

The Transformation of Jakarta's Administrative Status, 1905-1964: From Gemeente Batavia to Special Capital Region

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the historical progression of Jakarta's administrative classification from Gemeente Batavia (1905) to the Special Capital Region (DKI) in 1964. This study analyzes the impact of colonial heritage, the Japanese occupation, and post-independence political dynamics on Jakarta's evolution from a colonial city to a national capital with a unique administrative identity. The employed methodology is the historical method, which includes the stages of heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography. This study uses a historical institutionalism framework to analyze the continuity and institutional transformation (path dependency) within Jakarta's government. The study's findings reveal that the Gemeente Batavia period (1905-1942) instituted a modern municipal governance framework under colonial supervision; the Japanese occupation (1942-1945) intensified centralization and solidified the identity of "Jakarta"; while the post-independence era (1945-1964) illustrated the Republic's efforts in political consolidation through administrative reforms. Law No. 101964, which established the Special Capital Region of Jakarta, served both as an administrative measure and a political assertion of Indonesia's national identity and modernity. This research elucidates urban political and institutional history by illustrating that the Jakarta governance model encapsulates the amalgamation of colonial heritage, centralized power, and nation-building ideology in postcolonial Indonesia.

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1. INTRODUCTION

From the perspective of administrative history, cities are regarded not only as geographical sites but also as political and bureaucratic entities that continuously transform in response to changes in power dynamics and governmental frameworks [1]. In colonial and postcolonial contexts, cities emerged as significant arenas where economic, social, and ideological interests intersected, mirroring the dynamics of state power [2]. Consequently,

research on changes in the administrative status of cities is pertinent to examining the interaction between colonial and national policies in shaping urban governance in Indonesia.

Batavia, established by the VOC in the 17th century, epitomized Dutch colonial dominance in Southeast Asia. With the evolution of the colonial administrative system, Batavia was conferred *Gemeente* status in 1905, rendering it one of the inaugural cities in the Dutch East Indies to possess limited autonomy [3]. The creation of *Gemeente* Batavia marked a significant milestone in the execution of a colonial decentralization system aimed at administrative efficiency and social control. Nonetheless, the policy remained entrenched in colonial interests aimed at reinforcing dominance over urban populations and economic assets [4].

The 1940s signified a crucial transitional period in Batavia's history. The Japanese occupation (1942–1945) signified a symbolic transformation by renaming Batavia to Jakarta, aimed at obliterating remnants of colonialism and promoting national identity [5]. Following the declaration of independence in 1945, the Indonesian government retained the name Jakarta as a symbol of sovereignty and the ethos of decolonization. The city's administrative status remained uncertain due to political and military upheaval and alterations in governmental structure during the independence revolution [6].

Following Indonesia's independence in 1949, the government encountered significant obstacles in restructuring the urban administration system. Jakarta, as the hub of national governance, underwent multiple administrative reforms in line with domestic political dynamics. Attempts to restructure the city's status were undertaken to conform to the tenets of regional governance within a unitary state. During this period, a paradigm shift occurred from the colonial *Gemeente*-based city system to a regional government model, positioning Jakarta as a crucial component of the national system [7].

The establishment of Jakarta as a Special Capital Region (DKI) was not an instantaneous process. Between the early 1950s and the early 1960s, an extensive debate ensued over Jakarta's status: whether it should be designated as an autonomous city akin to other regions or accorded special status due to its role as the government hub and national emblem [8]. National political transformations, particularly during the guided democracy period, significantly impacted the trajectory of administrative policy concerning Jakarta. Ultimately, Law No. 2 of 1964 officially designated Jakarta as a Special Capital Region, conferring upon it a distinct status within the Indonesian governmental framework [9].

Several prior studies have analyzed the history of Jakarta from diverse viewpoints. Abeyasekere (1987), in *Jakarta: A History*, offers a comprehensive account of Jakarta's evolution from a colonial city to a contemporary metropolis [10]. Shabab (2002) highlights the socio-cultural dimensions of Betawi society within the urban dynamics of Jakarta, as exemplified in his work *Robinhood Betawi* [11]. Simultaneously, Soekiman (2011) emphasizes colonial cities, such as Batavia, from a cultural standpoint [12]. Nevertheless, the majority of this literature emphasizes the social or descriptive dimensions of the city's evolution and has not adequately examined the continuity and transformations in Jakarta's administrative status from 1905 to 1964. This article seeks to address this gap by offering an analysis grounded in historical institutionalism that highlights the continuity and transformation of Jakarta's governmental institutions.

Most research on Jakarta's history has focused on social, cultural, and economic factors that illustrate the evolution of urban life from the colonial era to the present, whereas its institutional and administrative aspects have been examined only briefly. The alterations in Jakarta's legal status and governmental framework are frequently addressed in a merely descriptive manner, neglecting to investigate the foundational institutional mechanisms, resulting in an incomplete elucidation of the continuity and evolution of the administrative system from Gemeente Batavia to the Special Capital Region. This article seeks to address this gap by elucidating the continuity and transformation within Jakarta's governmental structure and analyzing how the colonial legacy influenced the institutional framework of national governance. This study aims to address two primary questions based on this framework: What was the process of Jakarta's transition from Gemeente Batavia in 1905 to the Special Capital Region in 1964? What factors influenced this transformation process? This article seeks to elucidate and examine the administrative dynamics of Jakarta, highlighting the influence of colonialism.

2. METHOD

This study employs the historical method, comprising four primary stages: heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography [13]. The heuristic phase involved identifying primary and secondary sources pertinent to the research topic. Primary sources include Dutch East Indies colonial archives, official documents from the post-independence Indonesian government, minutes from DPR-GR (People's Representative Council) meetings, and contemporary newspapers that cover administrative policies and political discussions concerning Jakarta's status. Concurrently, secondary sources were acquired from prior research, urban history literature, and analyses of colonial governance, which offered a conceptual and interpretative framework for the alterations in Jakarta's administrative status. All acquired sources were subsequently categorized according to their temporal context and relevance to the research objective.

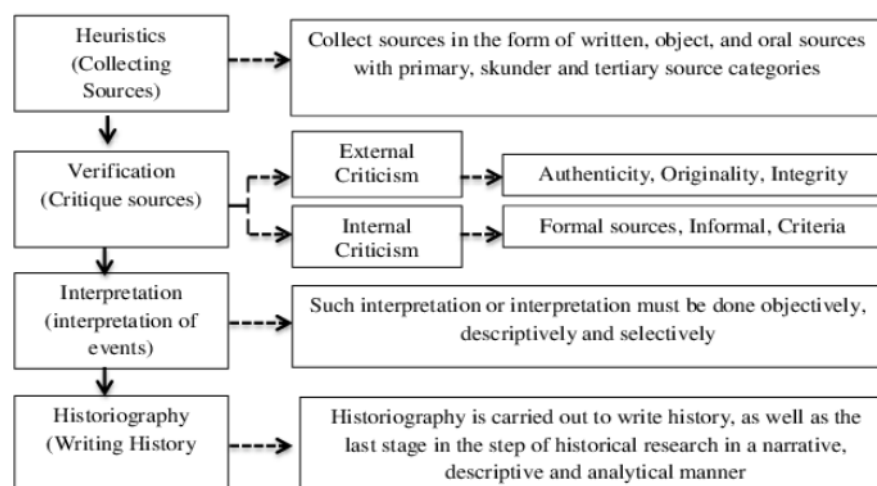


Figure 1. Research flow of the historical methodology process
(Source: Personal data processed)

Source criticism is performed to evaluate the authenticity, credibility, and reliability of data acquired from both colonial and national sources. External criticism assesses the authenticity of sources, including archives and official documents, whereas internal criticism analyzes their content and potential biases, particularly since many colonial documents reflect a hegemonic power perspective. Upon completion of the source validation process, the research advances to the interpretation stage, which involves elucidating the historical significance of the verified data. At this juncture, researchers contextualize each alteration in Jakarta's administrative status within its political, legal, and social frameworks, thereby elucidating the continuity and institutional transformations that transpired from the colonial to the national era. The concluding phase is historiography, characterized by the systematic and chronological compilation of research findings into an analytical narrative.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. The Batavia Municipality Period, 1905-1942

The enactment of the Decentralization Act of 1903 marked a significant milestone in the evolution of local government in the Dutch East Indies. This legislation emerged from the Ethical Policy implemented by the Dutch government in the early 20th century, which sought, among other objectives, to enhance governance and augment administrative efficiency in colonial territories. The *Decentralisatie Wet* established the legal framework for the creation of regional governmental entities (*gemeente* and *provincie*) with restricted autonomy in financial and administrative matters [14]. In this context, Batavia became the inaugural city to attain *gemeente* status, signifying the commencement of colonial decentralization initiatives in the Dutch East Indies.

The establishment of *Gemeente Batavia* was officially enacted on April 1, 1905, as stated in *Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indië* No. 179 of 1905 [15]. This measure aimed to establish Batavia as a paradigm of a contemporary colonial city with a more structured local governance system. The municipal status enabled the city government to oversee public matters, including sanitation, health, housing, and transportation. Nonetheless, although legally designated as “autonomous,” municipal policies remained under the control of the Governor-General and other senior colonial officials. The implemented decentralization was administrative rather than political, as it continued to prioritize colonial interests.

The governance structure of the *Gemeente Batavia* was established in accordance with the European model, specifically the municipal government system of the Netherlands. The apex position was occupied by the *Burgemeester* (mayor), appointed directly by the Governor-General, with a defined term of office and comprehensive administrative authority for executing municipal policies. Subordinate to the *Burgemeester* was the *Gemeenteraad* (City Council), a local legislative assembly comprising approximately 21 members, predominantly European and Chinese elites [16]. A mere few indigenous members were incorporated, and even then, their roles were exceedingly restricted. This framework exemplifies the discriminatory characteristics of the colonial system, which segregated individuals according to race and social standing.

The *Gemeente Batavia* government system perpetuated racial stratification within the city. The colonial administration enforced a policy of spatial segregation predicated on

ethnicity, evident in the delineation of residential zones, including the European Quarter in Weltevreden, the Vreemde Oosterlingen (Chinese and Arab) district in Glodok, and indigenous locales on the periphery of the city, such as Tanah Abang and Kemayoran [17], [18]. This spatial division was both geographic and socio-economic, establishing an urban pattern that mirrored the colonial hierarchy and European racial supremacy over other groups.



Figure 2. The construction process of the De Javasche Bank building.
Source: Ned.Indie Huis Oud en Nieuw

The Gemeente Batavia was pivotal in the trade network of the Dutch East Indies. Batavia served as the principal port, facilitating the export of commodities like coffee, sugar, and tea from West Java and other areas to global markets. The Tanjung Priok port infrastructure, established in 1883, serves as the foundation of the city's economic activities [19]. The existence of substantial trading firms such as the Nederlandsche Handel-Maatschappij and colonial financial institutions such as De Javasche Bank reinforced Batavia's status as a colonial economic hub [20], [21].

Batavia served as the political and administrative hub of the Dutch East Indies. The city housed the Governor-General, the Raad van Indie (Council of the Indies), and several colonial departments. All significant political decisions concerning colonial governance, taxation, education, and employment were concentrated in Batavia [22]. Consequently, the Gemeente Batavia's role was both administrative and symbolic, epitomizing Dutch colonial authority in Southeast Asia. Batavia emerged as the nucleus of the colonial governance apparatus for the entire archipelago.

In the late colonial era, particularly during the 1930s, the Gemeente Batavia faced significant difficulties due to the Great Depression. The global economic crisis resulted in a reduction of regional income, heightened unemployment, and deteriorated social conditions in indigenous communities [23]. The colonial administration implemented austerity measures and exerted stringent control over municipal finances, thereby further constraining the political engagement of the local populace. In this context, social tensions escalated, leading to the emergence of diverse forms of passive resistance against colonial authority.

The Gemeente Batavia period (1905-1942) marked the beginning of Batavia's transformation from a colonial administrative city into a modern urban center. Despite the formal introduction of the concept of autonomy, its implementation remained subject to discriminatory colonial control, with a focus on European interests. The legacy of the bureaucratic system, urban planning, and the gemeente model of local government significantly influenced the structure of urban governance in Indonesia post-independence. The administrative structures and social hierarchies that developed during this era established the historical basis for Jakarta's identity as the nucleus of contemporary national governance in the following period.

3.2. Japanese Occupation Period, 1942–1945

The Japanese occupation of the Dutch East Indies in March 1942 signified the conclusion of over three centuries of Dutch colonial dominance. The power shift was not solely military; it also significantly influenced the political, social, and administrative frameworks, including those in Batavia. The Japanese arrival was embraced by certain Indonesians who anticipated “liberation” from Western colonialism, aligning with Japanese propaganda promoting Asia for Asians (*Hakko Ichiu*). Nonetheless, the reality of Japanese governance quickly revealed that its primary aim was to centralize authority to bolster the war effort in the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere [24].

The Japanese military government initially changed the name of Batavia to Jakarta in a symbolic gesture. The name change was proclaimed soon after the occupation commenced in mid-1942. This action was not solely administrative but also politically consequential. Japan aimed to eliminate symbols of Dutch colonialism and substitute them with identities deemed more “national” and “Asian.” The name “Jakarta” derives from “Jayakarta,” meaning “true victory,” alluding to the prosperous period during the establishment of the Jayakarta Sultanate in the 16th century [25]. Consequently, this nomenclature shift aimed to strengthen Japan's portrayal as the emancipator of Asian countries from Western subjugation.

Japan administratively partitioned Indonesia into three zones of control: Sumatra, governed by the 25th Army (headquartered in Bukittinggi); Kalimantan and Eastern Indonesia, overseen by the 2nd Navy (based in Makassar); and Java and Madura, managed by the 16th Army, with its administrative center in Jakarta [26]. This structure solidified Jakarta's status as the preeminent administrative and military hub in Java, serving as the focal point for all operations of the new colonial government.

The Jakarta city government system experienced significant changes in its military framework. The Japanese government established the Gunseibu (Regional Military Government), which operated directly under the Jawa Hookoo Kanbu (Central Military Government in Java) [27]. While the Gemeente Batavia framework was officially preserved, its power was diminished, with all significant decisions relegated to the Japanese military. The role of Shico (mayor) was assigned to Indonesian officials, including Sudarsono and subsequently Soewirjo; however, this position was largely symbolic and lacked substantive political authority.

The Japanese government appointed numerous indigenous officials to technical roles under stringent military oversight. This step established a new cadre of local bureaucrats

who acquired contemporary administrative expertise, albeit within an authoritarian framework. Conversely, Japan established social and political entities such as Tonarigumi (neighborhood associations) and Seinendan (youth groups) to oversee the populace and cultivate a foundation of support for the occupying government [28]. This framework established a novel territorial administrative system that prioritized social control at the community level.

Besides its administrative roles, Jakarta emerged as the hub of Japanese military and propaganda operations in Southeast Asia. The city housed the headquarters of the 16th Army, which was responsible for military operations across Java. Japan utilized its established communication and transportation infrastructure, including the port of Tanjung Priok, railways, and postal systems, to facilitate logistics during the Pacific War [29]. The city served as a hub for the dissemination of propaganda via Radio Hoso Kyoku (later known as Radio Jakarta), which broadcast pro-Japanese and anti-Western messages in both Indonesian and Japanese [30].

The Japanese propaganda in Jakarta encompassed both political and cultural dimensions. The military regime orchestrated numerous cultural, educational, and military training initiatives to cultivate the ethos of Dai Tōa Kyōeiken (Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere). Educational institutions in Jakarta were instructed to instill loyalty to the Japanese Emperor in the youth and prepare them for self-sacrifice for Asia [31]. In the cultural domain, Japan instituted the Keimin Bunka Shidosho, which significantly influenced the regulation of cultural expression and guided Indonesian artists to create works that aligned with Japanese ideology [32].

The Japanese occupation (1942-1945) was a crucial transitional period for Jakarta's political and social evolution. While Japan did not provide genuine political autonomy, this era created avenues for indigenous individuals to engage in local governance, leading to the emergence of a nascent nationalist administrative elite, including figures such as Soewirjo, Otto Iskandardinata, and Sukarno. They gained experience in contemporary governance and developed a political consciousness of the significance of national sovereignty. Nonetheless, beneath these prospects, the socio-economic conditions of Jakarta's populace declined due to wartime economic policies, shortages of essential goods, inflation, and coerced labor (romusha). Municipal resources were repurposed for military use, resulting in a significant deterioration of public services for civilians and exacerbating the divide between the bureaucratic elite and the lower classes. The Japanese occupation not only established a new identity by renaming Batavia to Jakarta but also imposed a centralist, militaristic administrative framework that subsequently served as the basis for Indonesia's post-independence government system.

3.3 Jakarta Following the Proclamation and Revolution (1945-1960s)

The Proclamation of Indonesian Independence on August 17, 1945, signified a pivotal moment in national political history and simultaneously established Jakarta as the epicenter of authority for the emerging Republic. In effect, the city emerged as the Republic of Indonesia's inaugural capital, serving as the site of significant state decisions and a symbol of national resurgence. The Indonesian government appropriated Dutch colonial-era

buildings formerly used by Japanese authorities, establishing Jakarta as the administrative core and emblem of the nation's political sovereignty [33]. During the initial phase of independence, a robust atmosphere of nationalistic fervor prevailed, leading to the rapid proliferation of youth organizations, governmental institutions, and media in the city as vehicles for articulating independence and forging a new national identity.

Nevertheless, Jakarta's political and security stability was ephemeral. The arrival of Allied forces in late 1945, along with the re-establishment of the Dutch administration through the Netherlands Indies Civil Administration (NICA), created a complex situation. The primary objective of the Allies, under the auspices of the Allied Forces Netherlands East Indies (AFNEI), was to disarm the Japanese Army. However, this goal shifted to restoring order between Republican and Allied forces, which proved unavoidable, particularly in Jakarta's government centers [34]. In response to escalating military pressure and the potential arrest of national leaders, President Soekarno and Vice President Mohammad Hatta resolved to relocate the capital to Yogyakarta in early 1946. This measure was implemented to ensure the continuity of the Republican government in a more secure location, while simultaneously fortifying the diplomatic and military foundation of resistance against the Dutch.

Throughout the physical revolution (1945-1949), Jakarta retained its strategic significance, notwithstanding intense political and military pressure from the Dutch. Following the Allies' arrival, the Dutch, via the NICA, progressively reestablished administrative authority over the city, designating it as the provisional administrative center of the Dutch East Indies. In a geopolitical context, Jakarta functioned as the Dutch diplomatic center to oppose the Republic of Indonesia, based in Yogyakarta, and served as a crucial hub for military operations and colonial propaganda. The Dutch military presence established a duality of authority: on one side, the official Dutch administration existed, while on the other, a clandestine network of Republican fighters emerged, operating covertly [35].

Notwithstanding colonial pressure during the revolution, the republican network in Jakarta remained pivotal. Young nationalist figures, civil servants, and civil society carried out underground activities to establish a shadow government that preserved the symbols of the Republic's sovereignty during the Dutch occupation. This condition underscored that Jakarta maintained its symbolic significance as the heart of the Republic of Indonesia, despite being administratively governed by the Dutch. Following the ratification of the Round Table Conference (RTC) in December 1949, the acknowledgment of Indonesian sovereignty reinstated Jakarta into the national government framework as Kotapraja Jakarta Raya, signifying the commencement of formal city autonomy within the independent state system [36].

After Indonesia's sovereignty was recognized at the Round Table Conference (RTC) in 1949, Jakarta's status highlighted the complexities of serving as both an autonomous region and the nation's capital. Under the framework of the Republic of the United States of Indonesia (RIS), Jakarta was established as the Greater Jakarta Municipality pursuant to Law Number 22 of 1948 regarding Regional Government [37]. This initiative aimed to restructure the urban administration system inherited from the colonial era and the Japanese occupation. The municipal government was headed by a mayor, who was directly accountable to the

minister of home affairs, supported by a local representative council serving as the legislative body. Following the dissolution of the federal system in 1950, Indonesia reverted to a unitary state, with Jakarta continuing as the capital of the Republic of Indonesia. Simultaneously, the city underwent swift development as a hub of national governance, diplomacy, and the contemporary economy, with state institutions, foreign representatives, and international corporations contributing to the formation of Jakarta's identity as a postcolonial metropolis [38].



Figure 3. Construction of the National Monument
Source: Adhi Karya

As Jakarta developed, a significant political discourse emerged over its administrative and symbolic status. Some contended that the central government should directly govern Jakarta to demonstrate state authority, whereas others highlighted the importance of regional autonomy in addressing the interests of city residents. The debate escalated during the parliamentary democracy period when Jakarta emerged as a crucial battleground for political party rivalry. President Sukarno's vision shaped this policy by establishing Jakarta as the "face of the Indonesian revolution" through monumental projects like the National Monument, Hotel Indonesia, and the Senayan Main Stadium, which underscored symbols of national pride [39]. In this political and ideological context, the idea of establishing the Special Capital Region (DKI) of Jakarta emerged, which was institutionalized in the Constitution of Indonesia. Consequently, the period from the 1950s to the 1960s highlighted Jakarta's evolution into a city characterized by a dual identity: serving both as a local administrative hub and as a national emblem with a distinctive role within the Indonesian state framework [40].

3.4 The Special Capital Region was established in 1964.

The establishment of the Special Capital Region (DKI) of Jakarta marks the culmination of extensive political, social, and administrative developments since Indonesia's independence. The transition of Jakarta from a municipality to a special province was not

abrupt; it transpired through a succession of discussions and intricate institutional changes. Following the recognition of Indonesian sovereignty in 1949, Jakarta has served as a pivotal center of national governance and a symbol of the Republic's sovereignty. The municipal government structure inherited from the colonial period was considered insufficient to address the functional complexities of the swiftly growing capital city. The dynamic socio-economic landscape, swift urbanization, and Jakarta's escalating political significance necessitated a more adaptable and efficient governmental structure.

During the 1950s, the central government recognized that Jakarta had distinct characteristics compared to other regions in Indonesia. Jakarta serves as the nucleus of governance, diplomacy, and the national economy, functioning not merely as an administrative hub but also as a political and ideological battleground. In this context, the proposal emerged to confer special status on Jakarta, thereby exempting its administration from the conventional regional government framework. This concept was integral to President Sukarno's vision, who perceived Jakarta as the "face of the nation" and a symbol of national identity embodying the spirit of revolution and unity. Sukarno aimed to position Jakarta as the principal platform to exhibit Indonesia's advancement to the global community, particularly under the Nasakom ideology (Nationalist, Religious, and Communist), which served as the foundation of governmental policy during the Guided Democracy period[41].

In the early 1960s, Jakarta encountered numerous significant administrative challenges. The significant urbanization resulting from migration from diverse regions has led to unchecked population growth, causing social issues such as poverty, unemployment, and slum development. The overlapping authority between the central government and municipal governments resulted in inefficiencies in policy-making[42]. The bureaucratic structure, still rooted in colonialism, struggled to meet the demands of the rapidly expanding city. The central government recognized the need to establish a new governance system that would balance Jakarta's status as an autonomous region with its role as the national government hub.

In 1963, the government presented a Draft Law (RUU) concerning the Capital of the Republic of the People's Republic of Indonesia (DPR-GR). Debates regarding this bill persisted vigorously throughout the year, exposing significant divergences in viewpoints between the legislative and executive branches. The primary discussion centered on two critical issues: the degree of regional autonomy feasible in Jakarta and the role of the governor as both the regional leader and a direct representative of the central government[43]. Some believe that Jakarta should possess restricted autonomy in managing local matters. The central government deemed that Jakarta's strategic role as the capital necessitated direct presidential supervision to maintain political stability and national security.

The conclusion of this protracted process was marked by the House of Representatives (DPR-GR) of the Republic of Indonesia ratifying Law Number 10 of 1964 on August 15, 1964. This legislation formally established Jakarta as the Special Capital Region of the Republic of Indonesia, retaining the name Jakarta. This new status abolished Jakarta's designation as a municipality, replacing it with a provincial government framework directly

overseen by the president of the Republic of Indonesia, unlike other regions, which fall under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Home Affairs. This policy aimed to enhance Jakarta's administrative and symbolic roles as the governmental hub and a representation of modern Indonesian nationalism.

The ramifications of this alteration are substantial in both the administrative and political domains. The DKI government system was structured to enhance coordination with central government policy, with the governor directly accountable to the president. This provided the central government with the flexibility to formulate national development policies toward Jakarta, especially monumental projects such as the National Monument (Monas), the Hotel Indonesia, and the Senayan Main Stadium, which embodied Soekarno's aspiration to establish Jakarta as a symbol of national advancement[44]. From a political standpoint, the establishment of DKI further solidified the central government's supremacy in local politics and diminished public engagement in decision-making.

The consequences indicate that the formation of DKI Jakarta functioned not only to rationalize urban governance but also as a political tool to reinforce the legitimacy of national authority. In this context, Jakarta was reconfigured as an emblematic locus of central authority. On this symbolic platform, state ideology, developmental initiatives, and political dominance intersected to reinforce the capital's status as the nucleus of governance and the epitome of advancement for the Republic of Indonesia during the Guided Democracy period.

4. CONCLUSION

This study's findings indicate that the evolution of Jakarta's administrative designation from Gemeente Batavia (1905) to the Special Capital Region (1964) was a historical process shaped by continuity and institutional changes stemming from the dynamics of colonialism, the Japanese occupation, and post-independence national politics. The Dutch gemeente system established the groundwork for contemporary bureaucracy and urban governance, whereas the Japanese occupation implemented a model of militaristic centralization and incorporated local officials into administration. Post-independence, Jakarta's transition from the Greater Jakarta Municipality to the DKI Province exemplified the Indonesian government's attempts to realign the capital's roles with national political and symbolic imperatives.

The implementation of Law No. 10 of 1964 marked the apex of this process, establishing Jakarta as the nucleus of governmental authority and an ideological emblem of national advancement during the period of Guided Democracy. This research underscores that the establishment of DKI Jakarta was not solely an administrative decision but rather a component of the state's political strategy to cultivate national identity and consolidate central authority. This research theoretically advances the study of historical institutionalism by highlighting the significance of path dependency in elucidating the persistence of colonial heritage within the Indonesian governance framework. These findings are pertinent to the examination of urban governance and decentralization policies, particularly regarding the discussion of Jakarta's special status following the relocation of the national capital to IKN Nusantara. This research facilitates further investigation into the evolution of central-

regional relations and the political symbolism of the capital within the context of modern Indonesian governance.

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