

Elsbeth Locher-Scholten

Women and the Colonial State



Essays on
Gender and
Modernity in
the Netherlands
Indies
1900-1942

AMSTERDAM UNIVERSITY PRESS

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This publication was made possible by a grant from the Netherlands Organization of Scientific Research (NWO)

Cover illustration: Jantje and Agnes in the care of Baboe Mina. Surabaya 1915
(KIT Amsterdam)

Cover design: NAP, Amsterdam

Lay-out: Magenta, Amsterdam

NUGI 646/665

ISBN 90 5356 403 9

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Preface

In 1915 a Dutch family in Surabaya had its pictures taken in the studio of one of the famous photographers of the day. They took their Indonesian *babu* (nursemaid) along to be portrayed with their two children, in itself a highly unusual act. Pictures of a *babu* with children might occasionally be taken at home but very seldom in an official studio.

Jantje en Agnes in the care of Baboe Mina, Surabaya 1915
(KIT, Amsterdam).



Who they were we do not know. Only the name of the photographer remains, the Jewish Armenian Annes Kurkdjian. The three in the photograph are **anonymous, except for their first names noted in the photo-album, 'Jantje and Agnes in the care of Baboe Mina'**. The album in which this picture was glued, got lost during the Japanese occupation of the former Netherlands Indies (or Dutch East-Indies) during the Second World War. It was one of the many that were rescued and collected by private initiative after 1945 and donated to the Royal Tropical Institute in Amsterdam in the late 1970s.

Here I discovered the photo more than twenty years later at an exposition, when I was looking for illustrations for this book. Wardy Poelstra of Amsterdam University Press selected it from among many others for the cover. **The picture is not meant to be a romantic signal of the happy, albeit rather earnest, relations within a colonial family.** It offers a representation of both the literal and symbolic workload of Indonesian women and serves as an emblem for the unequal gender and race relationships in the European household, in women's labour situations in rural Java, in the struggle for women's suffrage, and in the monogamy debate of 1937, which are the subject of the following essays.

The research for this volume was made possible by a grant from the Research Institute of History and Culture (Onderzoeksinstituut voor Geschiedenis en Cultuur) at Utrecht University, for which I am highly grateful. Not least because it also brought me, a colonial historian at Utrecht University, a part-time position at the Women Studies Department at the same university for the years 1992-1997. The creative academic community of the department chaired by Rosi **Braidotti offered me an inspiring environment in which to continue my** research on the construction of gender in colonial Indonesia. The interdisciplinary discussions with my colleagues in the monthly 'Intellectual Atelier' served as a sparkling context for this book. My sincerest thanks go to those with whom I worked most closely: Rosi Braidotti, Rosemarie Buikema, Esther Captain, Denise De Costa, Geertje Mak, Maaïke Meijer, Boukje Prins, Berteke Waaldijk and Gloria Wekker.

Of the following essays, three have been published in slightly different forms before. The second chapter on female labour appeared as 'Female labour in twentieth-century Java. European notions - Indonesian practice' in Elsbeth Locher-Scholten and Anke Niehof eds., *Indonesian Women in Focus. Past and Present Notions* (rst imprint; Dordrecht/Cinnaminson: Foris, 1987) 77-103 (znd imprint; Leiden: KITLV Press, 1992) 77-103. The third chapter concerning European discourse on Indonesian servants was published in *Indonesia* 58 (October 1994; Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY). Chapter four which

deals with European fashion and food can also be found in Henk Schulte Nordholt ed., *Outward Appearances. Dressing State and Society in Indonesia* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1997). I am grateful to the editors of *Indonesia* and the KITLV Press for the permission to reprint the fruits of their editing labour.

Antoinette Burton, Frances Gouda, Maarten Kuitenbrouwer, Annelies Moors, Henk Schulte Nordholt, Marjan Schwegman, Berteke Waaldijk, and Saskia Wieringa read and commented on different chapters. Their sharp, clear and precise comments offered me the richness of their particular knowledge and put my thoughts in line. I owe them my warmest thanks for their strong intellectual and personal support.

Julia Suryakusuma (Jakarta) provided me with photographs from her aunt Maria Ullfah Santoso, one of the leading personalities of the Indonesian women's movement before (and after) the Second World War. Bart Plantenga reshaped my Dutch English and gave it a solid language base. Peter van Dijk, Edwin van Haaren and Wardy Poelstra from Amsterdam University Press provided the original manuscript with a highly appreciated professional outlook. I thank them all for their valuable contributions. Needless to say, the content of the following remains my full responsibility.

Spelling of Indonesian names always needs an introductory remark. Here I use the present day Indonesian spelling, except for personal names which are kept the way they were written in the first half of the twentieth century. Married women, who omitted their first name and used their husband's name at the time, are given the prefix Mrs as was the normal practice in those days.

Notes

'Orientalism and the Rhetoric of the Family: Javanese Servants in European Household Manuals', *Indonesia* 58 (1994) 19-40. For a shortened version see Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, 'So Close and Yet So Far: The Ambivalence of Dutch Colonial Rhetoric on Javanese Servants in Indonesia, 1900-1942', in: Julia Clancy-Smith and Frances Gouda eds., *Domesticating the Empire. Race, Gender and Family Life in French and Dutch Colonialism* (Charlottesville/London: University Press of Virginia, 1998) 131-153. Parts of the fifth chapter on the vote have appeared in a different context; see Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, 'The Colonial Heritage of Human Rights in Indonesia: The Case of the Vote for Women, 1916-1941', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 30 (1999) 54-73.

1 **By Way of a Prologue and Epilogue: Gender, Modernity and the Colonial State**

AFTER THE 'THE FAMILY OF MAN'

Other times, other photos. In the mid-1950s one could visit 'the greatest photographic exposition of all times' in Western capitals like New York, London, Paris, and Amsterdam. Presented under the title 'The Family of Man', it exposed the many faces of mankind in multiple shades of black, grey and white to the Western world: photos of people of all ages, places and races, in groups, **in couples or alone, human beings in love, during pregnancy and birth, at games and in grief, at work and in their old age.** From the happy Indian flute player displayed on the poster to the monumental photograph depicting the Assembly of the United Nation, this exhibition illustrated the optimism of that decade. Even now, the mild compassion with and smiling amazement about life glows from the pages of the catalogue.'

Since then the world has turned a few times. Other images, photographs and exhibitions have emerged, which show that the world is not the happy family of *brotherly/sisterly* connected races, classes, genders and ages that the immediate post-World War II culture would have us believe it was or was to become - in spite of the Cold War. The 'Family of Man' metaphor carried and **still carries numerous ambivalent connotations. Anne McClintock has recently laid bare its colonial and racist roots.** Its **nineteenth-century origin was far from egalitarian.** In many countries the metaphor of the state as a happy family **has served as a means of obscuring social and economic cleavages or to mask authoritarian regimes.** The meaning of the word 'Other' has turned 180 degrees, changing from designating your neighbour to be respected or even as a term for God (the complete 'Other' in Barthian Protestant theology), into **the stereotyped member of another race. 'White' has been recognised as a racial colour with social and economic consequences. Second-wave feminism has led to a renewed acknowledgement of the deep-seated character of gender differences.**

It is against this background of altered perceptions and representations of human relations that this book evolved. Its central theme is an analysis of how **gender differences were constructed, reconfigured, and maintained in the Netherlands-Indies (or Dutch East-Indies)** in close (dis)harmony and, or intersecting with the differences of race, class and that for long underrated aspect of socio-political relations - religion. The colonial context allowed for, and stimulated, a full display of these categories. Its history thus offers positive possibilities to study the subject of 'difference' in its many varieties.

WOMEN AND THE COLONIAL STATE

Historians of women and gender in colonial Indonesia are catching up with their colleagues who worked on the same subject in the former British colonies; they started publishing earlier and have done more) The early dissertation of Cora Vreede-de Stuers on Indonesian women, published in '959-60, lost its unique and isolated position in the late '980s and '990S, when among others the impressive work of Ann Stoler and Jean Gelman Taylor appeared.s **Works on women in twentieth-century colonial Indonesia for instance, now include colonial discourse analyses and representations of gender and gendered language,S as well as empirical studies of different aspects of women's lives, such as education and missionary activities," Indonesian feminism,7 the emancipation of Chinese women.f and the role of white women in the colony.s**

The following five essays cover subjects little researched before: **labour legislation for women and female rural labour; domestic servants in colonial households; European fashion and food patterns in the colony; the struggle for the women's right to vote; and marriage legislation. They are centred around the relationship between women of both the Indonesian and the European population groups, and the colonial state or 'the colonial project'.**? How did specific groups among Indonesian women, especially from the educated elite, express their relation to the colonial state? To what extent and how did European women participate in the colonial project; to what extent did they **wish to do so? How did authorities of that colonial state perceive women of both races and different classes; how did they include or exclude them in their policies? The question of whether or not we should 'rescue history from the nation-state' which has been posited elsewhere," is not of prime importance here. While it is a blessing that historical scholarship has extended its view beyond the borders of the nation-state, the latter still remains a historical category, which has changed in content and form and has to be studied in a colonial context as well." Many present-day nation-states in Asia and Africa are its**

(not altogether too happy) inheritors. There is even more reason to keep the **nation-state in focus, now that new political history studies have come to include political culture, mentalities and values, and observe actors beyond the narrow realm of politics itself. It is in that broader context that 'the colonial state' of the title should be understood.**

How should the other terms of the title: 'women' and 'gender' be read? **Women were never the essentialised homogeneous category that European women, in their naive late 1960s feminism considered it to be.** ^u **Class, race, and religious differences determined and still determine different positions. Here I focus on European and Indonesian women of specific subgroups.** ^v **both as historical agents and as subjects of government policies (such as labour legislation, marriage laws, and voting rights). The latter offers illuminating examples of (male) colonial discourse on women, both among the colonial and colonised groups.**

To broaden the analysis of 'women', the notion of gender has become a highly useful category, designating that 'women' and 'men' are biological specimens as well as cultural constructions. ^f **Gender denotes perceptions of male and female, femininity and masculinity, structuring relationships of hierarchy and power in society. It thus offers an example of what Rosi Braidotti has called in another context 'regulatory fiction' or 'normative activity', and serves as a multi-layered concept, both in terms of social context (race and class) and epistemological meanings.** ^g **As a product of culture, it is socially situated and historically produced: a valuable object of historical research. Speaking about women and gender implies speaking about men and masculinity, a subject which has also become popular in colonial studies.** ^h **Although masculinity is mentioned incidentally, I concentrate on gender in its female aspects.**

The questions about the relationship between gender and the colonial state cannot be answered without an analysis of the ways in which European and **Indonesian women were perceived and/or 'imagined' in the colony by men and women across the colonial divide, as well as how they presented and perceived themselves. Images of others imply visions of self in more complicated patterns than in mere binary oppositions. What kind of relationship can we discern between these perceptions and imaginings of other and self? What were the implications of these perceptions for women of the Indonesian and the European population groups as citizens or subjects of the colonial state?**

A volume of five essays on gender in colonial Indonesia cannot be comprehensive. ⁸ The choice of these five 'female' topics is legitimized by their relevance for the relationship between women and 'the colonial project' and by the variety of the themes which illustrate specific historical aspects. Access to

source material, an important criteria in the pursuit of historical research, also had to be taken into account. For these themes I relied on various sources, such as censuses, periodicals, agricultural reports, the Ministry of the Colonies archives, Indonesian press surveys, children's literature, and household manuals.

All the chapters concentrate on the same time span: the period from 1900, when a new modernisation policy (the so-called Ethical Policy) was being introduced, until '942, when Japan conquered the Archipelago and Dutch colonialism virtually came to an end. Specific emphasis is given to the years between the two World Wars, which were also the heyday of colonial modernity and the time period of the late colonial state.

All chapters focus on Java. When studying women in colonial Indonesia, this can hardly be avoided. Political life in colonial Indonesia was centered in Java; it was the most developed, the most 'colonized' and the most densely populated island in which the largest numbers of Europeans (80 %) and the largest numbers of Indonesians (almost 70 %) lived. Indonesian feminism was born and developed here. Most of the limited source material on Indonesian women - be it on their labour conditions or their organisations - derived from Java. This volume on women and gender thus stands in the java-centric tradition, which colours most of Indonesian historiography.⁹

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In order to install the following chapters in a broader historical framework, a few remarks characterising Dutch colonialism and developments in twentieth century Indonesia may serve as an introduction to the content and themes.¹⁰

Although the Dutch have been present in the Indonesian archipelago since the early seventeenth century, a full-fledged colonialism developed only in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. In approximately 1900 the territory of the area fell under the full control as a result of intensified Dutch military action and extension of the colonial civil administration. Indigenous princes could no longer escape the grasp of the ever-extending Dutch arm, reaching outward from the capital Batavia. Technical and economic changes as well as a new psychological mix of both Western superiority and social concerns resulted in a renewed sense of a 'civilising mission' and a more active colonial policy. Inspired by the contemporary popularity of the term 'ethical' and the normative culture of the period, it was named Ethical Policy, the Dutch variant of the British 'white man's burden' and the French '*mission civilisatrice*'. Its architects aimed at the development of both the land and its people and had a form of (limited) self-government under Dutch leadership following the Western

model in mind. The growth of exports - tropical agricultural products, oil and rubber - which lasted more or less uninterruptedly until the world economic crisis of the 1930s, *slowly* stimulated development in that direction. In the 1920s and 1930s, the Ethical Policy *lost* its progressive nature and turned into mere conservatism, aimed at maintaining '*rust en orde*', tranquillity and order."



Postcard from the 1930s The Netherlands Indies on the map of Europe.

Contrary to British liberal abstention in colonial matters, Dutch colonial practices were highly detailed. The British civil servant J.S. Furnivall characterised Dutch welfare policies of the period - and Dutch colonialism in general - as one of concerned tutelage over children: 'All these people want to help so much: "let me help you", you can almost hear them say, "let me show you how to do it, let me do it for you"'.²² Yet Dutch colonialism could never 'do it' completely, if only for reasons of sheer numbers. Compared to a population of 60 million Indonesians in 1930, the European population counted only 240,000 persons, or a mere 0.4 percent of the total. Of that less than half percent, 113,000, were women. Even if this was a relatively large group, compared to the European presence in other South and Southeast Asian *colonies*, its numbers were little more than the inhabitants of a middle sized town, living in a territory which - when spread across a map of Europe - reached from Ireland to the Ural.²³ It presented some practical limitations to colonial activities to say the least.

In the framework of this Ethical Policy, the formation of the modern state proceeded cautiously through administrative and political reforms. This process followed patterns of state formation in Europe, albeit at a different pace and **with more reluctance; colonial democracy would never be more than a caricature** of its Western predecessors. The extension of the territory of the colonial state around '900 combined with the growth of a colonial bureaucracy and a **limited extension of democratic institutions. City and other councils were** introduced in and after the first decade of the twentieth century. **In** 1918 a proto-parliament with limited powers, the People's Council or *Volksraad* was opened. **In** 1925 its advisory function evolved into one of eo-legislative authority. However, because the Indies government held the final word and could even be overruled by the Ministry of the Colonies in The Hague, this council never represented more than a shadow of responsible government.

'Dualism' (or better yet 'triadism') characterised Dutch colonial rule. **In** the twentieth century, Dutch colonial law recognised three distinct legal groups: so-called 'Europeans', 'Foreign Orientals' (Chinese and Arabs), and Natives (Indonesians). Officially legitimized by differences in legal needs, it resulted in a 'legal apartheid', which took different forms in different domains. Despite some Ethical Policy attempts to abolish this system in the twentieth century, **racial stratification remained the cornerstone of the colonial structure, whether it was of the legal system, civil service or education.**s-

In spite of this effort toward legal clarity, however, the population groups were never the neat, homogeneous categories the law suggested. **The Indonesian population group of 60 million reflected the spectrum of regional, religious and class diversity of the archipelago.** Urban Minangkabau Muslims differed from Javanese princes and Madurese *tani* (peasants), the orthodox Islamic *santri* differed from its *abangan* fellow believer, influenced by Javanese cultural practices. The group of Europeans included white administrators, rich **plantation owners, Protestant and Catholic missionaries, the poor Indo-European clerks, and their families.** This group consisted of different sub-groups: the Dutch citizens (the so-called *totok* born in Holland, and those born **in the Indies, whether they were 'white' or Eurasian); citizens of other Western countries (British, German, etc) and of some Asian states with comparable law systems; and Indonesians who had been 'equalised' to Europeans as a result of their education and lifestyle.**²⁵

Following upon the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, connections with Europe greatly improved. Changing life styles due to modern inventions (such as the automobile and electricity and cars) made the colony attractive to greater numbers of *totok* from the Netherlands. Between '905 and '930 their numbers

more than doubled in Java and Madura. This growth also included women. Impediments to women attempting to emigrate from the Netherlands to the **Indies diminished, marriage prohibitions imposed on women from the metropole were lifted, concubinage of Europeans with their Indonesian housekeepers (*nyai*) became outdated.**⁶ Between the 1880s and '930S the male/female **ratio among Europeans changed considerably: from 471 women per 1,000 men (,880) to 884 per 1,000 ('930).** In '905, 4,000 European women born in **Europe, were counted in Java; in 1930, there were 26,000.**²⁷

Legal distinctions turned up in administration and education. Unlike the British system in India, where the civil service was partly unified, the Dutch **and the Indonesian civil service, the Interior Administration (*Binnenlands Bestuur*, BB) and the Native Service (*Inlands bestuur*) retained their separate functions, while the Foreign Orientals were administered by their own 'captains'. Dutch civil servants depended on their Indonesian colleagues for their exertion of power. Although the latter were usually of noble origin (*priyayi*), they remained of inferior status to their 'older brethren', Dutch civil servants.**

Triadism characterised education as well. The Ethical Policy expanded educational possibilities, from a simple rudimentary form for the peasant population to Western Dutch language schooling for the Indonesian elite. An intricate web of private and public schools, of village, European, Dutch-Chinese and Dutch-Native schools (*Hollands-Chineesche* and *Hollands-Inlandstbe Scholen*) and different secondary schools evolved during this period, where pupils of the three population groups remained separate. Only at the high school level, **in vocational training institutes and in universities - not founded before the '920S - did adolescents of Indonesian, Eurasian or Dutch descent meet each other in class.**

Girls education followed similar dualistic lines. The expansion of education reached them as well. Between '920 and '930 for instance, the literacy **rate among Indonesian women increased more rapidly than that of the men. On Java, it grew from 9 to 13 percent. It was an urban phenomenon, and an achievement of the Indonesian female elite in the first place.** However, despite the rapid increase of literacy among both male and female Indonesians in the '920S (from a little more than 1.5 million to nearly 4 million), illiteracy still remained the norm. In '930 10 percent of all Indonesian **men on Java and Madura could read and write either in one of the Indonesian languages or in Dutch, while only 1.5 percent of the Indonesian women of that region could do so.** Those who were able to write in Dutch comprised less than one half percent ('36,000) of the native population in Java, of which **about one quarter (34,000) were women.**^v **Due to the late start of the univer-**

sity system the academic elite comprised an even smaller group of a few hundred graduates only.

In the years between the two World Wars, two manifestations of nationalism – one Indonesian and one Dutch - broadened the colonial divide. Dutch **nationalism found an organised outlet in the** Europe-oriented **conservative Patriotic Club (*Vaderlandsche Club*)**, which in '929 proclaimed the permanence of the colonial relationship. **It** encouraged the repression of Indonesian nationalism, the older and the more enduring of the two forms of nationalism. **In** the early '900S Japanese and Chinese examples of revolution and victory over the West provided Indonesians with new Asian models of hegemony. Education (geography) brought about a new sense of Indonesian territoriality **and national identity. Starting as a loosely-structured movement or *pergerakan***, Indonesian nationalism developed into a full-fledged modern political party system during the '920S and '930S. National parties evolved out of organisations that expressed a regional consciousness (of being Javanese, Minangkabau or Minhasan) into national structures, and from organisations that looked for **the practical lessons in modernisation to be learnt from the Dutch, into self-reliant institutions aiming at national independence.**

The many Indonesian parties of the time can be divided along ideological **lines in a secular, religious (Islamic), socialist/communist and traditionalist** stream. Although the Islamic party *Partai Sarekat Islam*, one of the oldest in a country that was 90 percent Muslim, could look back on the loosely organised mass support of the '910S, it was surpassed by the secular party, *Partai Nasional Indonesia*, **in the 1920s. The latter gained ascendancy when the communist party, *Partai Komunis Indonesia*, was prohibited after its abortive revolt of 1926-'927. In** the conservative '930S the Dutch colonial government exiled the PNIS **most famous leader Sukarno, as well as the leading personalities of successive secular parties, Mohammad Hatta, Sutan Syahrir and others. Confining party membership largely to the cities, it attempted to separate the nationalist movement from the rural areas with some success. In the mid-rojos, the merging of** different small secular groups created two larger secular parties, *Parindra* and **the more leftist *Gerindo*.**²⁹

In 1936 the neo-traditionalist group of *priyayi* and civil servants offered the moderate plea for a Round Table Conference to discuss the colony's political future. The so-called Petition Sutardjo won the support of the People's **Council. When the Dutch government two years later rejected it, Indonesians realised that they could no longer hope for any political reforms. This furthered a new, more united front of all the different parties and movements, the *Gabungan Politik Indonesia (Gapi*, or Indonesian Political Federation). As a**



Raden Ajeng Kartini in 1902 (KIT, Amsterdam).

result of the voluntary monogamy debate of 1937 (see chapter 5 of this volume), the Islamic parties had founded a federation in the MIAI (*Majelis Islam A'laa Indonesia*) as well.³⁰

Women in this period organised themselves along similar ideological lines, as they also sought unity. In the 1920s nearly every town in colonial Indonesia had a women's organisation, while nationalist parties and the modernist Muslim a-political movement *Mubammadiyah* either included (educated) women or had more or less independent women's branches."

The gender issues they struggled for first of all concerned cultural and social questions. Indonesian feminism is acknowledged to have started with the Indonesian *priyayi* daughter, Raden Ajeng Kartini (1879-19^o4), renowned for her book of letters written in Dutch.³² For a long time her threefold fight for the education of women, the promotion of monogamy and a re-evaluation of Javanese culture, had been the standard for Indonesian feminism, even if this

fight ended tragically in her polygamous marriage and her premature death in childbirth. Some thirty years long the emerging women's movement remained focused on similar social issues. One might even question whether the label **feminism applies at all, since feminism presupposes not only the creation of women's organisations but also a general questioning of gender inequalities as well as the struggle to change these inequalities.**^f Due to its colonial context, **Indonesian women sought national awareness and unity more than confrontations with men regarding gender issues.** In view of the growing unity and gradual politicisation of Indonesian women's organisations I will use both terms: **the women's movement and feminism. Their history shows the many faces of feminism.**

In December 1928, the first Women's Congress led to a federation of women's organisations, which in 1930 came to be called the *Perihatan Perhimpunan Isteri Indonesia* (PPII or Federation of Indonesian Wives' Organisations), **Although it claimed its position within the nationalist movement, it refrained from political issues in order to prevent conflict.** In '930, the newly formed *Isteri Sedar* (the Conscious Woman) was the first to opt openly for political activities. **It influenced the women's movement at large, which became more alert to economic questions, labourers and the problem of illiteracy among the rural population.** *Isteri Indonesia*, formed in '932 by a fusion of other socio-economic women's organisations, **applied this program as well, albeit in a more moderate manner.** Three years later the *Kongres Perempuan Indonesia* (KPI, Indonesian Women's Congress) was organised. **It was to be held every three years, and was based on nationalism, socialism, religious neutrality and 'womanhood' (*keperempuanan*).** The KPI replaced the PPII, which was disbanded. All its efforts would be directed to the improvement of society as a whole, but issues of politics and religion would still be avoided. Women of the urban middle and upper classes were the most active and consequently profited most from these efforts.^{t-}

This striving for national unity by both Indonesian men and women in the late 1930s was inspired by a growing distrust in Dutch concessions for change and the emerging threat of war. Although some of the leaders feared Japan's anti-democratic tendencies, **this prominent neighbour was also considered the only alternative for realising independence.** The Japanese victory over the colonial army in March 1942 was to finally usher in the long end of the Dutch empire in the Indonesian archipelago.

CONTENTS

The chapters of the book are part of this general history while they delve more deeply into various aspects of it. But they do more than simply inscribing women into this history. Writings about gender in a colonial context reveal the iniquities and inequalities of the colonial system at its most uncompromising, not because white women tended to be more racist than white men nor because Indonesian women were more susceptible to racism, but because the category of gender also sheds light on other categories of difference. The following essays thus clarify the ambivalences of colonial mentalities and their effects on people, social institutions and discourses, in short on the widely divergent worlds of the racial population groups in the Netherlands Indies.

The second essay 'Female Labour in Twentieth Century Colonial Java: European Notions - Indonesian Practices' starts with the perceptions of rural and industrial labour by Indonesian women, as expressed by the male European and Indonesian elite. Members of the People's Council, the Indies proto-parliament, debated the matter extensively during the 1925 debates on female night labour and differed in opinion on whether Indonesian women worked for economic reasons or because of *adat*, Javanese customs. Their perceptions are compared to the 'realities' of female agricultural labour as they read from other historical sources, such as census and agricultural research reports. Part of their labour could indeed be retraced to cultural patterns, but women's work originated first and foremost from economic necessity. Moreover, it did not imply a neglect of their families, but rather derived from women's concrete daily responsibilities for their off-spring. This responsibility was expressed in close cooperation with their husbands, 'as two oxen before the plough'.

The third chapter 'So Close and Yet So Far': European Ambivalence Towards Javanese Servants' offers an analysis of European perceptions of another aspect of Javanese/Indonesian female (and male) labour: those of Indonesian domestics within the European household. To European women domestic servants were often the only Indonesians they met - coming close to the skin, yet always kept at a safe distance. The analysis is based on European household manuals and children's fiction, both highly prescriptive sources as to the correct ways to behave. The representation of Javanese servants by European women furnishes views of these racial others as well as elucidating the strongly ambivalent feelings among Europeans about those household

members. **It also gives us an insight in the construction of whiteness and the images of self of these European women as clean mothers and teachers to their servants.** This task provided them with a self-appointed 'white woman's burden', comparable to that of their husbands in the colonial project.

The construction of whiteness or 'Europeanness' is also the subject of the fourth chapter 'Summer Dresses and Canned Food: European Women and Western Lifestyles'. Household manuals and the women's pages of magazines and newspapers offered an entrance to the normative discourse regarding fashion and food among European women in the Netherlands-Indies. **This discourse illustrated and stimulated the ever greater attraction of Europe and the growing distance from Indonesian culture that these European women developed.** Living within the framework of the colonial nation-state they shared a Europeanised colonial culture, an illusionary Netherlands in the Tropics, with their husbands.

The fifth chapter 'Feminism, Citizenship and the Struggle for Women's Suffrage in a Colonial Context' addresses questions regarding the struggle for **women's voting rights, which was won in September 1941, but for the election of city councils only.** Archival material from the Ministry of the Colonies, **parliamentary reports, journals and press reviews provide the source material for the analysis of this subject.** The struggle offered Europeans and Indonesians, **men and women, the opportunity to voice their perceptions of femininity and their imaginings (or the lack of imaginings) of a female citizenship.** Women, **organised along racial lines in an Indonesian women's movement and a European feminist movement of Dutch women, remained at a safe distance from one another, although both expressed their desire for female representation in the colonial state.**

The last chapter 'Marriage, Morality and Modernity: The '937 Debate on Monogamy' deals with more examples of both official and public opinion on gender: the colonial draft legislation on voluntary monogamy for Indonesians and the ensuing debates of 1937. The public struggle regarding this (abortive) Western attempt to regulate Indonesian Muslim family life sheds a sharp light **on the relationships and allegiances of Indonesian feminists, nationalists, the Muslim parties and the colonial government.** The draft itself was rooted in **racial as well as class and religious differences. Originally it was meant to protect European women from eventual polygamous practices of the Indonesian men they chose to marry, but its regulations were extended to the small group of Indonesian elite women who desired a monogamous relationship.** Drawing on the same kind of material as chapter four, I focus on the fierce verbal battle and **demonstrations against the draft ordinance among Indonesians of all Islamic**

signature, modernists as well as traditionalists, Javanese *abangan* as well as orthodox *santri*. Due to strong Muslim protests the draft never even reached the People's Council.

Although each essay can be read separately, they share some common themes. These are connected to the theoretical concepts that inspired me: Orientalism and the construction of whiteness, colonial modernity and gender, and female colonial citizenship. These themes also organise some concluding remarks, offered here by way of introduction.

ORIENTALISM, GENDER AND CLASS

No exploration of the cultures and societies affected by European imperialism can ignore Edward Said's *Orientalism*.³⁵ His analysis of the European perceptions and imaginations of the colonised has sharpened our scholarly views and broadened our research questions. Palestinian by birth and a literary scholar in the us by profession, Said drew attention to a centuries-old tradition in Western literature and scholarship of stereotyping the Oriental other as different and inferior. He made visible the binary opposition between coloniser and colonised in Western intellectual processes and laid bare the mechanisms of fossilising and dehistoricising cultural and political forms in the world East of the Suez Canal. Moreover, Said postulated the political purposes of all Western knowledge on the Orient, which was produced as an instrument of colonial power and authority. With his statements about politicised knowledge, he reminded historians of the inherently biased roots of their colonial source material and of the critical function of their profession.

Said has offered us a new view of the colonial past. Prior to the 1970s, the history of colonialism had already undergone some major shifts, varying from a focus on the colonised instead of the coloniser to a reformulation of the theories of imperialism and colonial state formation. The study of new research subjects and new theories was effectively stimulated by new source material from now accessible colonial and other archives and a renewed analysis of already known material. Said now flung open the gates of colonial discourse as a legitimate field of research. His overall concepts have had a highly stimulating influence on colonial scholarship and have laid the groundwork for the field of 'colonial studies'. The recent inclusion of 'the colonial' within the historiography of Western identity, and of colonial influences on the formation of European culture and civil society, takes this approach one step further.³⁶ As a point of departure for questions and analyses, the concept of Orientalism has thus been highly useful, also for this study.

However, Said's ideas should be adopted with care and caution. In the past **twenty years he has received praise as well as criticism. I list some of the latter,** relevant to this study. The absolute dichotomy between 'we' and 'they', 'us' and 'them' has been questioned and has become outdated. Culture, even colonial **culture, is constantly recreated in a dialogue or contest between the different contributors and participants, even when occupying unequal power positions.**^v Plus Said seemed to deny the agency of the colonised themselves. Yet the Orient informed Orientalists. In the early nineteenth century British scholars on India, for instance, got their knowledge from Indians of the Brahmin group, **who were serving their own interests, and thus their strategies should be taken into account."**

Moreover, the discourses of both groups themselves appeared to be more pluralistic than Said considered them to be. Overlooking internal contradictions and debates Said created a homogeneous or monolithic colonial **discourse. Yet, it was the debate between various factions in the colonial project** that produced a cultural exchange or modernity, as anthropologist Peter van der Veer has stated recently. Western knowledge regarding the Orient was not a uniform and closed system, as Said has it, but was produced in specific places at specific times. **It thus has its own historicity.**³⁹

Feminist scholarship has added the criticism of Said's male bias.⁴⁰ **Women as authors or subjects of Orientalist texts or as agents in a colonised context are almost completely absent."** They do not figure prominently in his early work at all; not as subjects/actors, as objects/victims nor as anything in between. The Oriental Other, which Said constructed as a classless male category, can be **deconstructed according to gender and class. Indonesian women, for instance, may well have been double or triple others, other as Indonesians, other as women, others according to class.**

Incidentally, Said describes the Western sexualised representation of the Middle East as the consequence of the sexual preoccupations of the West, or in other words the East as a paradise of sexual male fantasies in an era of Victorian moralism and prudery. He also alludes to the perception of the East **as feminine versus the masculine West."** **Yet, he does not elaborate upon this theme of gendered discourse, which can be characterised, in general, as a broader literary practice that labels opponents or the unknown in universally recognisable terms.**^f Nor does he pay attention to the psychoanalytical opportunities colonial texts may offer, as Homi Bhabha has pointed out. According to Bhabha, colonial discourse was less an instrumental intention of the West to **control the East than an unintended instrument to express and control unconscious desires and fears.**⁴⁴

These criticisms have led to an overall fragmentation of Said's postulates: no **absolute dichotomy between coloniser and colonised**; **interactive agency by the colonised**; a differentiated, gendered and class-bound subject; and multiple colonial discourses often expressed in gendered language, masking hidden **motives**. **Scholars on colonialism have tested Said's concepts, refined their instrumentality, sharpened its lenses**. Some of these patterns can be recognised **in the Indonesian context**.

Indonesian women were viewed as others, 'steeped in adat and religion', as one European feminist summed up a common European perception in the '930s.⁴⁵ Recourse to *adat* (indigenous customs and law) itself, which developed as a regular field of scholarship in twentieth century colonial Indonesia, held **Orientalising connotations**. **Codification of *adat* led to a conservative freezing** of indigenous law practices, marking juridical differentiation. It served **conservatives in more than one of the cases I cite here: labour legislation, women's suffrage and the debate on monogamy**.

However, Dutch opinions were rarely in unison and static, as debates on these same subjects illustrate.⁴⁶ **In the discussion in the *Volksraad*, or People's Council on the 1925 draft concerning female night labour (chapter 2) moderate Dutch representatives, supported by Indonesians, wanted to change Indonesian rural family structures to contemporary European ideals of the woman as 'the angel of the house', always present for her children. Their political opponents, Dutch industrial managers, expressed their conservative and 'Orientalist' perceptions of Indonesian peasant women and their work, which better served their industrial interests.** Following their native life patterns and customs (*adat*) Indonesian rural women were considered to be completely opposed to the Western tradition of family life. The result of this collision of opinions was a hesitant first step on the path to social state care: the regulation of night labour **among women**.

European men (and women) also disagreed regarding the rights of Indonesian women to vote (chapter 5). Until the end of the struggle in '94', internal debates among champions of the cause and conservatives frustrated the introduction of this right. Here again, the argument of *adat* and religion (Islam) provided opponents to female suffrage with Orientalising perceptions of women: neither *adat* nor Islam would allow for the introduction of this Western **'acquirement'**. **Indonesian spokespersons were divided on the issue as well**.

Child marriage offered another opportunity for debate among Europeans (chapter 6). While in the '920s conservative civil servants opted for government prohibition of this 'evil', the moderate Adviser of Native Affairs preferred **a more moderate approach. He wanted to refer the matter to private initiative,**

because he considered the subject too sensitive and too private for effective management by the government.

Colonial discourses on women differed not only according to political positions of European men, thus marking inter-European differences. They could also vary within the texts of one person, revealing internal fragmentation of opinion and deep-seated fears. Indonesian servants (see chapter 3) were certainly the ultimate other - different in race, class and religion. On the other hand they were the closest to the European families, encountering them in the **most intimate instances of the house. Their presence offered many possibilities for ambivalence, fears and desires, as expressed in the textual representations of this social group.**⁴⁷

European perceptions of colonised women in the Indies were indeed far less uniform than the ones Said found for the colonised in general. What strikes one the most, is their divergent views with respect to class. Whether it **concerned labour and work, the female enfranchisement or marriage law, in all instances colonial perceptions followed the class divisions which existed within Javanese/Indonesian society such as those between the elite (*priyayi*) and the peasant population. In the twentieth century the younger generation of noble descent (*priyayi*), largely received Western education, moved to the cities and took positions in the colonial administration, education and journalism.** Western notions of a woman's proper place and the family were guiding principles in colonial policies concerning female labour, enfranchisement and marriage of this *priyayi* class. Indonesian educated elite women should follow Western patterns of the modern woman as wife and mother. Not only was education for this group geared to a model of 'housewifisation' but ideally women of this class should live in monogamy in order to strengthen family life and to provide society with better educated offspring, able to develop as thrifty and trustworthy subjects of the colonial state.^{t?} **In its policies regarding this female class the colonial government followed the same evolutionary model, that it tended to use with the male *priyayi*. In the colonial authorities' opinion, this class was the first to reap the fruits of an 'uplifting' education and its 'association' with the West (see chapter 2).**⁵⁰

While colonial authorities considered women of the Indonesian elite open to education and change, they thought women of the rural masses should be left in their own cultural environment as much as possible. Voting was already limited for men of all population groups, whether Europeans, Foreign Orientals or Indonesians, by exigencies of literacy and census. Hence, the right to vote for city councils, which was the only voting rights that a small elite group of literate and tax paying women ultimately acquired in '94', would not

be extended to rural women. Interference in the rural women's marriage customs such as **child marriage, divorce and polygamy was consciously avoided** in the years between the two World Wars. Voluntary monogamy would not impinge on their behavioural practices. Ultimately, colonial policies towards women and the family were mainly directed at women of the elite."

Dutch colonial Orientalism with regard to gender was thus a 'qualified' **one. It was class-specific. 'Othering' and 'essentialising' into static patterns of difference** occurred first and foremost with relation to rural women, the class which was most distant and strange to the colonial bureaucrats. This was not only a means of handling the unknown, but it served pragmatic and **opportunistic reasons as well. Female labour was an important asset to European agriculture** and thus should not be hindered by a prohibition of female night labour. The government recognised its limited power to control child marriages and based its non-interference with this aspect of life on a certain acknowledgement of its own limitations. While the chapters thus underline the aforementioned fragmentation of Said's postulates, they confirm his point that Western knowledge production on the Oriental other was political and geared to purposes of governance and self-interest.

Yet, there is one remarkable exception to the general pattern of a Dutch class-bound Orientalism. European women did not express the class distinction between *priyayi* and rural women to the same extent as European men did. As housewives responsible for their servants, these women shared the contemporary political attitudes of 'uplifting' and 'education' with their husbands. **However, their rhetoric on servants did not mention class differences (chapter 3).** This could perhaps be explained by the dominant position these women had over their servants. Yet in their struggle for female suffrage European feminists overlooked this relevant category as well (chapter 5). In the early 1900s the Javanese feminist and *priyayi* daughter Raden Ajeng Kartini (1879-1904) was the darling of the Dutch because she inspired their social and political expectations of **Indonesian elite women. Twenty years later, however, Dutch feminists in the Indies seemed to have forgotten her exemplary function.** In line with the general conservatism of the two decades before the Second World War these **feminists defined Indonesian women as 'not yet educated' or as 'steeped in adat and religion'**, thereby conflating educated Indonesian women with the rural majority (chapter 5). In their hesitation about the chances of the suffrage for **Indonesian women, these colonial feminists did not seem to realise that the mass of Indonesian women would not profit from this right. Limited for men as well, they would reach women of a select class only, those of the educated elite.**

This difference between a class- and non-class-bound 'Orientalism' of Dutch men and women in the Indies can be attributed to social circumstances; it was certainly not part of {nature' or female genetic structures. While Dutch men met Indonesians of various classes in their work, Dutch women were focused on, and enclosed within, their households, families and the social relationships among Europeans. If they came in contact with Indonesians, they did so mostly through the work contacts of their husbands. Until the preparation for war in the early '940s, when European urban women became involved in public activities of civil defence, they met few women of other population groups, and then only in restricted numbers.⁵² The discourse analyses in the following chapters all point to the social isolation or 'apartheid' of Dutch women. In the Netherlands Indies of the years between the two World Wars, the binary **opposition between women of the East and the West was in most cases a social and political reality.** Individual exceptions to this pattern did occur, for instance **between women in the missions.** However, the general discourse on **Indonesian women by Dutch women expressed the existing social distance.** Indonesian fiction of that period, in which Europeans do not figure, reveals the same patterns, confirming Said's general dichotomy between coloniser and colonised after all. They remained so close yet so far.

WHITENESS AND 'EUROPEAN-NESS'

The interaction of the three categories of gender, class, and race, also becomes obvious when analysing perceptions of and by European women. In recent historiography, the role of white women in colonialism has been the subject of critical analysis, compressed succinctly into the opposition of 'complicity' and 'resistance'. **Were white women participants and perpetrators within the colonial project, its opponents or its victims?**⁵⁵ The examples of this book conform to the notion of McClintock (and many others) that European women were 'not the hapless onlookers of empire, but were ambiguously complicit both as colonisers and as colonised, privileged and restricted, acted upon and acting'.⁵⁶ The struggle for women's voting rights for instance, offers a fine example of this situation. **When Dutch women crossed the equator, they lost their voting rights, which they had won in '9'9 in the Netherlands. In their struggle for this right in the Indies they firstly opted for the right to vote for themselves, basing their argument on their contribution to the colonial project.**

Colour of skin always expresses itself in contrast to other colours. Although in the Western world whiteness may still be seen as the common unnoticed denominator or a non-colour, whiteness is a colour as well, with many expres-

sions. As Ruth Frankenberg has argued, 'whiteness needs to be examined and historicized (...). Whiteness needs to be delimited and "localized"'.⁵⁷ How has the West looked at its own whiteness?'f

For European women in the colony whiteness was not a self-evident category, white was not an 'essential colour to be unconscious of',⁵⁹ as it was in (contemporary) Europe. Coming out in ever larger numbers - generally at a young age - into an 'expatriate' community, Dutch-born, *totok* women felt forced to formulate their racial identity. Whatever their social background in the metropole might have been, in the Indies they automatically became part and parcel of the hegemonic colonisers class.⁶⁰ As one of them stated slightly ironically, 'Isn't it true, every European woman in the Indies is a lady?'⁶¹ These 'ladies' reframed their identity in their behaviour towards servants, in choosing their clothing - an all important symbol of social status - and in their struggle for suffrage. They formulated their identity with ever stronger connections to 'patria' (Europe). Their 'long-distance culture', as Henk Schulte Nordholt, following Ben Anderson's 'long-distance nationalism', has aptly defined it, was expressed in various cultural and political repertoires of difference between West and East such as those of dress and cooking, of monogamy and female suffrage." It was anti-Indonesian because these women refused to acknowledge their locale; they could have been situated anywhere in the world.

Yet 'whiteness' may not be the most appropriate notion in a colony in which Indo-Europeans of mixed blood legally belonged to the 'European population group'. In party politics and culture twentieth-century Indo-European men and women chose overwhelmingly for Europe and for Dutchness. Highly aware of their European legal status and their concomitant position in colonial hierarchy, Indo-European women organised themselves in the '930s. The women's organisation of the largest Indo-European political party, the Indo-European Alliance (*Indo-Europeesch Verbond*), explicitly formulated its self-image in immediate relation to Dutch norms and values.⁶³

In their responsibility for domestic servants, in their efforts to Europeanise colonial culture and in their struggle for women's suffrage, European women inscribed themselves full-heartedly within the colonial project without paying **much attention to the Indonesian social settings. Therefore, as illustrated in the following chapters, in line with these women's cultural longing, their legal position and their colonial affiliation, the term 'Europeanness' is preferred to 'whiteness'.**

COLONIAL MODERNITY AND GENDER

The topics of the following chapters can all be arranged under the heading of 'modernity'. As a result of the fierce academic debates on the notion of the 'post-modern' of the last fifteen years, the term modernity has won great popularity. **As an umbrella term it encompasses the 'grand' notions of post-Renaissance and Enlightenment's history: the application of rationality, the development of capitalism and industrialisation, including concomitant long-term processes, such as urbanisation, consumerism and individualisation. But it also refers to the longing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries for progress, development and 'the modern' as well as the attraction of twentieth-century 'modern' objects like cars and telephones. With the acknowledgement of national, regional, or local variations of modernity, its recent use has been extended to the plural: 'modernities'** It is modernity in its longing for progress and 'the modern', that makes it useful as a narrative label for the **various chapters on gender in colonial Indonesia. The notion offers an encompassing framework regarding the subjects of this study, while its content illuminates some aspects and paradoxes of this phenomenon with regard to gender in a colonial context.**⁶⁵

Labour legislation, women's suffrage and monogamy were issues of modernity; state concerns with these topics were an expression of the same. Debates about servants fit into larger patterns of the 'modern' household, while fashion itself formed part of a modern commodification process. It has recently been argued that modernity encompassed both colonial authority and nationalism, the Ethical Policy as well as nationalist ideas⁶⁶ In line with this statement we can argue that it encompassed both the Indonesian women's movement and European colonial feminism. Women of the two population groups were affected by and also affected modernity in congruent ways.

European housewives broadened their roles to issues of hygiene and health; they 'professionalised' their activities by training and organising themselves and they took up the self-appointed task of educating their servants (chapter 3). **By wearing Western summer dresses European women were definitely part of 'the modern'; it was 'modernity that introduced fashion as a new phenomenon in the colony'** (chapter 4).⁶⁷ Not only their dresses, but also their feminism was part and parcel of modernity (chapter 5).

For Indonesian women European clothing was not a primary concern: Javanese girls attending Dutch school began to dress in European clothing in the '920s, adult women would do so only in the '950s after independence. Yet,

women of the educated elite, whether secular or Islamic, stimulated modern motherhood and hygiene." But it was education that developed as one of the strongest pillars of their modernity. As mentioned above, since the days of **Kartini education for women - whether for girls, adults, or later the masses -** stood first on the agenda of Indonesian feminism. During the 1920S and 1930S many of the leaders of the Indonesian women's movement had themselves **been trained as teachers. Their main support came from women educated in various institutions, whether public or private, secular or Islamic, high school and vocational school in rapidly increasing numbers.**⁶⁹

In the first half of the twentieth century, these women crossed the fluctuating boundaries between private and public, a line which in Indonesian society had never been absolute. As of old, rural women occupied a visible position in **economic life. Even if elite women were more secluded, this seclusion had never** reached the almost total invisibility of women in the Middle East. Now they entered the modern world of emancipation abhorring of a future as 'domestic drudges', and they came more actively to the fore in newly developing public **institutions such as newspapers, women's organisations and political debates.** These women acted as the most visible symbols of cultural change; their emancipation presented the most explicit form of liberation and of modernity?" The **prime examples of their agency came out of the cities, for the 'modern' was a** largely urban phenomenon, and this was no different in the colony!'

Secular feminists agreed on another central issue, the battle against polygamy, also introduced by Kartini. However, it would be too easy to read the fierce Islamic protests against their modern monogamy struggle as a purely **anti-modern opposition. Even if some opponents to modernity got their inspiration from that source, it was not only fear of modernity that stimulated Islamic protests against voluntary monogamy for Indonesian women on an** unprecedented scale (chapter 6). These protests revealed a more complicated **convergence of both anti-modernity and anti-colonialism. The Islamic community as a whole refused a modernity directed from above by a *kafir* (heathen) government.** For that reason the colonial state's attempt to influence the family - the centre of Islamic culture - was doomed to fail. By putting marriage and polygamy on its own agenda - as Islamic organisations did in the wake of the state ordered debate of 1937- Islamic modernity formulated its own forms, independent of foreign norms and values as much as possible. Thus modernity **did not necessarily imply secularisation as an unavoidable consequence; Islam** selected its own appropriate points from the modern repertory.

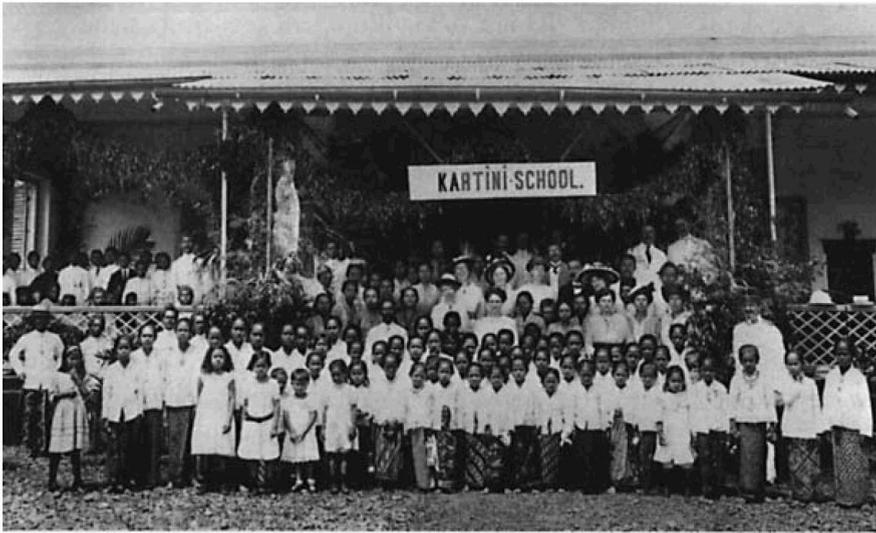
This is not to deny that anti-modernity existed. It did among both population groups: Europeans who denied the right to vote to women and Indo-

nesians who blocked monogamy for purely orthodox reasons. Both could find support for their argument in *adat* and Islam, and both did so.⁷² The anti-modern colonial position found its clearest expression in what has been called **'the most threatening form of modernisation', the democratising of colonial government.**⁷³ In conservative colonial eyes denial of the right to vote for women from the Indonesian elite 'shielded them' from modernity. That these anti-modernists gave in in 1941, was for practical exigencies only: the threat of war meant that they had to win loyalty and support of as many indigenous groups as possible.

Nowhere in the world did modernity follow a straight course. But in the colonial context, it met with even more hesitation and ambivalence than in the West. It was hampered by colonial fears about the loss of Indonesian traditions and culture, which would endanger political tranquillity and ultimately **Dutch sovereignty. It was thus a 'half-way' measure of 'gendered' and 'classed'** colonial modernity, which Indonesian women experienced: night labour of rural women was regulated but not forbidden; servants were to be educated but kept at a safe distance; European fashion in the Indies did not refer to an **Indonesian context but focused on Europe instead; political rights were something that was denied to women for a long time and would have been granted - had it not been for a strong opposition - to Dutch women only; monogamy should be introduced to a select group of the Indonesian elite, but was also meant to protect Dutch women, who might choose to marry Indonesian Muslim men.**

The debate on modernity includes the question of the Western origin of the 'modern'. For many Indonesians of the early twentieth-century elite, **Dutch culture and education opened the doors to modernity, as educated Javanese women enthusiastically confirmed in 1914. But, although modernisation and colonialism have often been conceived as 'tandem developments', it would be a simplification 'to conflate colonialism, modernity and Westernisation', as Vickers has pointed out. Modernity's culture came from many more directions other than just the coloniser alone. Processes of *totokisation*, Westernisation and modernity were influenced by American culture, Parisian fashion, Japanese examples, and Islamic reforms in the Middle East and during the process took particular Indonesian expressions.**Pt

For Indonesian women, for instance, modernity did not just come from colonial authorities, state sources or Dutch culture alone. In fact, it was external pressure from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) that prompted the colonial government to initiate social legislation. Through its educational policies for girls the government introduced modernity. But this modern edu-



Pupils, teachers, and board members of the new Kartinischool at its opening in 1915, Batavia (KIT, Amsterdam).

cation for girls was not a governmental prerogative; it was offered by private European institutions (the Kartini and Van Deventer schools, and the missions) and the modernist Muslim movement on a larger scale.⁷ Nor did modernity come from Dutch women's organisations. In the early 1930s their modern ideas about households, hygiene and female participation in politics found expression in the apolitical Association for Housewives in the Indies and the politically-inspired feminist Association of Women's Rights in the Indies. Yet, despite the participation of a few Indonesian members, both institutions largely confirmed existing patterns of social distance or 'apartheid', as chapters 4 and 5 on fashion and women's suffrage illustrate. Female solidarity across the colonial divide did not exist nor did it come into being over common goals. **In** the Indies Dutch feminists did not forge alliances with nationalist men and women, as female British theosophists and left-wing (Irish) revolutionaries had done in British India, albeit in 'maternalist' forms. Although Theosophy inspired early Javanese nationalism, European women never made a name for themselves in that movement nor in the Indonesian women's movement.⁸

To Indonesian women of the 1920s and 1930s Dutch women rarely served as role models. 'I have so longed to make the acquaintance of a "modern girl"', Kartini wrote to her new Dutch pen pal in 1899, which she understood to be a

self-confident woman working (like herself) in and for society and of high moral standards." But she did not follow European modernity blindly; she sought to reshape Javanese values and culture. Moreover, she actually fought a struggle for modernity on two fronts: against a hegemonic Western modernity and against a traditional Javanese society." She, however, never totally broke with the latter. Her love for her father and her fear of 'black magic' by a menacing suitor made her choose for a polygamous marriage in 1903, thus remaining within traditional Javanese boundaries. Her new ideal was to work alongside her husband to develop her people through education at home, but this was never realised because of her premature death one year later.

Kartini, now a national Indonesian heroine, set the stage. Many educated Javanese women in later years framed their gender identity along similar lines. In 1918, for instance, Sriati Mangoenkoesoemo, who was personally affiliated with the first Javanese nationalist association *Budi Utomo*, argued that 'the Javanese woman', educated as she might be, should not opt for a Western lifestyle of equality, but should strive for 'her own destiny'. She should educate herself to be a better mother to her children and a better partner to her husband. This did not mean being his 'plaything': on the contrary she should 'consciously serve [him] and, by it, reign'. In the 1930s, women from the Association of Indigenous Civil Servants, the PPBB, voiced similar opinions. Educated Javanese *priyayi* women should stand beside their husbands to develop women of the lower classes and seek the harmony they had sought and not found in Western thought, in their own culture.⁸¹ In the late 1930s male and female authors in the nationalist press repeatedly emphasised, that Javanese women should not lose their 'female' qualities of *'ibu yang sejati'* ('the true woman'). **Their education, economic independence, social activities and political participation should not harm or endanger their central position within their harmonious marriages and family lives.⁸² In view of these common ideals, it may be considered as consequential that in the marriage debate Indonesian feminists, although personally in favour of monogamy, stuck to Indonesian values and preferred an all-Indonesian harmony of Muslims, nationalists and themselves above codified monogamy (chapter 6). They thus claimed their right to fashion a 'modern' national culture, that was not Western.⁸²**

Twentieth-century modernity, however, offered women of both population groups one common emblem, that of modern motherhood. Yet this would not bridge the colonial divide. The centrality of this notion for both racial population groups permeated all debates on and by women. Modern mothers, healthy, hygienic and caring for the upbringing of their children, were considered the carriers of modernity by Europeans and educated Indonesians. Some Euro-

pean and Indonesian men considered all women to belong at home and not to work at night. However, as good mothers Indonesian rural women indeed worked to support their families (chapter 2). European women considered it their - and other European women's - duty to be like mothers to their Indonesian domestics (chapter 3). Early protests against polygamy by Indonesian women were inspired by similar notions of motherhood and harmony in the family (chapter 6). The modernist Muslim movement fostered these ideals as well.

This maternal role should be extended to the society at large. Motherhood inspired women of both population groups to join in a 'maternal' or 'familial feminism' (chapter 5). Women should be responsible for the social issues of the nation-state. Their motherhood ideals influenced their blueprint of a 'new woman', one who would be moral, responsible and active in society at large. Both feminisms frowned upon the idleness and luxuries of Western and Westernised women in the colony. Both voiced chaste protests against liberated sexual mores.⁸⁴ Yet, colonial power differences and racial distance prevented this shared ideology of a modern motherhood from serving as a common ground for (political) actions of Dutch and Indonesian feminists together. It has been argued recently that 'marriage and motherhood are always imaginaries in the making' instead of 'essential categories' and may even become part of the struggle between colonial and nationalist groups.⁸⁴ Here these 'imaginaries' of motherhood remained enclosed within each group. In the colonial state, modernity followed and actually acerbated existing racial differences among women.

NATION-STATE AND FEMALE COLONIAL CITIZENSHIP

Colonial modernity also implied the process of colonial state formation. In the Western world the process of state formation resulted in the creation of the nation-state, by which the government extended its authority over civil society and by which civil society influenced or even determined government action. Eventually, the state found its modern legitimation in the nation, as Anderson has stated.⁸⁵ Perceptions and imaginations of nationhood and nationalism simultaneously stimulated and were stimulated by this process.⁸⁵ The extension of citizenship through education, social welfare, voting rights and organised labour was the visible sign of these changes.

Yet, modern colonialism never brought a whole-hearted emulation of the West to the Rest.⁸⁷ At most it aimed at the construction of reformed subjects as 'almost the same but not quite'.⁸⁸ Or as Partha Chatterjee has claimed:

*The colonial state, we must remember, was not just the agency that brought modular forms of the modern state to the colonies; it was also an agency that was destined never to fulfill the normalizing mission of the modern state because the premise of its power was a rule of colonial difference, namely, the preservation of the alienness of the ruling group.*⁸⁹

The question of whether one can speak about colonial citizenship, a citizenship **of the colonial state at all, or whether this alludes to a strident *contradictio in terminis***, is a valid one. In legal language it is indeed impossible; the law only recognised Dutch citizenship. After 1892 this Dutch citizenship was legally restricted to those born of Dutch descent, excluding those merely born on Dutch territory; blood became more important than place of birth. In '910 the colonised were defined as Dutch subjects; they could never become more than that - except for those Indonesian women who married Dutch men and acquired their husband's legal status as European as well as Dutch citizen.?? **However, similarly to Western state formation the colonial state attempted to encourage the creation of a colonial nation, a corpus of socio-political allegiance to state authority with which the colonial state increasingly claimed the right to interfere.?' Just like modern states produced modern citizens through education, political participation and welfare policies, colonial state formation produced 'citizens of the colonial state'. For colonial state formation was also a cultural project, although of divergent accessibility for the various races, classes and gender.**

Hence, if we agree that colonial nation-state formation took place, including racial inequalities, its history should be expressed not just in legal concepts, but also in the wider setting of the cultural notions of (female) citizenship. Despite the legal definitions of the time, cultural policies within the colonial state allowed for the creation of a new group of subjects-with-citizens-rights, even if these rights like voting, freedom of speech and political organisation were limited and remained restricted to the educated (male) Indonesian elite.s- In the 1920s and 1930s the colonial government formulated its own ideal on proper female citizens. As can be deduced from the chapters 5 and 6, they should be of European legal status and Indonesian only if educated enough and monogamous, moreover socially involved and politically inactive.

To some extent we can also situate Indonesian nationalism within the framework of the struggle for citizens' rights in the colonial state (rights of representation, organisation and freedom of expression), from which Indonesians were excluded. The struggle of these citizens' rights dominated colo-

nial policies from the '910S right up to '942. But nationalism implied more: it revealed the ambivalences of these claims. For while the nationalists opted for these rights within the colonial nation-state, they 'imagined' - if we follow Ben Anderson's terminology - another nation for the future: independent **Indonesia.**

This ongoing process of the creation of a colonial citizenship - besides an **'imagined' Indonesian one** - allows us to analyse debates on and by women in terms of female citizenship of the two nations. European women considered themselves part and parcel of the colonial project. As the analysis on domestic servants revealed, they viewed their educational and 'uplifting' duties towards their Indonesian domestics as comparable to those of their husbands. In fashions and food they behaved like so-called 'incorporated wives', in line with their husbands' professional and social roles in the same state. European women involved in the struggle for female suffrage based their claims for voting rights on their participation within the colonial project as female citizens of that state. In short, **European women were most expressive in their opting for a female colonial citizenship.**

Indonesian women were more ambivalent. Following the Muslim opposition to the draft on voluntary monogamy of '937, Indonesian women's organisations preferred a united Indonesian women's movement and a more Indonesian solution to the problem of polygamy and divorce beyond government-imposed marriage laws. They sacrificed their own private desires for an improved marriage life and opted for a partnership within the Indonesian community. That implied a female citizenship of the future Indonesian state. But they remained ambiguous. In those same years they continued to strengthen their efforts to gain the right to vote in the colonial state, in which they finally succeeded in '94'. This ambivalence can be partly explained by the distinction between the 'state' and the 'nation', made by the Indian historian Partha Chatterjee. In identifying 'state' and 'nation' with the public and private sphere respectively, Chatterjee has put forward that Indian nationalism opted for a removal of 'difference' in the public state sphere and for a modernisation independent of the coloniser's culture in the private sphere of the nation.s' Yet, the opposition private-public may easily be misunderstood.s't The Indonesian women's actions for suffrage was a state-directed struggle for equality indeed, while its choice to side with Indonesian Islam and nationalism against the colonial monogamy draft was a commitment to an Indonesian 'nation', Contrary, however, to similar nationalist debates about women in India, the argument that women belonged to the private realm, not to be touched by colonialism, was not voiced by secular nationalists in Indonesia.

The monogamy debate extended this double private sphere of the family and 'nation' into the public domain. It made women and the rhetoric about women transgress the borderline between private and public and politicised them both.

Indonesian and European women were thus involved in the process of colonial state-formation in various ways, both as subjects and objects. The colonial nation-state of the twentieth century had to recognise the subject of gender. The following chapters will illustrate in more detail just how women and the colonial state interacted.

Notes

- The Family of Man. The Greatest Photographic Exhibition of All Time - 501 Pictures from 68 Countries - Created by Edward Steichen for the Museum of Modern Art* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1955). I have vivid memories of visiting this exhibition as a young high school student.
- 2 Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather. Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York/London: Routledge, 1995). While Barthes criticised the masking of class and race differences of the exposition by putting 'Nature' before 'History', McClintock extended this critical approach to gender. Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (Paris: Edition du Seuil, '957) 173-176.
 - 3 For instance Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid, *Recasting Women. Essays in Colonial History* (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1989). Also Barbara N. Ramusack, 'From Symbol to Diversity: The Historical Literature on Women in India', *South Asia Research* 10, no. 2, 1990, 139-157; Malia B. Formes, 'Beyond Complicity versus Resistance: Recent Work on Gender and European Imperialism', *Journal of Social History* 28, nO.3 (1995) 629-641; Christine Doran, 'White Women in Colonial Contexts. Villains, Victims and/or Vitiators of Imperialism?', in: Harry Poeze and Antoinette Liem eds., *Lasting Fascinations. Essays on Indonesia and the Southwest Pacific to Honour Bob Hering* (Stein: Yayasan Soekarno, 1998) 99-116.
 - 4 Cora Vreede-de Stuers, *L'émancipation de la femme Indonésienne* (Paris/The Hague: Mouton, 1959), also published in English as *The Indonesian Woman. Struggles and Achievements* (Paris/The Hague: Mouton, 1960). Ann Stoler, 'Rethinking Colonial Categories: European Communities and the Boundaries of Colonial Rule', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31 (1989) 134-161; 'Making Empire Respectable: The Politics of Race and Sexual Morality in 19th Century Colonial Cultures', *American Ethnologist* 16 (1989) 26-51, also in: Jan Breman ed., *Imperial Monkey Business: Racial Supremacy in Social Darwinist Theory and Colonial Practice* (Amsterdam: CASA, 1989) 35-70; 'Carnal

- Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and Morality in Colonial Asia', in: Michaela di Leonardo ed., *Gender at the Crossroads: Feminist Anthropology in the Postmodern Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991) 51-101; 'Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers: European Identities and the Politics of Exclusion in Colonial Southeast Asia', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 34 (1992) 514-551; Jean Gelman Taylor, *The Social World of Batavia. European and Eurasian in Dutch Asia* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983).
- 5 See Ann Stoler's work, mentioned in note 4, plus articles of Ann Stoler and Jean Gelman Taylor in Laurie J. Sears ed., *Fantasizing the Feminine in Indonesia* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996); Frances Gouda, 'Good Mothers, Medeas or Jezebels. Feminine Imagery in Colonial and Anticolonial Rhetoric in the Dutch East Indies, 1900-1942', in: Julia Clancy-Smith and Frances Gouda eds., *Domesticating the Empire. Race, Gender and Family Life in French and Dutch Colonialism* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1998) 236-254.
 - 6 Rita Smith Kipp, 'Emancipating Each Other: Dutch Colonial Missionaries' Encounter with Karo Women in Sumatra, 1900-1942', in: Julia Clancy-Smith and Frances Gouda eds., *Domesticating the Empire. Race, Gender and Family Life in French and Dutch Colonialism* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1998) 211-235; Sita van Bemmelen, 'Zwart-wit versus Ieud. Geschiedschrijving over Indonesische vrouwen in de koloniale periode', in: Francisca de Haan et al. eds., *Het raadsel-orouwnngeschiedenis. Tiende Jaarboek voor vrouwengeschiedenis* (Nijmegen: Sun, 1989) 1-44.
 - 7 Susan Blackburn, 'Western Feminists Observe Asian Women: An Example of the Dutch East Indies', in: Jean Gelman Taylor ed., *Women Creating Indonesia. The First Fifty Years* (Clayton: Monash Asia Institute, 1997) 1-21; Susan Blackburn and Sharon Bessel, 'Marriageable Age: Political Debates on Early Marriage in Twentieth-Century Indonesia', *Indonesia* no. 63 (April 1997) 107-141.
 - 8 Myra Sidharta, 'The Making of the Indonesian Chinese Woman', in: Elsbeth Locher Scholten and Anke Niehof eds., *Indonesian Women in Focus. Past and Present Notions* (Leiden KITLV Press, 1992) 58-76; Faye Yik-Wei Chan, 'Chinese Women's Emancipation as Reflected in Two Peranakan Journals (c. 1927-1942)' *Archipel* 49 (1995) 45-62; Charles A. Coppel, 'Emancipation of the Indonesian Chinese Woman', in: Gelman Taylor, *Women Creating Indonesia*, 22-51.
 - 9 For instance, Frances Gouda, *Dutch Culture Overseas: Colonial Practice in the Netherlands Indies 1900-1942* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1995) 75-118, 157-193; Clancy-Smith and Gouda, *Domesticating the Empire*. The bibliography in Van Bemmelen, 'Zwart-wit versus kleur', 46-50, offers earlier titles.
 - 10 As the Dutch sociologist J.A.A. van Doorn has characterised Dutch presence in the Indies. J.A.A. van Doorn, *De laatste eeuw van Indië. Ontwikkeling en ondergang van een kokmiaal project* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 1994).
 - 11 Prasenjit Duara, quoted in Frances Gouda and Julia Clancy-Smith, 'Introduction', in: Clancy-Smith and Gouda, *Domesticating the Empire*, 1-20, esp. 6.
 - 12 Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments. Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); also Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick

- Cooper, 'Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda', in: Frederick Cooper and Ann Lama Stoler eds., *Tensions Of Empire. Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1997) 18.
- 13 See the criticism of Chandra Talpade Mohanty, 'Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses', in: Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres eds., *Third World Women and the Politics Of Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991) SI-80. For an analysis of the meaning of 'woman' see Denise Riley, *'Am I that Name?': Feminism and the Category Of Women' in History* (London: MacMillan, 1988). Needless to say that 'women' in the title of this book are not conceived as a universal category.
- 14 For women of Chinese descent see the literature mentioned above note 8.
- IS jean W. Scott, 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis', *American Historical Review* 91 (1986) IOS3-107S.
- 16 Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects, Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994) IS6-1S7. Braidotti underlines three levels of sexual difference: between men and women, between women, within each woman. The research program of the Netherlands Research School of Women's Studies focuses on gender as a dimension of personal identity, as a principle of social structure and as a basis for normative dichotomies (gender as femininity).
- 17 Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity. The 'Manly Englishman' and the 'Effeminate' Bengali' in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester New York: Manchester University Press, 1995).
- 18 For instance, I do not deal with the female body and the colonial state control of maternity, and I do so only indirectly with the indigenous concubine or *nyai* (chapter 5). See for the first Kalpana Ram and Margaret Jolly eds., *Maternities and Modernities. Colonial and Postcolonial Experiences in Asia and the Pacific* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1998); for the second Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, 'The Njai in Colonial Deli. A Case of Supposed Mediation', in: Sita van Bemmelen et. al. eds., *Women and Mediation in Indonesia* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1992) 265-280; Brigitte Muller, *Op de wipstoel De niet-gewettigde inheemse vrouw van de blanke Europeaan in Nederlands-Indië (1890-1940). Een literatuuronderzoek naar beeldvorming en werkelijkheid* (Amsterdam: Vrije Universiteit, 1995); James T. Siegel, *Fetish, Recognition, Revolution* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997).
- 19 For exceptions to this rule see for instance Rita Smith Kipp, 'Emancipating Each Other', in: Clancy-Smith and Gouda, *Domesticating the Empire*, 2II-235; Sita van Bemmelen, 'Zwart-wit versus Idem'.
- 20 The didactic truism that the acquisition of knowledge starts with the simple and evolves to the more complex provides the reasons to frame the content of the book in just such a way.
- 21 Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, *Ethiek in fragmenten. Vijfstudies over koloniaal denken en doen van Nederlanders in de Indonesische Archipel 1877-1942* (Utrecht: Hes, 1981) 201.
- 22 J.S. Fumivall, *Nether/and India. A Study Of Plural Economy* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press/Macmillan, 1944) 389.

- 23 *Volkstelling 1910. VI. Europeanen in Nederlandsch-Indie* (Batavia: Landsdrukkerij, 1936), 131. In British India the British with a population of nearly 3°0,000, in 1931 accounted for no more than 0,05 percent of the total population. In Ceylon and the Malay Peninsula British presence of respectively 40,000 and 34,000 accounted for nearly 1 percent of the total population. The French presence in French Indo-China (40.000) barely reached 0.2 percent.
- 24 C. Fasseur, 'Hoeksteen en struikelblok. Rassenonderscheid en overheidsbeleid in Nederlands-Indie', in: C. Fasseur, *De weg naar het paradijs en andere Indische geschiedenissen* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 1995) 139-171.
- 25 *Volktelling 1930. VI. Europeanen* (Batavia: Landsdrukkerij, 1936) 23, 25, 40, 68, 70, 78, 79. Dutch nationals comprised 87%, 'equalised' Indonesians 4% and other nationalities 9%. Non-Western nations included Japanese, Filipinos, Thais, and Egyptians. The term *totok* also refers to those Chinese in Indonesia, born in China. Here I will only use the term with reference to Europeans.
- 26 Jean Gelman Taylor, *The Social World of Batavia*.
- 27 A. van Marle, 'De groep der Europeanen,' *Indonesie* 5,4 (1952) 320-321.
- 28 *Volktelling 1930. VIII. Overzicht voor Nederlandsch-Indie* (Batavia: Landsdrukkerij, 1936) 29-31, 110-III.
- 29 Takashi Shiraiishi, *An Age in Motion. Popular Radicalism, 1912-1926* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1990); Robert Cribb and Colin Brown, *Modern Indonesia, A History since 1945* (London and New York: Longman, 1995) 9-13.
- 30 J. van Goor, *De Nederlandse kolonien. Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse expansie* (The Hague: Sdu, 1994) 255-296.
- 31 Of these *Pasundan Istri*, the sister organisation of the Sundanese *Pasundan* party, and *Aisyiyah*, the female counterpart of *Muhammadiyah*, were the most vocal.
- 32 *Door duisternis tot licht. Gedachten over en voor het Javaanse volk van Raden Adjeng Kartini* (jth imprint; Amsterdam: Nabrink, 1975; rst impr. 1911); EG.P. Jaquet ed., *Kartini. Brieven aan mevrouw R.M. Abendanon-Mandri en haar echtgenoot en andere documenten* (Dordrecht-Holland/Providence USA: Foris Publications, 1987); Joost Côté, translation and ed., *Letters from Kartini. An Indonesian Feminist, 1900-1904* (Clayton: Monash University/Hyland House, 1992).
- 33 Maria Grever; *Strijd tegen de stilte. [Johanna Naber (1859-1914) en de vrouwenstem in geschiedenis* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1994) 31-32. Kumari Jayawardena, *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World* (London New Delhi: Zed Books Kali for Women, 1986) 2.
- 34 J.M. Pluvier, *Overzicht van de ontwikkeling der nationalistische beweging in Indonesië in de jaren 1930 tot 1942* (The Hague-Bandung: Van Hoeve, 1953) 148-151; Kongres Wanita Indonesia ed., *Sejarah Setengah Abad Pergerakan Wanita Indonesia* {Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1978) 15-57; S.E. Wieringa, *The Politicization of Gender Relations in Indonesia. The Indonesian Women's Movement and Gerwani until the New Order State* (Ph. D. thesis University of Amsterdam: 1995) 71-87.
- 35 Said, Edward W., *Orientalism* (jd imprint; London and Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1987; First imprint 1978).

- 36 For instance, Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf 1993); Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire. Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham/London, Duke University Press, 1995); Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, eds., *Tensions of Empire. Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1997) 1-56; Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity*; for a Dutch example see Maria Grever and Bertheke Waaldijk, *Feministische Openbaarheid De Nationale Tentoonstelling voor Vrouwenarbeid in 1898* (Amsterdam: IISGIIIIV, 1998).
- 37 For a successful attempt to overcome this distinction see John Pemberton, *On the Subject of 'Java'* (Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 1994), McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference. An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 1991).
- 38 Peter van der Veer, 'The Foreign Hand. Orientalist Discourse in Sociology and Communalism', in: Carol A. Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer, eds., *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993) 23-44.
- 39 Peter van der Veer, 'Introduction', in: Peter van der Veer ed., *Conversion to Modernities: The Globalization of Christianity* (New York/London: Routledge, 1996) 1-22, esp. 14. Historians, working on India, have pursued the concept in a more structural way than Indonesianists.
- 40 For an illuminating discussion of Orientalism and gender see Mills. *Discourses of Difference*, 47-63.
- 41 Said only deals with one female author, Gertrude Bell. Mills, *Discourses of Difference*, 13. In his *Culture and Imperialism*, Said shows more interest in the role of women and the feminist movement in European imperialism.
- 42 Said, *Orientalism*, 190, 311-316.
- 43 Tropes of gender, easily recognisable to a general public, are a common instrument in depreciating others; research into this practice cannot do without research into the historical context, because in itself these tropes do not explain but merely illustrate these oppositions. See for instance Frank Costigliola, 'The Nuclear Family: Tropes of Gender and Pathology in the Western Alliance', *Journal of Diplomatic History* (1997) 163-180. For labelling in the Indonesian historical context: Frances Gouda, 'Good Mothers, Medea's or Jezebels: Feminine Imagery in Colonial and Anti-Colonial Rhetoric in the Dutch East-Indies, 19⁰⁰-1942' in: Gouda and Clancy-Smith, *Domesticating the Empire*, 236-254; F. Gouda, 'Languages of Gender and Neurosis in the Indonesian Struggle for Independence 1945-1949', *Indonesia* no. 64 (October 1997) 45-76. See also chapter 2.
- 44 Homi K. Bhabha, 'Difference, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism', in: Francis Barker et. al., eds., *The Politics of Theory* (Colchester, Eng: Essex University 1983) 194-211; Pamela Pattynama, 'Secrets and Danger: Interracial Sexuality in Louis Couperus' *The Hidden Force* and Dutch Colonial Culture around 19⁰⁰', in: Clancy-Smith and Gouda, *Domesticating the Empire*, 84-1⁰⁷. For a methodological critique of Said on the relationship between the Orient and Orientalism see also Robert Young, *White Mythologies. Writing History and the West* (London/New York: Routledge, 1990) 119-140.
- 45 'Buitengewone vergadering', *Maandblad van de Vereeniging voor Vrouwenrechten in Nederlandsch-Indie*, VI 6, March 1932, no page number.

- 46 On inter-European differences and gender see also Ann Stoler, 'Rethinking Colonial Categories', 134-161.
- 47 One of the heritages of the colonial past is the many stories on close, warm contacts with servants. It is one of the common themes in the interviews, collected by the Oral History Project Indonesia 1940-1962, *Stichting Mondelinge Geschiedenis Indonesie 1940-1962*, located at the Royal Institute of Anthropology, Leiden.
- 48 See Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, 'Colonial Ambivalencies: European Attitudes towards the Javanese Household (19^o0-1942)', in: Juliette Koning et. al., eds., *Women and Households in Indonesia. Cultural Notions and Social Practices* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 2000) 28-44.
- 49 H.E. Steinmetz, *Oorzaken der mindere welvaart. Onderzoek naar de mindere welvaart der Inlandsche bevolking van Java en Madoera. XII* (Batavia: Landsdrukkerij, 1914) 6.
- 50 One might argue that the modern Muslims, living in the cities, occupied middle-class positions. Except for political control, colonial state policies, however, did not heed to this specific group: *priyayi* groups were preferred. Deliar Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia 1900-1942* (Singapore etc.: Oxford University Press, 1973).
- 51 This is confirmed by an analysis of colonial policies with regard to female education and to the Javanese household. See for the first Sita van Bemmelen, 'Enkele aspecten van het onderwijs aan Indonesische meisjes, 1900-1940 (Unpublished M.A. thesis, Department of History, University Utrecht, 1982). For the latter: Locher-Scholten, 'Colonial Ambivalencies'.
- 52 Yik-Wei Faye Chan, 'Feminist and Scholar: The Student Days of Dr. Thung Sin Nio in the Netherlands', [Unpublished paper presented at the 'First Colloquium on the Chinese in Europe', Paris, 1995] 8.
- 53 Letters from Dutch women to their mothers prove the same. Henk Schulte Nordholt, *Het dagelijks leven in Indië 1937-1947* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 1999); Eveline Buchheim, 'Geschreven levens. Brieven van Nederlands vrouwen in Indië 1919-194^o' (Unpublished M.A. thesis, Department of Political, Social and Cultural Sciences, University of Amsterdam 1999).
- 54 For instance Van Bemmelen, 'Zwart-wit versus kleur'; Rita Smith Kipp, 'Emancipating Each Other'.
- 55 Nupur Chauduri and Margaret Strobel, eds., *Western Women and Imperialism. Complicity and Resistance* (Bloomington/Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992). See chapters 3 and 4 in this volume.
- 56 McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 6. See also the work of Stoler, Chauduri/Strobel and Gouda.
- 57 Ruth Frankenberg, *White Women. Race Matters. The Social Construction of Whiteness* (New York/London: Routledge, 1993) 231.
- 58 See also Young, *White Mythologies*.
- 59 Frankenburg, *White Women*.
- 60 For a critical Indonesian appraisal of the class of the European population group, Siegel, *Fetish, Recognition, Revolution*, 105-107.

- 61 Beara van Helsdingen-Schcevers, *Indie en Europa. Fragmenten. Causerieën en beschouwingen over het leven in Ned. Indie over de vrouw en het kind en hun belangrijke problemen*, (Leiden: Leidsche Uitgeversmaatschappij, 1929) 177.
- 62 Henk Schulte Nordholt, 'Introduction', in: Henk Schulte Nordholt ed., *Outward Appearances. Dressing State and Society in Indonesia* (Leiden: KITLV, 1997) 1-37, esp. 14
- 63 P.W. van der Veur, *Introduction to a Socio-Political Study Of Eurasians Of Indonesia* (Ithaca, 1955). For the women's organisation of the Indo-European Association (*Indo-Europeesch Verbond Vrouwen Organisatie*) see E. Locher-Scholten, 'Metzer, Cornelia Hendrika', in *Biografisch Woordenboek van Nederland* (Electronic Data, Institute for Dutch History, The Hague, 1997).
- 64 Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences Of Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990); Stephen Toulmin, *Cosmopolis. The Hidden Agenda Of Modernity* (New York: Free Press, 1990); Stuart Hall, 'Introduction', in: Stuart Hall and Bram Gieben eds., *Formations Of Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press/Open University, 1991) 1-16; Adrian Vickers ed., *Being Modern in Bali. Image and Change* (New Haven, CN: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1996) 4; Maila Stivens, 'Theorising Gender, Power and Modernity in Affluent Asia', in: Krishna Sen and Maila Stivens eds., *Gender and Power in Affluent Asia* (London: Routledge 1998) 11-13. For the plural see also Kalpana Ram and Margaret Jolly eds., *Maternalities and Modernities. Colonial and Postcolonial Experiences in Asia and the Pacific* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). An example of its recent popularity: half of the books mentioned in the Dutch Central Catalogue of Books with 'modernity' in the title, have been published in the 1990s. The term is used in all aspects and disciplines of the arts, and regards publications on both the recent and the more distant past.
- 65 For an overview of feminist critique on modernity as 'a masculinist construct' which should be gendered, see Stivens, 'Theorising', 12.
- 66 Siegel, *Fetish*, 148. Shiraishi, *Age in Motion*, 27-28; Ruth McVey, 'Building Behemoth: Indonesian Constructions of the Nation-State', in: Daniel S. Lev and Ruth McVey eds., *Making Indonesia. Essays on Modern Indonesia in Honor Of George McT. Kabin* (Ithaca, NY: Southeast Asia Program Cornell University, 1996) 12.
- 67 Henk Schulte Nordholt, 'Introduction', 14
- 68 Jean Gelman Taylor, 'Costume and Gender in Colonial Java 1800-1940', in: Schulte Nordholt, *Outward Appearances*, 8s-n6, esp. 86; Noer, *Modernist Muslim Movement*.
- 69 Vreede-de Stuers, *Emancipation*, 27-37; 160-163. Gouda, *Dutch Culture*, 75-n7. For a beautiful and clarifying example of what this meant on a private level see the novel written in Dutch by Soewarsih Djojopoespito, a modern Indonesian woman, *Buiten het gared Indonesiseheroman*. (and imprint; Utrecht-Amsterdam: De Haan-Vrij Nederland, 1946).
- 70 For that reason they also were the protagonists of a new literature. Vickers, *Being Modern*, 18; also Siegel, *Fetish*, 115-r60; Vreede-de Stuers, *Emancipation*, 51-62; Els Postel-Coster, *Het omheinde kweekbed. Machtsverhoudingen in de Minangkabauseftmilieroman* (Delft: Eburon, 1985).
- 71 Dons Jedamski, 'Mabuk Modern and Gila Barat - Progress, Modernity and Imagination. Literary Images of City Life in Colonial Indonesia', in: Poeze and Liem, *Lasting Fascinations*, 167-186.

- 72 This similarity offers another example of the complexity of the phenomenon of 'Orientalism'. The orthodox Indonesian speaker in the People's Council, opposing the female vote on religious grounds, will not easily be characterised as an 'orientalist'. **But** the appeal to religion and tradition by colonial policy makers who voiced their reluctance to modernity, exemplifies the orientalist discourse of the Said tradition in its most pure forms.
- 73 Vickers, *Being Modern*, 12.
- 74 Vickers, *Being Modern*, 9. For aspects of the origin of the modern in Indonesia discussed here see Giddens, *Consequences*, 174-q6; Takashi Shiraishi, *Age in Motion*. 27-32; Anthony Reid ed., *The Last Stand of Asian Autonomies: Responses to Modernity in the Diverse States of Southeast Asia and Korea, 1750-1900* (Houndmills New York: MacMillan, 1997); Siegel, *Fetish*, 134; Pamela Pattynama, 'Beweging op het achtererf. Dagelijks leven in de jaren twintig', in: Wim Willems et. al. eds., *Uit Indie geboren. Vier eeuwen familiegeschiedenis* (Zwolle: Waanders, 1997) 117-131; Noer, *Modernist Muslim Movement*; chapter 4 and chapter 6.
- 75 Gouda, *Dutch Culture*, 75-117; Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement*.
- 76 Kumari Jayawardena, *The White Woman's Other Burden: Western Women and South Asia During British Rule* (New York: Routledge, 1995); H.A.O. de Tollenaere, *The Politics of Divine Wisdom. Theosophy and Labour, National and Women's Movements 1875-1947* (Nijmegen: Uitgeverij Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen, 1996). British women who had learned from their Irish struggles for Home Rule and who idealised Hinduism, belonged to this group of British critical colonialists. The difference between British and Dutch women may thus be due to an older British tradition of anti-colonialism and left-wing revolutionary politics. It may also be related to the absence of a dominant Hinduism in the Netherlands Indies. Moreover, there is a time difference. British female support of nationalism was particularly strong in the early twentieth century. The progressiveness of Theosophy waned both in India and Indonesia in the 1920s and 1930s, the decades of a more explicit Indonesian nationalism.
- 77 Coté, Joost, translation and ed., *On Feminism and Nationalism. Kartini's Letters to Stella Zeehandelaar, 1899-1901* (Clayton: Monash University, 1995) 1.
- 78 Joost Coté, 'Tirto Adhi Soerjo and the Narration of Indonesian Modernity, 1909-1912: An Introduction to Two Stories', *Review of Indonesian and Malayan Affairs*, 32, no. 2 (1998) 1-43.
- 79 Sriati Mangoenkoesoemo, 'De Javaansche vrouw', in: Harry Poeze and Henk Schulte Nordholt eds., *De roep om Merdeka. Indonesische vrijheidslievende teksten uit de twintigste eeuw* (Amsterdam/Den Haag: Mets/rocvta, 1995) 41-44.
- 80 O.R., 'De Hedendaagsche Javaansche Vrouw', *De Locomotief* 22-9-1934.
- 81 *Pasoendan Istri*, the Sundanese women's organisation, the Indonesian student movement *Indonesia Muda* (New Indonesia), and the Indonesian nationalist education reformer Ki Hadjar Dewantoro agreed on this gender program, *Overzicht van de Inheemsche en Chineesch-Maleisische Pers (IPO)* 1937. no. 51, 18-12-1937, 832; 1938, no. 2; 8-1-1938, 26; 1938, no. 43, 22-10-1938, 712-713.
- 82 To paraphrase Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments*, 6.

- 83 About these ideals amongst others Razoux-Schultz-Metzer in chapter 5; Soewarsih Djojopoespiro, 'De Indonesische vrouw van morgen', *Kritiek en Opbouw*, I, 9 (IS-6-1938) 145-147. The latter was the younger sister of Soewarni Pringgodigdo, chair of the most feminist organisation *Isteri Sedar*. As Chatterjee has outlined, images of 'motherhood' made it sexually safe for women to act in the public realm. Chatterjee, *Nation and its Fragments*, 131.
- 84 Antoinette Burton, 'Introduction, The Unfinished Business of Colonial Modernities', in: Antoinette Burton ed., *Gender, Sexuality and Colonial Modernities* (London/New York: Routledge, 1999) 1-16, esp. 12.
- 85 Benedict R.O.G. Anderson, *Language and Power. Exploring Political Cultures in Indonesia* (Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 1990) 95.
- 86 Charles Tilly ed., *The Formation Of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton/New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1975); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread Of Nationalism* (London /New York: Verso, 1991. First imprint 1983).
- 87 See for an analysis of the ambivalences of the colonial state Van Doom, *De laatste eeuw van Indic. 51-79*.
- 88 To cite Homi Bhabha's famous phrase about the Western gaze of the 'mimic' colonised. Homi K. Bhabha, 'Of Mimicry and Man. The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse', in: Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location Of Culture* (London-New York: Routledge, 1994) 85-92.
- 89 Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments*, 10.
- 90 E.J.M. Heijs, *Van vreemdeling tot Nederlander. De verlening van het Nederlanderschap aan vreemdelingen (1811-1992)* (Nijmegen: Ph.D. Catholic University Nijmegen, 1995) 61-75.
- 91 Peter van der Veer, 'The Moral State, Religion, Nation and Empire in Victorian Britain and British India', in: Peter van der Veer and Hartmut Lehmann eds., *Nation and Religion. Perspectives on Asia and Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999) 15-43, esp. 18-20, 39.
- 92 For recent research on the contest around the freedom of speech see Mirjam Maters, *Van zachte wenk tot harde hand Persvrijheid en persbreidel in Nederlands-Indie, 1906-1942* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1998).
- 93 Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments*, 3-13.
- 94 For the complicated patterns of public and private for women and women's issues in colonial modernity in India see also Mrinalini Sinha, 'The Lineage of the 'Indian' Modern. Rhetoric, Agency and the Sarda Act in Late Colonial India', in: Antoinette Burton ed, *Gender, Sexuality and Colonial Modernities* (London/New York: Routledge, 1999) 207-221.

II Female Labour in Twentieth-Century Colonial Java: European Notions - Indonesian Practices

INTRODUCTION

The apostle Peter had already described women as the 'weaker vessel' in his Biblical letters (I Peter 3:7). His image of women as the weaker sex was of considerable influence on nineteenth-century labour legislation with regard to **women in Europe. For its own sake this 'weaker vessel' was not allowed to work** outside the home or only to a limited extent. This would not only be for the women's own well-being, but also for that of their families. Christian and socialist ideas of protecting the weak fitted in remarkably well with the ideology of the family, as it developed in the industrialised world of the nineteenth century.

To what extent were these Western notions exported when in the twentieth century the first social legislation was introduced in the Netherlands Indies? Were these ideas responsible for the government's interference with female labour here too, or did the Europeans, on crossing the equator, discard their own norms and values, using the tropics as a pretext for a change in their opinions? Both approaches were possible, as the official debates on female night labour of the mid-twenties illustrated. **Two opinions emerged. First, a woman's place was in the home and she should seek employment only in dire (economic) circumstances. The second opinion held that – contrary to women in the Western world - Indonesian women were not bound to their home. They used to work not out of economic necessity, but in accordance with Javanese cultural patterns, or *adat*.**

How did these gender perceptions influence the first colonial social legislation for women? What was their origin and how did they relate to women's work practices in rural Java? **Answers to these questions can offer a clarifying view of colonial knowledge production about women from the Indonesian peasant class (*tani*) and of gender, class and race relations in the Indies. Official colonial reports on Indonesian rural labour in the 1920s and 1930s may serve as contrary evidence as to what extent these European notions corresponded to Indonesian 'realities',**

EUROPEAN NOTIONS

In 1925 the proto-parliament of the Netherlands Indies, the People's Council, **discussed a bill on the abolition, or rather regulation of women's night labour in industry.** The council voiced two opinions. At the debates in the all-male People's Council' those who spoke in favour of the measure had undeniably been inspired by opinions on the subject voiced earlier in the Netherlands. They shared the views of the abolitionists of female night labour expressed in 1889.' The members, on the other hand, who opposed the bill, were guided by **their experiences in the colony.**

According to the first Western' viewpoint - held not only by Europeans, but also by progressive Indonesian members of the People's Council - Indonesian women belonged to the weaker sex, like Dutch women. **When the government acts in the area of social legislation, it stands to reason that it will first of all try to protect the physically and economically weaker categories of workers - women and children',** read the explanatory memorandum } **Night labour was, after all, more exhausting than day labour, and women were supposedly more sensitive than men to the hardships of night labour.**

Moreover, a woman's place was supposed to be with her family, whether in the Indies or in Europe. Her night labour was believed to lead to the neglect of her husband and children, and of babies in particular. Therefore, night labour had to be restricted not only for the woman's own sake, but for the benefit of 'future generations'. The socialist J.E. Stokvis, member of the Indies Social Democratic Party (*Indische Sociaal-Democratische Party*) pointed out that social legislation had been necessary everywhere in order to preserve the family. Achmad Djajadiningrat, regent of Batavia and member of the Netherlands Indies Liberal Alliance (*Nederlandsch-Indische Vrijzinnige Bond*), also put the family first. After all, the aim of social legislation was not only to improve labour conditions and wages, but also to raise the standard of family life, to **improve moral and spiritual well-being, housing and other aspects of workers' lives. Married women were thus expected to work only out of economic necessity.** Djajadiningrat cited the prosperous Preanger region as an example: 'If the **economic conditions are favourable, here too the men will let the women work** as little as possible, because they, too, like pretty hands and a pretty complexion'.⁵ This line of reasoning had been heard before, in the 1889 discussions in the Netherlands. Western views of women prevailed among the supporters of **abolition. The woman was the weaker sex, her place was in the home and she would seek outside employment only if forced to by necessity.**

The arguments of the anti-abolition forces were quite different. These opponents were found mostly among employers in the large agricultural industries such as the Java Sugar Employers Federation (*Java Suiker Werkgeversbond* or JSWB) and the Netherlands Indies Employers Association (*Indische Ondernemersbondt.*" Their arguments hardly concealed their self interests. Female night labour was particularly common in the sugar, tea, and coffee factories. In general, a considerable portion of the labour force in European agriculture **was made up of women: 25 percent on sugar estates and 45 percent on the remaining European estates in Java, not including the category of casual coolies.**"

Opponents stressed the completely different nature of Eastern society and **Eastern women, - an essentialising 'Orientalist' position.**" **According to their views female night labour in Java was, 'as in every Eastern society, considered in principle to be on a par with that of male labour and a perfectly natural institution?** The East differed from the West, where women were regarded as unsuited or not destined for manual labour by nature. According to the **representative of the Indies Employers Association, the 'native man' in the Netherlands Indies could not adequately provide for his family. This brought in the economic argument after all. But more importantly, Indonesian men also lacked the 'serious desire' to do so. Therefore, husband, wife and children each had to provide for themselves.**¹⁰ Or, in the words of another European employers' spokesman: **female labour was not an economic necessity, but 'adat', a traditional cultural pattern. For that reason, it was argued, the government should refrain from interfering.**"

Hence, according to these 'Orientalising' conservatives, Eastern women were fundamentally different from their Western counterparts. Speaking from their own class position and ill-informed about European labour patterns, they seemed to forget that European women of other classes had been working for ages as well." They, moreover, overlooked the Western idea of labour as an adaptable and changeable economic phenomenon. Talking about female rural labour in terms of nature (a 'perfectly natural institution'), they essentialised it and rendered it untouchable. Those who were active in the economy thus - ironically - appealed to cultural traditions, whereas the more idealistic members of the People's Council chose the economy as a starting point. This respect for *adat* and nature suited the employers' self-interests extremely well, as it served to continue and legitimise the existing situation.

The core of the antithesis between the two notions of female gender was the **view of the role and place of Javanese peasant women inside and outside the family.** This determined the wide range of opinions regarding their labour. Yet,

it should be noted that this discourse on gender roles was constructed in close connection with economic policies. Besides its social and psychological functions, labour always serves economic purposes: to provide for a living, whether in a strict or broader sense." The question therefore, was not whether Javanese women used to be or should be at home, as argued during the People's Council's debates, but firstly, what the place of female labour was within the Javanese (and colonial) rural economy, and secondly, if and to what extent *adat* determined a gender division of rural labour. The most likely answer as to whether Javanese peasant women worked out of economic necessity or because of *adat*, is a combination of the two. Female labour in agrarian Java -- where the standard of living was low - was born of economic necessity and had developed into a 'perfectly natural institution', expressed and legitimised in images and rituals. Before testing this hypothesis with figures from the period between the two World Wars, it is relevant to look more closely at the origins of the debates on this modern social policy in a colonial context and to analyse to what extent these Western and Orientalist notions determined the resulting legislation.

FEMALE NIGHT LABOUR IN THE NETHERLANDS INDIES

The views on female night labour mentioned above turned out to be only partially relevant to the ultimate legislation that was adopted. Although the Western view had formed the stimulus for the bill, it was not consistently applied. The government of the Netherlands Indies proved susceptible to economic 'realities', which left the 'Orientalists' plenty of room to move. This is apparent both in the way in which the bill was adopted and from the content itself

The proposal was the first public action taken by the newly founded Labour Office (*Kantoor van Arbeid*) of the Department of Justice. It was to prepare social legislation and usher it through the People's Council. With this decree of 1925, the Netherlands Indies were certainly not as advanced as other colonies. The British colonial government of India had already taken a similar measure in 1891." Not until 1918 did a social policy for workers attract any attention in the Indies. Governor-General, JP. van Limburg Stirum ('9,6-'92') was not insensitive to the demands of the nationalist movement in this matter. After the first attempts to design social legislation had failed because of lack of data, the Labour Office had been given the task of collecting the missing information in 1921.

The bill was also the result of international pressure. In '922 the Netherlands had signed one of the first conventions of the International Labour Office (ILO) in Geneva concerning the prohibition of child labour and female night

labour in industry, in which colonies were included but also acknowledged as **exceptional cases. A subsequent request from Geneva for information on the subject** from the Netherlands and its colonies stimulated the process of legislation in the Indies.

The bill was drafted after, and under the influence of, a survey carried out among government officials and employers' federations. As the head of the Labour Office/*Kantoor van Arbeid* had been pessimistic about the possibilities of implementing the ILO treaty, he had first asked for their opinions.^c **The European and Indonesian trade unions were not consulted and neither were the Indonesian women's organisations. The government did not seek the latter's advice** in this matter, probably because they represented the educated female elite who were not very connected to the women of the lowest classes working in the sugar industry for instance. Before the early '930s, these women's organisations were not deeply interested in socio-economic problems of these women.⁶ Only the magazine *Sedio Tomo* would dedicate an article to the new legislation. The anonymous male writer applauded it as important for both women and unemployed men, partly because it would prevent women from going out at night and indulging in 'lascivious pastimes' instead of work.⁷ **The subject remained a colonial topic, reaching Indonesians who were members of the People's Council only. It attracted little attention outside this assembly.**

The result of the survey showed that female night labour was particularly common at harvest time in the sugar, cassava, fibre and (palm) oil industries, in salt production in Madura, and less frequently (in cases of an abundant harvest) in the coffee and tea factories." **In the sugar industry in particular, there were no men to be found for certain jobs in certain regions. Hence, the Java Sugar Employers Federation and the Indies Employers Association considered female night labour indispensable. Government officials were on the whole more positive about the possibilities of abolishing night labour. No figures were given to support the arguments, however; and jobs in the sugar industry in which women were indispensable were not mentioned by name. All in all, the survey could not claim to be very thorough.**⁹

But these surveys were used in drafting the legislation. Female labour in closed workspaces (as the bill defined 'industry') was forbidden from 10 P.M. until 5 A.M. An exception was made for all industries in which female labour **was common on a large scale such as the sugar factories during the grinding period, the fibre, cassava flour and palm oil factories, and the government salt factories in Madura. The managers of these factories, however, were obliged quarterly to provide the Labour Office (KvA) with details of working hours and wages when harvest time was over. Moreover, by issuing special licences,**

the Labour Office could allow female night labour during certain periods in the tea, coffee and fireworks factories, in batik workshops and other unspecified industries.:"

Thus, the bill was a compromise between Western opinions about a woman's place and the economic demands of employers, with large concessions to the latter who justified their needs for female labour by referring to *adat*. The night was actually designated as four hours shorter here than in Europe. All industries which already used female night labour were exempted from the measure in advance or by means of a special licence. As had earlier been the case in the Netherlands, social legislation had to fit in with, and be adapted to, the demands of industry. Not unjustly, the head of the Labour Office added this comment to his proposal: 'In fact it restricts female labour to such a small degree that opposition is very unlikely'."

Not even in the final version of the decree was it possible to express more consistently the Western principles which had led to the measure after all. When the People's Council dealt with the matter, amendments in that vein (extension of the night by 1 1/2 hours, restriction of exemption to 60 days) - which had been suggested by the socialist Stokvis - were rejected upon governmental advice. Restriction of the exemption was also strongly opposed by the spokesman of the Java Sugar Employers Federation, because the sugar growing season often lasted more than twice as long as the period proposed, and because it involved some 10,000 women. As they worked in shifts, a ban on night labour would also mean an end to their daytime jobs. The proposal was accepted by the People's Council with only Stokvis opposing. It took effect on March 1, 1926.²² The government abolished female night labour at its own salt factories in Madura, on October 1, 1927.

In the events that followed, practice once again proved stronger than legislation; the economy was more influential in diminishing women's night labour than any opinion. The decrease in the number of licences issued towards the end of the 1920s was not a matter of principle, but of practice: new sorting machines in the tea factories diminished the need of female night labour. At the same time, the number of sugar factories using female night labour increased from 117 to 126. This number was not to diminish dramatically until the crisis of the '30s, when many sugar factories closed down: in 1936 only 22 out of a total of 37 remaining factories still employed women at night. When the economy in the Indies improved, this number rose back up to 53 out of 80 factories in 1938.²³

On the one hand the worldwide economic crisis stimulated a reduction of female night labour in the sugar industry, while on the other hand it also urged

the government to postpone its plans for stricter measures in this respect. In the 1930s there was no money either to replace the permanent dispensation (through licenses), or for a ban on female night labour in the batik workshops. The income of the Labour Office had been too drastically reduced to enable the introduction and inspection of these measures.

Although Western views of a woman's place were a source of inspiration at the beginning of social legislation in the Netherlands Indies, no further progress was made. Both the Western and the 'Orientalist' school of thought were satisfied with the compromise embodied by the decree. In the crisis-ridden '930s, social policy had to give way to economic reality even more so than in the '920s. The fact that this did not displease the 'Orientalists' seems less important. What was decisive in the end was not this viewpoint but the economy.

THE INDONESIAN PRACTICE:

FIGURES FROM THE 1920S AND 1930S

To what extent European notions about women with paid work corroborated with Indonesian reality can be seen from figures produced by surveys of indigenous labour in the '920s and '930s. As these figures were not published until after the debate on female night labour in the People's Council, the government was able to determine its labour policy, unhampered by a surplus of information.

The surveys considered were:

- 1 The analyses of indigenous agriculture in Java by the *Landbouwvoorlichtingsdienst* (Agricultural Information Service);
- 2 The 1930 census of the Netherlands Indies;
- 3 The '939-'940 Coolie Budget Survey in Java's, concerning income and expenditure of working-class families on Western estates.

On the basis of this material, and other information if necessary, it is possible to verify whether a large number of women were indeed involved in the **production process, and if so, whether this was determined by economic necessity** or by indigenous cultural patterns or by a mixture of the two.

ANALYSES OF INDIGENOUS AGRICULTURE

In order to gain more insight into the working methods and results of Javanese agriculture, the Agricultural Information Service (*Landbouwvoorlichtingsdienst*) carried out various studies in the 1920s. Rural activities in a number of villages, mostly in East Java, were observed over several monsoon seasons and years; items such as the number of working hours per product per hectare for



Cutting and transporting rice, no year (Private).

men, women, and children, as well as the remuneration, selling prices, and profits were recorded." These analyses offer documented proof in figures of the important role of women in *sawah* or wet-rice cultivation on flooded fields, as the Europeans had already observed in the nineteenth century." The situation in dry-rice cultivation was similar. On average, 50 to 80 percent of the time spent on the production of rice per hectare was by women (see Appendix I). After all women had the most labour-intensive jobs: planting, weeding and the gathering of the rice ears one by one.

Within rice cultivation, a fairly strict, if not rigid, division of labour according to gender was observed. As mentioned, women did the planting, weeding and harvesting. Men prepared the fields by tilling them with hoes and harrows, and they maintained the irrigation systems and *bibit* fields (young rice plants). There were many variations on this theme: weeding could be a male or a female activity according to the region and the season. Islamic students of a *pesantren* (Islamic school) sometimes agreed to cultivate a piece of land, in order to pay their tutor in crops that they harvested themselves. During the crisis of the 1930s in some regions of West Java, men are said to have taken over the harvesting from women." However, according to the agricultural analyses, on average two thirds of the total working hours in rice cultivation was still performed by women (Appendix I).

In the cultivation of rice, the gendered division of labour was strongly influenced by *byadat*, and particularly by Javanese religious traditions. The adoration of the rice goddess - called Dewi Sri (in Javanese) or Nyi Pohaci (in Sundanese) - demanded female hands and labour-intensive harvesting. Male hands were too 'hot' (*pat/as*), which were believed to put the rice goddess in an unfavourable mood.³⁰ Rice was supposed to have a female soul that should be bound to it. All customs surrounding rice cultivation were geared towards this purpose. Only then could a good harvest and a permanent quality of the rice be guaranteed.³⁰ The prescribed labour division was thus part of traditional agrarian technology, intended, just like modern techniques, to increase crop production.³¹ Thus – in addition to its religious significance - the labour division of labour served an economic purpose.

The gendered division of labour had other economic functions as well: it engaged the largest possible labour force in a labour-intensive cultivation and (re)distributed scarce means within the village community. It also fixed the practical indispensability of women's labour. Before the economic crisis of 1885, Java had suffered more from a shortage than from an abundance of labour. All available hands were used, more so because, due to the different maturing times and varying lengths of its ears, the rice had to be individually cut with the *ani-ani* (rice knife); only particular types of rice could be harvested with a sick-

Sortingpadi, no year (KITLV, Leiden).



le.³² Moreover, men were often already involved in the harvest by processing the straw and transporting the crop.

Harvesting by women also had another important economic function: the (re)distribution of means. The many women involved in this were rewarded with a share of the crop. This is why harvesting has been called one of the 'welfare institutions' of rural Java.³³ This share of the harvest formed a large, if not the largest, part of the family income. > Whether it was earned by the richer women (the *kecukupan*, those who possess just enough) or by the poorer women (the *kekurangan*, those who have too little) is not relevant; in both cases their labour served economic purposes.

In other words, in rice cultivation, religious rules and economic functions went hand-in-hand. In the cultivation of *polowijo* - secondary crops, sowed or planted after the rice had been harvested, and crops on dry land - *adat* played no part. Here the division of labour had only an economic motive. This type of cultivation was less labour-intensive and had no tasks prescribed exclusively for women. Generally, in the planting, weeding, and harvesting of *polowijo*, women were in the minority (see Appendix I). The number of female labourers was also influenced by employment of men elsewhere. Thus the women in the *desa* (village) of Ngulang (Kediri) picked peanuts during the 1927 East monsoon, when men were earning money in the European sugar industry. The harvesting during the West monsoon was done by men.^c

So the number of female labourers was only remarkably higher than men's labour in rice cultivation. Even if we combine the average number of hours for female labour for *polowijo* and rice (Appendix I), on average it turns out to equal the number of hours of male labour, varying from 42 percent to 57 percent of the total amount of labour hours. And only in wet-rice cultivation was this pattern of labour culturally defined. But also here economic motives were paramount; *adat* and the economy went hand-in-hand. In the religious precepts all aspects of life were united. It would go too far to ascribe an economic origin to a religious practice on the grounds of its economic function. Yet, we can be certain that the religious practice of the division of labour in rice cultivation supported and maintained certain economic choices of the community concerned.

The division of labour in rice cultivation proved that both the Western and the 'Orientalist' views were correct. Women worked out of economic necessity but their labour was motivated and legitimated by *adat*. At first glance, rice cultivation seemed to support the 'Orientalist' perceptions in particular. And since Orientalist conservatives rarely were thorough investigators, their opinion on women's labour in general was certainly based on their observation of the role

of women in rice cultivation. After all this had long attracted European attention for its colourful beauty and basic food production.

THE CENSUS OF 1930

The census of September/October 1930 did not directly confirm these figures on the important role of women in indigenous agriculture. Only 23 percent of the total work force in Java and Madura actively involved in agriculture were **women.**³⁶ **The labour in indigenous agriculture was invisible, as the editors of the census implicitly acknowledged.**

The census considered professionals only those workers who did their job **'as a rule' and in order to earn or contribute towards a living, either by producing for themselves, or by making money)?** Therefore the paddy harvesters, **who received a share of the rice, were not regarded to be agricultural workers.** The same was true for those women who helped their husbands with agricultural duties. In general, the census takers, young indigenous civil servants, had **run into trouble to find out whether married women worked 'as a rule'.** Moreover, much of the agricultural work was done by *buruh tani*, the landless rural **labourers and casual coolies, who were categorised under the 'insufficiently described professions'.** In Java and Madura women made up almost 41 percent of this category. In other words, this figure also concealed much of the agricultural labour done by women)

Hence, the statistics of the census on female labour were not very reliable. It had also been hard to convince the Indonesian census takers that the work of married women should be regarded as a profession. According to the census **editors, in Indonesian society women's incomes were often considered complementary.** This statement reveals some of the problems experienced in the collection and interpretation of the data.

Instructions to count married women's labour as a profession had led to uneven results. In several regencies in Central and East Java and in the Principalities of Central Java (Yogyakarta and Surakarta), the figures for female labour were higher than average. This was due to the fact that here the wives of agricultural labourers and *buruh tani* had been included in the agricultural category)⁹ Another disadvantage was that information on the kinds of work was published only per province (West, Central and East Java, Yogyakarta and Surakarta), while overall figures were published per regency. This makes it **impossible to explain the great differences between the various regencies.** Unfortunately, the regency data seem to have disappeared for good, so that the published figures will have to suffice.^f Although there is thus every reason to

read these figures with necessary reservations, it does seem sensible to find out what they can tell us about female labour and the relation of this labour with contemporary colonial gender perceptions.

In Java and Madura, which were combined in the census, women formed a large part of the working force: 43.5 percent (in the Netherlands, never known for its high percentage of women with paid work, the census of 1930 counted only 24 percent)." There appeared to be great regional differences: West Java showed only 22.5 percent women with paid employment, while Surakarta scored the highest percentage, 45.6 percent. Of the total number of women in Java and Madura in 1936 (irrespective of age) 22.7 percent had a profession (in the Netherlands, the figure was 19.2 percent). Once again, the different parts of Java show a variable picture: in West Java 12.9 percent of women had paid employment, while in Surakarta it was 42.1 percent. Even within a regency the figures could vary considerably from district to district: from 6.5 percent (Krawang, West Java) and more than 8 percent (Wonosobo, Central Java, and Lamongan, East Java) to 25.5 percent, 43.8 percent and 57.5 percent (Ciamis in West Java, Kraksaan in Central Java and Grobogan in East Java respectively).

These differences were determined mostly by the percentage of married women with paid employment. Among all women with paid employment, they prevailed everywhere except in West Java (41.9 percent versus Surakarta 65.2 percent). These same regional patterns were visible in other figures: as a proportion of all married women, the group with paid employment was the smallest in West Java (12.4 percent) and the largest in Yogyakarta (56.5 percent) and Surakarta (65.2 percent). The average for Java as a whole was 29.3 percent. Again, there were considerable differences per regency: from 4 percent in Krawang (West Java) to 90.6 percent in Sragen (Surakarta). The percentage of women with paid employment among single women (which included divorcees and widows) showed a more stable pattern, varying from 13.2 percent (West Java) to 25.4 percent (Surakarta). So even here, Surakarta had the highest figures. **Again there were considerable differences between regencies for this category of single women: 8.6 percent in Jatinegara (Meester Cornelis, West Java), 33 percent in Klaten (Surakarta).**

How to explain the differences between the two extremes of West Java and the Principalities, which apparently continue to the present day?⁴ Were they economically determined? Was there, in connection with this labour pattern, also a difference between the two areas in perceptions of and ideas about women's labour? Even if the figures of the Principalities regarding women's labour in agricultural sector were more complete than those from West Java,

which might render the extremes more salient, the figures vary so widely in every respect that we can actually speak of a real difference.

The census does not show any direct causes for the differences. In view of **the economic factor, one could assume a correlation between population density** and female labour. After all, West Java with its 244 inhabitants per square kilometer was among the least densely populated areas of Java, whereas Surakarta with 425 inhabitants per square kilometer was among its most densely populated regions. However, a comparison of the figures per regency disproves this hypothesis. Generally speaking, the regencies with low female labour figures belonged to the less densely populated areas of the region. But they did not belong to the least densely populated areas, whereas regencies with a high percentage of female labour did not necessarily have a high population density, neither per km^2 , nor per km^2 of arable land.

However, one might point out the fact that, in general, West Java was more prosperous than the Principalities. According to the Coolie Budget Survey (see below), land ownership in the areas around the agricultural estates in West-Jawas, **on average, more extensive than in Yogyakarta and Surakarta.** In the feudal Principalities the relationship between *tani* and land had broken up earlier than elsewhere in Java when, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, land was rented to Europeans. The labour surplus this created forced workers to find other sources of income and other kinds of labour outside the agricultural sector. **Because the women in this core area of Java had traditionally played an important part in the cultivation of rice, they may have made the transition to other economic sectors more easily to enable them to provide for their families; consequently paid labour for them was perhaps just as much a matter of course as it was for the men.**

Women's labour figures were highest in those places where labour was the **most diverse, in other words where large numbers of workers worked outside** the indigenous agricultural sector." This was the case for men as well as for women. Surakarta indeed had a higher percentage of women employed in the agricultural and trade sectors than West Java. Yogyakarta had a smaller number of women working in the agricultural sector, but a large number of women in trade and industry. **Nearly two-thirds of the total number of women with paid work were employed in these two sectors, whereas in West Java this was no more than one-quarter.**

The differences in female labour percentages between the regions did **indeed seem to have an economic basis, especially in the loosening of the bond** between the farmer and his land in the Principalities, and the resulting increase **in labour specialisation.** **The increase in labour specialisation and the impor-**

tant role of women in the labour force may also have been caused by the large number of services required by the Principalities' courts, which demanded **specialisation and intensification of labour**.⁴⁶ **To what extent these economic differences were reflected in the different views on female labour in the regions,** and to what extent these, in turn, influenced male labour, is difficult to trace on the basis of the material available. As far as I know, there is neither historical nor anthropological information on this subject.

The information produced by the census showed that in some regencies 'typical female professions' had high percentages of female labourers. In Bantul (Yogyakarta) and Panarukan (East Java) this was the *batik* industry; in Trenggalek (East Java), where only a small number of male workers were employed, the bamboo craft created a relatively large number of jobs for women. In Java and Madura as a whole, some professions were almost completely or to a large extent female: the textile industry (92 percent), woodwork and bamboo craft and the trade in foods and luxuries such as sweets (72 percent), the preparation of those foods and luxuries (68 percent), the mixed retail trade (54 percent), and the clothing industry (51 percent). In some regencies in Central and East Java, where the main industry was textiles (*batik*), as much as 99 percent of this work was performed by women.⁴⁹

Does this prevalence of 'typical female professions' point towards *adat* as the decisive factor in the gendering of labour divisions? The division of labour between married and single women does not confirm this hypothesis. In the following domains the majority of women were married: in the textile industry (71.4 percent), in woodwork and bamboo craft (65.5 percent), in the preparation of foods and luxuries (67.8 percent), in the trade of these items and in the clothing industry (66.1 percent).⁵⁰ So the 'typical female professions' were dominated by married women. Most of these activities came under the heading of 'home industry'. This kind of work could be more easily combined with looking after the children. Recent anthropological research has shown how **Javanese women incorporate various forms of retail trade and the preparation of foods and luxuries into their households, family situations and life cycles.** Women, therefore, chose these types of labour for mostly practical reasons.

Apart from these 'female professions', the census figures revealed more regional differences than particular patterns. Thus, there appears to be no connection between the degree in which a regency depended on agriculture, and **the percentages of women employed in that sector. In those regencies where more than 70 percent of the working population was employed in indigenous agriculture, women held 7.9 percent to 52.8 percent of all jobs in that sector.** The invisible female workers mentioned earlier might have played a part in

this. In sugar and other European estate agriculture there was no correlation between the importance of an industry for a region - as expressed in the percentage of the working population employed in it - and the percentage of women in that industry's work force.⁵²

From all this information we may conclude that Javanese women sought **employment for economic reasons, i.e., to provide for their family. As with men, the supply of female labour depended on women's income needs, their appreciation of the work offered, as well as the availability of other income generating opportunities.** For example, if home produce (the coconut) provided **sufficient income, then the indigenous population had no desire to work on European sugar estates.** This explains the great differences in labour patterns for both men and women from regency to regency.

The figures of the '930 census lead to the following conclusions:

- 1 There was no general picture of female labour in Java. Local figures varied too much, especially with regard to married women with paid employment. Therefore, the 'Orientalist' view of female labour as a general behaviour **pattern and a 'perfectly natural institution', was, at the very least, a gross generalisation.**
- 2 To a large extent this view was formed by what Europeans had observed in Yogyakarta and Surakarta, where female labour played a very important **role. From a historiographic point of view it is interesting to consider to what extent the Principalities determined and distorted the European view of Javanese society in other areas.**
- 3 **Although the census can only give us implicit information, it is clear that in the case of female labour, economic motives were more important than adat. However, it may be safely assumed that these economic motives had led to a strong 'tradition' of female labour and female professions.**

THE COOLIE BUDGET SURVEY IN JAVA '939-'940

For a small portion of all the women with paid employment - the five percent **who in that period found work in European estate agriculture - more specific information on labour and wages can be found in the report of the Coolie Budget Survey carried out in Java from '939 to '940.** The purpose of this survey, carried out by a special branch of the Central Bureau of Statistics (*Centraal Kantoor voor de Statistiek*) was to establish a minimum standard of living **for labourers in Java on which the colonial government was to base its wage policy - after a twenty-year debate on the subject.** To this end, the details of **labour and wages, income, expenditure and nutrition of 1555 working families**



Planting sugar cane for the sugar factory Ketanen in 1916 (KITLV, Leiden),

on twenty estates were recorded daily for thirty days. **In** the survey, three tea, three coffee, six rubber, two tobacco and four sugar estates were involved as well as two forest ranges and for comparison, the same details were collected from 390 *tani* (peasant) families in the surrounding area. As no women were employed in the forest ranges, I shall not discuss the latter. The working-class families were categorised first according to their involvement with the estate - whether they were living on or off the premises - and then according to their jobs. Thus there were families of garden labourers, factory workers, and top labourers (*mandur* and *tukang*).⁵⁴

In view of the survey's aim, to render a quick budget analysis, the material shows a number of restrictions regarding the data. The twenty estates formed a reasonable representation of the numerical strength of estate agriculture, of which in the 1930s rubber was by far the most important (44 percent), followed by coffee and tea. However, twenty estates out of a total of 1394 in Java alone was a very small sample (less than 1.5 percent). The estates were selected in consultation with employers' organisations; therefore, it remains questionable to what extent they were representative. **In** view of the large regional differences in labour patterns, they were certainly not representative of Java as a whole.⁵⁵

The families that took part in the survey had been selected after consultations with local government officials. In terms of family size and land owner-

