fortifications and canal-factory-road arrangements engineered for optimal performance by European engineers, Batavia was less a marvel of European efficiency and more a successful adaptation to the model for a Chinese trading port. In 1602, the founding of the Dutch East India Company introduced three major innovations to what would become the world of multinational corporations. The first was to “unify” (*verenig*) Dutch operations under a single charter of the *Vereniging Oost-Indische Compagnie* (VOC,

literally the United East India Company) with an eye towards establishing monopoly control of the rare spices of the region. The second was to aggregate profits and losses of multiple voyages over the course of years, thus removing the all-or-nothing volatility of several ill-fated early adventures that chilled the Dutch will to invest. The third was to create the conditions for trading in “joint-stock” shares, making it the first publicly-traded company.⁸ The Dutch Crown vested the company with the authority to wage war. The purpose was decidedly not to conquer and hold lands—a costly and unnecessary ambition—but to defeat Portuguese and English competitors at sea. The Southeast Asian archipelago (Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei) leaves precious few gaps for passing between the Indian and Pacific Oceans. A naval base from which to control the straits of Malacca (Melaka), Sunda and Lombok was the key to establishing monopoly control of the world’s sole source of cloves, nutmeg and mace in the “spice islands” (Maluku) of the eastern archipelago.

In 1619 a long-standing rivalry between the Sundanese Hindu Kingdom of Pajajaran and the Javanese Islamic Sultanate of Demak provided the pretext for a series of battles between their respective European allies. The Dutch East India Company’s naval force evicted the English and, betraying their indigenous allies, burned the port town of Jayacatra to the ground. On the ashes of the homes, markets, mosques, churches, temples and a Portuguese fortress, the Dutch constructed the long-sought eastern headquarters of the Dutch East India Company as the fortified canal town of Batavia. The location, size, form and features of Batavia were the result of careful calculations aimed at maximising Dutch Company dominance of sea trade with the lowest logistical costs in terms of land, labour, military force and Dutch personnel. The Dutch built its new headquarters according to the ideal fortified port-canal town model developed by polymath engineer and designer Simon Stevin with a slave labour force brought to Batavia from its ports of call from Africa to East Asia.⁹ The entire enterprise of long-distance trade as exploited by Stevin then as now is predicated on the relatively low friction, high capacity, and low cost of water transportation in comparison with any land-born conveyance. Even the heaviest loads could be pulled on a barge along canals with remarkably little energy and then off-loaded into a quayside factory-warehouse-home with a minimum of labour. Stevin’s plan was produced in the manner of a fractal geometry problem maximising the number of shophouses with direct access to the water while minimising the number of bridges and length of canal. Due to the cost of fortifications, the size of the town was as small as possible while still housing the required labour force, warehouses and factories within.

To build and operate Batavia, the Dutch Company emulated the success of Spain's colonial headquarters of Manila, founded in 1571. The first Governor-General of Batavia praised Manila's incorporation of Fujianese enclaves that by 1614 housed as many as 9,000 permanent and some 16,000 seasonal residents.¹⁰ Operating as a mosaic of self-regulating districts, the overseas Chinese population of Manila required minimal administrative support and generated a handsome tax income for the Spanish.¹¹ To replicate Spanish-Chinese Manila's success, the Dutch partnered with Souw Beng Kong, a prominent leader of a Fujianese immigrant community in nearby Bantam (now Banten). Souw was Batavia's first Captain of the Chinese responsible for all matters related to his community of 170 families. The close personal relationship between the Dutch Governor-General and Souw proved to be a boon to the early success of town construction and operations. Even before the first fortifications were completed and the next shipment of spices reached Holland, Souw integrated Batavia into the well-established Fujian overseas trade system linking it to ports from Dejima (Japan) to the Malabar Coast (India).¹² Many of the ports within this early regional network were off-limits to the Dutch themselves.¹³

Despite the dominant imagery of Dutch architectural and urban form adapted to the tropics, Batavia was largely a Chinese port town operated for the benefit of the Dutch colonial project.¹⁴ In his 2004 *The Boat and the City*, urban historian Johannes Widodo identifies the characteristic features of 15th-century Fujian port settlements found in the urban structures of trading centres throughout Southeast Asia.¹⁵ The earliest coastal trading camps were established across a river from indigenous populations to segregate them from the Fujianese traders dwelling around a central market. Despite Islam's dominant role in the Fujian trade network, the Mazu (grandmother) shrine at the stern of every ship was symbolically reproduced as a Mazu temple at the heart of each Chinese port settlement. The temple was typically positioned to look down an axial street (like a ship's keel) to the market adjacent to the quay. The morphological structures that Widodo identifies in Batavia and other Southeast Asian ports are the functional and symbolic traces of a shared provenance evidenced by the formal-spatial relationships between quay, market, temple, streets and residential enclaves.¹⁶

As a strategy of imposing order on this otherwise disorderly agglomeration of humanity, Captain Souw instituted the conventions of the Fujian port town system, including ethnicity- and occupation-specific residential quarters. The word "gang" originally conflated the narrow alley of the residential barracks (the Dutch meaning of *gang*) and the work crew that lived there (as in the dominant English usage).¹⁷ Despite Dutch colonial pretensions of ethnic purity, the more operative factors would have been skills, social solidarity

and a shared language, all of which were amenable to social negotiation.¹⁸ It is important to recognise that the presumed homogeneity of each identity group is largely a product of an administrative imperative. As suggested by Scott in the opening quotation, identity groups were manufactured or constructed out of a decidedly heterogeneous population.¹⁹ The system cloaked deviance and compelled uniformity in fulfilment of the logistical requirements of the port town. Once assimilated into a gang, the member would be tagged by language, residential district, comportment and clothing as belonging to a specific occupation-based ethnic identity group positioned spatially and functionally within Batavia's hierarchical chain of command and control.

From its first formation, Batavia grew according to the preplanned grid of identities imprinted in the naming of neighbourhoods. Like other cities throughout the overseas Chinese port town network, it retains the trace of these conventions to the present. The cellular semi-autonomy of the residential work gang districts served as the seed crystal for what was to become the larger Dutch policy of "indirect rule". As the Fujian work gang barracks were adapted to Dutch purposes, the indigenous village unit of the *kampung* was similarly adopted by Dutch colonialism to serve these purposes. Part of the success of the Fujian management system was its resilience in the face of disorder. Local disruptions were managed by local officers and were largely resolved before reaching the attention of Dutch authority. Despite divergent conditions, heterogeneous participants and unpredictable events, lower-ranking officers adapted to local circumstances to ensure the fulfilment of quotas and goals. Individuals were homogenised by language, costume and behaviour into the group. Failures by one group were addressed by adjacent work gangs. Despite the convenient abstraction of distinct groups, these categories were aspirational more than actual. They simultaneously imposed an appearance of the colonial order while cloaking the inherent cosmopolitanism from the ongoing exchanges and flows carrying over from pre-European contact beyond and within these communities.

Not only could the Captain be counted on to manage the logistical operations of Batavia, he was also the primary taxing authority overseeing exchanges necessary for its day-to-day business, legal and otherwise (opium, prostitution, gambling and alcohol). While it would take more than a century for the Company to fulfil its aspirations to establish and profit from international trade monopolies, Batavia's internal business dealings proved a significant source of wealth from the start.²⁰

Like other Chinese port towns, Batavia was a cosmopolitan hub in an increasingly global network. The population exchanges compelled by the

seasonal nature of monsoon or trade winds placed strangers in the port towns along the north coast of Java for months at a time before they were able to make the return journey. Some stayed longer with the realistic expectations of quickly assimilating into the port town hierarchy through intermarriage in only a few generations.²¹ In this context, traders from Portugal, England and Holland (the Netherlands) were to a large extent merely the last wave of new trade partners joining others from Gujarat (northwestern India), Arabia, Persia, Lanka (Sri Lanka) and Melaka (Malay Peninsula). When the Dutch landed to trade in Bantam, Sunda Kelapa and other port towns, these arrangements might have been experienced as the logical extension of a long-standing system. But as the military base of company control of regional sea routes, the supremacy of Dutch colonial authority executed through its hierarchy of Chinese officers compelled Batavia's specific form and order both on paper and in built reality. The key to the Batavian apartheid was the impersonal ubiquity of the system, as something taken for granted to operate in the background. The system was embedded within Batavia's urban form in ways that compelled a specific spatial structuring of relationships. This spatial structure may have taken shape on plans for the design and construction of the town before showing up in built form and then as a map as if drawn after the fact.

Batavia's successful operations were only partially implemented through built form. Batavian apartheid depended not just on embedded urban structures but also on the ability to map identity categories upon human bodies. Each participant in the system was cloaked in legally enforced symbolic costumes that were associated with a cultural package in terms of language, expectations for degree of deference to members of other identity categories, means of conveyance through Batavia, and access or restrictions to different parts of the town at different times of the day. All relationships were structured by a combination of identity markers worn on the body and spatial position in relation to urban form.

Batavia's spatial-corporeal order was a demonstration of "logistical power" operating in the background embedded in the infrastructures of the town that Joyce describes as arising in the unitary states of Europe (especially France) from the mid 18th through the 19th century.²² In Joyce's terms, the ability to "count, see and know the governed" in Batavia took place at the granular level of each gang and at the panoptic level of urban space in which any body out of place was subject to immediate questioning or correction under threat of violence. Rather than being aggregated and recorded, the diagrammatic clarity of the model is imposed top-down to maintain the appearance of order, an order with sufficient diagrammatic clarity to contain

FIGURE 1: Map as an instrument of segregation. J.J. Bollee, “Kaart Voorstellende het Kasteel en de Stad Batavia in het Jaar 1667” (Amsterdam: TropenMuseum, 1919).

the ingredients of an almost immediate self-correction. If Batavia’s early success was achieved by the wholesale embrace of the Fujian port town system, how then did the Dutch adapt the model to the purposes of the colonial extractive mission?

Instrumental Urban Form

The graphic depictions of Batavia since its founding were used to promote the port as an attractive destination for Europeans and as a map for navigating its streets and canals. Beyond these, the two specific functions of the 1667 plan of Batavia examined here are its purpose, first, as a diagram of power and control instrumental to the conception and operation of Batavian apartheid, and second, as a practical spatial directory for locating its residents. As with several prior plans, the 1667 plan shown in Figure 1 is oriented with north to the left placing Batavia’s central organising feature, the Groote Rivier (Kali Besar, Ciliwung River) bisecting the plan horizontally with the northern entry to the port at the left and southern gate to the hinterland at the right. To the east (above) of the Groote Rivier, the town hall, church and other institutions proper to any European town are on prominent display around a generous town square. Nearby lie the ample garden residences along the Tigers Canal, the premier address in Batavia purported at the time to rival the finest canals of Amsterdam.²³ The administrative and cultural buildings

FIGURE 2: Map as social registry: Dutch residents listed by name. Bollee, “Kaart Voorstellende het Kasteel”.

are drawn to scale with sufficient detail to make the spatial relations between walkways, trees and other landscaping features legible. More unexpectedly, each prominent residence in these blocks is similarly depicted in ways that convey the relative size of each distinct home in relation to gardens, walkways, streets, servants quarters and outbuildings.

To the west (below the Groote Rivier), the infrastructure patterns, buildings and conventions of representation take on an altogether different appearance. In contrast with the eastern sector, there is almost no detail provided as to the likely configuration of buildings within the blocks. The blocks of barracks to the west are left mostly blank. Only four buildings are depicted to scale and identified as the “Portuguese Church” (for the Christian Mardijker’s of the archipelago converted by the Portuguese), the Chinese Hospital, the workhouse and the “sick house” for the non-Chinese, non-European populations. While the index of blocks, landmarks and even homes in the southeast quarter are all spelled out on the map itself, the southwest quarter blocks labelled “A” through “O” are not identified on the map. We are left only with the canal names suggesting the possible work gangs housed along these canals. The cartographic conventions of the 1667 map are such that the scale, density of inhabitation, identity groups and other conditions of this quarter of Batavia are rendered inscrutable.

In addition to the usual navigational purposes of any town map, the 1667 plan of Batavia functions simultaneously as a spatial directory of its residents. In its own way, this directory was a census of sorts of the year 1655 in that no individual present within Batavia would have been left out. At the same time, the map portrays different members of the Batavian population quite differently. Some were listed by name as heads of households (male property-owning Europeans), some were listed by rank (mostly Chinese officers), with

a vast majority included only as part of groups labelled according to identity category place names. At the top of Batavia's social hierarchy, a list on the right of the map serves as a directory giving the name and location of each European head of household residing within the town walls. The list is organised by block and house location elevating the importance of spatial location as a proxy for status on the list.

One of the unique characteristics of Batavia's racial segregation is that the highest-ranking Chinese officers in the colonial service lived in homes side-by-side with Europeans at some of the most prominent addresses in the southeastern quarter. As non-Europeans, they did not qualify for having their names included on the 1667 map, but the directory lists their position according to the group under their control. These appear as: "Bancko", "Sincko", "Coujock" or "Incko Chinees". The nesting of identity categories so instrumental to the Dutch Company's early success is imprinted in the hierarchical status diagrammed by the locational logics of European and Chinese residences. Of the 234 distinct households shown in the southeast quarter (individual houses are not distinguishable in the other three quarters), 30 were listed using a workgroup label indicating that roughly 13 per cent of the families were likely identified at the time as being Chinese. Several of these homes faced the prestigious Tigers Canal. Six of the seven of the largest homes in a residential block fronting on the town square were occupied by Chinese officers. This residential juxtaposition reinforces reports of the exceptional presence of Chinese residents in the otherwise European enclave of Batavia, at least up to the Chinese Massacre of 1740.²⁴

The cellular structure of distinct non-European identity groups reflected in the nested hierarchies of Chinese officers had an important logistical and administrative purpose. Given the small number of Dutch overseers in Batavia at any given time, the Company was sensitive to the dangers posed by large unified groups of slaves.²⁵ In this context, the well-managed hierarchy of Fujian work gang labour took on additional benefits. The Dutch were careful to limit the number of slaves brought to Batavia from any single place. A large number of linguistically isolated work gangs were less likely to band together in common cause against the Dutch. Each group was overseen by a lieutenant of the Chinese Captain.

For all of the open squares, streets and canals of the proper Dutch town on the eastern side of the Groote Rivier, the western side appears to have contained a much higher density grid of walled residential blocks. In her excellent 2015 analysis of the 1681 map of Batavia, Marsely Kehoe examines the relative scarcity of bridges in the western half of the town as part of the built environment strategies for "ordering Batavia's population".²⁶ Where the

FIGURE 3: Canals as moats and bridges as checkpoints. Bollee, “Kaart Voorstellende het Kasteel”.

canals of the European and Chinese administrator’s town offered freedom of movement and open views to the fortress, the relative sparseness of bridges rendered the canals as barriers to free movement rather in the manner of a series of moats (Figure 3). Kehoe speculates on how movement through the port town might have been experienced by a Chinese servant of the Dutch Company, constrained at each turn by the spatial restrictions imposed on slaves and the time-limited access across many of the bridges. Conspicuously missing from her account is the encounter with soldiers of the Dutch Company that would have monitored the passing of each individual. The negotiation of multiple checkpoints along the route may have been a familiar and routine punctuation to each journey baked into the very fabric and form of the city, but a slave making their way through this gauntlet of checkpoints is unlikely to have experienced the threat of company-sanctioned violence as “subtle”.

As Kehoe observes, where the canals and street bridges of the southeast quarter appear to suggest a high degree of access from block to block, the southwest quarter has relatively few bridges. This suggests, as we see in the 1667 plan, the role of canals and bridges points for permitting or withholding access, the most significant barrier being the Groote Rivier itself. Kehoe dates the original survey used in the 1681 publication as 1650 based on the

FIGURE 4: Walls within walls: the higher walls with pointed bastions at the corners defend against threats from outside the city while walls within the city defend against potential enemies within. “Plattegrond van Batavia”, 1630–1700 (Fries Museum collectie Quaestius/Eekhoff, 1881).

absence of the 1655 Red Bridge (*Jembatan Merah*, *Roode Brug*) across the Groote Rivier. The 1667 map, in contrast, includes the Red Bridge along with several other features not included in the 1681 map. Bridged or not, passage could be controlled. The addition of a single armed guard at a bridge is sufficient to convert any canal into a moat, strategically separating different areas and establishing specific points of control. The street grid of the south-eastern quarter of Batavia is well connected across each canal by bridges in support of the free movement of “free burghers” of the town. In times of danger, the residents to the east of the main canal had direct access to the protective walls of Fort Batavia and its cannon in the northeast quarter. In contrast, to the west of the main canal, the frequency of street and bridge crossings are greatly reduced. As of 1667, there were only three points of connection between the administrative southeast quarter and southwest quarter. Each of the three large blocks of the southwest quarter was linked with its neighbouring block by only three bridges. Large populations, or the entire southwest quarter, could have been controlled by posting armed guards at a handful of bridges.

A map of Batavia dated from 1700 emphasises another sharp distinction between the southeast and southwest quarters. By making its walls explicit, this map shows the configuration of Batavia as defending against enemies from beyond and from within its town wall. Again, the distinction between the administrator's southeast quarter (upper right) and the slave quarters of the southwest quarter (lower right) could not be greater. Throughout the 17th century, we see Batavia's cellular social structure of small, linguistically distinct work gangs simultaneously mirrored in a cellular urban formal structure of small walled enclaves. These parallel systems were two sides of the same colonial order working together to isolate, control and order each element in relation to its larger operation.

Category Conflations and Collapse

The formal structure of controlled access found a direct complement in the use of sumptuary codes to render Batavian bodies immediately legible at first glance, even from afar. Stoler, Taylor, Kehoe and others reinforce colonial accounts that emphasise the role of sumptuary codes as being motivated primarily by the need to curb the immodesty and status symbol inflation of the upper crust European and Chinese society. Missing from these accounts are the important roles played by costumes and conveyances in exhibiting the identity category of any individual or group passing through the rarefied spaces within the walls of Batavia. The Sumptuary Codes of 1680, 1719 and 1754 included ever greater levels of detail in describing prescriptive dress codes specific to an individual's identity category. The urban and architectural form of Batavia would have presented a maze of pathways and multiple thresholds that would have been encountered at every turn of the street, crossing of bridges, passage through gates, or even, as Kehoe notes, the right to step up onto pavements.²⁷ The convenience of identifying the status of any body moving through the space of the town would have been essential to the smooth administration of Batavia's operations. Early illustrated treatises on Batavia and later scenographic portrayals of the characters found in and around the market served as a pragmatic guide to Batavia's population groups. In parallel with the maps examined in this work, these publications had an important pragmatic value in the day-to-day management of the colonial population.²⁸ Taken together, the careful grouping of populations, illustrated catalogues for interpreting the sumptuary codes, and maps that served as a spatial directory to the zoning of these legible bodies produced an urban structure for sorting and controlling operations according to idealised diagrams of colonial order set forth in the blueprint of Batavia.

The strict physical and social compartmentalisation of Batavia's populations in terms of residential quarters, constraints on free movement, language and dress, demonstrates the multiple elements of an integrated strategy for systematic control of a large workforce by a small handful of Dutch men. The system is recognisable as having antecedents throughout the Dutch trading world and survived into the 20th century at the core of the South African system of Grand Apartheid (1949–91). As in Batavia several centuries earlier, identity categories were artificially constructed to divide and conquer non-white South African tribes to be more readily dominated by the largest minority group, “whites” (*Blankes*). Arguably, the concealed nature of pass-cards as identity markers was far less effective than the Batavian dress codes.

These Dutch adaptations of the overseas Chinese management system accommodated the company's requirements of stricter controls on Batavia's operations only up to a point. As the colonial administrators expanded their territorial control beyond Batavia's outer walls, they also undermined the operational authority of their Chinese partners with calamitous results. With the logics of Batavian apartheid embedded deeply into everyday lived experiences, with every body made legible and assigned a place in the categorisation of every square meter of the town, the security of the town was increasingly taken for granted. In this context, three larger population categories came to offer a simplified organising diagram for structuring social-spatial relations. Over the course of the 18th century, the Dutch Company (dissolved in 1799) simplified its colonial diagram by consolidating its finer-grained identity group structures into three distinct populations: Dutch, Chinese and Native. From the very start, Batavia's “Dutch” population was deliberately inflated in relation to the non-European majority. The category “Dutch” was stretched to include all Europeans and mixed-blood descendants of European men.²⁹

As the administrative classes of the Dutch headquarters town grew more confident in the capacity of the colonial formal-spatial-institutional order to ensure control, the other population categories were increasingly gathered together into overarching categories that came to largely smooth out finer-grained work gang ethnicity and occupation identities. The label “Native” eventually grew to include all peoples of the Southeast Asian Archipelago previously identified according to more localised subcategories. Despite the extensive work of ethnographers working in the colonial service, some cultures were lost from the colonial record as they were subsumed into larger census groups. The conflation of Sundanese, Madurese and Javanese into a single category illustrates the expedient logic of these category constructions. The island Java derives its name from the most populous of its four distinct

language groups. Two smaller groups on Java, the Madurese and the Balinese, are associated with islands adjacent to Java. While the Javanese are the most populous group on the island, the Sundanese continue to be the dominant cultural group of the western third of Java up to the present. Javanese and Sundanese languages are mutually unintelligible. Company accounts of the colony rarely acknowledge the presence of the Sundanese who, though conquered by the Javanese Kingdom of Demak in 1579, would have been the dominant group of the region around Batavia.³⁰ Instead, the label “Javanese” was extended to cover all identity groups indigenous to the island of Java. Thus after the 1656 Bantam War, the “Javanese” were banned from living within the walls of Batavia, with no mention of the Sundanese. As late as 1935, De Haan’s authoritative Dutch history of early Batavia mentions Sundanese cultural traits (language, house form, dress) but otherwise subsumes the Sundanese into the category *inlandisch* (native) or Javanese in keeping with the colonial census category and archival accounts. He thus reproduces the colonial practice considering the indigenous population of the entire island as “Javanese” whereby the Madurese, any Balinese outside of Bali, and the Sundanese of West Java have subsumed into “Java”.³¹ Much scholarship since De Haan reproduces this colonial conflation.

The Chinese category similarly expanded to include ever further flung sub-groups. The overarching term “Chinese” came to sweep an even larger cacophony of distinct cultural identities than either “Dutch” or “Native” categories. The “Chinese” of Batavia included groups from Ayutthaya (Thailand), Funan (Cambodia), Champa (southern Vietnam), Dai Viet (northern Vietnam), Nanjing (Yangtze River Basin, China), Xiamen (Fujian, south coastal China).³² Anderson writes of the Dutch census takers that they ignored the diversity of: “heterogeneous populations of the Middle Kingdom; of the mutual incomprehensibility of many of their spoken languages; and of the peculiar... geographic origins of their diaspora across coastal Southeast Asia”.³³ In their place, they constructed an all-inclusive homogenous category “Chinese”, characterising them as being “diligent”, “peace-loving” and “cowardly”.³⁴ Over the course of the 18th century, the Chinese category expanded further to more explicitly include Arabs, Persians, Japanese, Koreans and others as “foreign orientals” more as a framing useful in managing the smooth operations of the colonial project and less as a matter of racial exclusion.³⁵

In 1684, the Qing Dynasty restored maritime trade resulting in a surge of new Chinese migrants to Batavia. Around the same time, even as the Dutch Company consolidated a global monopoly on cloves, nutmeg and mace, the relative peace they enjoyed with their Sundanese and Javanese neighbours opened a new source of profits that would define its colonial legacy: plantations. While Java became synonymous with coffee, the well-irrigated plains

to the south of Batavia were rapidly developed by newly arrived Chinese work gangs for growing tobacco, tea and especially sugar at a massive scale.³⁶ While the wealthier mercantile class of Chinese compradors and colonial officers continued to enjoy many of the freedoms of their European counterparts, the flow of wealth from the plantations showed up in ostentatious displays in Batavia's southeast quarter.

As the plantation boom took off in European colonies throughout the tropics, three forces converged on Batavia with catastrophic consequences. First, despite the close partnership between the Dutch and Chinese administrations, as market gardens beyond Batavia's outer walls were expanded into commodity producing plantations, an ever-wealthier comprador class of Batavian Chinese became increasingly intolerable to European sensitivities. European jealousies and growing distrust drove the Dutch to incrementally undermine Chinese authority even as Company dependence on a booming plantation system was growing. Second, plantation-related deforestation, water diversion and soil erosion led to a silting in of Batavia's canals and a dramatic rise in environment-related sickness and death.³⁷ Finally, global sugar consumption boomed and European powers raced to establish new plantations throughout the Caribbean, Africa, the Americas and the Pacific Islands resulting in dramatic price fluctuations. Whoever had the cheapest access to slave labour could capture the greater share of the sugar trade.

In the late 1730s, slave plantations in French Haiti and English Bengal drove sugar prices so low that Batavia's Chinese-run plantations could not afford to harvest what they had planted. With disenfranchisement of the Chinese lieutenants, the small, disciplined work units melted into a mass uprising as tens of thousands of workers suddenly faced the prospect of starvation. When an armed rebellion approached from the south, the Dutch panicked. They responded by blocking the exits to the Chinese quarters within Batavia, setting buildings ablaze and killing anyone trying to leave. Despite having only weak ties to newly-arrived plantation workers isolated from them to the south, the concentration of so many of Batavia's Chinese workers in isolated barracks on the west side of the Groote Rivier proved too terrifying to the outnumbered Europeans. Over 10,000 residents of Batavia were killed in what the Dutch termed the 1740 *Chineezenmoord*, the murder of the Chinese.³⁸ Whatever the proximate cause of the 1740 Chinese Massacre (the accidental fire, rumours of mass deportation or genocide, the rebellion, global markets, etc.), what is the role played by such social-spatial identity constructions in ethnic cleansing?

In the aftermath of the 1740 Chinese Massacre, violence spread across Java. Dutch forces were mobilised inland to defeat an alliance between a group of

Chinese rebels and the Mataram court in Kartasura (Central Java) in 1743.³⁹ In towns throughout the island, a majority of the Chinese were removed to *Kampung Cina* or “Chinatowns” outside of the town walls. Only the most trusted Chinese elite and relatively small groups of workers remained in the towns, and these were subject to stricter enforcement of the restrictions on dress and movement. The 1754 Sumptuary Code played a role in making Chinese and other census category identities ever more legible and restrictions on free movement through the space of the city ever more enforceable.⁴⁰ In the ensuing decades, new Chinatown areas were established in other towns with an expanded system of passcards, quartermasters and security patrols to reinforce further the formal-spatial-institutional power arrangements of the identity-specific residential enclaves. An all-encompassing rhetoric reinforced by the social and physical structures wove the hierarchy of “Dutch”, “Chinese” and “Native” into a ubiquitous order made “natural” as part of all that is taken for granted in everyday experience. The form of the town rendered the manufactured hierarchies of colonial society with the same self-evident legibility as the interplay between land, air and sea even as the conceit of its false premises evaporated into the archive.⁴¹

When the Map Becomes the Territory

The Dutch view of Batavia as a divided land was no mere observation that proved true century after century. It was both a self-fulfilling prophecy and a design principle that guided colonial planning and policy. The transition from Company to Dutch government control around 1800 led to rising ambitions for expansion beyond Batavia and its sister port towns of Semarang (Central Java) and Surabaya (East Java). A rich literature on the cities of Semarang, Surabaya among others, suggest some similarities and instructive differences in the dynamic interplay between the operative (instrumental) and reflective (manifestation) role of persistent physical and social divisions along the lines sketched out in the non-European residential enclaves of Batavia.⁴² The rise of the plantation economy necessitated an expansion of control not just of labour but also territory and transportation infrastructures radiating out of Java’s port towns. With each new conquest, the ethnic categorisation of populations and the associated spatial arrangements were extended and reproduced.

The pivotal function of the Chinese Kapitein of Batavia outlived both the Company and Dutch Crown in a nearly unbroken succession of *kapiteins* from its 1619 founding to the declaration of Indonesian independence in 1945. Expanding the social-spatial order beyond Batavia, local heads (*kepala*)

were responsible for the populations within the walls of their *kampung*. The evolution of these arrangements out of the original port town system evolved to satisfy the functional imperatives of a quintessential extractive economy.⁴³ While each *kampung* was left to its own devices to provide for the social welfare of colonial subjects internally, the infamously brutal arrangements of the 1830 Cultivation System (*cultuurstelsel*) extended, distorted and amplified the pre-colonial practices of corvée labour and tribute in ways that imposed unprecedented hardships.⁴⁴ Throughout, the overseas Chinese model of semi-autonomous and ostensibly identity-specific residential quarters was similarly a consistent feature of Dutch colonial law surviving every episode of legal reform. The colonial insistence on semi-autonomous enclaves in this context prefigures South African Grand Apartheid's use of tribal homelands after 1948. The term "homeland" was borrowed from the United States policy towards its indigenous populations. The common factor seen throughout these histories is a pretext for systematic neglect, some surviving well into the 20th century.⁴⁵

While the Sumptuary Codes as they applied to Europeans fell sharply into disrepute with the French Revolution and the Napoleonic influence on Dutch society on both sides of the equator, the rules for non-European exhibitions of identity became if anything more sharply applied and enforced in the keeping of the colonial order. In the later 18th century and into the 19th, spatial and dress requirements were formalised ever more explicitly in the establishment and revision of Ethnic Quarter and Pass Systems (*wijkenstelsel en Passenstelsel*).⁴⁶ These regulations anticipate the provisions lying at the core of South Africa's Grand Apartheid spatial identity controls. A rare account from around 1800 comes to us from Chinese school teacher Ong Tae Hae who speaks to the completeness of Dutch control over the movement of all subjects. The Dutch posted sentries at guard posts "at every gate" as one of the key components of the Dutch infrastructure of absolute control.⁴⁷ Every such point in the daily transfers of people and goods where access could be denied became another opportunity for extracting some payment, official or not.

Building on a long career of fieldwork in Java, Benedict Anderson problematised the complete control imagined in maps showing hard black lines bounding distinct shapes of uniformly saturated colour. He writes of the imperatives of nationalism to produce a plausible mass delusion of total control of boundaries and territories through the graphic conventions of mapping modern nation-states.⁴⁸ In the mapping of Batavia, we see in contrast, a much more plausibly direct translation between hard lines and urban walls, uniformly coloured areas and controlled populations, between the map

FIGURE 5: The footprint of municipal buildings and homes of the elite stand out against entire neighbourhoods of non-European residents shown as vestigial gardens (*kebon*) or rice fields (*sawah*). “Batavia en Omstreken”, 1:20,000 (Batavia: Topografische Inrichting in Nederlandsch-Indië, 1904).

and the territory. By building the fabric of Batavia's southward expansion according to the ideal diagrams of a social-spatial ordering, the identity enclaves were made into categorically homogeneous zones in a way that parallels the manner in which dress codes aspire to flatten human bodies into homogenous categories by suppressing the nuances of individual uniqueness. Dutch representations of Batavia in the late 19th and early 20th century demonstrate how the diagrammatic distributions of power became the silent backdrop of a given order structuring the everyday life experience of Batavian society resonating through multiple scales, from details of clothing to an overarching colonial mindset.

In his *Fifth Layer of Jakarta*, planning historian Jo Santoso uses a 1904 Map of Batavia to locate the distinct enclaves among the formally planned 1787 extension of Batavia about 4 kilometres south of its original southern gate.⁴⁹ Close inspection of Santoso's map shows that the underlying original map embraces the architectural conventions of a scaled figure-ground representation of not just institutional buildings, but even homes and domestic complexes of the Dutch villas lining its generous garden city boulevards.

In contrast, one might mistake the coloured shapes lying behind and between the grand homes and buildings of Batavia as being the vestigial

FIGURE 6: 1866 and 1921 maps of the Weltevreden use architecturally precise figure-ground representations of Dutch structures while the indigenous kampung areas are depicted as if they are low-density areas still making a transition from former market garden or forest uses. G.P.F. Cronenberg, “Plattegrond der Stad Batavia”, 1:20,000 (Batavia: G. Kolff & Co., 1866, left); “Stadskaart van de Gemeente Batavia - sheet 2”, 1:10,000 (Batavia: Topografische Inrichting in Nederlandsch-Indië, 1921, right).

remnants of forests, fields, market gardens or otherwise yet to be developed lands leftover from before Batavia’s expansion. The cartographic norms are instructive. The saturated green used in the colour versions of maps suggests a shady enclave with a continuous canopy of tree cover. Within the sheltering boughs, we are left to imagine a bucolic existence in continuity with past traditions and undisturbed by European ways. These impressions are reinforced by the labels indicating them as “unbuilt areas” (*niet bebouwde kom*). Place names feature *kebon* (garden), *tanah* (land), and fruits and vegetables, further suggestive of pastoral settings. Even as the term “kampung” came into use on colonial maps, the graphic symbol for these areas suggest a sparse and disorderly arrangement of small structures among the trees and gardens, resonating more with the rural use of the term than its urban variant. Only rarely do we see indications of formalised circulation paths within these areas.

When the first aircraft flew from Holland to Java in the 1920s, aerial photography produced evidence that contradicts cartographic depictions and offers views previously concealed from ground level photography. Far from being treed areas of productive gardens with only a scattering of structures, photos from above clearly show well-established neighbourhoods of the highest density to be found in Batavia. It turns out that the “unbuilt areas” were far more built up with a far higher density of inhabitation than formally planned and built areas of Dutch villas and colonial institutions. Views from

FIGURE 7: The seemingly sparsely occupied area labelled Petodjo at the bottom of the map (left) is in reality, the densely populated kampung in the foreground of the aerial photo (right). “Stadskaart van de Gemeente Batavia” (1921, left) and “Luchtfoto van Batavia met Rechts Boven het Waterlooplein en het Koningplein” (Leiden: Luchtvaart Afdeeling KNI/KITLV, 1924, right).

above reveal entire communities previously veiled from view and public awareness behind conceits of a cartographic canopy on maps, and kampung walls and gates at ground level.

During the 1930s, anthropologist John Sydenham Furnivall made a study of the Netherlands East Indies (Indonesia) and English Burma (Myanmar) that remains a powerful contribution to Southeast Asian studies nearly a century later.⁵⁰ Based on observations at the time, Furnivall characterised the social formation and relations in the towns he visited, and indeed “all tropical dependencies”, as a “plural society” of distinct religious, linguistic and cultural identity groups.⁵¹ Furnivall’s description of the plural society portrays it as a cultural mosaic of sharply distinct peoples residing in similarly hard-bounded separate but adjacent enclaves. According to his description, despite their proximity, the groups do not intermarry, mingle or socialise but instead remain separate and decidedly apart. This plurality manifests as a “medley of peoples” mixing only in the marketplace where their common economic needs bring them together for mutual advantage around “buying and selling”. Furnivall stretches the metaphor to the point where he characterises each distinct enclave as a “little republic” left free to govern according to local principles and practices by the enlightened administration of Dutch indirect rule.⁵²

Despite the larger subtlety and significance of Furnivall’s work, the diagrammatic purity of the plural society model deserves to be understood

as a manufactured construct of the colonial order. Instead of uncovering a natural state of affairs, Furnival's "discovery" demonstrates the success of a coordinated colonial programme integrating census, governance and urban form to produce an idealised mosaic of manageable social units. Furnivall's reading of Batavia's distinct groups living in discrete enclaves as a "natural" condition is itself a verification of the processes described by Anderson and Scott. As has been the researcher's plight over several centuries of engagement in Java, the manufactured constructs of one era lay in wait to be discovered through the scientific research of the next.

The dimensions of the Dutch ideal approximates what centuries later [Michel Foucault would call a "heterotopia", characterised as discrete enclaves of distinct regimes of control.⁵³ The difference is that in the cities produced by Dutch administrations, the boundaries of each enclave were as hermetically sealed in practice as they appeared in the colonial maps. Furnival's report on the conditions he found would seem to suggest that the Dutch had indeed achieved the reconstruction of the port cities of Java according to the diagrammatic purity of its apartheid system. The construct is camouflaged in the very fabric of the city, causing later observers to lose track of which came first, the diagram or the lived experience. In this, it mirrors the petty apartheid constructs being tested out in Capetown around the same time in the decades before the 1949 imposition of a more formalised and comprehensive system.⁵⁴

Despite the near-ubiquitous reference to Furnivall's plural society mosaic, a closer look at local records reveals a situation of frequent intermarriage and social malleability just below the veneer of the convenient administrative diagrams. Coppel's 1997 re-visitation of the larger context of Furnivall's study complicates his findings. Coppel points to decades of colonial legislation resorting to extraordinary measures to mask or erase the vast complexity of ethnic divisions in late colonial society.⁵⁵ Because Dutch categorisations depended so heavily on the symbol systems of clothing, language and space, a colonial subject could literally cloak their identity and dissolve into the desired group by donning its costume. Given the wide spectrum of skin tones and other markers of ethnicity, a woman might be read as being European in church, a Native in the *kampung*, and a *mestiza* in the market.⁵⁶

While identity controls never eliminated intermixing, other forces were operating to hasten social isolation after 1900. Increased immigration to Java from Europe and China, especially of women, brought with it rising social expectations of ethnic purity. Language became a proxy for ethnicity in the rise in language-based schools. Even as exclusionary legal structures were less zealously enforced, these developments led in the late colonial period to

what may have been a more pervasive “racial and cultural separating out” than what prior regulatory strictures or urban form ever achieved.⁵⁷

Conclusion

A key feature of segregation is that it is difficult to identify root causes definitively. In the absence of determined examination, segregation resulting from compulsory restrictions may appear, at least on the surface, to be indistinguishable from self-selection. Because the homogeneity of a given residential enclave may be the direct result of free choice, even in the context of oppression, we are obligated to overcome the opacity of social and physical constructs examined here.⁵⁸ The functional objective of Batavia’s walled enclaves and corresponding cartographic conventions were both instrumental to rendering the segregated compounds unseen and, to a large extent, unseeable. European observations of Batavia as a mosaic of separate communities—the proverbial “city of a thousand villages”—was not the outcome of timeless natural flows evolving in some kind of cultural ecosystem. It is a design outcome. Paraphrasing Upton Sinclair: it is difficult for a person to see oppression when their privilege depends on them not seeing it.⁵⁹

As these and other more recent examinations demonstrate, the power dynamics of categorical segregation continue to play out within and through the representation, physical formation and transformation of our cities, not least of all in the context of 21st-century Jakarta.⁶⁰ By reexamining colonial Batavia through the optics of its apartheid system, we see with new clarity how form and representation operate to reinforce power relations. To the extent that the present examination proves useful, these methods may warrant further development in application to urban form in Jakarta or elsewhere to demonstrate that form and representation are not only manifestations of power but are also instrumental in the performance, consolidation and reproduction of that power.

BIOGRAPHY

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