

Blaricum in the tropics. Dutch principles of modern town planning in Indonesia  
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“Uncle Hendrik broke the spell when he turned the page and with a contemptuous smile pointed at the map of Europe printed in grey with across it in black to show its vastness the powerful archipelago of India, that with Sumatra and the small island of Sabang over it stretched beyond Ireland in the Atlantic Ocean and with New Guinea reached the Black Sea in Russia.”<sup>1</sup>

The introduction of modern town planning

Planning in the Dutch East Indies/Indonesia during the first half of the twentieth century developed from a non-existent profession to a discipline that was methodologically, organizational and legally embedded in society. Besides town planning it also gradually dealt with regional planning and (spatial) planning. No small achievement if one realizes that except for the ethnic group that in number was an absolute minority, the Europeans, until around 1900 hardly any attention was given to planning at all. The turning point that generated this development was a new policy and the subsequent enactment of the Decentralization Act (1903) and the Local Council Act (1905). It were these measures that, for the first time during the Dutch administration over the archipelago, delegated central power from Batavia (now Jakarta) to smaller administrative entities, the so-called local councils.<sup>2</sup> The first three local council that were established were Batavia, Meester Cornelis and Buitenzorg (1905). In 1906 Bandoeng, Blitar, Cheribon, Kediri, Magelang, Pekalongan, Semarang, Soerabaja and Tegal on Java, Makassar on Celebes, Padang and Palembang on Sumatra followed.

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<sup>1</sup> Jan Wolkers, *De walgvogel*, Meulenhof, Amsterdam, first edition 1974, sixth edition 2000, 21.

<sup>2</sup> The Decentralisation Act and the Local Council Ordinance were the result of a plea for a more liberal colonial policy that was implemented during the second half of the nineteenth century. The new line of policy that resulted from these pleas was referred to as Ethical Policy. The majority of the members of a local council were of European descent.

P.F. Woesthoff, *De Indische Decentralisatiewetgeving*, N.V. Boekhandel en drukkerij voorheen E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1915.

The responsibility that was bestowed upon these councils was a novelty in the Indian context: it was the first time that local administrators – by and large modelled on the municipalities in the Netherlands – were administratively and financially directly responsible for the community they administered. It soon became evident though that due to lack of knowledge and manpower the municipalities were barely capable to cope with the continuous housing shortage and, particularly in the indigenous Indonesian neighbourhoods, unhygienic circumstances. The multi-ethnic character of the colony – four ethnic groups, Indonesians, Europeans, Chinese, Arabs, and other so-called ‘strange Asians’, lived side by side – with its corresponding cultural and social differences, its specific economy, tropical climate and multifaceted geography made it rather unrealistic to apply European or Dutch town planning models.

Notwithstanding these circumstances, the complexity of the assignment that resulted from them, and the multitude of practical, financial and administrative obstacles some administrators and architects full heartedly dedicated themselves to town planning issues. They soon discovered though that in order to do this appropriately the money the government annually allocated for the local councils was far from sufficient. Thus the local councils soon started to send requests to the central government for additional funds. In vain: the central government hardly ever conceded to these requests as it was dedicated to stick to the decentralisation-principle. In some cases it even ordered a municipality to refrain from interfering. This for instance happened when Batavia in 1907 proposed improvements plans for indigenous neighbourhoods (kampung).<sup>3</sup> A proposal that was categorically refused by the government.

In an attempt to enhance interaction and exchange of information and experience on various topics related to their administration and the development of their town the municipalities in 1911 established the Union of Local Interests.<sup>4</sup> This union, the annual

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<sup>3</sup> National Archive of the Republic of Indonesia. Archive of the Department of Domestic Affairs (Departement van Binnenlandsch Bestuur), record n° 1686.

<sup>4</sup> As a result of the reluctant attitude of the central government in Batavia the majority of the civil servants during the first ten years after Decentralisation was implemented was not very supportive of the new policy.

J.J. Schrieke, *Ontstaan en groei der stads- en landsgemeenten in Nederlands-Indië*, J.H. de Bussy, Amsterdam, 1918.

Decentralisation Congresses it organised and its two periodicals, *Local Interests* (established in 1911) and *Local Technique* (established in 1932), provided administrators, lawyers, and architects various opportunities and media to do so.

[III.1a] [III.1b]

[III.12a] [III.12b]

### The first plans

Notwithstanding the shortage of financial means, manpower, know-how, and the initial cynicism among many local and national administrators about the decentralisation policy all together, town councils addressed the issue of town planning to the best of their abilities. Due to regulations that initially limited the councils involvement in indigenous and Chinese neighbourhoods most efforts in the 1910's served the needs and interests of the European population. With the aim to build new areas for the Europeans the municipality of Surabaya in 1909 and 1916 thus purchased the private lands Goebeng, Ketabang and Ngagel. In Semarang and Batavia the municipalities in 1917 respectively began with the construction of New Candi, an extension plan in the hills south of Semarang, and the southern extension plans Menteng and New Gondangdia. A remarkable though by nature slightly different plan was designed for Bandung. There, in order to comply with a proposal of the governor-general to relocate the majority of the governmental departments from Batavia, the municipality from 1916 onwards anticipated its new status of residence by acquiring land north of the existing town.

Preparing and executing plans for these areas the municipalities followed a more or less similar procedure. As knowledge on town planning among administrators and civil servants by and large was missing, commissions to design plans were usually given to an external architect or bureau. For the execution most municipalities during the 1910's established a department for public works plus municipal development- and property companies. Thus in Bandung the Batavia based Algemeen Ingenieurs- en Architectenbureau (General Engineers- and Architects Bureau, AIA) designed the northern extension plan while the developments company regulated distribution and

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D. van der Zee, *Het Indische gemeentewezen*, Martinus Nijhoff, Den Haag, 1928.

execution of the plan. In Semarang the first plans for an extension plan south of the existing town were designed by the Dutch based architect K.P.C. de Bazel as early as 1907.<sup>5</sup> The official commission for New Candi and the area between the existing town and this extension area was nine years later granted to the Semarang based Architectural Bureau of Henri Maclaine Pont. In Surabaya the municipality was involved in the development of Goebeng, Ketabang and Ngagel. It had however, very little involvement in the development of the plan Maclaine Pont designed for Darmo, Surabaya's most southern extension plan on land owned by the Eastern Java Steam Tram Company (Oost-Java Stoomtram Maatschappij). In Batavia the plans for New Gondangdia and Menteng were designed by P.A.J. Moojen and, contrary to regular procedure, executed by a private company also established by Moojen.

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[III.5a] [III.5b]

[III.6]

Although the architects did not use a particular methodology or ideology the common features of these plans are striking. The new areas were in general located at some distance from the existing town centre, covered several hectares, were divided in spacious lots with likewise detached houses, and were transected by wide and green roads. The larger part of the plans was in general designed to accommodate the European population. Plans for Indonesian and Chinese neighbourhoods were of a much smaller scale and offered a limited variety of plain small houses. To improve the hygienic conditions in these areas supply- and drainage pipes for water and waste were constructed, pathways and roads were paved, and gutters were hardened.

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[III.8a] [III.8b]

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<sup>5</sup> K.P.C. de Bazel was personally invited to design an extension plan for Semarang by H.F. Tillema. Tillema was a pharmacist and member of the local council of Semarang. Together with the physician W.T. de Vogel he stressed the need for hygiene and proper (healthy) town plans.

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[III.10a] [III.10b] [III.10c] [III.10d]

### Indian town planning

The majority of architects who designed town plans in the colony were architects who graduated from Delft's Polytechnic. Although town planning was fairly new on the curriculum in Delft and no much methodology existed, the architects' shared background undoubtedly explains the analogous vocabulary of most of the plans.<sup>6</sup> Some fifteen years after the municipalities engaged in town planning it became apparent though that the design strategy while from many points of view quite satisfactory, needed to be revised in order to address related problems and incorporate new issues.

One of the first architects who recognised this problem was Herman Thomas Karsten.<sup>7</sup> Like most of his colleagues in the Dutch East Indies Karsten studies architecture at the Polytechnic in Delft (1903-1909). His overseas career started when he took up the position of manager at the architectural firm of his college friend Maclaine Pont in

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<sup>6</sup> The lay-out of European neighbourhoods by and large corresponded with exclusive residential areas in The Netherlands. Their character pertained for several decades. In 1952 the Indian author Tjalie Robinson described particular areas in Djakarta as follows: "They stand in groups and clusters, and all have their own tjak [literally: stamp]. A tjak that reminds one of Blaricum for instance, of Hongkong, Old-Amsterdam or Singapore, Hilversum or Cannery Row. [...] The houses are usually uncritically cut from Fokker's model books and remind one of Hilversum or Bennekom [...]". Tjalie Robinson, *Piekerans van een straatslijper*, N.V. Masa Baru, Bandung, 1952, 21. "Ze staan in groepen en trossen, die allemaal een eigen tjak [letterlijk: stempel] hebben. Een tjak dat herinnert aan Blaricum bijvoorbeeld of aan Hongkong, aan Oud-Amsterdam of aan Singapore, aan Hilversum of aan Cannery Row. [...] De woonhuizen zijn meestal critiekloos geknipt uit Fokker's modellenboekjes en herinneren aan Hilversum of Bennekom [...]".

<sup>7</sup> Karsten considered town planning an appropriate discipline to incorporate and deal with various problem. Earlier engineer H. van Breen, responsible for a water management plan for Batavia in the 1910's, and the pharmacist H.F. Tillema in Semarang emphasized that many issues were related and needed to be addressed accordingly.

H. van Breen, *Overzicht der voorgestelde werken tot verbetering van den wateraf- en aanvoer ter hoofdplaats Batavia*, 1913.

National Archive, Archive Ministry of Colonies (Ministerie van Koloniën), record n° 1124.

H.F. Tillema, *Van wonen en bewonen: Van bouwen, huis en erf*, Samarang, 1913.

Semarang in 1914. While working for Maclaine Pont Karsten soon made a name for himself as a gifted, inspired and socially engaged architect and thinker. He forever connected his name to Indian town planning when he presented a preliminary report called «Indian Town Planning» (Indiese stedeboom) at the 1920 Decentralisation Congress.

In «Indian Town Planning» Karsten explained the nature and the objective of contemporary town planning in general and in the Dutch East Indies in particular, the various elements that constituted a town plan, and the tools that designers and administrators could use to arrive at a harmonious and organic town plan. He described how buildings should be grouped together, how buildings and roads were to be connected, how roads needed to be differentiated, how squares and other public spaces were to be designed, the purpose of zoning, the content and function of building regulations and, last but not least, the functional and aesthetic significance of plants. Karsten stressed that apart from technical and aesthetic qualification town planners also needed to have the disposal of a solid and up-to-date knowledge of local social economic and technical situations. He also stressed that local administrations were responsible to collect these data and coordinate the various works and activities related to town planning. Regarding the situation in the Dutch East Indies and the connection between town planning policy and design he remarked: “When we realise, how until a few years ago – until the moment the local councils, adequately equipped, started to work – nothing was done except for some small, practical work, it is obvious that for stimulus and learning we have to look towards the West, and gradually to America. It also needs to be stressed though that while doing so we have to be aware of the specific-Indian, in certain ways contrary to the European, – because otherwise there is a very real danger of applying concepts that are appropriate elsewhere but not here”.<sup>8</sup> In line with

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<sup>8</sup> Thomas Karsten, «Indiese stedeboom», *Mededeeling Locale Belangen* n° 40, 1920, p. 159.

“Wanneer wij dan bedenken, hoe hier in Indië tot voor weinige jaren – tot het tijdstip dat de lokale raden, behoorlijk geoutilleerd, begonnen te werken, – niet anders tot stand kwam dan enig prakties klein werk, is het duidelijk hoe wij ons voor stimulans en lering tans nog tot het Westen, en langzamerhand ook Amerika, moeten wenden. Maar tevens volgt daaruit, hoe nodig het is ons bij deze lering bewust te zijn van het specifiek-Indiese, in zekeren zin in tégenstelling tot het Europese, - omdat anders allerminst het gevaar denkbeeldig is van inzichten, die wel elders maar niet hier op hun plaats zijn.”

contemporary notions in Europe on town planning Karsten pleaded that historic town plans might very well serve as a source of inspiration for contemporary town planners in their search for a functional and aesthetic (Indian) town planning Karsten, as did Maclaine Pont, recommended to study and analyse the construction and appearance of historic town – i.e. Javanese towns.<sup>9</sup>

Karsten's well-wrought yet concise treatise on Indian town planning received great acclaim. One of Karsten's former teachers particularly appreciated that fact that Karsten considered various aspects of town planning. He considered his visions and particularly his idea on the function and design of main roads very relevant for the Netherlands. He articulated his appreciation as follows: "This is a work that deserves the utmost attention; as it is it is already peculiar that, we may say a complete work is published on India, complete in the sense that town planning is being dealt with in its entirety; an achievement that given Indian circumstances, the various races, the prominent transitions from primitive to cultivated towns, etc., can hardly be overestimated".<sup>10</sup>

#### Towards a town planning methodology

Karsten's account on the objectives and demands of town planning definitely influenced and stimulated the debate on town planning in the archipelago. Although it did not overnight change the attitude of the government, it gave architects an insight in the conditions and methodology of town planning as a discipline. Two indispensable requirements for proper town planning were the availability of land and houses.

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<sup>9</sup> In this respect the analyses and studies on the settlements of the former fourteenth century Javanese kingdom Madjapahit executed by Henri Maclaine Pont in the early 1920's were 'exemplary'.

H. Maclaine Pont, *Madjapahit: Poging tot reconstructie van het stadsplan. Nagezocht op het terrein aan den hand van den middeleeuwschen dichter Pradana*, Albrecht & Co., Weltevreden, 1925.

<sup>10</sup> M.J. Granpré Molière, «Indiese stedeboew door Ir. Th. Karsten», *Tijdschrift voor Volkshuisvesting* n° 9, 1922, p. 226-234, p. 226.

"Dit is een werk, dat volle aandacht verdient; op zichzelf is het reeds merkwaardig, dat over Indië een, we mogen wel zeggen compleet werk verschijnt, compleet in dien zin, dat het vraagstuk in zijn vollen omvang wordt gesteld; en dat is voor Indische toestanden, gezien de verschillende rassen, de markante overgangen van primitieve tot gekultiveerde stads-vormen, enz., niet weinig."

Given the aloof attitude of the government to the request of the municipalities regarding the second issue the Union of Local Interests in 1922 and 1925 organised special congresses that solely focussed on public housing. The first one on housing in general, the second one on housing for Indonesians. With good result. Immediately after the first congress the national Department of Public Works was commissioned to advise what measures could be taken to increase the production of houses and encourage the cooperation between central and local administrations. Based on the advice formulated by the department and the conclusions of the second congress, the government in 1925 agreed with the establishment of public limited companies devote to housing.<sup>11</sup> An important breakthrough as it departed from the government's long held stand not to interfere with local issues.

The next important step was a decision regarding the municipalities priority rights on land. The circular letter the governor general in connection with this issue sent to all municipalities in 1926 had far-reaching implications. Stipulating that based on an extension- or betterment plan approved by the government, the government could grant a municipality priority rights on land and subsidies for the construction of roads, sewerage, etc. in order to take "good care of the interests of various ethnic citizens regarding housing while considering good town planning and the development of trade, industry, traffic, and so on", the letter regulated some of the legal and financial aspects related to town planning the municipalities for almost twenty years had be asking for.<sup>12</sup> Although the letter did not oblige the municipalities to subject their town plans to the assessment of the national government, an assessed plan offered undeniable benefits in the form of more financial and legal means for the municipalities.

The third and last important decision made by the government in the 1920's was the decision to annually allocate 500.000 guilders to subsidize kampong improvement

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<sup>11</sup> In the so-called Public Housing plc's the government and the municipalities owned respectively 75 and 25 percent of the shares.

<sup>12</sup> "goede verzorging van de belangen van de verschillende groepen der stadsbevolking op woninggebied en met het oog op een goede ontwikkeling van de stad en de door handel, industrie, verkeer, e.d.g." «Agrarische aangelegenheden gemeenten. Voorkeurrecht der gemeente bij uitgifte van gronden in eigendom», *Bijblad op het Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indië* n° 11272, 1926, paragraph 5.



projects to a maximum of fifty percent provided the intended improvements followed the standardised improvements applied by the government.<sup>13</sup>

[III.13: to be reproduced]

The fact that municipalities were forced to work according to an approved plan, standard procedures, and third parties could no longer thwart municipal plans were the first steps towards consolidating Indian town planning. As such the circular letter of 1926 in particular marked the beginning of a systematic town planning practice and methodology. Unfortunately timing was very awkward though. Just after the municipalities secured themselves of some financial and political support by the government the consequences of New York's Wall Street crash of 1929 became noticeable. The steep decrease of export commodities and the likewise abrupt decrease of public income forced the government in 1931 and 1932 to heavily reduce and even abolished the subsidies that were promised only two years to three earlier.<sup>14</sup>

[III.11a] [III.11b] [III.11c]

Despite this setback the arguments that gradually persuaded the government to put it initially very strict interpretation of the decentralisation principle aside were still valid. Thus, in accordance with the report of a committee that previously studied prevailing local acts on building restrictions and advised the government on the desirability of a statutory regulation, the government in 1934 appointed a so-called Town Planning Committee. Her task was to study current principles of town planning and subsequently formulate principles of town planning for the municipalities on Java and Madura. The Town Planning Committee – that for nearly fifty percent consisted of members of her

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<sup>13</sup> National Archive of the Republic of Indonesia, Archive Department of Domestic Affairs (Departement van Binnenlandsch Bestuur ), record n<sup>o</sup>s 1686 and 1728.

<sup>14</sup> Subsidies as a result of failing public income were also suspended in 1939 and 1940.

National Archive of the Republic of Indonesia, Archive Department of Domestic Affairs (Departement van Binnenlands Bestuur ), record n<sup>o</sup> 1728.

predecessor – presented her findings in 1938 in the form of a draft for a Town Planning Ordinance and an extensive commentary.<sup>15</sup>

The objective of the authors of the ordinance was to comprehensively describe the way town plans were to be designed and executed. To avoid misunderstandings they opened the ordinance by defining a town plan and its corresponding regulations as means “to arrange the construction and building by municipality as well as by third parties in such a way that the development of a town would be in accordance with her social and geographical character and her expected development, and that it strived at an proportional fulfilment of the need of all sections of the population according to their disposition and a harmonious functioning of the town as an entity, all of this in reference to the setting and general function of the town”.<sup>16</sup> Subsequently the draft described the elements of a town plan, the involvements and responsibilities on various administrative levels, the procedures to be followed for design and assessment, permissions to be granted, financial aspects, imperative demands and mandates the municipalities could apply.

The draft ordinance was extensively discussed among professionals during a special two day conference on planning in 1939. Subsequently, after necessary alterations would

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<sup>15</sup> *Stadsvormingsordonnantie Stadsgemeenten Java*, Landsdrukkerij, Batavia, 1938.

*Toelichting op de Stadsvormingsordonnantie Stadsgemeenten Java*, Landsdrukkerij, Batavia, 1938.

Four of the thirteen members of the Town Planning Committee were architects (ir C. Citroen, ir H.Th. Karsten, ir W. Lemei, W. Westmaas). The chairman was professor at the Institute for Law in Batavia. The other members were administrators on various levels.

*Regeringsalmanak voor Nederlands-Indië en supplement*, Landsdrukkerij, Weltevreden, 1935;

«Stadsvormings-commissie», *Indisch Bouwkundig Tijdschrift/Locale Techniek* n° 2, p. 36.

<sup>16</sup> *Stadsvormingsordonnantie Stadsgemeenten Java*: hoofdstuk II, § 1, art. 8. Strekking stadsvormingsvoorschriften. *Stadsvormingsordonnantie Stadsgemeenten Java*, Landsdrukkerij, Batavia, 1938, 12.

“ordenen het aanleggen en bouwen, zoowel door de stadsgemeente als door derden, in dier voege, dat voorzien wordt in eene ontwikkeling der stad in overeenstemming met haren maatschappelijken en geografische eigenaard en haar vermoedelijken groei, en dat gestreefd wordt naar een evenredige vervulling der behoeften aller bevolkingsgroepen in overeenstemming met hun aard, naar een harmonische functioneering van de stad als geheel, een en ander in juiste aansluiting aan hare omgeving en met inachtneming van hare functie in algemeen verband”.

have been made the ordinance would have come into effect after the governor general would have approved it. Unfortunately though external circumstances interfered yet again. The outbreak of the war in Europe and the Japanese occupation of the archipelago in 1942 foiled its assessment and hindered its coming into force.

#### Developments after 1945

The Japanese occupation fundamentally and forever changed in the archipelago. Considered by many Indonesians as the liberators of Indonesia from the Dutch colonial yoke, the Japanese gradually removed the Dutch and Dutch-Indian population from daily life. They were increasingly interned in camps: neighbourhoods closed off by barbed wired fences. Due to poor hygienic conditions, lack of food and overpopulation many interns did not survive these camps. Nor did large numbers of men who were forced to work for the Japanese, either in- or outside the archipelago.

Notwithstanding the many losses and growing resentment against the Dutch administration in the archipelago, the Dutch government in The Hague refused to endorse the proclamation of an independent Republic of Indonesia in August 1945 by the Indonesians Soekarno and Hatta. Instead a new Dutch governor general was appointed in Batavia. He and his government set out to resume pre-war activities and restore order in the colony. Not an easy task as the refusal of the Dutch government to recognise Indonesian independence and the installation of a new government led to a fierce war between Indonesians and Dutch.

Another crucial problem for the Dutch was that because many professionals had left the archipelago or had passed away during their internship in the Japanese camps, hardly any professional knowledge and expertise was available. The reconstruction works that were necessary to restore the damages caused by war casualties, could hardly be addressed by the fifteen architects that were left. Thus, in order to work as efficient and fast as possible the government followed the advice of a prominent Dutch planner and the Indonesia based engineer Jac.P. Thijsse, a Central Planning Bureau (CPB) was established in 1946. By uniting the remaining expertise on town planning it would be easier to advise, assist, and coordinate the design and execution of local reconstruction- and town plans. The

employees with most experience in the CPB were its director Thijsse and two of Karsten's former employees, Moh. Soesilo and ir J.H. Schijfsma.<sup>17</sup>

One project CPB was involved in was the development of a satellite town near Batavia. The idea to build a satellite town stemmed from the enormous housing shortage in Batavia. Rather than design yet another extension plan CPB instead proposed to build a new town at some kilometres distance from the town's southern border. As the army, due to tensions between Indonesia and the Netherlands could not guarantee the safety of the inhabitants on the initially selected site CPB decided to build the new town near Kebajoran, a small farmers village five kilometres south of Batavia. The undulating borders of the new town, New Kebajoran followed the edge of a slightly elevated plain. The town plan itself was divided into different zones: housing, offices, commercial building, leisure areas, etc. Execution of New Kebajoran started in 1949. By 1955 nearly 75 percent of the new town was completed.

[III.2a] [III.2b])

#### Town Planning Ordinance and education

In line with contemporary European and Northern American developments regarding (spatial) planning, CPB not only intended to design local but also regional, provincial and possibly even national plans. It therefore set out to list and analyse damages throughout the country. Because of the heavy damages in the area and the urgent need for reconstruction works the first region CPB turned to was northern Sulawesi. Only six months after it was established, CPB designed a regional reconstruction plan for this area.<sup>18</sup> Just like before the war though CPB was soon confronted with problems related to the absence of a solid planning methodology and a corresponding legal system. One of

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<sup>17</sup> Thijsse had worked between 1921 and 1942 for the department of public works in Bandung. From 1946 until 1950 he continued to work for the municipality of Bandung.

Soesilo and Schijfsma worked for Karsten in the 1903's.

Jac.P. Thijsse, *Een vergelijking tussen Nederland en Nederlands Oost Indië tijdens de laatste eeuwwisseling*, s.a. (ca 1980).

Netherlands Architecture Institute, Archive Thijsse (no index).

<sup>18</sup> So far non of the plans have been found.

the problems that occurred was that according to still current pre-war regulations areas without municipal status were not authorized to design nor execute town plans. As many of the badly hit areas that were in dire need of reconstruction did not have this status, this regulation seriously obstructed reconstruction works in some of the most severely hit areas.

To solve this deadlock it was necessary to modify existing regulations. As this new regulation according to Thijsse only needed to meet “present abnormal circumstances” the most obvious solution was to enact the pre-war draft for the Town Planning Ordinance.<sup>19</sup> In order to harmonize the pre-war draft with post-war circumstances some changes were inevitable though. Consequently two paragraphs were added stipulating that the ordinance would be applicable to municipalities on Java as well as to non-municipal towns and areas in- and outside Java. Furthermore, the extend of the ordinance was widened in such a way that it would “ensure a well-considered town planning, in particular in the interest of a swift and effective reconstruction of areas hit by turmoil of battle”.<sup>20</sup> After the Town Planning Ordinance was assessed in 1948 it was immediately gained force of law in Batavia and surrounding areas (Tangerang, Bekasi, Kebajoran, Pasar Minggu), Malang, Pekalongan, Semarang, Salatiga, Surabaya, Tegal and Tjilatjap on Java, Padang on Sumatra, and Bandjermassin on Borneo (Kalimantan).<sup>21</sup>

The coming into effect of the Town Planning Ordinance established the long- advocated and much-awaited methodological and juridical foundation of town planning. It did not, however, provide the chronic need for professional skilled labour. Thijsse considered graduated students from Bandung’s Polytechnic inadequately trained to fulfil leading functions in the field of (town) planning.<sup>22</sup> To improve this situation he repeatedly

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<sup>19</sup> Jac.P. Thijsse, *Aantekeningen over Stadsvormingsordonnantie*, s.a.

Netherlands Architecture Institute, Archive Thijsse (no index).

<sup>20</sup> “[...] ter verzekering van een weloverwogen stadsvorming, in het bijzonder in het belang van een snelle en doeltreffende wederopbouw van door krijgsgeweld getroffen gebieden.” «Stadsvormingsordonnantie», *Staatsblad van Nederlands-Indië* n° 168, 1948.

<sup>21</sup> *Staatsblad van Indonesië* n° 250, 1948; *Staatsblad van Indonesië* n° 331, 1948; *Staatsblad van Indonesië* n° 241, 1949.

<sup>22</sup> Jac.P. Thijsse, *Letter to the Secretary of State for Public Works & Reconstruction in Batavia*, 8-12-1949. Netherlands Architecture Institute, Archive Thijsse (no index).

pleaded for adaptations of the curriculum and extra training courses on the subjects of (town)planning, sanitation and technical hygiene.

One of the reasons the level of the students was inadequate was the lack of appropriate literature and reference books. From that point of view the publication of Thomas Nix' dissertation *Contributions to the morphology of town planning in particular in Indonesia (Bijdrage tot de vormleer van de stedeboom in het bijzonder voor Indonesië)* was a big step forward even though it was exclusively based on pre-war Indian literature and did not take account of contemporary planning developments. Nix was of mixed Dutch and Indonesian descent and born in Batavia. After he graduated as an architect from Delft's Polytechnic in 1930 he worked at the architectural firm Ed. Cuypers, Hulswit and Fermont in Batavia until 1938. In 1941, one year prior to the Japanese invasion, he took up the position of town planner in Bandung. Although some critics remarked that his study on town planning was more of a handbook than a scholarly study, the schematic overview of the various town planning elements and their application did provide a useful tool for town planners and town planning students alike.<sup>23</sup>

The absence of any reference to contemporary developments in planning remains remarkable though. Especially when one realizes that in 1948, the year Nix finished his dissertation, the government in Batavia in compliance with Thijsse's aspiration to widen the town planning discipline to town- and country planning and spatial planning, the government appointed a special committee at department of Public Works and Reconstruction to advise the government on the desirability and possibility to arrange spatial planning outside urban centres and, if possible, lay down the foundations for a

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The Polytechnic in Bandung was established in 1920. The curriculum by and large was based on the curriculum of the Polytechnic in Delft.

<sup>23</sup> *Contributions to the morphology of town planning in particular in Indonesia* was the commercial edition of Nix 1949 dissertation at Delft Polytechnic entitled *Town planning in Indonesia and the morphology of town planning. A study on the general design in town planning and her application on town planning in Indonesia (Stedeboom in Indonesië en de stedeboomkundige vormgeving. Een studie over de algemene vormgeving in de stedeboom en haar toepassing op de stedeboom van Indonesië)*.

Thomas Nix, *Bijdrage tot de vormleer van de stedeboom in het bijzonder voor Indonesië*, De Toorts, Heemstede, 1949.

methodology and an organisation.<sup>24</sup> Three years later this Committee for Spatial Planning in Non-Urban Areas presented her findings to the minister of the meanwhile renamed department of Public Works and Energy (Pekerdjaan Umum and Tenaga).<sup>25</sup>

The draft act on spatial planning she formulated contained guidelines for a national plan, regional plans plus the execution of detailed plans, building regulations, compensations, and procedures for assessment. Whether it was ever decreed or implemented though is hard to establish. What can be ascertained is that it was not in 1954. Though it is unlikely that this was the only reason for its delay, the absence of an Indonesian translation of the text certainly did not help its assessment.<sup>26</sup> Another reason might have been even more pragmatic: the lack of professional architects. That at least was what Thijsse, at the time general advisor for the Dutch government for the Physical Planning Service in The Hague and was involved in various United Nation-missions on housing, suggested when he wrote in 1954: “One of the reasons of this postponement is certainly the expectation that the execution of this law will be very difficult owing to the lack of competent personnel”.<sup>27</sup>

[Ill.14: to be reproduced]

### Changing paradigms

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<sup>24</sup> Committee for Spatial Planning in Non-Urban Areas was part of the department of Public Works and Reconstruction. The only members with an architectural background were Thijsse, Schijfsma, and Soesilo. The other thirteen members were mainly senior officers or directors at departments or similar institutes. National Archive of the Republic of Indonesia, Archive of the General Secretary and the Cabinet of the Governor-General (Algemene Secretarie en het Kabinet van de Gouverneur-Generaal) 1944-1950, record n° 924.

<sup>25</sup> Regeringscommissie Voor de Ruimtelijke Ordening, *Wetsontwerp op de Ruimtelijke Ordening*, Djakarta, 1951.

Suyono, private archive.

<sup>26</sup> J.W. Keiser, *Letter to H. Lining*, 16-10-1951.

Erica Bogaers, private archive.

<sup>27</sup> J.P. Thijsse, *Bijlage en overzicht van bijlagen voor ECAFE Report 1954*.

Netherlands Architecture Institute, Archive Thijsse (no index).

At the time Thijsse wrote this, important changes had taken place. The official transfer of sovereignty to Indonesia in December 1950 led to new hierarchical political relations between both Indonesia and the Netherlands. It also changed hierarchical relations within organization. As of January 1950 leading positions were no longer open let alone reserved for Dutch citizens. As a result Thijsse early December 1949 resigned as director of the CPB. His recommendation to appoint Soesilo as his successor was put aside in favour of ir Poerbodiningrat. Consequently Soesilo left the CPB in April 1950 and returned to Bandung.<sup>28</sup>

Despite these and other fundamental changes that took place as of January 1950 around 50.000 Dutch architects and other professionals continued to work in Indonesia. In 1957 however, as a result of a profound political conflict between Indonesia and the Netherlands over New Guinea, all of them were forced to leave the country overnight. It was this event, more than the transfer of sovereignty, that marked the beginning of a new phase in the development of town planning in Indonesia. The arrival of architects from Germany, Austria, and particularly North America (Kentucky, Harvard) to fill up the gaps left behind by the Dutch, and the return in the 1960'7 and 1970's of Indonesian architects educated in the USA gradually led to a reorientation of ideas and paradigms concerning architecture and town planning. Over a number of years the approach for town planning became much more car-driven while increasing attention was paid to spatial planning and the construction of new towns. With the growing interest and appreciation of American models and developments, the Dutch paradigms gradually sank into oblivion.

As time went by though, the sensitive relationship between former colonised and former coloniser gradually normalized. With it both Indonesian and Dutch architects and scholars started to appreciate and discover the quality, value, and significance of the architecture and town plans designed by Dutch architects in Indonesia. The concern of

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<sup>28</sup> J.W. Keiser, *Letter to Jac.P. Thijsse*, 9-12-1951.

Jac.P. Thijsse, *Letter to the Secretary of State for Public Works and Reconstruction*, 8-12-1949.

J.W. Keiser, *Ruimtelijke Ordening in het Indonesië van omstreeks 1950*, 1980, 13-14.

Netherlands Architecture Institute, Archive Thijsse (no index).

Erica Bogaers, private archive.



universities, architects, and also local heritage organisations ran almost parallel to and was in many ways provoked by the drastic and irreversible changes imposed on Indonesia as a result of the booming economy during the 1980's and early 1990's. They started to question the seemingly ceaseless growth of the number of cars, the construction of highways, super blocks, and air-conditioned shopping malls at the expense of Indonesia's (built) heritage. Although their efforts did not (yet) fundamentally change these developments, they did regenerated an interest the history of modern town planning – and architecture – in Indonesia. Thus, nearly one hundred years after town planning first became a serious administrative issue, studies on the history of town planning in Indonesia gradually have started to emerge - and with it the rehabilitation of Indonesia's first modern town plans and their designers.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> The interest in the history of town planning in Indonesia is shared by Indonesians and Dutch architects and scholars. From 2001 until 2003 the Indonesian then called department of Settlements and Regional Development (KIMPRASWIL, now again the department of Public Works) and the Directorate General of Space at the Dutch ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and Environment jointly worked on a project on the history of spatial planning in Indonesia after 1950. One of the results of this joined project was a publication: N. Jenny, M.T. Hardjatno, Febi Harta, *Sejarah Penataan Ruang Indonesia 1948-2000. Beberapa Ungkapan*, Departemen Peremukiman dan Prasarana Wilayah, Jakarta, 2004. Another project on the history of the Indonesian town is coordinated by the Dutch Institute for War Documentation. Within this project the following book was published: Freek Colombijn, Martine Barwegen, *Kota lama, kota baru: Sejarah kota-kota di Indonesia sebelum dan setelah kemerdekaan*, Ombak, Yogyakarta, 2005.

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