



Going Back to The Past: Critical Perspectives on Colonialism of Urban Kampung Sanitation in Jakarta

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Abstract

This article aims to conduct a critical introspection on the influence of colonial heritage on sanitation space and infrastructure in Jakarta's Kampung, highlighting how the colonial past has shaped and continues to influence urban planning and living conditions in kampung areas. Through a critical lens, this research explores how colonial practices in sanitation and housing management impact the social and physical structure of Kampung, as well as how these legacies survive and transform in the context of Jakarta's current urbanization and modernization.

Keywords: *Batavia, Colonial, Introspection, Jakarta, Urban Kampung, Sanitation*

INTRODUCTION

Jakarta, formerly known as Batavia during the Dutch colonial era, has a rich and complex urban history, colored by the profound influence of colonialism on its social and physical structure. The transformation from colonial Batavia to modern Jakarta is inseparable from the dynamics of space and sanitation infrastructure, especially in the urban kampung environment which is home to the majority of its population. This article aims to conduct a critical introspection on the influence of colonial heritage on sanitation space and infrastructure in Jakarta's Kampung, highlighting how the colonial past has shaped and continues to influence urban planning and living conditions in kampung areas. The Batavian era brought significant changes in spatial planning and infrastructure development, with colonial policies and practices emphasizing development that served colonial interests and abandoned the basic needs of the indigenous population. This policy creates a striking discrepancy between the city center, with its more advanced sanitation infrastructure, and Kampung on the periphery, which often lack basic sanitation facilities. These dynamics not only reflect social and economic inequalities but also embed patterns of spatial segregation that persist into the post-colonial era.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Urban Kampung Sanitation

Urban kampung are defined as traditional or semi-traditional settlements in Indonesian cities that are often located in the midst of rapid urban development. They highlight the interplay between tradition and modernity, often with inadequate infrastructure, but strong cultural richness and community strength. Terms related to urban kampung include "informal settlement" and "slum areas" that highlight poor living conditions. Urban Kampung in Indonesia illustrates the interaction between tradition and modernity in the context of rapid urbanization (Saepudin et al., 2022; Yuliasuti & Sukmawati, 2020; Martinez & Masron, 2020; Sujatini et al., 2023).

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Urban sanitation is a critical aspect of sustainable development and public health, especially in cities experiencing rapid population growth and urbanization. Various literature on urban sanitation highlights the complexity and multidimensionality of this issue, covering technical, social, economic, and policy aspects. Several studies emphasize the importance of integrating sanitation systems with water resource management to mitigate pollution and promote sustainable use of resources (Yok-shiu, 2019; Moschonas et al., 2022; Mohan et al., 2017; Rahman et al., 2016; Banerjee, 2019; Sudarno et al., 2016). Likewise with waste management. Alternative sanitation solutions are essential to be developed to address waste management challenges in densely populated urban environments and minimize the environmental impact of human waste (Särkilähti et al., 2017; Nyambe, 2020; Drangert et al., 2018)

Sanitation facilities not only have an impact on health, but also of course on the social and economic life of the community. Good sanitation will certainly increase productivity (Mensah, 2019), and through improving its infrastructure will have an impact on social and economic life for its people, especially for low-income people (Kramm & Deffner, 2018). Marginalized communities are usually groups with low access to sanitation facilities. Access and fairness to obtain sanitation facilities are important parts that must be considered. Several studies have shown that inequalities in access to high-quality sanitation services contribute to health disparities, particularly for slum areas. Sanitation for urban poor (Agestika, 2019; Iqrar & Musavi, 2023; Nasim et al., 2022; Affandi et al., 2022).

RESEARCH METHOD

This research methodology is designed to explore the historical and socioeconomic dynamics that influence the development and evolution of sanitation infrastructure, as well as its implications on modern urban settings.

1. Literature Studies. The study began with a comprehensive literature study involving the analysis of historical documents to build a theoretical and contextual framework on sanitation infrastructure in the Batavian era, colonial policies, and their influence on Jakarta's social and physical structure.
2. Document and Archive Analysis. The research involved an in-depth analysis of colonial documents and archives available in national libraries, municipal archives, and research institutions to collect historical data on sanitation infrastructure, colonial government policies, and urban planning in the Batavian era.
3. Critical Discourse Analysis. This approach is used to express, understand, and critique the construction of power, ideology, and social structure in a text or discourse.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Disparity of Space and Sanitation Infrastructure in Urban Kampung in Batavia as Jakarta's Colonial Heritage

Kampungs and cities look so contrasting in Batavia, between beautiful neighborhoods side by side with Kampung with a lack of hygiene facilities, and their locations that are often swampland, dense that rich people avoid. Kampung residents lived in houses made almost entirely of wood, woven bamboo and leaf roofs, surrounded by gardens to raise poultry, and grow fruits and vegetables for their own food (Figure 1, while Europeans were concentrated in the central area of Batavia, namely the Weltevreden area (Claudia, 2018).

Sanitation infrastructure in Kampung in Batavia is very limited and uneven. Facilities such as sewers and sewage systems are almost exclusive to areas occupied by Europeans, while indigenous Kampung often lack basic facilities. Europeans enjoyed better access to sanitation facilities such as sewers and clean water, while indigenous populations had to rely on wells and rivers, which were often contaminated. The key to all these problems was that the Dutch considered Batavia to be an enclave of Western settlement with the disregard of non-Westerners in it, as stated in a book published for the city government which stated about the taste that every European had when he first came to Batavia, as written by Van der Zee (1926): *“The Kampung in Batavia have never been an auxiliary factor for the beauty of Batavia, even though Western governments have been in power for so long”*

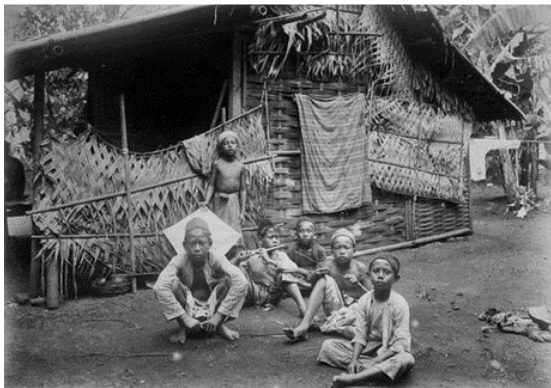


Figure 1. Contrasting Conditions Between Villages And European Residences

Source: KITLV Leiden

The inequality of sanitation services between Europeans and Indigenous citizens is shown in terms of sanitation spaces and access to clean water. While the natives only used canals or rivers as sanitation (Figure 2), Europeans used the bathrooms available in their homes and got four times more water from the city. The water supply in Batavia, consisting of artesian well hydrants, was built and centered in the Koningsplein area (Figure 3).



Figure 2. Indigenous Washing Areas and Latrines

Figure 3. Artesian Wells for Europeans

Source: ANRI

Source: KITLV

These inequalities in sanitation management form a lasting legacy, affecting the social structure and public health in modern Jakarta. Lessons learned from the history of Batavia show the importance of inclusive and equitable sanitation infrastructure as the foundation of public health and social welfare in the context of rapid urbanization. Colonial heritage influenced urban development in post-colonial cities, including Jakarta, creating an infrastructure gap between areas reserved for colonial citizens and Kampungns inhabited by local residents (Dewi, 2016; Goddess *et al.*, 2017).

Creative Solutions and Innovations as a Form of Kampung Urban Adaptation to Sanitation Challenges

The historical transformation of kampungns from the colonial era of Batavia to modern Jakarta has left a significant impact on the city's urban planning and sanitation. In the colonial period, kampungns were marginalized and stigmatized as unsanitary and unruly, which influenced their development and the city's planning practices. Today, these areas are seen not just as challenges but as opportunities for innovative planning approaches that leverage the resilience and adaptability of kampung communities in addressing urban sanitation and environmental health issues. Jakarta's postcolonial governments have avoided making the urban environmental sanitation sector the main public sector priority (Putri, 2018). In the lack of welfare policies, kampung communities are viewed as collections of responsible individuals rather than as cohesive units with definite rights.

The adaptation and innovation of Kampung communities in the midst of urbanization challenges and infrastructure development is a reflection of the resilience and creativity of the community in facing various obstacles. Communities also often develop creative solutions to improve local infrastructure through community cooperation, demonstrating resilience and innovation in the face of urban challenges (Putri, 2020; Safrina *et al.*, 2022; Sujatini *et al.*, 2015; Sari *et al.*, 2018). Various innovative solutions have been implemented by villages in Jakarta in order to survive and adapt to various problems in Urban Kampungns, such as waste management being a blessing and creating independent "Thematic Kampungns" (Figure 4 and Figure 5).



Figure 4. Creative Solution to Waste Problem in Jakarta Urban Kampung

<https://www.ampl.or.id/>



Figure 5. Innovation through "Thematic Kampungns" in West Jakarta

Source: <https://metro.sindonews.com/>

In several Kampung, there have been innovations in the form of waste collection and waste treatment systems initiated by residents. For example, programs such as the "Garbage Bank" encourage residents to collect and sort waste, which can then be exchanged for money or goods. This kind of initiative not only helps address waste management issues but also creates environmental awareness and strengthens community ties (Qotrunnada, 2023). Practices such as urban farming and roof gardens are becoming increasingly popular in some Kampung, allowing residents to produce fresh food and reduce the temperature of the surrounding environment as an adaptive solution to improve environmental conditions and food security in the Kampung (Goddess *et al.*, 2023; Austin & Marleni, 2021; Istikomah, 2022; Nuraini, 2023). In conclusion, the adaptation and innovation of Kampung communities in facing urban challenges demonstrates the tremendous strength and potential of community-based approaches in addressing infrastructure and environmental issues.

CONCLUSIONS

In the Batavian era, uneven and often inadequate sanitation infrastructure reflected the social hierarchy and segregation enforced by the colonial government. The indigenous population, the majority of whom live in Kampung, experience poor sanitary conditions, contributing to high prevalence of disease and mortality. It shows how colonial policies not only created spatial disparities in access to sanitation but also reinforced social inequalities. Colonial legacies in urban planning and infrastructure continue to influence the distribution and accessibility of sanitation services, with Kampung often lagging behind in infrastructure development and improvement. The adaptability and innovation capabilities of Kampung communities offer valuable insights into how Jakarta can address current sanitation challenges. Community-based initiatives, the use of simple technology, and local solutions show potential for the development of more inclusive and sustainable sanitation infrastructure.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

This research contributes to further research by conducting more immersive research in several villages in Jakarta. The opportunity for further research, can be also by conducting comparative studies with urban Kampung in other cities in Indonesia or in other parts of the world that have colonial histories. This can help in understanding differences and similarities in sanitary arrangements and colonial legacies across multiple contexts.

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