



## ***Ke PIM Yuk!:* Mall Culture, Coloniality and Classification in Pondok Indah Mall**

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# Introduction

*“Fortress-like mansions decorated with satellite dishes and surrounded by spiked fences of glass and metal competed with one another for attention. Guards stood at gates [...]. Streets were smooth, silent, lined by tall palms and manicured like botanical gardens. Rows of BMWs and Mercedes were parked in the driveways, polished by their chauffeurs. [...] Families often own at least three other houses and were sometimes away in New York, London, Australia or Paris, staying at their other houses. Servants were left to clean and occupy the 24 rooms of their Pondok Indah house [...].” (Low et al. 277)*

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My first memories of childhood are of Jakarta, set in its vibrant and glimmering shopping malls, and by default, when I come home, new memories are always made within the same walls. When Indonesia is discussed, locals and foreigners alike seem to always highlight our warm culture; friendship, family, celebration, education, politics, religion, art, food, history, marriage, coffee and tea. In Jakarta, these aspects of our heritage can all be practiced in one place, and many often do. In an overpopulated and polluted city where open public spaces with clean air is next to nonexistent, it is no wonder that the glassed and marbled shopping malls are a pervasive part of the Jakartan lifestyle. In fact, it is such a large industry, that shopping malls dominate the city's land as there are 170 malls in Jakarta as of 2014 alone (Kasdiono).

Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia, located in the heart of the Java island, is the hub of mainstream (upper) middle-class culture. After the collapse of the Mataram Empire, the longest lasting Javanese dynasty, the Dutch United East Indies Company (*Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*) became the dominant economic and political power in eighteenth-century Java. Batavia, now Jakarta, was the center of the Dutch colonial rule as the Governor-General of the colonial administration was based in Batavia (Fasseur 13). When nationalism rose in early twentieth-century Indonesia, the Japanese occupied the Dutch

Indies in 1942 with the intention of oil exploitation in Indonesia, and on 17 August 1945, Soekarno and Hatta, the first president and vice-president of Indonesia, proclaimed the independence of the nation (Indonesia Investments). Thus, the capital, due to its history, is painted to be the centre of Indonesia's economic activity. In a country where, as of 2019, 25.1 million citizens live below the poverty line (World Bank), capitalist and high-consumerist spaces like shopping malls are strictly exclusive to the systemically elite, which I will unpack further in my analysis.

In Indonesian history, the emergence of shopping malls and mall culture has been synonymous with progress and a symbol of the city's wealth. The first shopping center to open in Jakarta, Sarinah Mall, was also the first skyscraper in Indonesia (Fig. 1). Inaugurated by Sukarno in 1962 (Sidiq), it was famous for Indonesia's first escalators, electronic cash registers, and air-conditioned space (Rimmer and Dick 179). Moreover, it was built by the Obayashi Corporation, one of five major Japanese construction companies, with war reparation funds from the Japanese Government (Gunawan S.). Sarinah, much like many other Indonesian malls, stood as a symbol of modernity, progress, and a constant attempt at higher status after gaining independence from colonial powers and becoming a nation, while acting as a reminder of the power structures that have been at work and are still at work within the country.



Figure 1: Sarinah Mall, 1980 (Haryanti)

Since the opening of Sarinah, the shopping mall occupancy rate in Jakarta rose to approximately 90% in 2019 (Eloksari). Going to the mall has become a lifestyle due to the growing urban middle class and consumer habits. According to a survey I conducted, which will be further explained in my methodology, visitors can spend up to ten hours at the mall. The Pondok Indah Malls, or more commonly referred to as PIM by the locals, were built by the Pondok Indah Group and consists of three malls; PIM 1 opened in 1991, PIM 2 opened in 2005, and PIM 3 (or Street Gallery) opened in 2013 (Fig. 2). The large shopping complexes are connected through ‘skywalks’, which allow visitors to explore all three malls without exiting a building, and are also connected to InterContinental Hotel and Pondok Indah Water Park. The title of this research, *Ke PIM Yuk!*, directly translates to “let’s go to PIM!”, a saying that is widely recognized by the locals of South Jakarta and its surrounding area, which is a testament to the enthusiasm and the frequency with which it is said.



Figure 2: Pondok Indah 'Town Center' (Alexander)

With their motto “Commitment to Excellence”, Pondok Indah Group is owned by PT Metropolitan Kentjana Tbk. Located in Pondok Indah<sup>1</sup>, a luxurious residential area dubbed the Malibu of Jakarta, PIM was built by the Murdaya family in the 1970s. The Murdaya family is a Chinese-Indonesian family, infamous for their wealth, as well as their corruption, political controversies and ecological scandals. This is reflected in Pondok Indah’s history, as farmers who protected the area as a source of irrigation agriculture “were paid low compensation rates for their land and forced to leave” (Low et al. 277). Regardless, Pondok Indah became a home for many Indonesian elites and expatriates, who were especially enticed by its proximity to the Jakarta Intercultural School, the Pondok Indah Country Club, and the golf course that surrounds the area “like a protective shield filtering out Jakarta’s air pollution—mostly caused by the carbon monoxide fumes from the cars owned by the rich”

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<sup>1</sup> Translates to ‘Beautiful Resort’.

(Low et al. 277). The houses were mostly mansions—each one more unaffordable and opulent than the last—and had enough room for chauffeurs, nannies and maids, who would often come with employers to assist with their shopping at the mall. Today, the area is much more densely populated due to overpopulation, has rough roads due to the government's neglect towards flooding, and the Greek pillars and Roman statues lining the mansions are more gaudy than grand. Nonetheless, the high status of Pondok Indah remains imprinted on Jakartans' subconscious and its malls are still considered a hub for the elite, the creative, the youth, the affluent, the 'cool' and the 'in-the-know' until today.

As a Javanese-Indonesian raised in South Jakarta myself, the purpose of this research is to deconstruct how the Jakartan (upper) middle-class spend their leisure time, and what deeper, cultural meanings their activities both produce and reproduce. Thus, not to 'Other'—as thought of by Edward Said in his book, *Orientalism*, published in 1978—a community of people that are underrepresented in the Western European academic setting, but to shed light on how people often inhabit space without minding its implications in this overstimulated era, whether regarding race or otherwise. Moreover, I also aim to explore how inhabiting space in one specific corner of the world is often connected to other nations and cultures as their histories intertwine. Nevertheless, keep in mind that my research has its own limitations due to my lack of experience outside of Java, my Westernized education and my position as a middle-classed cisgendered, able-bodied and multiracial woman. It is also incredibly vital to note that many of the experiences and analyses of culture that take place in this research will be focused on Java as a colonized space, and therefore does not speak for the Indonesian experience as a whole.

Therefore, within the context of (neo-)colonial and urban studies, I will analyse how PIM uses space to exclude specific groups of people through classification, and how this

exclusionary practice is situated in colonial systems. Thus, the research question arises, “How does the coloniality of the Pondok Indah Malls in South Jakarta, Indonesia, reinforce practices of classification?” To answer this question, I will make use of three main theoretical concepts; Henri Lefebvre’s definitions of ‘space’ and its modes of production, Pierre Bourdieu’s conceptualization of ‘classification’, and Walter Mignolo’s theory on ‘coloniality’. Moreover, to answer the research question, I will unpack the colonial history behind shopping spaces in Java, the division of space within PIM, the aesthetic of the aforementioned space and the bodies that inhabit the space. Essentially, I will focus on critically analysing what the malls, and subsequently Jakartans, deem as “high-class”, and how this definition renders the space inaccessible for those who do not fit this class.



# Literature Review

Countless scholars have written about politicized space, how identity is formed, and the subtle ways in which society segregates class. However, most of this research is often set within the framework of the Global North, and as a result, canonical thinkers within the Western academia often disregard the non-white (male, cisgendered, heterosexual, able-bodied, middle-class and up) experience. In my research, I will mostly be making use of Western literature. However, I will be applying these theories within the Jakartan context and considering how Jakarta's complex Javanese and Western history can be reconciled—or further aggravated—through my analysis of space.

In addition, most research regarding how Europe and North America has impacted Asia is set within the East Asian context. In this research, I aim to focus on and represent the phenomena occurring in South-East Asia instead. Furthermore, in Indonesia itself, I have found that many Jakartans are aware of how much their lives revolve around shopping malls, yet many overlook how the root of this capitalist practice reinstates systems within its society, such as classicism and Western imperialism. Therefore, I intend to demonstrate how established (Western and twentieth-century) theories within the field of cultural, colonial, and urban studies can be applied to more diverse topics to expand on what has scarcely been written about in academia; mall culture in South Jakarta, Indonesia.

## **a. City Culture: Lefebvre and the City**

To understand experiences produced within the city, urban cultural studies is a foundation for the deconstruction of social space and its analysis. Urban critique arose during modernity as thinkers began to analyse how they sense their respective environment spaces, and the

political or cultural meanings these spaces create. Henri Lefebvre, a French philosopher, is a prolific theorist, who combines sociology and philosophy, and applies this to the analysis of everyday experiences. My research draws upon Lefebvre's 'Right to the City', a concept introduced in his book, *Le Droit à la ville*<sup>2</sup>, published in 1968. Lefebvre's writing is very much situated in the Marxist context, as 'The Right to the City' is established on the idea whereby the city, due to capitalism, has become a commodity. According to the Lefebvrian dialectical approach, space is contextualized in capitalist activities where commodities enter daily life as they themselves represent processes (Merrifield 520). As a result of how space internalizes conflictual and contradictory social forces, such as class, the "process of space and place production is a deeply political event" (Merrifield 521) and is, therefore, the "terrain where basic social practices - consumption, enjoyment, tradition, self-identification, [...] social reproduction [...] are lived in" (Merrifield 522).

Lefebvre theorizes that there are different modes of production of space. "Space plays a role at all levels: the relations of production and property, the organization of labor and productive forces, "superstructures" and representations (ideologies)" (Lefebvre 212). Therefore, according to Lefebvre, social and political space is overtly existent and operates through the constant motion of being "produced, a product, but also producer and reproducer (in the maintenance of relations of domination)" (212). As social space becomes commodified, this production is solidified through signals and signs, which makes the space a spectacle (Lefebvre 213). This spectacle, however, is monotonous and thus creates a homogeneity, which is a political product of power relations between the dominant class and the oppressed. Through these power relations, fragmentation occurs as both the material and immaterial support of social relations acts as a political power that "divides and separates in

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<sup>2</sup> The Right to the City

order to rule” (Lefebvre 215), thus creating a hierarchization amongst those who inhabit the space. In Jakarta, the production of space is linked to its colonial history as systemic oppression creates economic, political and social processes that shape the urban experience, which I will elaborate in more depth in my analysis.

## **b. Postmodern Theory: Bourdieu’s Classification**

The shopping mall, a space Nancy Backes describes as a “representation of an idealized city, a contemporary fabrication of the mythical, utopian city” (1), is a postmodern space. In his text *Distinction*, published in 1979, Pierre Bourdieu explores how the cultural context of class excludes and includes particular groups of people in society. The distinction that occurs in postmodern society is a process of ‘classification’, carried out through ‘embodied social structures’, which is based on ‘knowledge without concepts’. Classification is built upon the concept of ‘taste’, which “functions as a sort of social orientation [...], guiding the occupants of a given place in a social space towards the social positions adjusted to their properties, and towards the practices or goods which befit the occupants of that position” (Bourdieu 466).

Embodied social structures, moreover, refers to how communities ascribe to social cognitive structures in their day-to-day activities, through the internalization of their knowledge of the social world (Bourdieu 466). These social structures are based on “historical schemes of perception and appreciation which are the product of the objective division into classes (age groups, genders, social classes) and which function below the level of consciousness and discourse” (Bourdieu 467). Therefore, knowledge without concepts refers to the power structures behind what is considered to be ‘common knowledge’, such as concepts of ‘taste’ or distinctions between classes. Essentially, Bourdieu implies that because of the very internalization of this knowledge regarding social order and classification, it

becomes widely accepted by a society as the universal truth, which in turn are embodied in social structures both mentally and physically (467).

Additionally, to establish a connection between Bourdieu's theory and the shopping mall is to recognize said space as a postmodern one, as well as investigating how PIM can build and reinforce class (distinctions) within Jakartan society. In the context of Java, these "historical schemes of perception and appreciation" (Bourdieu 466) irrevocably overlaps with the (neo-)colonial history of Jakarta and the cultural colonialism that takes place as a result, which I will explore further in my analysis. Using Bourdieu's theory as a lens allows one to see how the cultural context of PIM, such as Indonesia's colonial history, contributes to practices of internalizations or social indoctrinations. Hence, our presence in the social world, including how social spaces are presented and how we interact within these spaces, are highly coded.

### **c. Colonial Theory: Mignolo's Coloniality**

To underline systemic oppression, I will make use of Mignolo's theorization of 'coloniality'. According to "Coloniality at Large: The Western Hemisphere in the Colonial Horizon of Modernity", Mignolo mainly focuses on the American nuances of coloniality and colonial identity. Regardless, the systems of powers he discusses are similarly present in the "East Indies". My definition of what I refer to the "West" in my research is based on Mignolo's use of the "Western Hemisphere", which refers to the colonial powers of the 'Global North'; Western Europe and Northern America. In addition, Indonesia also has a colonial history with Japan during the Japanese Occupation in 1942 (Indonesia Investments). This history is precisely why it is so essential to deconstruct definitions that are often polarizing and overly simplistic, as it erases the colonial and exploitative history between the

distinctions of countries, as well the destructive rankings that are inherent when we use language such as ‘developed’ versus ‘developing’ countries, ‘modern’ versus ‘traditional’, or ‘progressive’ versus ‘conservative’.

It is also important to establish that societal definitions, especially in the context of cultural studies, are imaginary as it is “the symbolic world through which a community defines itself” (Mignolo 20). This is to say that clear distinctions that are often taken for granted as definitive or fact, such as the West and East, have been constructed—usually by those in power—to simplify and reduce centuries of exploitative systems to mere functional terms. As Mignolo writes, the colonality of power is invisible, and “the image of Western civilization that we have today is the result of the long process of constructing the “interior” of that imaginary” (Mignolo 20-22). This imaginary was constructed through processes, such as what Edward Said has described as ‘Othering’.

## Methodology

To answer my research question, “How does the coloniality of the Pondok Indah Malls in South Jakarta, Indonesia, reinforce practices of classification?” I will make use of the theories previously explained in my Literature Review to practically assist me in my visual and discourse analysis. With PIM as the case study, I will describe and provide visuals to demonstrate how the malls are constructed. These visuals will be based on photographs I have personally taken, as well as photographs taken by other authors, which will be referenced when featured in my analysis. Moreover, using secondary resources, I will explain how, as a result of these visual and physical structures, discourse is created through the way in which Jakartan society embody the space.

In addition, I will conduct primary research through a survey and personal interviews. My survey respondents are mainly local Jakartans who live in the surrounding area, and are mostly upper-middle class citizens, as defined by their accessibility to privatized, international education. The correspondents are also mainly the youth; consisting of Generation Z and Millennials. The personal interviews, on the other hand, are much more concentrated as I focus on three interviewees; Siti Annisa Saraswati (20), Yordan (21), and Rinening Amartya Piscesta (20). These interviewees will provide an interesting, detached perspective as they are non-Jakartans who frequent Jakartan malls. All three interviewees are based in Bintaro, Tangerang, a neighbouring city only half an hour away from South Jakarta, and are of middle-class status. Therefore, the interviewees, unlike the survey correspondents, are positioned outside of the high-class community and will have a more objective outlook. By combining data from Indonesians with varying class standings, familiarity with South

Jakarta, and accessibility to PIM, I aim to have a more nuanced overview of how locals view the space.

The analysis is structured as follows; to begin, I will dedicate a sub-chapter titled ‘Colonial Roots’, in which I will detail the progression of Western spaces within Jakarta, namely the annual fairs held in Batavia, how this was inspired by the World Fairs of Western Europe and North America, as well as how the behaviors established in these spaces are repeated in the malls of ‘modern’ Jakarta. Afterwards, I will continue on with PIM as the primary focus, namely its ‘Division of Space’. In this second sub-chapter, I will analyse the differences between PIM 1, PIM 2 and PIM 3 according to their selection of stores and restaurants, as well as how the space is segregated depending on whether one is a visitor or employee of the mall. To deepen my exploration on the differences between each mall, I will move on to my third sub-chapter, titled ‘Aesthetics of Space’, where I will move on to my visual analysis through examining the architecture and imagery, such as advertisement, featured both inside and outside of PIM 1 and PIM 2. Then, I will move on to my fourth sub-chapter, titled ‘Bodies in Space’, where I will deconstruct discourses that form when classification is practiced. Lastly, I will finish with my conclusion, in which I will answer my research question and provide suggestions for further research.

## Analysis

### a. Colonial Roots



Figure 3: Pasar Gambir Program Pamphlet, 1925 (Lukito) and Figure 4: *Stand of the Hygiene Committee at the Pasar Gambir*, 1930 (Van Der Meer)

Before exploring the inner workings of PIM, I would like to dissect the division between the space of the malls inside and the space of the urban landscape Pondok Indah offers outside. It is paramount to understand that fundamentally, PIM is a utopia only a percentage of the privileged are privy to. The shopping mall in itself is firstly an upper-class Western concept, originating in European promenades and shopping centers in the United States. The first outdoor and enclosed shopping malls in the United States were built by Victor Gruen, who intended “to import the pedestrian experience of modernist, European cities like Vienna and Paris into America” (Bogost). Gruen was largely inspired by the World Fairs and Colonial Exhibitions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which were mainly held in wealthy and powerful cities, such as London, Paris, Brussels, and New York. These exhibitions were used for enlightening, entertaining, showcasing achievements of nations’ industries, boosting trade



and promoting the exploitative wealth of colonizing “exotic” nations (Richman-Abdou). Specifically, Java was presented in the International Colonial and Export Exhibition (*Internationale Koloniale en Uitvoerhandel Tentoonstelling*) held in Amsterdam in 1883, as well as in annual fairs held in Javanese cities, such as the *Jaarmarkt* in Jakarta and Pasar Gambir in Surabaya (Van Der Meer 505). As a result of this colonial history, Indonesian policy makers aspired to copy what occurred in the West during the late twentieth-century, as “they felt that the indigineous ways of life of Indonesian society were backward and had to be destroyed” (Low et al. 284).

According to “Performing Colonial Modernity: Fairs, Consumerism, and the Emergence of the Indonesian Middle Classes” by Arnout H.C. Van Der Meer, the annual fairs in the colonial world have an opposing function to that of World Fairs in the Western world. It is the “very different nature of their location, intended audience, and objectives that sets them apart as a unique colonial phenomenon” (Van Der Meer 506). In these annual fairs set in Java, the colonized were the audience and (Western) modernity was celebrated. It was a tool the Netherlands used to promote their modernity “through architecture, demonstration of tutelary strength, performances, entertainments, advertisements, and commercial displays” (Van Der Meer 505). The ‘natives’ were expected to don their best traditional dress, “seemingly in accordance with the colonial sartorial hierarchy” (Van Der Meer 504), as a form of entertainment and cultural dissection for Western visitors. The colonizer’s aim was to generate awe, support, and legitimization of ‘modernizing’ Java. Thus, the proliferation of these annual fairs established a practice of gazing in the colony, which showed the colonized how to consume Western images and products. At the same time, Javanese attendees were consciously performing their own culture for the colonizers. Therefore, these fairs required a costume, a certain way colonized bodies are expected to perform, a specific language, a

colonial gaze, and a standard of behavior based on class hierarchies—albeit unspoken or inexplicit.

The ‘traditional’ *kampung*<sup>3</sup> spaces set up in the Dutch Colonial Exhibitions were performatory, zoo-like spaces for the Dutch to admire their exploits without regarding the darker effects of colonization as they were set to showcase live craft exhibits, local artisans, traditional workmanship, *gamelan*, *wayang*, and traditional dancing (Van Der Meer 508-509). Concurrently, the ‘modern’ (Western) spaces of shopping malls are also imitative and contained in comparison to the rest of twenty-first-century Jakarta. This is, ultimately, how the dominant class and ideologies were formed, as the Indonesian middle-classes began to rely on Western influences for symbols and definitions of prosperity and progress. Similar to the annual fairs, the shopping malls in South Jakarta are a sort of safe haven, separated from the tropical heat, polluted traffic, and beggars just outside the glass and concrete walls. PIM stands as the bubble that Kate Lamb describes as the “air-conditioned alternate reality” of Jakarta. The mall is a “contrast to how millions of Jakartans actually live” (Lamb), as in 2019, 20.6% of the population are vulnerable to falling into poverty (World Bank). In a city where the lower-middle-class are the majority, the branded lifestyle that is sold in shopping malls are only accessible to the upper-crusts of Jakartan society, which make up approximately 3% of the country (Merrillees 46). The rest, and the majority of the population who are not able to set foot in these spaces, shop in ‘traditional’ *pasar*<sup>4</sup>, street vendors or lower-class malls, such as Blok M Square or Mangga Dua Mall (Fig. 5 and 6).

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<sup>3</sup> Village.

<sup>4</sup> Markets.



Figure 5: Blok M Square (Putri) and Figure 6: Mangga Dua Mall (Gundul)

## b. Division of Space

### I. Between Malls

Now, I will make sense of how the colonial history of consumer behavior in Java has translated to Jakartan consumers' behavior today, through the manners in which space is divided in PIM. Perhaps one of the most blatant and crucial ways PIM reinforces Bourdieu's concept of classification amongst its visitors is through the way in which the shops and restaurants are placed across each mall. Most notably, the malls are segregated by price range, and as a result, prestige. PIM 1, for instance, is focused on affordable cuisine and necessities, filled with mostly older, more local restaurants and shops. Not only that, the price range for these stores are also considerably lower than in the other two malls. For instance, restaurants available at the mall include Western fast food chains, such as Wendy's and McDonald's, and local chains, such as Bakmi GM and Hoka-Hoka Bento. Non fast-food restaurants are also mostly local and less costly in this mall, such as Solaria (Asian fusion cuisine) and Sari Ratu (traditional Padangnese cuisine). By purposefully establishing PIM 1 as a centre for more affordable goods, "although the doors of most retail centers are open to

visitors of all backgrounds, [developers play] to each social class with shopping malls and centers built with a target market in mind” (The Jakarta Post).

PIM 2, on the other hand, focuses on Western fashion, cuisine, and technology. As a more recent establishment, PIM 2 offers more ‘current’ and Western brands that are popular not only amongst the Jakartan elite, but around the world. In fact, according to the survey I conducted, 64.7% of visitors prefer PIM 2. Fashion retail at PIM 2 include high street brands such as Zara, Massimo Dutti, Mango, Hugo Boss, Tommy Hilfiger and Ben Sherman. They also provide luxury accessories, such as bags by Il Bisonte and Furla, watches by Tissot and Aigner, and pens by Mont Blanc. Local brands are available, however they are either highly priced ‘hipster hubs’, such as The Goods Dept. or sell expensive traditional clothing, usually worn during special occasions; weddings, state meetings, and business meetings. These high-street stores include Batik Keris and Negarawan, which is a store specialized in men’s Batik<sup>5</sup>, consisting of three fits; the *Negarawan Fit*<sup>6</sup>, the *Pejabat Fit*<sup>7</sup> and the *Perwira Fit*<sup>8</sup>. The deliberate selection of these labels show what job titles are expected as upper-class or of high taste by Jakartan society. PIM 2 also hosts the same cinema as PIM 1 called Cinema XXI (Fig. 7), yet PIM 2 has a separate space dedicated to the Premiere theatre, where tickets are more expensive and seats are more lavish. Those who buy Premiere tickets have their own lounge area, upgraded separate bathrooms, and can order warm food, which will be delivered to their seat during the movie. By choosing PIM 2, a more recent mall, as a more non-local centered space, PIM subliminally associates progress with Westernisation in the (neo-)colony.

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<sup>5</sup> Traditional Indonesian technique of hand-dyeing patterns on cloth.

<sup>6</sup> Statesman’s Fit

<sup>7</sup> Government Official’s Fit

<sup>8</sup> Military or Police Officer’s Fit



Figure 7: Cinema XXI, PIM 2 (21Cineplex)

Lastly, PIM 3, also known as Street Gallery, is a restaurant-focused mall, home to a few fine-dining restaurants and expensive (Western) desserts. The only local restaurant PIM 3 hosts is Remboelan, a traditional Indonesian food chain that serves their meals in royal, colonial style platters and Union, an upscale fine-dining restaurant that requires a dress code. PIM 3 is dedicated to cuisine and is considered to be the most unaffordable of the three malls due to its high price range and restaurants that often require a reservation.

As a result of how the three malls are divided, the visitors form behaviors that may be assumed as a given, however interactions within the mall are “not natural but created in such a way to push consumption” (The Jakarta Post). A consumer’s choice in dining or shopping might seem as their personal preference, when in reality, consumers are limited to their own financial accessibility. Therefore, visitors who frequent a specific mall not only do so because of their interest, but also because of the accessibility or inaccessibility of that space, regardless of the fact that the malls are connected through skywalks. The affordability of the mall will depend on one’s class position, which will also then determine the clothing they wear, the frequency of their shopping activities, their favourite stores to shop at, if they have

maids looking over visitors' children while they shop, and their choice of transportation to visit the mall with. In fact, visitors who are lower-class may choose to ride the Busway or *Gojek*<sup>9</sup>, as they are more affordable, and have separate spaces to enter the mall from (Fig. 8 and 9). Bourdieus' Classification then occurs when these standards are solidified as 'taste' and creates a "matrix of social order" (Bourdieu 3) that is based on oppositions between the elite and the masses, as well as what is considered as high and low culture.



Figures 8 and 9: Segregated designated areas for Gojek and Busway users

## II. Between Visitors and Employees

According to "Consumerism, disorientation and postmodern space: A modest test of an immodest history" by Ian Woodward, Michael Emmison and Philip Smith, published in 2000, shopping malls are microcosms "organized around consumption, leisure and the image and are regulated by surveillance, gatekeeping and crowd disciplinary technologies" (339). This idea of gatekeeping is evident not only in the manner in which stores are distributed amongst the malls, but how space is divided for visitors and employees as well. For instance, mall employees are only permitted to enter through a separate entrance and exit, which are

<sup>9</sup> An app-based company that allows clients to hire drivers, food deliverers, cleaners, hairdressers, masseuse and grocery shoppers that ride on motorcycles, as they are thought to be more efficient than cars in Jakarta due to traffic.



hidden from general visitors' paths. Employees also have segregated bathrooms (Fig. 10), prayer rooms, cafeterias, and parking spaces. In addition, all of these spaces are guarded by security guards who actively inspect the space and ensure that social orders remain in place (Fig. 11).



Figure 10: Employee-Only Restroom in PIM 2 and Figure 11: Security Guards at the PIM 2 Lobby

In the survey I conducted, most respondents said that they would not be able to navigate the mall as an employee. As written by respondents, employee-designated areas are usually “tucked away in a small hallway [out] of sight [so] that most people [do not] think twice about it” because these spaces are “not that nice to look at”. This is crucial as visitors often rely on the mall to lead how they maneuver within the space and as a result, never adopt a “political attitude or active orientation” (Ian Woodward et al. 341). In PIM, the employee-designated spaces are deliberately hidden and there are no signs to indicate that they exist, thus making these spaces virtually invisible. As the survey answers and lack of questioning from the general public demonstrates, most do not even realize that the mall is spatially divided. The same way that the conglomeration of pricing varieties between the malls are a way of policing as it contains a group of people with a certain income bracket in one space, the untransparent segregation of employees and visitors classifies the bodies

within the space by making distinctions between which spaces are worthy of the middle-class gaze, and which are not.

### c. Aesthetics of Space

#### I. Architecture



Figure 12: Crystal Palace, Joseph Paxton, World Expo 1851 London and Figure 13: Palais des Machines, Dutert and Contamin, World Expo 1889 Paris (López-Cèsar)

According to Mignolo, “the coloniality of power is invisible” (22). Through visually analysing PIM, I would like to illuminate the very coloniality that would otherwise be overlooked or considered meaningless. As established by my analysis on the division of space, the aesthetic construction of shopping malls, both subliminally and blatantly, suggests what is worth showing and in turn, seeing. Bearing in mind the coloniality of the space and history of the practices that take place within it, PIM is an example of Ann Stoler’s concept of ‘colonial ruination’ and ‘imperial debris’, as explained in her text, “Imperial Debris: Reflections on Ruins and Ruination”. PIM is a colonial ruin, both in its imperial influences found in the physical appearance of the space, as well as in the social meanings produced by and within it. Similar to the World Expositions and annual fairs (Fig. 12 and 13), PIM is a product of (imperial) bourgeois taste as it reinforces the structures of dominance, left from



the colonial order of things (Stoler 193). As Mignolo writes, “coloniality is constitutive of modernity, and not derivative of it” (26).



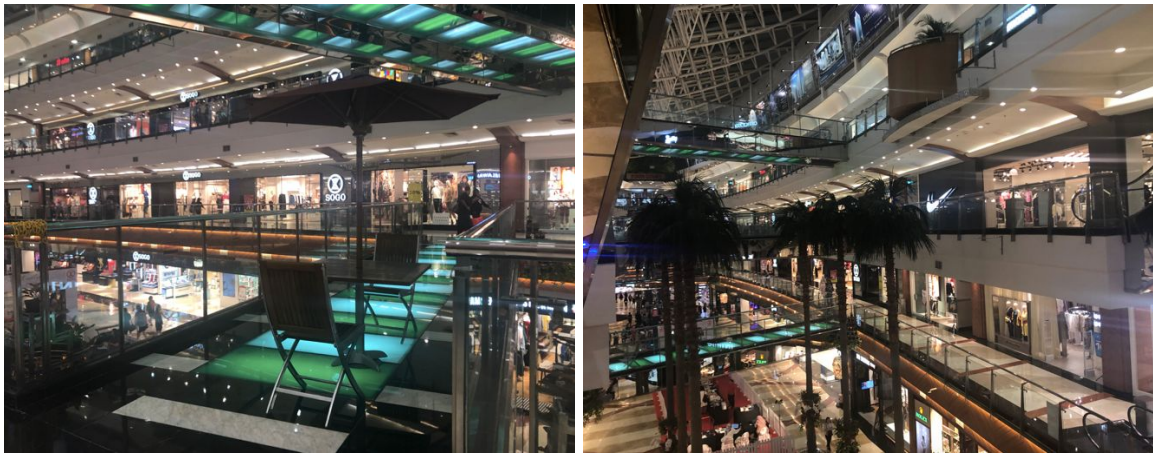
Figures 14 and 15: PIM 1 Architecture

PIM 1 (Fig. 14 and 15), for instance, as the oldest out of the three malls, looks the least embellished. Standing since 1991, the architecture and design of PIM 1 appears to be a twentieth-century, Indonesian take on modernist architecture. The minimalist rectangular forms, solid white concrete, steel framing, harsh lines, as well as transparent glass, is reminiscent of the exemplary modern design found in the Crystal Palace—the site for the famed Great Exhibition of 1851 in London (López-César 5) and the *Palais des Machines*. The discourse of ‘modern architecture’ being considered universally synonymous with (Western) imperial styles is inherently colonial and perfectly demonstrates how perpetuating this idea only reinforces the imperialist myth that progress is synonymous with Western European ideals and archetypes.



Figure 16 and 17: PIM 2 Architecture

On the other hand, as a mall with more expensive stores and therefore more prestige, PIM 2 (Fig. 16 and 17) is decorated in a much more decadent, ornamental manner that is more reminiscent of the postmodern style. In comparison to PIM 1, PIM 2 is lined with more glass, darker wood, marbleized floors, golden borders and a maroon colour instead of the light blue of its predecessor. Unlike PIM 1, PIM 2 does away with all of the bulky iron structures, and instead relies on thinner lines that look decorative, rather than merely sustainable. Almost every corner of the mall is embellished, with either details of wood or other aspects of bringing the outside to the inside, such as fake palm trees or potted plants (Fig. 18 and 19). In addition, the bridges that allow visitors to cross from one side of the mall to the other, are illuminated with a green floor and decorated with outdoor furniture, which visitors are not allowed to use.



Figures 18 and 19: Elements of the outside, inside PIM 2

In addition, the opposite ends of PIM 2 are atriums decorated to mimic foreign cultures (Fig. 20 and 21). A former Dutch colony that was also occupied by the Japanese Empire, the European and Japanese models found in PIM 2 are a reflection of the city's neo-colonial identity. The Japanese model is filled with stereotypes such as fake *sakura* trees, patterns, lanterns and symbols, whereas the European model is filled with Greco-Roman architecture, such as white marble, pillars, and classic statues. According to “The Right to the City”, architects and, in this case, decorators of space establish a culmination of “dogmatized significations”, which are elaborated from these architects’ “interpretation of inhabiting” (Lefebvre 152). In an interview with local Indonesians, Yordan says that the foreign decor “is a symbol of social status. In malls and traditional markets for the lower-middle class, the spaces are simple and have no added designs.” Echoing Stoler’s work, Bourdieu also writes how taste is an ‘orienting practice’ based on historical schemes of perception and appreciation, which “[functions] below the level of consciousness” (Bourdieu 466). PIM intends to emit high culture, “especially because the general population around it are upper-middle class, they must appeal to these people and their tastes,” another interviewee, Piscesta adds. As Piscesta explains, it is to create “a feeling of being in a foreign country”, which defines social status in Indonesia due to what Yordan deems an “inferiority complex”.



This is presumably a result of (neo-)colonial structures that many generations after the nation's independence carry with them. The interviewees explain that one's ability to claim that they have been to Japan or a European country is a prestigious one to make, as it shows how one is able to afford such an expensive trip, which is widely inaccessible for majority low-income Indonesians.



Figures 20 and 21: Atriums in PIM 2 modelled after foreign countries

The eclectic aesthetic of PIM 2, which both combines and blurs the lines between real and unreal, outdoors and indoors, local and foreign are all a symptom of postmodern pastiche, as coined by Frederic Jameson. “Pastiche is, like parody, the imitation of a peculiar or unique, idiosyncratic style, the wearing of a linguistic mask, speech in a dead language. [...] Mimicry without any of parody’s ulterior motives, amputated of the satiric impulse, devoid of laughter” (Jameson). However, unlike Jameson’s Western belief that these aesthetic codes are meaningless and a surface language especially beneficial for commodification, PIM uses the postmodern allure with a vengeance as it is a reinforcement of imperial architecture—and by extension, cultural dogmas. PIM’s use of modern and postmodern aesthetic, along with associating this discourse of progress with more Western imagery is an atmospheric tool for re-colonization used by Indonesian architects. Comparing

PIM 2 and Sarinah or traditional markets like Pasar Pondok Indah (Fig. 22 and 23), it is clear how PIM 2 is a disproportionately more embellished, and therefore high-class, space.



Figure 22: Pasar Pondok Indah (Kompas) and Figure 23: Inside Sarinah Mall (Santoso)

## II. Advertisement



Figures 24 and 25: Advertisement outside of PIM 1 and PIM 2, respectively

Aside from architecture, advertisement also plays a role in cultural colonization as commodified imagery influences how consumers shape their identities. Brands, especially those of the high-street variety, sell symbols of wealth and depictions of aspirational lifestyles to entice consumers. However, within the (neo-)colonial context of Jakarta, majority Western brands sold in PIM simultaneously sell whiteness. This is showcased in the advertisements displayed within the malls, as well as on the external surfaces of the building. According to *Advertising and Consumer Citizenship: Gender, Images and Rights* by Anne M. Cronin, in



advertising, “the ostensibly neutral, universal category of the individuals [pictured] veils a sexed, racialized and classed particularism” (10). All of the images at PIM include on the outside perimeters of their buildings are women or are marketed towards women’s clothing (Fig. 24 and 25). Furthermore, these women all have caucasian features, light skin, and wear non-local fashion styles—some even wearing coats, which Indonesians living in the tropical climate would be unable to associate themselves with, unless they have had the privilege of traveling to a foreign country.



Figures 26 and 27: Glass displays next to the PIM 2 lobby



Figures 28 and 29: Store advertisements in PIM 2

The imperialist mindset is also evident in the glass displays located at the entrance of the mall, which every visitor will see if they enter from the main lobby (Fig. 26 and 27). The

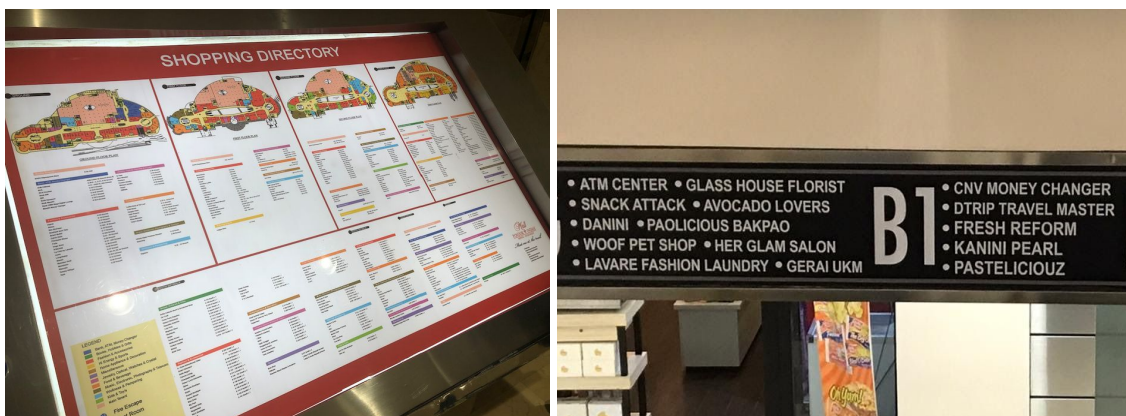
images include white women shopping with background images set somewhere in Europe and New York, USA. Both pictures are also eclectic in the way that one of the models looks to be wearing a stereotypical Parisian striped shirt and red beret, whilst the other is wearing clothing for the summer time, and both displays are clearly a combination of multiple edited images that do not fully look as though they fit. At the same time, both images evoke Western-supremacy, as it communicates the message that shopping at PIM 2 will give visitors a sense of being Western, and would be able to live the privileged life these images are supposed to convey. This creates a “social mythology, [which] always derives their ideological strength from the fact that they refer back, more or less discreetly, to the most fundamental oppositions within the social order: the opposition between the dominant and the dominated” (Bourdieu 469). In the setting of PIM, these advertisements (Fig. 28 and 29) are a classificatory scheme embodied by the dominant class within a social space, which in turn, by institutionalising it, contributes to the cultural production of colonial discourse that dictates that the Global North and whiteness is equivalent to affluence.

### III. Language



Figures 30 and 31: Signs in PIM 1, written in Bahasa Indonesia

As previously established, an unspoken hierarchy is placed upon each mall. This is further solidified in the languages used on signs. These signs are not only a suggestion of the targeted readers, but a societal insight into its readers as well. Amongst the malls, only PIM 1 has signs in Bahasa Indonesia, such as instructions to throw trash in the rightful place or reminding visitors not to lean on glass railings (Fig. 30 and 31). In contrast, perhaps intended as a later initiative to welcome globalization and the influx of foreigners, the signs found in PIM 2 and PIM 3 are all in English (Fig. 32 and 33). Even when entering stores or restaurants, clerks and waiters often greet in English, or Japanese if it is a Japanese restaurant. This, of course, is only an exception for areas specifically designated to visitors' employees, such as chauffeurs or domestic workers, as well as the mall staff, where signs are in Bahasa Indonesia. These signs are found in the parking garage, the drivers' waiting area, employee-only bathrooms and prayer rooms. Language, as a reinstator and perpetuator of reality, can be an indicator of the cultural implications of its use.



Figures 32 and 33: PIM 2 shopping directories, written in English)

In Jakarta, English is perceived as a symbol of elevated status and pride, as it is majorly taught in elite private schools or used amongst prestigious companies, which are spaces that are most likely to host expats from the Global North. “Language, especially foreign language, has the power to ruin the originality of identities, since through language



the cultural imperialism begins” (Boy 169). According to a *The Jakarta Post* article, titled “Your letters: Mother tongue vs. English”, the use of English in major Indonesian cities has been a heated debate amongst Indonesians as “struggling with a mother tongue is now becoming an urban phenomenon in third-world countries” (The Jakarta Post). Many citizens see the association of English with high education as an erasure of nationalism, especially since the Indonesian youth are increasingly less fluent in Bahasa Indonesia—the national language specifically chosen as a sign of the republic’s independence from colonial forces during the nationalist movement in 1928. The use of English in public spaces, which are already coded as capitalist spaces combined with its implicated caste-system reflected in the selection of shops and restaurants offered in each mall, is a reflection of the colonized mind. As English sets apart visitors who are “respected and educated” (Boy 167) and those who are not, the Pondok Indah Malls set apart visitors who are privileged to be a part of the higher class, namely those who are able to shop at PIM 2.

In terms of accessibility, language also correlates with class and race, as Indonesians who speak English are more likely to be upper-middle class who went to international schools or expatriates. Therefore, the use of English in PIM 2, as opposed to Bahasa Indonesia in PIM 1, is a subliminal exclusionary practice as it would completely prevent new Indonesian-speaking visitors from effectively navigating PIM 2. This language dilemma clearly illustrates what Mignolo describes as a duality within modernity and coloniality, “an exteriority that is not necessarily outside of the West (which would mean a total lack of contact, but which is an interior exteriority and exterior exteriority (the forms of resistance and opposition trace the interior exteriority of the system))” (Mignolo 27). This duality explains how the rise of nationalism in Indonesia resulted in a resistance towards English as a form of cultural colonialism. Yet, due to the effects of colonialism, the nation is subjected to

a systemic indoctrination of English as a gateway language to the rest of the world, and must therefore be celebrated as a symbol of status and affluence.

#### D. Bodies in Space

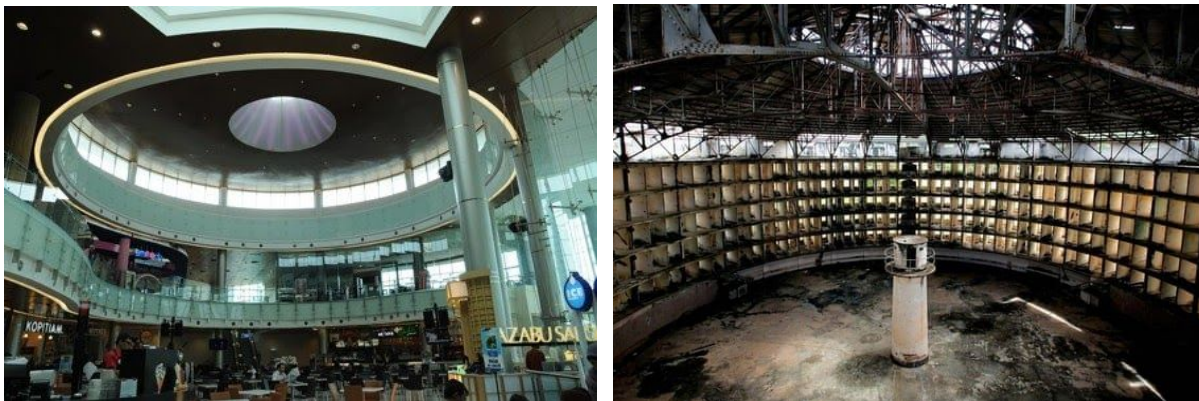


Figure 34: Area 51, PIM 1 (Multikon) and Figure 35: Abandoned Presidio Modelo complex, McMullan

In accordance, mall visitors, how they navigate the space and their behavior within the space also contribute to classification. Navigation is largely reliant on the architectural design of the space, and this is particularly apparent in the atrium-like corners, clear railings, clear windows, mirrors on escalators, lack of doors, circular food courts, and open views from escalators (Fig. 36). These structures show how “architects seem to have established and dogmatized an ensemble of significations [...]. They elaborate them [...] from their interpretation of inhabiting” (Lefebvre 152). This is exemplified, for instance, in the PIM 1 food court, called Area 51 (Fig. 34), that is shaped similarly to the panopticon (Fig. 35), which is a symbol for surveillance and a disciplinary mechanism used in prisons (Cutieru). In this food court, visitors who sit inside are able to gaze at others while they buy food at the stands lining the atrium, the glass walls allow visitors who are sitting inside and outside to look at each other and visitors sitting outside also have a view of the Water Park next to the mall (Fig. 38). Hence, the architectural design allows people to gaze at others and evokes the

feeling that where other shoppers interact within the space are worthy of thought or judgement.



Figure 36: Bird's Eye view from the escalator and Figure 37: Security guard surveilling PIM 1



Figure 38: Outside terrace, Area 51, PIM 1

Meanwhile, the clear view to all floors and stores through the windows and railings allow visitors to see which stores others visit, shop at, and what products they buy. The fact that visitors have an almost bird's eye view of their fellow shoppers encourages a *m'as-tu-vu* culture, where seeing and being seen becomes a social objective. This is displayed in the fact that shoppers will often actively judge others' fashion, identify the brands on others' shopping bags (Piscesta and Saraswati), or park their cars in the more expensive self-parking space in PIM 2 where visitors' luxury cars are on display (Fig. 40). As my survey respondents answered, all of them feel as though "they are being looked at", except for one, and they believe it is due to the fact that they dress plainly. The way visitors physically embody the space greatly affects their experience, as respondents feel that "there are implicit dress codes, [...] influenced by the social class niche of the mall [and] the racial or religious demographic." The panopticon model allows visitors to police and reinforce these social rules, and breaking them can mean judgement or even a luxury store clerk's refusal to serve you.



Figures 39 and 40: Lobby and Personal Parking Space in PIM 2

As a prominent facet of the Jakarta lifestyle, a large portion of socializing amongst Jakartans is done whilst shopping. Therefore, "shopping is conducted to maintain

relationships and be liked, to socialize, to be accompanied by friends, and to be part of the crowd” (Widiyani). Due to the *m’as-tu-vu* culture that takes place, inhibiting the space turns people into a spectacle to be gazed at. This gazing, similar to the panopticon, can act as social surveillance, and therefore pressure people into performing the roles society dictates them to perform at a subconscious level. According to Lefebvre, this spectacle is a “political product, a product of administrative and repressive controls, a product of relations of domination and strategies decided at the summit of the State” (214). This theory is exemplified in the lobbies, for instance, where only visitors with cars and chauffeurs are able to enter the mall from (Fig. 39).

According to “Jakarta malls: the cities where the poor are invisible” by Waleed Aly, for the upper-middle-classes that frequent these spaces, malls are contained, isolated areas full of shoppers on the same class rung, where visitors are able to partake in their class by wearing expensive clothes or eating expensive food “without feeling guilty” (Aly). This also means that they must appeal to the language of their class; wear the right clothes, be around the right people, shop at the right stores, eat at the right restaurants, drive the right car, and spend the right amount of money. This idea of what is ‘right’ is based on a hierarchy that puts the dominant class (wealthy, white and Western) as the ideal standard that everyone must aim to attain. Nonetheless, Indonesians, as colonized bodies, will never be white, which is why the dominant identity becomes commodified. Despite never being able to be racially white, Jakartans are able to consume white culture through learning to speak English, wearing Western clothing, eating Western food and partaking in Western traditions with the aim of becoming white-passing, or at the very least, Westernized. PIM, as a historically Western space, facilitates this mythical and privileged escapist lifestyle.



## Conclusion

To conclude, the coloniality of Pondok Indah Malls in South Jakarta, Indonesia, reinforce practices of classification through the historical spaces of annual fairs that have caused systemic suppression of native culture, the division of space within the Pondok Indah Malls that perpetuate segregation between classes, the aesthetic of space that is used by those in power to recolonize visitors, and the social structures embodied by the (Indonesian) bodies in the space.

As I have explained in the first sub-chapter of my analysis, the annual fairs that took place in the nineteenth and twentieth-centuries were used as a tool to legitimize colonization and indoctrinate locals. Through the creation of these performative spaces, Indonesians learned how to behave according to the social hierarchies that were imposed by the Dutch. As Indonesia gained independence and grew as a nation, leaders and investors looked to the West as a marker of progress, thus encouraging the beginning of opening new shopping spaces, each more advanced than the last. At the same time, as the structures of colonialism remained intact, these principles of class transcended the Dutch East Indies and were translated into the space of the Pondok Indah Malls.

In the second sub-chapter of my analysis, I described how space was divided in PIM, mainly between PIM 1, PIM 2 and PIM 3, as well as how it is dependent on whether one is a visitor or an employee of the mall. As demonstrated, the three malls vary in its affordability, and therefore, accessibility. Thus, the deliberate clustering of lower-end and high-end shops and restaurants reinforces segregation between the classes.

In my third sub-chapter of my analysis, I disentangled the aesthetics of the malls through a visual analysis of the architecture, advertisement and language featured within

PIM. The architecture, inspired by Western and Japanese standards of modernity and postmodernity demonstrate how affluence is synonymous with colonial rulers. Furthermore, the advertisement, which mostly features white models in Western clothing, and the use of English on signs in PIM 2 exemplify how Jakartan society views those who are Westernized as the dominant class, as well as solidifying the West as the admirable standard.

Lastly, in my fourth sub-chapter of my analysis, I explored how these definitions of power set by the malls affect how bodies move in said space. Evidently, through perpetuating these classifying and segregating systems, PIM and its visitors inherit the colonial gaze that was used to scrutinize natives during colonial rule. This translates to the *m'as-tu-vu* culture of the mall and pressures visitors to perform their class, while simultaneously being subconsciously aware of how they are judged based on this performance. However, because the standard is Western and white, Indonesian bodies, despite the commodification of whiteness, will never fully meet their ideal standards.

In closing, my analysis exhibits how PIM, an escapist utopia built on gentrification, is a space that reinforces the reproduction of colonial myths. The malls, if not criticized and analysed by visitors, can succeed in its hegemonic attempt at institutionalizing systemic oppression, so that these classifying structures are accepted as a natural order by Jakartans. Moreover, as a recommendation for further research, there is a lack of focus on how class structures in Jakarta have been affected by religion, as well as colonialism, and how this affects gendered bodies and bodies with disabilities. For instance, in my discussion of the colonial gaze, it would be insightful to further research how this intertwines with the male gaze in a country where women's rights are still often overlooked. In addition, when I discuss accessibility, this idea also relates to disability studies, and would be interesting to see how

public spaces, such as PIM, would be analysed with theories from said study, especially because it is an underrepresented issue in Indonesia.



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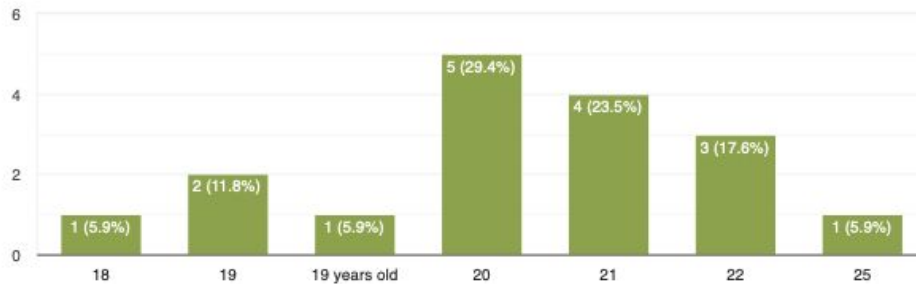
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# Appendix 1: Survey

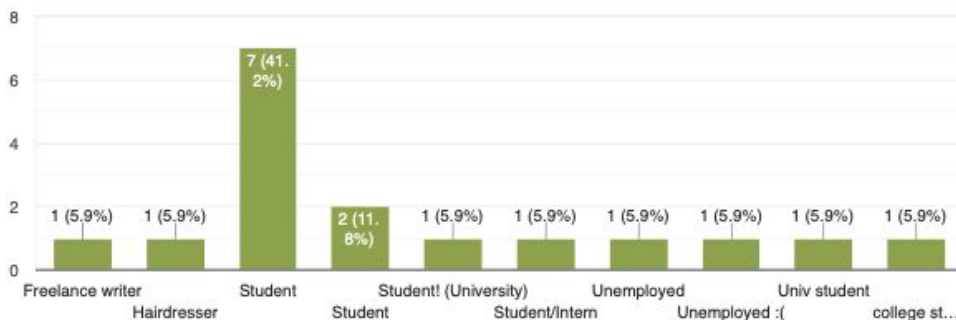
What is your age?

17 responses



What is your occupation?

17 responses



Do you think Jakarta has a "mall culture"? If so, can you define it?

- Yeah. I guess it's like, super consumptive? Always having the need to go out and just idk do something and spend money whilst doing so
- Yes. The heavy dependence on malls as a place for entertainment..?
- Yes, I feel like the primary "easy" activity for a hang out is just to go to a mall and then it's "we'll figure out what to do when we're there." It's easy and there's always so many options, if not - Indonesians love to eat anyway.
- Mall culture is hanging out with friends in malls, usually spending the day from a possible of 6-8 hours which include watching movies, eating, walking around, window shopping, or even drinking
- Yes. we do have that "mall culture" kenapa? karena memang dari dulu tujuan akhir untuk memenuhi kebutuhan hiburan kita lebih tertuju ke Mall dimana sebenarnya banyak hal lain selain mall. tapi hanya mencari aman.
- Yes, people go to certain malls for how much it is the 'it' spot to hangout in

- Yes. There are certain things that almost everyone would wear to the mall and how people behave. To most people in Jakarta the mall is a way of showcasing your expensive outfits etc. And people do sometimes stare at others and look at their outfits etc. This is especially true for upper class malls. And there are only limited activities you can do in malls so most people would do the same things
- Yes of course! Well in my opinion people are obsessed with the idea of going to malls to do everything even if you don't have anything to do
- I do think Jakarta has a mall culture because I think that people there are more accustomed to being indoors as opposed to outdoors, given the temperature, smokey smell, etc.
- Yes. Going to the mall is an obligatory activity to do in Jakarta. There are so many malls in Jakarta, it's basically the only activity that you can do in the city.
- The people are a lot more put together, like you can see most have put thought in their outfits
- Yes, I think Jakarta has "Mall Culture". Because of the consumptive behavior of its people which causes a high demand for many shopping centers in all areas in Jakarta.
- In my opinion Jakarta has a very mall culture, because most Jakarta residents have a habit of visiting the mall regularly. And has become an entertainment for them.
- I think yes and I think it means going out to a mall is viewed as classy and high class, especially if you go to a specific mall (such as Plaza Indonesia) people would think that you're rich. While if you go out to just a park, people would think that you're a lower class people.
- Yes, the mall culture I've observed here apply particularly to the upper-middle class - upper class, where leisure activities are primarily concentrated in shopping malls. These activities generally include eating out, purchasing goods, entertainment like movie theaters and arcades, etc., all housed in a single shopping mall complex.
- Yes there's over 100 malls in Jakarta alone and most of the citizens visit malls a lot
- Yes, I think Jakarta has a mall culture. Almost everyone meets up with friends and catches up at malls. Rarely at stand alone cafes or places like that.

On an average, how much time do you spend at the mall upon one visit?  
(weekend/weekday)

- 2-3 hours maybe?
- 5 hours
- 3 hours
- 6-8 hours
- only when we have no choice where to go. atau nonton. so maybe 2 times
- I go to the mall at most three or four times a week and spend 4-5 hours there

- 3-4 hours
- 30 mins - 10 hours
- Oof around Rp300.000 - Rp500.000
- In one week, maybe twice.
- A pretty big part of the day, when school ends we could dine or hang out in the mall, maybe like 4 or 5 afternoons a week
- On weekends, I can be at the mall for 9-12 hours.
- Weekday : around 3-4 hours, Weekend : around 5-7 hours
- Long, like at least 4 hours
- 3-4 hours, weekend
- Weekend 5 hours?
- 2 hours

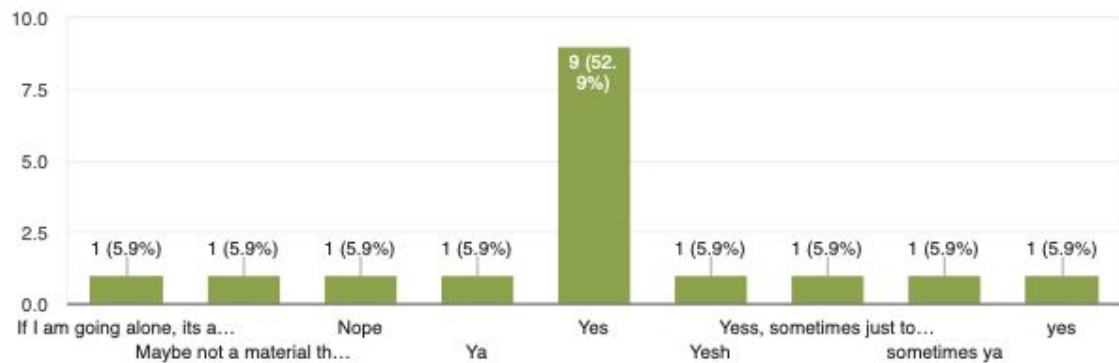
What do you most commonly do at the mall?

- Shop for clothes, read in the bookstores, eat, watch a movie
- Hanging out, watching movies, eating, window shopping
- nonton
- Go for coffee or buy shihlin
- Watch movies, eat and shopping
- Go to a cafe to chill and sometimes go in and out of clothing stores to “cuci mata” as they say 😂
- EAT FOOODDD try out new restaurants or just chill at a cafe and read a book
- Eat snacks and hang out
- Usually, I eat lunch, then I walk around to do some window shopping, meet up with friends, drink boba or buy some snacks and then have dinner.
- EAT!, do grocery shopping, watching movie at the cinema.
- Watch a movie and eat and strolling around from one shop to another
- Meal, coffee, movie theater, grocery shopping
- Walk around eat cinema arcade
- Groceries and Shopping for Foot wear, clothes



Do you go to the mall even when you know you're not going to buy anything?

17 responses



Do you feel your appearances (your clothes, your body, etc) affect your experience at the mall? If so, how?

- Yeah, sometimes I feel like if I don't look presentable enough I'm gonna get stares (which I find uncomfortable) + some restaurants have dresscodes
- yes. i feel the need to dress and blend into the class that kinda lowkey characterize these malls..
- Sort of. If I'm with my friends and we've all got that "hobo" look, we tend to have more fun cuz it's chill. If i'm dressed really nice, I get more nervous hoping I'll bump into someone. Weird it's kind of backwards.
- No, however because malls are where people go to hang out, their individuality and fashion style is what pops out the most (if they are into fashion) otherwise people's purpose of going to malls are varied that it doesn't clash or really affect visitors' experience
- depends on the mood
- Yes, i went to pacific place in sweats, a shirt and sandals and the lady at louis vuitton didnt wanna serve me lol
- No, apart from plaza indonesia where i can feel underdressed
- Yes. If you dress "differently" people will absolutely judge you with their eyes and it ruins the experience especially if you're going to the mall for some fun
- To some extent, because like i said above the girls that dress up the way they do sometimes can get a good pic out of it 😂 but more often than not for me, it does not affect my experience whether or not i wear slippers and sweatpants to the mall or wear trousers with heels. May get looks from people but thats just normal.

- Definitely. If I dress in something more revealing, I get nasty stares from elderly women (sadly) and lustful stares from more males (how disturbing and gross). If I were to dress a bit more “extra”, i would receive questionable stares lol. If I were to dress “poorly” (messy hair, no makeup, wrinkly shirt) most store clerks would treat me poorly (most of the time)
- I feel like if you're dressed too casual, you'll get more attention, you dont have to look super fancy but at least put together.
- Yes, In some malls in Jakarta, if I wear neat and fancy clothes some shop keepers are more friendly and offer their products. Sometimes it's different when I wear casual clothes.
- For me personally not, because I am the type to dress because I am comfortable and for myself not to be the center of attention.
- Yes, because if I feel like I wear something wrong I would feel not comfortable as people would look at me with their judging eyes but also I would feel not confident
- There are implicit dress codes in Jakarta malls. Generally in terms of types of footwear, how much skin is being shown, etc. Sometimes the way I'd dress isn't just influenced by the social class niche of the mall but by the racial/religious demographic as well.
- If im using shorts people tend to look at me weirdly
- I have personally never felt that shop staff has treated me

Do you feel like you're being looked at when at a mall?

- Sometimes
- Yes
- sometimes. maybe when i get sweaty (cus of the heat)
- Yes, but just 'cause of toxic jkt youth culture
- always
- Yesss all the time
- Always
- Sometimes. Depends on what I'm doing, who I'm with, and what I'm wearing
- Absolutely yes
- For some reason I don't really feel seen now, maybe because now my clothes tend to be dark and basic.
- Extremely Yes!
- ALWAAAAAYSSSS

Do you think malls are accessible to the Indonesian people?

- Some malls
- only to urban Indonesians :/ and many are only accessible to the upper middle class.
- Very much so
- To most of the population
- yeah
- Yes and no, since people be judging a lot
- I feel that malls have different level tier of class. There are malls for middle class and lower such as itc and blok M square, and there are malls for the upper class that doesnt allow motor cycles to come in the premises. Which makes it harder cause most indonesians ride motorcycles.
- Not all malls. Like i said there is different group of social class for different malls. But at the same time the answer is yes also? Because they "have" their own malls (if u get me)
- Yess ofc! And not only to them but for everyone!
- Yes. Its everywhere. Sampe depok yg sudut mana pun ada 😊
- They're usually quit crowded so I think so
- Very. The problem is that there are so many Mall in Indonesia. All classes from various social statuses can go to any mall that they feel comfortable. In nearly every area there are malls that are open to all, there are also those who are indeed inclined to the upper class.
- Maybe yes
- I think the mall itself is accessible to the people, however the people inside could sometimes make the mall not so accessible for some people because people would really judge our appearance and can make us feel uncomfortable, and for the lower class people going to "a classy mall" would make them feel unworthy i think just because they dont wear like other people inside the mall.
- This depends on how the terms "accessible" and "Indonesian people" are defined. There are plenty of malls in Jakarta and there aren't generally any strict screening process at the door, but there are limits to what goods and services you can access depending on your financial means.
- Yes
- Cant say much about this as I havent gone to the malls as often in indonesia

Would you know how to move around the mall if you were an employee instead of a visitor? (Employee exits, entrances, toilets, prayer spaces, etc) If not, why do you think this is?

- In some malls (not in Jakarta; but in bsd or bintaro) yes. In Jakarta, no. I guess theyre trying to separate employee & visitor paths? Or just separate the 2 in general

- no.. i dont really try to explore the less visible places of the malls
- I've never thought about this, but it probably won't be too different
- Ive seen separate spaces in Senayan City the most, usually hidden and tucked away in a small hallway which is out of sight enough that most people don't think twice about it.
- yeah because its important
- No because they dont specify in the malls
- No. Because they purposely hide the employees bathroom, elevator etc.
- For pondok indah mall i know (i actually can kinda recite almost all shops and places in pim 😂😂)
- I think i would know, especially in PIM since i practically live in that place i'm able to point out places that usually employee hangs out in or store stuff, etc this is because they are usually located in a little hallway that is usually where the public restrooms are.
- Yes. I have worked at a mall before. Although going through the back door is often times confusing, you get used to it at the end.
- I would not, I dont think I can think of any employee entrance, they probably hide it because employee spaces like lunch spaces are usually not that Nice to look at
- I wouldn't know because the Mall in Jakarta tends to give all access to the employees who work there.
- Yes
- Some malls, yes I know all the exits including the loading dock. But some malls, i dont because I just dont spend as much time as the mall I know really well
- Not with my current knowledge and understanding. There are separate spaces between employees and visitors.
- Maybe
- I think it would take me a very long time to remember all these details because most malls in Jakarta are so huge, they have various entrances that so are far away and so many toilets and exits.

#### Which Pondok Indah Mall do you prefer?

17 responses

