Chapter Title: The Archipelago of Racial Difference: J.P. Kleiweg de Zwaan and Human Diversity

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INTRODUCTION

As we have seen in the last chapter, the main legal categories in the Dutch Empire (“European”, “native”, “foreign Oriental”) were not the major themes of anthropologists. Nor were race-mixing and the Indo-Europeans the subject of much inquiry. ¹ It was the diversity among the “natives” within the colonial state that held the interest of anthropologists. They saw the population as a set of distinct people—Javanese, Madurese, Balinese and so on—separated by adat [traditions] or ethnicity but also by “race”. Informed by their “white skinned physicality”, to use Frances Gouda’s term, which influenced what they defined as different, their discourse was one of internal difference and diversity. ² By administering and studying these groups, the colonial state produced sharper divisions among these indigenous groups; physical anthropologists too made, recycled and supported ideas about component cultures of the Netherlands Indies and their boundaries.

One of the important figures in the making of the racialised archipelago was Johan Pieter Kleiweg de Zwaan (1875–1971), whom we have encountered several times already in the previous chapters. He was an expert on racial diversity in the Netherlands Indies and his life spanned almost the entire heyday of Dutch physical anthropology: in 1903, when he finished medical school, physical anthropology had moved away from the confines of the anatomical museum and had
started to include research on living people, facilitated in the Indies by the age of exploration. Though Kleiweg retired after 1939, he continued to write about anthropology until long after the war and lived to see the end of Dutch colonialism in the East, and with it the end of Dutch anthropology in the Indonesian archipelago.

As a young man, Kleiweg began his anthropological work with an exploration in the Padang highlands of Sumatra and on the island of Nias off the coast of Sumatra. These journeys steered his career into anthropology and 20 years later, Kleiweg returned to the Indies for a final stretch of fieldwork as a well-known professor in anthropology. Between his expeditions, Kleiweg was based in the Netherlands where he spent most of his working life at the Colonial Institute in Amsterdam and at the University of Amsterdam, holding a chair in anthropology and medicine of the Indies. In his position as head of the anthropology department, Kleiweg was able to propagate colonial anthropology and to develop its institutional infrastructure. As we will see, Kleiweg worked on an all-encompassing view on the races of the Indies, even though over the course of his career, he had to acknowledge, as Ann Stoler writes in a different context, that “[t]hose sharp divisions between ethnic groups so familiar in descriptions of late-colonial Indonesia—where Batak was pitted against Javanese, Gayo against Malay, Chinese against Javanese—were proving to be less clear-cut on the ground”.

**SUMATRA AS AN INTRODUCTION TO THE RACIAL MAKE-UP OF THE INDIES**

It was pure chance that brought Kleiweg to the Indies and to colonial anthropology, he told a journalist decades later. If he had not been asked to accompany the explorer Alfred Maass to Sumatra, things might well have been different. He had studied medicine, first in Leiden and then at the University of Amsterdam, and although anthropology was not part of the official medical curriculum, it is possible that Kleiweg visited the lectures of Lodewijk Bolk, his future supervisor, who gave his first courses in anthropology in Amsterdam in the early years of the 20th century. Medicine had been a logical choice for the son of a surgeon, but Kleiweg’s real interests lay in (art) history. A few years after his graduation, an opportunity arose to move away from medical
practice. When Kleiweg visited the National Ethnographic Museum in Leiden one day, he heard from its director that the Berlin ethnologist, zoologist and explorer Alfred Maass was planning an exploration of central Sumatra and was looking for a young doctor to accompany him to take anthropological measurements. Kleiweg applied and left for the Indies in late 1906. During his journey to Sumatra, he wrote to his father that he wanted to specialise in anthropology. “It is essential now to focus my attention on a single field. All that amateurism in many fields leads to nothing. You become a jack of all trades and master of none.” Specialising in anthropology and its sister sciences meant that Kleiweg would be working on things that were nearer to his heart than medical practice—collecting artefacts, bodies in a more abstract, aesthetic sense and foreign cultures.

This was Maass’ second journey to the Dutch Indies. He had been taught anthropological methods by Felix von Luschan and had sent Kleiweg to Berlin to take Luschan’s course too. Luschan was a curator at the Museum für Völkerkunde and in 1908 obtained the second chair in physical anthropology in Germany. He was known for his knowledge of the anthropology of German colonies and for the chromatic scale tables he developed for research on skin colour. As we saw in Chapter 3, he also taught techniques of plaster casting to his students and Kleiweg would be using Luschan’s tables and his new plaster casting skills regularly. Luschan is generally seen by historians as an example of the liberal anthropology of the late 19th century before a younger and more blatantly racist generation succeeded the older scholars after the First World War.

Kleiweg’s work fits well within this liberal school and he was influenced mostly by Luschan and (later) the Swiss anthropologist Rudolf Martin. In the Netherlands, important influences on his work included his supervisor Bolk and Sebald Steinmetz, sociologist and professor of geography of the Netherlands Indies in Amsterdam. Bolk was an anthropologist interested mostly in the physical make-up of the Dutch, who published on Dutch skulls and in 1904 presented a survey of the hair and eye colour of Dutch school children. A “statistician” in anthropology, he believed in amassing large amounts of information and to a greater extent than Kleiweg, talked about races in terms of decline and fall, disease and restoration, emphasising the connection between physical and mental characteristics and the eugenic uses of
anthropological knowledge. Steinmetz too was a positivist scholar who believed in the value of inductive methods and who was, in the words of Patrick Dassen, “obsessed with quantity”. He was also a staunch social Darwinist and not a believer in human equality. Kleiweg shared his positivism but not his worldview and was wary of grand explanatory theories such as Darwinism.

Central Sumatra became Kleiweg’s introduction to the races of the Indies. Maass and Kleiweg travelled to Padang on the west coast of Sumatra and from there they moved inland to the Minangkabau highlands, home of the Minangkabau Malays. The Minangkabau had been under Dutch control since the mid-19th century and were well known for their matriarchal culture and Islamic reformism. Minangkabau culture therefore became a focus for ethnographical studies about kinship. Though Minangkabau culture was not supposed to be as untouched by modernity as some other cultures, Minangkabau bodies were nevertheless attractive for physical anthropologists because they could be situated in a larger discussion about the diverse influences in the Malay archipelago and especially about the difference between “Malays”, on the one hand, and “aboriginal Malays” or “pre-Malays” or “Indonesians”, on the other. As we saw in the previous chapter, Junghuhn had suggested that the Sumatran Bataks were not Malays proper but an older, pre-Malay layer, and the French anthropologist Hamy had added his voice in support, on the grounds of his craniological work. One of Kleiweg’s questions was whether the Minangkabau Malays incorporated a pre-Malay element; he also hoped they could provide clues to the presence of the Vedda element, thought to be even older than the “pre-Malay” stratum and observed in Sumatra by the anthropologist Bernhard Hagen.

Maass and Kleiweg travelled via Solok to the village of Sijunjung and from there to Taluk further up in the mountains. As we have seen in Chapters 2 and 4, Kleiweg found out that anthropological research was not easily organised and he met with a great deal of opposition to his research. He was soon tired of the “endless patience and nagging” that was involved in persuading people to “expose their stomachs”. He returned home nonetheless with 218 measurements on male genitals, so he must have persuaded some to undress even further—although it is likely that these measurements were taken on the convicts that were his recourse once others had refused to cooperate.
Like other anthropologists, Kleiweg combined techniques and included many different measurements to find out whether they were good markers of difference. Kleiweg measured pulse rate, for example, but dismissed it as a useful anthropological indicator because he found that it was quite high—possibly, he suggested, because people were nervous. Because he perceived differences between the two villages, he separated the measurements made in the Padang highlands (Taluk) from those of Sijunjung further inland to compare these once back home. This decision shows how Kleiweg’s perception of physical differences between these two groups became more important than the common-sense knowledge that the Minangkabau were one ethnic and thus one anthropological unit.

Back home, Kleiweg developed his anthropological data into a PhD thesis. *Bijdrage tot de Anthropologie der Menangkabau-Maleiers* was a classic anthropological study, with observations on skin colour, skin texture, hair growth, eye colour, noses and teeth. It included tables of measurements on the living and on skeletal remains, in which Kleiweg followed the standards of Luschan and Martin.\(^{16}\) Kleiweg concluded that the Minangkabau Malays from Taluk differed in 28 somatic characteristics from their hinterland neighbours. They were taller, had longer skulls, and larger noses and penises. He concluded that they must have mixed with a taller and slimmer “element” or that those further inland represented a shorter and more heavily built type, an undefined autochthonous primeval element of Sumatra. Nor did Kleiweg rule out the option that the diet of the coastal people was advantageous or that due to some hidden rule, mountain people in general were taller than those living on the plains.\(^{17}\) Like many of his fellow anthropologists, he left conclusions for a future generation. He even refrained from commentary on the question as to what extent the autochthonous element could be seen as pre-Malay influence.

Kleiweg generally avoided giving his personal impressions of the Minangkabau in his academic work, although sometimes his thoughts did seep through, as when he wrote that “[t]he habit of many Minangkabau Malay to keep their mouth open did little to soften their stupid features.”\(^{18}\) These ideas were framed in a scientific narrative at the end of his thesis, where Kleiweg included a short chapter called “beauty ideal” in which he compared the Minangkabau dimensions to the “laws of human beauty found in the depths of nature”.

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He concluded that the Minangkabau Malay nose was too small, the forehead too narrow, the trunk and legs too short and the arms too long, but he added that European ideals of beauty were not fully applicable to Malays. “Every race has its own canon, its own ideals of proportion and every individual who, besides the possession of his typical racial characteristics, satisfies this ideal scheme, can be called beautiful.” 19 This attempt to bring beauty into science shows that although anthropologists aimed to break the body down into measurable parts, they also found ways to reflect on the body as a whole, by presenting themselves as educated experts who could judge at a glance whether bodies were healthy or diseased, beautiful or ugly. 20

After a three-year stay in the Netherlands in which he wrote his thesis, Kleiweg returned to the Indies in 1910. This time, he travelled through Java, Bali and Lombok and especially to the island of Nias, off the west coast of Sumatra. It is likely that Kleiweg was attracted by the prospect of studying a people he considered less civilised than the Sumatran Malays. “A natural people,” he had written earlier, “seems so much more interesting than a little developed cultural people, like the Malays from central Sumatra.” 21 Kleiweg, like most of his colleagues, distinguished between “natural” and “more cultured” people, the former being more interesting for anthropologists. Nias was seen as a perfect fieldwork spot if one wanted to study “remote” people: Nias knew a European presence because the island had been visited by German protestant missionaries since 1865, but it was marginal to Dutch colonial interests and was finally “pacified” only in 1906.

Earlier travellers like the Dutch H.J. Domis had suggested that Nias people were physically different from Sumatrans—he wrote that they were small and diligent and had a lighter skin colour than Malays. Junghuhn, on the other hand, had suggested that they were related to the Bataks of mainland Sumatra. The Italian naturalist and anthropologist Elio Modigliani, who did anthropological measurements and collected skulls in Nias in 1885, concluded that the Nias people consisted of many different racial elements, but other craniological research in Europe on Nias skulls had not led yet to clear descriptions of a Nias skull type. 22 Kleiweg was encouraged to go to Nias by its contrôleur, Engelbertus Schröder, an old friend of Kleiweg who did linguistic and ethnographical research there and who stimulated Kleiweg to do anthropological research. Schröder himself divided the
island culturally into north, centre and south and Kleiweg was possibly eager to find out whether that distinction was tenable for physical characteristics too.23

Kleiweg took with him a few staff including a European assistant, an indigenous botanist from the botanical gardens in Buitenzorg and an indigenous servant. He suffered from severe bouts of malaria in Nias and had to recover twice in Sumatra. As several other expedition members were also taken ill, the expedition was brought to an end earlier than planned at the end of 1910. Nevertheless, much work had been done: 1,298 people were measured and 64 plaster casts taken and Kleiweg returned with numerous boxes full of ethnographical objects.24

As in Sumatra, measurements were accompanied by recurrent troubles. “Rumour had it,” says a volume on the history of the Royal Dutch Geographical Society, “that he did measurements to recruit coolies; and other Nias men, converted to Christianity, were afraid of being damned if they had themselves measured and asked their local missionaries for advice. In the coastal regions, with many non-indigenous people, the researcher was suspected to pursue indecent goals.”25 Two groups were exempted from measurements beforehand: Muslims because it was believed that they were probably less pure and of mixed Malay descent, and women to prevent trouble with the population.26

The Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad reported with relish about the expedition that “those women the travellers met were exceptionally ugly, a pretty sex does not seem to exist.” The men were hardly better, they were “skinny, unfortunate individuals, badly fed, small, cursed with skin diseases and very dirty.” The newspaper reported Kleiweg’s assistant saying that the human stench of the anthropological subjects was often too much for him.27 If these opinions were indeed Kleiweg’s, they did not find their way in his scholarly work, which referred only cursorily and abstractly to the “hardships” of exploration.

Kleiweg’s work on Nias was published as a three-volume book: the first part on indigenous medicine, the second on anthropometry and the third on craniology.28 Not surprisingly, Kleiweg found that the Nias people were far from a homogenous race. The majority of the people were short and stocky, with low foreheads, wide flat noses, almond eyes, an epicanthic fold, prominent cheekbones and big lips, prognathism and rugged facial features, but there were also a few slimmer and more finely built types. He also saw differences between
the north of the island and the south, where people were taller, stronger and healthier. However, he felt that this was because of the better environment and not because of racial differences. He found more long-skulled men than in mainland Sumatra but was not yet able to explain those differences. Dactyloscopy showed that the Nias fingerprints were remarkably like those of the Minangkabau Malays and Europeans—a reason for Kleiweg to doubt the anthropological value of taking fingerprints. It is an example of how methods that did not match common-sense colonial divisions were dismissed.

Kleiweg’s skull measurements showed him that Nias skulls were small and delicate and some possessed striking asymmetries. Unexpected anomalies emerged, however, when he compared skull measurements with the anthropometrical measurements: the skulls were mostly dolichocephalous (with a long, narrow head), the living were mostly brachycephalous (with a short, broad head). Kleiweg suggested that it was probably necessary to make a different reduction scale for the relation between the indices of the living and the skulls for each human variety. Bernhard Hagen had stated earlier that dolichocephaly was a characteristic of the pre-Malays, but Kleiweg wanted to go only as far as to conclude that “if the Nias long-heads are related to the original Malays (...) one would be inclined to count the flat nosed dolichocephalous as that type while the brachycephalous may have come about through mixing with foreign [allophyle] elements.”

The books were well received and valued primarily because little was known in Europe about Nias—“an enormous mass of positive knowledge, unequalled in the somatology of the Indian archipelago”, Herman ten Kate wrote in his review. Dutch anthropologist Johan Sasse criticised Kleiweg for publishing too early while the material was still an unfinished mass of details. Kleiweg had ignored the latest trends in statistics, had no clue about means, modes or medians, and would do better to conclude that there were two separate races in Nias which, according to Sasse, was obvious from the amassed data. Arnold van den Broek wrote that the book filled him with a feeling of respect for the troubles and adventures Kleiweg had to overcome for the collection of data and for the energy needed to put all these in the book. At the same time, he felt a “vague distress of doubt and fear” whether the result was worth all that trouble.
Bali and Lombok in the 1930s

In 1938, at the end of his career, Kleiweg de Zwaan made a last long journey to the Netherlands Indies, to do research in Bali and Lombok. Little had changed in these years with respect to research practices. Even though Kleiweg himself had downplayed the possibility of finding pure races in his work, as we will see in the following, he still aimed to do exactly that. His anthropological goal this time was to study the physical differences between the Bali-Aga and the Balinese, and between the Balinese and the Sasak of East Lombok, and to identify the sources of the different racial “elements” of the population. The Bali-Aga were thought to be the original inhabitants of Bali and in the usual anthropological fashion, Kleiweg hoped to find out whether this already constituted entity could be supported with hard physical facts.\(^{35}\) A few years before Kleiweg travelled to Bali, the German Ernst Rodenwaldt had attempted a study of the question whether racial differences could be recognised in the different Hindu castes in Bali. Though he found a high forehead among Brahmin men, his measurements were unsatisfactory. He concluded nonetheless that he still believed in his impressions of the physical difference between the lower and the higher castes, his expert eye sharpened by long-term experience in the Indies.\(^{36}\)

In the words of Kleiweg’s wife, the Bali-Aga were interesting because legend had it that they were the original people of Bali, “an exquisite restaurant for anthropologists and ethnologists”.\(^{37}\) Kleiweg noted that “in [the village of] Tenganan, people are strictly forbidden to marry outside the kampong. Those who do not abide to the rules are banned from the kampong. Because of this regulation anthropological research of this population was of course very interesting.”\(^{38}\) Not only were villages anthropological units, the blacksmith’s “guild” of Brattan was also mentioned by Bijlmer as his preferred group to measure because of their special, secluded status in Balinese society.\(^{39}\)

Kleiweg measured about 1,000 people in Bali and another 700 in Lombok and took their fingerprints. Mrs Kleiweg de Zwaan Vellema, his wife, took about 1,500 photographs and assisted with the measurement of women. What had changed since the 1900s were Kleiweg’s use of more statistical methods and the addition of a new field of research—taste research. In the 1930s it had been found that
to some people, phenylthiocarbamide (PTC) tastes very bitter while others taste nothing at all. It turned out to be a hereditary trait. Yet field research, as so often, proved to be less controllable than Kleiweg had hoped: he suspected that many research subjects just copied the answers of those in front of them in line. Besides that, as he assumed the Balinese were more intelligent than the Sasak of Lombok, he was disappointed that more Sasak tasted the bitterness. He explained this by pointing to the fact that in Lombok his wife had assisted with this research and she had more patience than the local Balinese doctor who had helped him in Bali. He did realise that another problem was that people from the Indies defined taste differently and with another idiom than Europeans.

Kleiweg’s published results again consisted of a description of personal impressions and lists of measurements. Compared to his earlier anthropological work in the Indies, he had more experience with what Indies people looked like and his vocabulary had expanded. Kleiweg now recognised deutero-Malays with Mongolian characteristics, or people who reminded him of Javanese, Minangkabau, Nias or Batak people. Others seemed Indo-Aryan, Vedda, Melanesian-Negroid, Australian, Indian, Eskimo and Semitic, and there were Balinese who made a very European impression. He also noted that some people from higher castes had a softer, fairer and more European appearance. In the notes for a lecture he prepared, he wrote that there were many different types: “You understand that it is of the utmost difficulty for the anthropologist to make sense of this amalgam of types. Making the case even more complicated, one also has to ask whether the detected differences must indeed be understood as racial differences or merely as individual constitutional differences”.

Kleiweg found that the Bali-Aga were slightly taller and had slightly broader heads than the surrounding Balinese but refrained from proclaiming that they were really another race. At most they could be said to have some racial element that dominated a little more than in other people. Neither were the Balinese and the Sasak from East Lombok clearly different. There were slight differences in his outcomes, but the question he asked himself then was to what extent did statistical difference constitute anthropological difference? The small differences between the Balinese and the Sasak were perhaps quantitatively significant but not qualitatively, he wrote. By questioning
his statistical outcomes, Kleiweg implicitly criticised the core tenets of anthropology, but he still believed in qualitative approaches to racial difference. The accompanying photographs, on the other hand, Kleiweg asserted, were qualitative and illustrated perfectly his initial impressions. The objectivity of photographs and the ability of the anthropologist to judge them here prevailed over the results of measurements. Incidentally, these photographs were not the images of Bali to which readers were accustomed: “Don’t expect the usual images of the famous Balinese beauties,” wrote his reviewer Hendrik Bijlmer, “on this fairy tale island, these do not even represent the average type!”

**The Colonial Institute and Physical Anthropology in the Netherlands**

Kleiweg now had more anthropological research experience than anyone else from the Netherlands. Coupled with travel experience in Java, Bali, Lombok, Sumatra and also Japan and Ceylon, he was now very well acquainted with the diversity of “types” in the East. The wealth of anthropological data that seemed available in the Indies boosted the promise of the discipline, even if the emerging picture was not yet very clear. Thanks partly to Kleiweg’s expertise in the colonies, his plaster cast, photograph and human remains collections, as well as his skills in building and activating a network of physical anthropologists in the Netherlands, racial science witnessed its most successful decades in the 1920s and 1930s. Kleiweg would participate in the heyday of anthropology from what would become his and colonial anthropology’s institutional base: the Amsterdam Colonial Institute. The institute combined research and a museum specialised in trade, industry and ethnology of the Dutch colonies (mainly those in the east), and greatly improved Amsterdam’s position vis-à-vis Leiden as a centre of colonial scholarship.

Interestingly, the heyday of physical anthropology is usually dated before the end of the 19th century. Thanks to George Stocking, we have come to see anthropology as “Victorian” and Piet de Rooy similarly argues that after 1900 physical anthropology was being undermined. Maarten Couttenier describes how in Belgium physical anthropology as a discipline based at the Tervuren museum in Brussels was in
decline after the turn of the century. Likewise, Elise Juzda shows how craniology in Britain had known its heyday in the last two decades of the 19th century and how its members increasingly started to doubt the validity of their own project. This is far from true in the case of Dutch anthropology, however, which was only getting started at the turn of the century, even though members of other disciplines sometimes saw it as a more old-fashioned approach. As in France or Germany, the history of colonial anthropology can be followed far into the 20th century.47

In the Netherlands, anthropology became increasingly popular after 1900, especially in the 1920s and 1930s, thanks to the opening up of the colonies and the work of individuals such as Bolk and his student Kleiweg. It was also felt that the Dutch had to catch up with their German, British and French counterparts. Although in the course of their careers, many anthropologists came to doubt the possibility of deriving a solid global classification of races through measurements, new optimistic generations were always ready to take over. Every decade saw promising innovations for anthropologists, from statistical advances to blood group and taste research, which were new impetuses for the discipline. Finally the longevity of anthropology in the Netherlands can be explained by the fact that knowledge from the colonies was valued more because of its exoticism and the desire to get to know the Dutch possessions, while similar research in the Netherlands itself was more likely to be forgotten. As Dutch anthropologist Arie de Froe argued, colonial anthropologists got away with their research more easily because “coming back [from the colonies] they could count on an attentive audience”.48

In 1915 Kleiweg gained the first full position in anthropology in the Netherlands: the post of physical anthropologist at the newly established Colonial Institute. The director of the Institute, Johan van Eerde, wanted to add a physical anthropologist to the department of ethnology because he considered anthropology a valuable “supporting science” for the study of ethnology and a branch of science that could provide insights into practical questions concerning racial characteristics, heredity, miscegenation and racial extinction. “Through research on living individuals,” he wrote, “anthropologists “gain insight into the typical physical and psychological elements that compose an ethnic group.”49 An anthropologist at the Institute would also give it a
greater scientific appeal. The Colonial Institute continued to strengthen ties with academia when Kleiweg became an affiliate professor in anthropology and indigenous medicine of the Dutch colonies at the University of Amsterdam in 1919. From 1924 he had a special chair of anthropology and prehistory. In 1933 he became a full professor until his retirement in 1939.\textsuperscript{50}

In 1915, when Kleiweg received his appointment in Amsterdam, the National Ethnographic Museum in Leiden had not invested in physical anthropology since the death of Lindor Serrurier in 1901. Anthropology at the universities, on the other hand, became increasingly institutionalised, although only as a secondary activity of anatomy professors. Bolk was still professor at the University of Amsterdam while his students became more prominent. Ton Barge, for example, who had written a dissertation on Marken and Friesland skulls, was to become a professor of anatomy in Leiden in 1919. Another student of Bolk, Arnold van den Broek, who had published on Papuan skulls, became a professor of anatomy in Utrecht in 1909. In Amsterdam, Bolk and Steinmetz gave their full support to the idea of a physical anthropologist at the Colonial Institute.

At the Colonial Institute, anthropology was not narrowly defined as mere anthropometry and craniology. In 1915, Kleiweg described anthropology as “not only the study of somatic characteristics of man, racial difference and descent, the study of phylogenetic development and differentiation of races, racial grouping and transfer but anthropological studies can also consist of subjects like psychological characteristics, the talent and character of races and the influence on them of the environment, the special conditions of life and heredity.”\textsuperscript{51} He repeated this definition in his inaugural speech in 1919, quoting Armand de Quatrefages, Franz Boas and Eugen Fischer as examples. Later in life, Kleiweg preferred the shorter but equally wide-ranging definitions of Paul Broca, “l’histoire naturelle de l’homme”, Egon von Eickstedt’s “Formenkunde der Menschheit” or, significantly, the narrower definition by Rudolf Martin who argued that “anthropology should occupy itself solely with the physical condition of man”.\textsuperscript{52}

The value of physical anthropology, according to Kleiweg, also lay in its eventual usefulness for the colonial government. Together with ethnological knowledge, it would facilitate contacts with indigenous people. Insufficient knowledge, he wrote, caused trouble if not rebellion,
but “a large part of the many mistakes in colonial policy can be
prevented if colonial agents have anthropological and ethnological
knowledge at their disposal and can take into account both physical
and psychological characteristics of the indigenous population.”\textsuperscript{53} In the
1930s, Kleiweg added eugenics as one of the applications of physical
anthropology but these statements were hardly more than lip service
because he considered the discipline not advanced enough to be able
to advise about colonial policy.\textsuperscript{54}

In line with scholars like Rudolf Martin, Kleiweg refrained from
connecting biological characteristics to “primitive mentality”. This does
not mean that he did not hold any prejudices towards the indigenous
people of the East or that he did not rank peoples on an evolutionary
ladder from primitive and primeval to modern and civilised. It does
mean, however, that he did not link brain size or posture to intelligence
or the capacity to be civilised. Kleiweg found other ways to study
the “native mind” by engaging in studies of the medical beliefs and
practices of indigenous Indonesians and other more ethnographical
work (indigenous ideas about cats and dogs, for example). His refusal
to speculate on the basis of modest craniological and anthropometrical
findings and his separation of cultural and biological studies places
Kleiweg in a Boasian tradition; but his references to Fischer and
Eickstedt, the hardliners in German historiography, show that he was
not immune to their conservative ideas about races.\textsuperscript{55}

Kleiweg’s academic work also included the supervision of students
who wanted to pursue further studies in Indies anthropology; expertise
in colonial anthropology was increasingly available in his academic
network. Of the PhDs Kleiweg supervised, the majority were medical
students specialising in Indies anthropology.\textsuperscript{56} At the Colonial Institute,
Kleiweg was assisted by Adèle van Bork Feltkamp, who specialised
in brain research and did most of her research on Chinese brains,
sometimes publishing with Kleiweg. According to Van Duuren et al.,
“She never held a formal post (...) [but] seems to have fulfilled an
indispensable role as a jack-of-all-trades of the physical anthropology
sub-department.”\textsuperscript{57} Machteld Roede calls her “for many years (...) the
personification of Dutch physical anthropology”.\textsuperscript{58}

At the Colonial Institute, Kleiweg carved out his position partly
with “his” collection. Like the research of the department, the collection
of skulls, plaster casts and photographs represented the diversity of the
archipelago, a diversity that became visible through categories such as “Batak” or “Papuan” written on some of the skulls. Kleiweg actively tried to augment the collection and regularly donated the material from his journeys to the department. While some of the skulls and plaster casts were exhibited in the Colonial Museum and others were placed in the storage rooms, Kleiweg also kept some of them in his office, where big cabinets on the wall displayed a large number of skulls, underlining his identity as head of the physical anthropology department.

As a “three-dimensional imperial archive”, in the words of Tim Barringer, the collection and the building of Colonial Institute, officially opened in 1926, reflecting colonialism and the role of physical anthropology in it. On the outside of the building, for example, the department of cultural and physical anthropology had its own door, decorated with figures referring to the colonies. A hall in one of the towers of the museum was used for an anthropological exhibition. Anthropology and prehistory were represented there “by a collection of torso’s and busts of Indonesians, made from life, by casts of the

Fig. 5.1 J.P. Kleiweg de Zwaan in his office at the Colonial Institute. (Photograph from the private collection of the Kleiweg de Zwaan family)
most well-known prehistoric skulls, by prehistoric stone axes and tools and by an important collection of ethnographical objects”. Also included were photographs of the expedition to New Guinea in 1926–27 showing “the mountain-Papuan in his original state”. The combination of both prehistory and the “natural people” of the Dutch colonies can be explained by the material basis (human remains) of both studies and by the imagined similarities between prehistoric and Papuan culture.

At the Colonial Institute, it was hardly possible to ignore developments in Germany and the role of racial research across the border. In 1935, a joint pamphlet with contributions by Kleiweg and, among others, brain researcher Cornelius Ariëns Kappers, Orientalist Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje and the anatomists and anthropologists Ton Barge, Arie de Froe and Hendrik Bijlmer took an explicit stand against German ideas regarding Jews. Kleiweg argued that it was not yet proven at all that races had different mental and moral characteristics: “Has not history taught us that in the course of time very different races and people have had their heyday?” He also raised objections to the idea that Aryans and Jews could be defined anthropologically as pure races. Like the races of the Indies, Jews consisted of different elements and it was mostly their religion that bound them together. “There is no such a thing as the Jewish race,” he wrote, “nor is there an Aryan race: so it is impertinent to place the Jewish race in opposition to the Aryan.” Instead, according to Kleiweg, Jews were an old and developed culture that bestowed on mankind much that was good, valuable and beautiful, for which they deserved respect and appreciation.

The relation between anti-Semitism and anthropology in Germany did not, however, lead Kleiweg to further reflections on the discipline. What happened to Jews in Europe seemed to bear no relation to the situation in the colonies. But while he had included psychological characteristics in the study of anthropology earlier, Kleiweg let go of that quietly in the 1930s. In his 1943 booklet on the “aim and development” of anthropology, he merely stated that “There are anthropologists and schools that want to incorporate the mental and cultural qualities of people and races in this study [of anthropology]. In my opinion this is undesirable and it is better to leave the study of those features to the psychologist and ethnologist.”
Kleiweg retired in 1939. He received so little support from the university for his Bali and Lombok exploration that he wrote an angry letter of resignation saying that he refused to work any longer for a university that declined to pay his salary when he was doing fieldwork. While this seems to be the reason for his retirement, on the eve of the Second World War, meeting reports of the various societies to which he belonged also hint that ill health was the reason for his increased absence. On the other hand, Kleiweg’s grandson suggests that “pessimism about the international situation and fear for a new World War” made him retreat from Amsterdam a few years before his official pension.

Kleiweg’s broad range of expertise made him a “highly regarded figure both in the Netherlands and abroad [who] accumulated an impressive network of influential colleagues”. His international contacts were praised, as was his factual knowledge. His colleague Ariëns Kappers emphasised his “phenomenal” knowledge of anthropological literature and his wide-ranging approach, “omitting not one measurement or other detail”, although we should also read this statement as implicit criticism of Kleiweg’s theoretical weaknesses. Cees Fasseur felt that individuals such as Kleiweg de Zwaan, despite having published extensively, could hardly “compete with the mighty phalanx of Leiden professors in almost as many Indonesian languages as one can speak”. However, by positioning himself as an anthropologist, as opposed to the linguists and ethnologists of Leiden, and through his active networking, Kleiweg was able to develop physical anthropology around objects, exhibitions and like-minded individuals, which made him a serious player in European anthropological circles. Yet the institution, network and collections were only the starting point for actual research. Did anything like a clear anthropological picture of the colonised subjects of the Dutch in the Indies emerge in the research done at the Institute?

THE ORIGINAL RACES OF INDONESIA

With his work, Kleiweg de Zwaan hoped to add building blocks from the Dutch Indies to the global edifice of racial knowledge. His work can be divided into specialist and descriptive studies of bones or brains and overviews of the larger question—what exactly was the racial
make-up of the Indies and which past migrations and developments made the Indies what they were? Like many of his predecessors since the 19th century, Kleiweg felt there was too little data available to say anything conclusive about the archipelago as yet. “An anthropological map of the Dutch Indies is still unthinkable” he wrote in 1919. More information and good statistics, he expected, could either lead to an exact classification of mankind or to the conclusion that this was impossible, because mankind was one large somatic group. A decade later, little had changed and Kleiweg repeated the same mantra in 1929—“what we really know is utterly insignificant in comparison with what we should like to know”.  

Kleiweg’s craniological work of the 1920s and 1930s gave him few answers. The skulls, jawbones and clavicles at the Colonial Institute mostly showed a bewildering variety of dimensions, though they were generally smaller than European skulls. When Kleiweg wrote a study on Mentawai skulls, he tried to bring all Mentawai skulls in the Netherlands together, borrowing them from the anatomical collections of Bolk at the University of Amsterdam, from Van den Broek in Utrecht or from Barge in Leiden, while also taking good note of what foreign anthropologists had written about Mentawai skulls or those from nearby regions. Yet the skulls did not reveal any degree of uniformity. Similarly, the Hansen skulls from the Mentawai Islands (see Chapter 1) showed too much diversity for Kleiweg’s liking; they also did not correspond to measurements on the living. Comparing the dimensions of the lower jaws with those that were known from other regions of the world, he found that those from the Mentawai Islands were closest to the “Caucasian type” but did not go into the implications of this finding.

As the single specialist in the Netherlands, Kleiweg was naturally suited to work on wider questions on the Dutch Indies and though he generally refrained from jumping to conclusions, he was bold enough to write several overviews on the races of the archipelago: an article in 1924, a book for a general public in 1925 and another article in 1929. For these publications, Kleiweg relied mostly on his experiences in the Padang highlands and in Nias, and on the work of other Dutch and foreign anthropologists. As we have seen in Chapter 4, there was abundant material, each adding different possible racial influences to the picture. Kleiweg wrote that “[t]he task of the student of anthropology
is made more difficult by the fact that from time immemorial new and foreign elements among the population, probably from quite different regions have entered the Indian Archipelago. In his work, Kleiweg brought these layers together in one very complicated picture.

Kleiweg’s ideas about the earliest people of the archipelago revolved around three influences, each tied to the international research questions of the day: (1) the Negrito and the Papua element, (2) the Vedda element and (3) the Indonesian or pre-Malay or proto-Malay element. Kleiweg was less interested in the “deutero” or secondary Malay as the latest newcomer, but he still described this “element” as indigenous to the region. The downplaying of Malays, the group the Dutch encountered most in their daily life, as just one more recent layer in a longer history of colonisation was easy to digest in Dutch colonial circles, where the Dutch could present themselves as their natural successor, but it made physical anthropology less useful for colonial policy. Pierre Labrousse suggests that the positive ideas about Indonesians (pre-Malays) compared to Malays had to do with the fact that they were Christian, or apparently susceptible to conversion to Christianity, and not Islamic, but that does not fit with the fact that physical anthropologists were salvage anthropologists for whom the introduction of Christianity was a change for the worse.

Kleiweg thought that the so-called “Negrito” element was probably the oldest of the archipelago, but he added that the Vedda and Indonesian element were still possible contenders for that title. The term “Negrito”, meaning “little negro”, had been used since the 17th century to refer to inhabitants of Southeast Asia whom travellers related to Africans. In the early 19th century, the archetypes of the Negritos were the Aeta people of the Philippines and the Andaman islanders in the Indian Ocean. Kleiweg defined the Negrito element loosely as small, with frizzy hair, dark skin, dark brown eyes and (most likely) broad skulls. The research of several physical anthropologists showed, however, that no two groups of Negritos were alike in all their physical characteristics. Observations about physical characteristics were not the only reasons some smaller and darker people were singled out as a separate group. Ethnological characteristics that pointed to a lack of civilisation such as a lack of clothes or religion, and the fact that they were not yet connected to a wider world of Malay traders and European colonisers, led anthropologists to place them in this category too.
Many anthropologists expected to find traces of the Negrito in the Dutch archipelago. One of the anthropologists on whom Kleiweg’s modelled himself, the Swiss Rudolf Martin, had done his main fieldwork in the Malay peninsula, studying mountain tribes that were reputedly Negrito. The German anthropologist A.B. Meyer discussed the presence of Negritos in 1899, locating them in the Philippines and New Guinea, and perhaps on the islands around Sumatra. From his own experience in Sumatra and Nias, Kleiweg did not believe that the Negrito element could be found there, but taking into consideration the photographs of others, he did not rule out the option entirely. As we saw in Chapter 4, Herman ten Kate had speculated that the West-Timorese probably had some Negrito elements, although he never encountered a pure type. With respect to Java, Kleiweg became convinced that there was a Negrito element after Dutch anthropologist Egbert Jan Bok sent him photographs that he had taken. It was most likely, Kleiweg wrote, that the Negritos were once spread all over the archipelago but were later ousted by intruders with a higher culture.82

Anthropologists also disagreed about whether Papuans from New Guinea were a different element or were partly or wholly Negrito. This was especially for Papuans living in the isolated interior of New Guinea, who were said to be of very small stature—one of the criteria for Negritos. In his 1924 article, Kleiweg discussed Negritos and Papuans separately but in 1929 he wrote about them as one unit of analysis, though he added that there were many uncertainties about their relation. “No area in the Indies archipelago,” he wrote, “gives so much trouble, anthropologically, as the island of New Guinea.”83 Kleiweg’s student Hendrik Bijlmer, whose anthropological research in New Guinea in the 1920s is discussed in Chapter 6, considered the Negrito element as just one component of the racial make-up of the small-statured inhabitants of the New Guinea highlands. Kleiweg too saw the contemporary Papuan not as an original race or a degenerated form but as the product of much miscegenation. For the “Semitic type” that was often observed by anthropologists in New Guinea and which caused much speculation, he had no explanation.

A second stratum in the racial composition of the Dutch Indies people, according to Kleiweg, was the Vedda (or Wedda) element. “Vedda” referred to the population of today’s Sri Lanka, characterised
mostly by their wavy hair, but according to the anthropologists, also by a dark skin, deep lying root of the nose and long extremities. Among those who studied the Vedda element were again Rudolf Martin in the Malay peninsula and the English anthropologists Walter Skeat and Charles Blagden in the same region. Studying the Toala people in Sulawesi, the cousins Paul and Fritz Sarasin found a close resemblance to the Vedda people, whom they had—not surprisingly—studied earlier in Ceylon. A generation before Kleiweg, Herman ten Kate argued that the Vedda element played an important role in large areas of the Indies, and Bernhard Hagen had seen the Vedda element among the Kubu of Sumatra. However, in 1933, H.H. Bartlett argued that these wavy-haired people, “known chiefly as recorded in chance photographs”, were insufficient proof for a Vedda layer in Sumatra but could be explained by the “absorption” of Negritos by the dominant population.  

The Vedda element was again linked to a lack of culture. According to Kleiweg, Veddas in Ceylon and in Celebes also corresponded in the fact that they lived in caves, knew no iron or stoneware industry, were monogamous and truth-loving or, in short unspoilt and prehistoric. Kleiweg even related the prehistoric Wajak fossil skulls, found on Java in 1888 and 1890, to the Vedda-element. Remarkably, both the Sarasins and Kleiweg had spent time in Ceylon, the Sarasins for a larger study of its inhabitants, Kleiweg for a shorter stop. The experience and memories of these observations later influenced their observation in the Indies where they felt they recognised familiar Vedda features. Travellers coming from the east were more likely to point to Polynesian influences.

Besides the Negritos and Veddas, the Indies were thought to harbour the so-called Indonesians, another layer of original inhabitants. The word “Indonesians” was used ambiguously, but in its anthropological sense used strictly for those who were not Malay or Papua but of an older, more Caucasian, type. As we have seen, it was usually the inhabitants of the interior of Sumatra and Borneo who were referred to with the term “Indonesian”, “pre-Malay” or “proto-Malay”. Hamy, for example, mentioned the Bataks of Sumatra, Dayaks of Borneo and Nias people as examples of Indonesians. Kleiweg preferred to use the word “Indonesian” as a general name for all the indigenous people of the archipelago and to use “proto-Malay” for those who were neither Malay nor Negrito nor Vedda. Proto-Malays according to Kleiweg
were a long-skulled race, whereas most other aboriginal people were broad-skulled. They were small, with dark hair, a lighter skin than the Negritos or Veddas, a wide mouth and a broad and more concave nose and they were thought to have migrated later than the Negritos or Veddas. According to anthropologist Bernhard Hagen, Sumatra or perhaps Borneo was the cradle from whence they had spread. When Jacob Kohlbrugge worked out the anthropological measurements of Anton Nieuwenhuis, explorer of Borneo, he believed he had found this original pre-Malay element in the inhabitants of central Borneo where he discerned more broad-skulled and more long-skulled groups. He defined the long-skulled group as Indonesians. They were also relatively short, with a dark skin, broad nose and broad mouth. He also observed an Indonesian element in Java, where he lived. From his own research on skulls in Nias and Mentawai, Kleiweg had also found a surprising number of long skulls, so he suggested that dolichocephaly could be used as a marker to define the proto-Malay element.

Kleiweg concluded in his 1925 book that the composition of the races of the Indies was very intricate and made more difficult to investigate because recent migrants had driven the older tribes away. “The intensive miscegenation makes it very difficult, if not impossible, for the anthropologist to trace the original elements (…) from the mixed product.” In his review of the book, anatomist Arnold van den Broek wrote that he could well imagine a reader would put the book down with a feeling of deception, thinking: “I will never learn any of that.” Kleiweg, according to Van den Broek, did nothing to make the complex history of races more comprehensible: “When I read that Dixon considers the Polynesian people a mix of the palae-Alpine, the proto-Negroid and the Alpine type, with elements of the proto-Negroid, the proto-Australoid and the Kaspian element (page 178) then I ask myself whether a non-anthropologist (and an anthropologist too) would not find their head spinning.” According to Van den Broek, the book would have gained from a better argument, but it was typical of Kleiweg to keep strictly to what was known and tolerate no speculation. His description of the different layers of the Dutch Indies population added to the discourse of racial diversity in the Indies that trickled down to popular works as well, but the picture painted was still complicated. “Many, many wet monsoons will follow the dry ones before this colourful mix will be analysed satisfactorily.
and we will gain an adequate insight in the racial make-up of the Archipelago”, stated a popular booklet as late as 1948.91

CONCLUSIONS

Kleiweg retired from the university in 1939, but this did not mean the end of his scientific output.92 He continued to work on the results of his journey to Bali and Lombok and many other subjects as an honorary anthropologist at the Colonial Institute until 1948 (though mostly working from home). Kleiweg was succeeded at the Institute by Rudolf Bergman in 1949, the year of Kleiweg’s official retirement. Bergman had started his academic career in the Indies where he became a lecturer at the Netherlands Indies Medical School (NIAS) in Surabaya and at the medical faculty in Batavia.93 He was a professor in anatomy there for two years before he joined the Institute, occupying too the University of Amsterdam chair of tropical anthropology. Bergman’s appointment meant that after the war, physical anthropology was still considered an indispensable addition to the department.

In his inaugural lecture, Bergman argued that the “nonsense” of the German “herrenvolk” and the “Nippon demigods” was naturally dismissed by any honest intellectual, but that the anthropological questions remained. The problems of the world, he wrote, were not helped by categorically denying any differences between human groups.94 Bergman believed that careful study would yield insights into human differences and the social structures and phenomena that these differences produced. It comes as no surprise then that Bergman was part of the UNESCO committee that produced the 1951 Statement on the Nature of Race and Race Differences, a reaction to the 1950 Statement on Race that had campaigned to do away with the concept of race entirely. The 1951 statement, produced by physical anthropologists and geneticists, declared that racism was morally reprehensible, but it did not dismiss racial research.95 In Inleiding tot de Physische Anthropologie, his handbook for anthropology students, Bergman continued Kleiweg’s line of thought by emphasising how social factors were hard to unravel from racial ones in determining racial capacities.96

An anthropological map of the Dutch Indies remained elusive. For Kleiweg, such a map of the Indies was unthinkable in 1919.
and remained so even at his retirement in 1939, when he wrote: “Despite the fact that we have come to know much more lately about the physical condition of many people, we have come no closer to an end result regarding the classification of races. (...) People of absolutely pure race do not exist anywhere in the world.”  

Kleiweg’s first journeys to the Indies as a young anthropologist had taught him how difficult it was to find valuable data. Part of his task was, in fact, testing out different techniques to see whether they worked, and like other physical anthropologists, Kleiweg found it difficult to confirm social realities with measurements. In describing the races of the Indies, he trusted his own observations and photographs more than his metric data—certain features in people, according to him, revealed older population layers.

Kleiweg’s work encompassed the entire Dutch Empire in the East and he wrote on subjects as geographically diverse as the inhabitants of Nias in the west and the “dwarf people” in the east of the archipelago. With other anthropologists, he created and recycled a discourse of diversity that existed alongside other narratives about colonial subjects. The archipelago of anthropologists was one of internal human difference, with different layers that represented the influences of migration far back in time. It was the Dutch Empire that brought unity to this diversity and defined the boundaries of the research of anthropologists.

As an expert in the anthropology of the archipelago and with his position at the Colonial Institute, Kleiweg was part of and experienced the heyday of East Indies anthropology in the 1920s and 1930s. When Bergman retired in 1964, the post of physical anthropologist disappeared. It was likely the establishment in the 1950s of two new institutes for human biology in Amsterdam and Utrecht and most of all, the new direction of the Colonial Institute with the end of colonialism that heralded the end of institutionalised anthropology of the Indies—more than the subversion of its methods or the legacy of Nazi anthropology. What remained at the Institute was the material legacy of the discipline, even though witnesses thought the skulls and bones would fade into obscurity: “The pre-war collection of skulls,” wrote De Volkskrant in 1972, “gently died a second death with the demise of the anthropology department.”