

# Power over Architecture

## A Case Study on Malay Sultanate Palaces in West Kalimantan During Colonial Period (1800-1949 A.D.)

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**Abstract** – The notion of power, characterized by its ability to wield influence over others as guided by its holder’s intention, is intertwined with a spectrum of social control mechanisms encompassing force, coercion, manipulation, seduction, and authority. Malay sultanate palaces in West Kalimantan were a form of architecture *hinggil* (high) culture. The historical development of Malay ethnics in West Kalimantan is linked to power dynamics. This study investigates the historical development of Malay Sultanate palaces’ spatial configurations and architectural designs. It focuses on the colonial era, during which power dynamics exerted significant influence. This paper aims to ascertain the extent to which power dynamics have shaped the architectural aspects of the Malay Sultanate palaces. The analysis highlights the architectural objects and employs a historical methodology with diachronic and synchronic analyses to discern the patterns of power prevalent throughout the Sultanate’s history. Power is palpably demonstrated in effecting substantial transformations in the intent and function of the sultanate palaces, often through manipulation, seduction, and assertion of authority. These power dynamics are exemplified through architectural modifications, i.e., the *controleur* strategic placement and fort within the Sultanate’s vicinity, interior space reconfigurations, alterations in functionality, and symbolic embellishments reflecting the Sultanate’s authority. The colonial administration from the Dutch regime embarked on fortifying its dominion through modifications to the functional underpinnings of the palace chambers. The Dutch authority’s influence facilitated the consolidation and validation of their control. These mechanisms engendered compliance and acquiescence to the dominion of the ruling party through latent means.

**Keywords:** *architecture, colonial, Malay sultanates, palaces, power.*

### I. INTRODUCTION

In architecture, power becomes the trigger for developing the built environment (Foucault, 2002). For example, the formation of buildings built or characterized by their presence can reflect the role of colonists in producing truth to maintain power (Setiadi, 2022). At the most elementary level, the built environment represents the material expression of pleasure and well-being through ordering conceptual space (Altomonte et al., 2020)— creating space for activity and interaction. Through the arrangement of the fabric of the space, someone has to carry out its power. Power manifests itself decisively in the transformation of its power. When authorities exercise this power, they are sufficiently aware of how they have caused something conspicuous and out of sync with local life (Yuan, 1987). It is through the change of the spatial organization or the experience in it that the expectation that the power is on display.

Researchers (Adelaar, 2004; Andaya, 2001; Bellwood, 1995; Collin, 2011; Ibrahim, 2010; Milner, 2009; Notofoher, 1996) suggest the spread of the Malay language in West Kalimantan originated in the Sambas region. However, until now, there has been no research on the origins of ethnic Malays in Indonesia and West Kalimantan, including their architectural repertoire. As far as ethnic architecture is concerned, the Dayak Long House in West Kalimantan is believed to represent ancient Malay tribes before Islamic influence was introduced (Coedes, 2010). After the advent of Islam, the intact area in West Kalimantan was in the Sultanate, which was led by the Muslim king (Sultan). Islamic sultanate architecture artifacts left a palace building complex, most of which have been damaged and destroyed due to lack of attention to the historical heritage of the Malay Sultanate in West Kalimantan (Zain et al., 2023; Zain & Putro, 2021). Malay Sultanates in West Kalimantan are a part of the history of the Malay people in West Kalimantan, from the establishment of kingdoms to the present day. The first kingdom is the Tanjungpura, founded in the 800M (Lontaan, 1975). From the entry of Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms to further expansion, the Tanjungpura kingdom experienced many events and influences (Smith, 2021). The preceding events significantly impacted and transformed the Malay people's development, especially in cultural, social, religious, scientific, and artistic creative achievements, including architecture.

Foucault (2002) said that history took place in a familial space framework, simultaneously a history of power. Power remains a means to an end, and the emphasis is on the ability of power to impose its will and control over one person or group of people against another. It is emphasized that power can impose will and control over one person or group against another. The creation and embedding of power in the architecture of the building have two stages: the initial design stage and the stage of use. Through the identity (built environment) and as perceived by the users, power influences the entity (behavior and emotions) (Mamat & Abdul Aziz, 2020). Sovereignty, dominance, and authority are part of a generated form of power. Power can participate in the reflexive relationships around spatiality to absorb and distribute. Power is embedded in the built environment through the meanings inscribed in the collective.

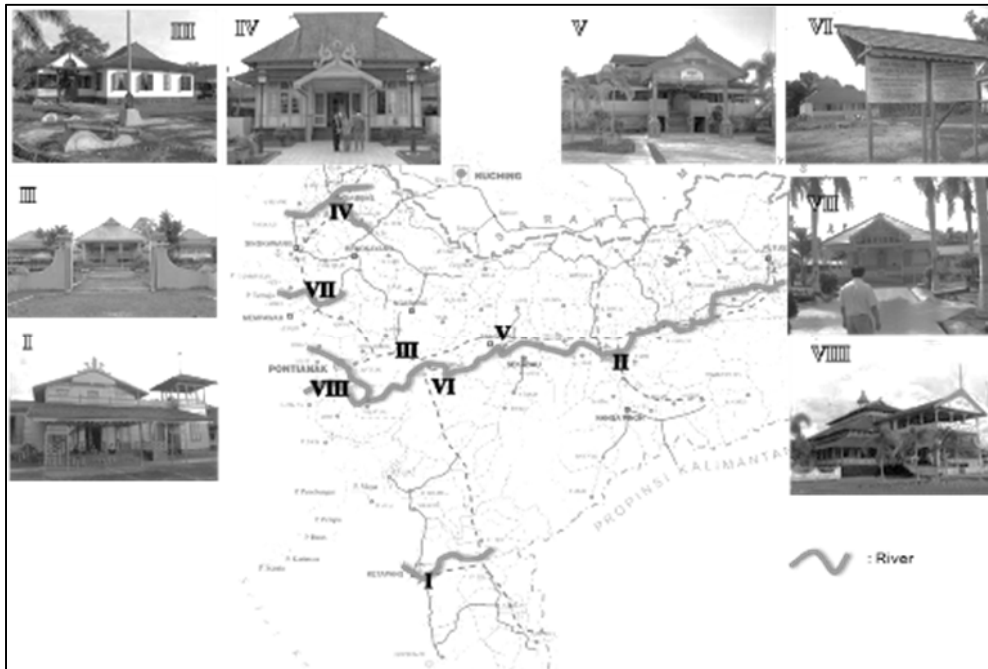
This study aimed to determine the influence of power on architecture. The architectural objects are the palaces of the Malay sultanates in West Kalimantan. The actor who plays a role of power is suspected to be the Dutch Indian colonial government that ruled at that time. Architecture can no longer be reflected chronologically as a formal object, which develops an aesthetic, but as a symptom of a complex socio-cultural and chronological dimension. As a product of architecture, Malay sultanate palaces in West Kalimantan cannot be separated from the influence of power, especially in the colonial period. The power over the sultanate palace architecture was part of the efforts to legitimize the colonial powers against the Sultanate.

## **II. METHODOLOGY**

The research illustrates the logical thought process for achieving the research objectives: comprehending power as a variable for understanding the power structure in the Malay sultanate palaces in West Kalimantan. The development of political, social, economic, cultural, and religious aspects in Southeast Asia and Indonesia impacts the patterns of power from time to time. The historical method in diachronic and synchronic analysis is employed to understand the form of power throughout the Sultanate's history. The diachronic analysis of the form of power that occurred in each of the sultanates during his empire, while the synchronic analysis looks at the whole of the empire in a period.

The study was conducted by recording the data on the history and development of the Malay sultanates in West Kalimantan during the colonial period (1800-1949 A.D.). Of the entire Malay Empire and Sultanates, eight Malay Sultanate palaces still exist (Fig.1). They are 1) Matan Sultanate Palace in Ketapang, 2) Al-Mukarramah Palace in Sintang, 3) Ismahayana Palace in Landak, 4) Azwadjikubillah Palace in Sambas, 5) Suryanegara Palace in Sanggau, 6) Tayan Sultan's Palace, 7) Amantubillah Palace in Mempawah, and 8) Kadriyah Palace in Pontianak.

In the process, the forms of power interactively influence and manifest in the architecture of the palaces. The manifestations of power in palace architecture will be made visible using Dovey's (1999) concept of power: force, coercion, manipulation, seduction, and authority. It will be possible to identify how power was exercised in the architecture of palaces by explaining the concept of power that occurred in the colonial period.



**Fig. 1.** Eight Palaces of the Malay Sultanates as an Object of Research and their Location in the Province of West Kalimantan

Source: Authors (2023)

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### A. Malay Sultanate System in West Kalimantan During Colonial Period (1800-1949 A.D.)

The Dutch colonial period influenced the existence of the Sultanate, especially in the control of the territory. The Dutch colonial rule began with establishing VOC as a trade representative (Wan, 2022). VOC successfully exerted influence in the Sultanate of Kadriah, Pontianak, due to the establishment of a trade representative. The VOC succeeded in persuading Sultan Syarif Abdurrahman Alqadrie to expand into the kingdoms, which proved to be the ally of the Kadriah Sultanate of Pontianak (Firmansyah et al., 2021). In 1787 AD, Sultan Syarif Abdurrahman Alqadrie and the Dutch VOC successfully conquered the Sultanate of Mempawah. In 1795 A.D., the Dutch began to invade the Sultanate of Kubu. With the approval of the political treaty of June 7, 1823, the Dutch influence lasted long and reached its peak.

In 1822, the Dutch entered the Sultanate of Tayan and entered into a binding treaty with the Sultan of Tayan. In July 1822, the Dutch troops entered the Sultanate of Sintang and the signing of a treaty and then the control of the Sultanate of Sintang. On March 17, 1824, the Dutch and the British agreed to a treaty. It is recognized as the Treaty of London. Fill in the Treaty of London at its core is to deliver the countries established in the Archipelago of the United Kingdom to the Dutch. Thus, the Dutch formally occupied the entire territory of the Sultanate in West Kalimantan (Sirrullah, 2019). In 1831, the Dutch entered the Sultanate of Landak and resisted by the Sultanate. However, the Sultanate of Landak was under the control of the Dutch. In 1876, the Dutch entered the Sultanate of Sanggau, and on Tahun 1877, the Sultanate could be controlled by the Dutch. The Dutch eventually controlled all the sultanates in West Kalimantan. In 1889, the region was established as a region of West Borneo (Borneo-Wester Afdeelling).

In the colonial era, the system of inheritance of Malay sultans in West Kalimantan, initially based on the lineal descent of the sultan, had been modified. Policy of the Dutch Government: As the supreme authority, the Governor-General seeks the cooperation of the whole Kingdom and Sultanate. Determining the King or Sultan of the approval and decree issued by the Governor General. If the heir to the throne of the Sultanate is considered not to cooperate, it will be replaced by the Sultan's brother or cousin. Changes in the inheritance made by the colony can not issue a consent form and formulate a policy that pits against one of the relatives of the Sultan recommended by the colony. Dutch colonial government's changing bureaucracy. Based on residential distribution, West Borneo is divided into 2:

Pontianak and Sambas. In contrast, other sultanates in Borneo have been assistant residents under the leadership of a *panembahan*, namely the Sultanate of Landak, Sanggau, Sekadau, Sintang, Matan, Tayan, Sukadana, Simpang, and Mempawah (Madjid & Wahyudi, 2021). Other sultanates, such as the Sultanate of Nanga Bunut, Selimbau, Nanga Silat, Kendawangan, and Semitau, were under the positions of assistant district officers headed by a prince.

The system of government of the Sultanate refers to the structures of power set up by the Dutch colonial government. According to the structure, each leader has the position and territory of the national territory. However, the authority is not granted according to the power structure. King/Sultan/*Panembahan*/Prince functioned as a traditional leader who addressed domestic and social issues. At the same time, global and international trade under the authority of the colonial government, and both levels were placed in each area control realm. The position of the king/sultan as a part of the bureaucratic structure of the Dutch East Indies colonial administration led to limited authority. The sovereign's position as resident representative is responsible to the Governor of Borneo and governor-general in Batavia, as well as a resident assistant and district officer. The authority of the Ruler/Sultan is limited to domestic and municipal affairs. In contrast, the regional and international affairs were delegated to the Colonial through the Viceroy of Borneo and the Controller of each region of the realm, with the approval of the Governor-General.

Throughout the colonial period, the location of the Sultanate has never been shifted from its previous location as it was in the sultanate period. In this period, the colonial constructed a controller representation in all regions around the empire under the leadership of a Dutch captain and served as a watchdog sultanate. The Dutch also constructed infrastructures around the empire to port/pier and build settlements and markets (Firmansyah, 2019; Gunawan et al., 2022). The location of the sultanates never moved due to the limitations of imperial authority and resources. The Sultanate's territory is based on forming the western part of Borneo, with the power structure from the highest (Governor-General) to the village level. The bureaucratic system is maintained to divide the territory. A *Residen* became the supreme colonial ruler. He represented the Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies in his territory. The *Residen* additionally became the representative and symbol of the government of the Dutch East Indies in his regency. Legislative, executive, and judicial powers were in his hands. A *Residen* has a capital territory and a region in the section of the Sultanate. The *Residen* is responsible to the Governor of the province where he resides. Under the *Residen*, there was Assistant *Residen*. They supervised the territories under the province, i.e., the sultanate territories headed by a *Panembahan*. The Assistant *Residen* is in charge of several order sections headed by the District Officer, and at the end are some other order section districts headed by the Assistant District Officer.

#### B. *Power over Architecture of Malay Sultanate Palaces in West Kalimantan During Colonial Period (1800-1949AD)*

Power in Latin is called *potere*, which means being able to reach some final destination (Dovey, 1999). The emphasis is that power can impose its will and control of a person or group of people against another (Dovey, 1999; Foucault, 2002). Power is defined as the ability to influence the other party according to the holders' will. It includes an ability to govern (so that ordered it obedient) and provide decisions that directly or indirectly affect the other party's actions. To absorption and distribution, power can present the entire spatiality reflexive relationship.

Benton in Miller and Tilley (1984) breaks down power into two aspects: power to and power over. Power is an integral element of social life, a component of all social practices, an existential part of bodily existence, and can be disassociated from the social control and domination characterized by power over. Power is capacity and power over a relationship between people. Power to be understood as an embedded social skill to foster and utilize resources. Resources can be material or non-material. The materials include media, raw materials, and means of production, while the non-material is the knowledge, skills, and competencies (Miller and Tilley, 1984). Power over is the ability of individual or groups of agents to convince others to perform something they may never do (Miller and Tilley, 1984). Dovey (1999) outlines some concepts associated with power over: force, coercion, manipulation, seduction, and authority. Force, coercion, manipulation, seduction, and authority comprise habitual actions that must be mediated into the built form of the building.

1) Force

Force represents the concrete action from power to disarm a subject due to non-compliance. Force is a form of power limited because it can merely be prevented rather than subdued. The application of built building can be enforced spatial confinement (prison) or enforced spatial exclusion (the fort, the enclave, keys, cell wall). Force as a form of colonial power manifested by the formation of Westeer-Afdeelling van Borneo in 1886, the division of territories sultanate based on power structures and bureaucratic system in the Dutch East Indies government. The bureaucratic system during the VOC, which was in place at the time of the Dutch East Indies, represents the division of the region of West Borneo into a resident. The aim is to have control of the areas underneath from all forms of interests. The area of the Sultanate of Pontianak was identified as the capital of the West Borneo residence with the other Sultanate as an Assistant *Residen*. With this policy, the Dutch colonial implemented a system to maintain the region’s centrality and gain maximum benefit. An assistant Residen is responsible to *Residen*, a Resident is responsible to the Governor of Borneo, and the Governor of Borneo is to the Governor-General in Batavia. The king or the sultan was a part of the power of subordinates who were exclusively responsible for the traditional governance in their respective areas.

The Dutch colonial also put *controleur* (supervisor) building and fort around the sultanate palace area for this power, with arguments for the security of the sultanate territory from enemy attacks and internal threats. The *controleur* function is eventually regulation of land use issues and trade system. The *controleur* position is established before or facing the sultanate palace area. The *controleur* position is expected to dominate the empire’s activities in terms of politics and trade. In Fig.2, we can observe the force pattern on the land use of Malay sultanate palaces during the colonial period. The pattern is adapted to the direction of the river from downstream to upstream. The position of palaces and *controleurs* became the dominant orientation. Placement *controleur* is a critical aspect of the parties to oversee the colonial government.

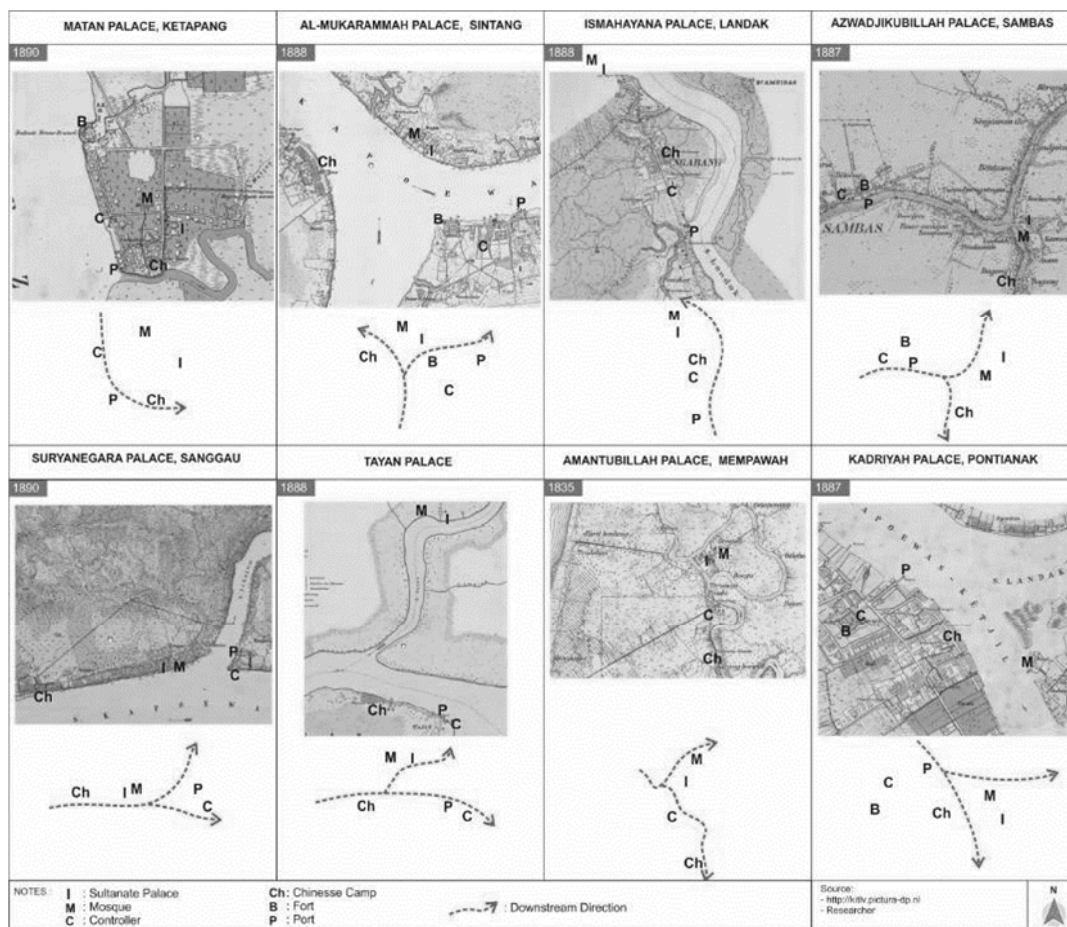


Fig. 2. The Placement of Controleur as Manifestation of Force by The Dutch Colonialist on Malay Sultanate Palaces Area in West Kalimantan.  
Source: Authors (2023)

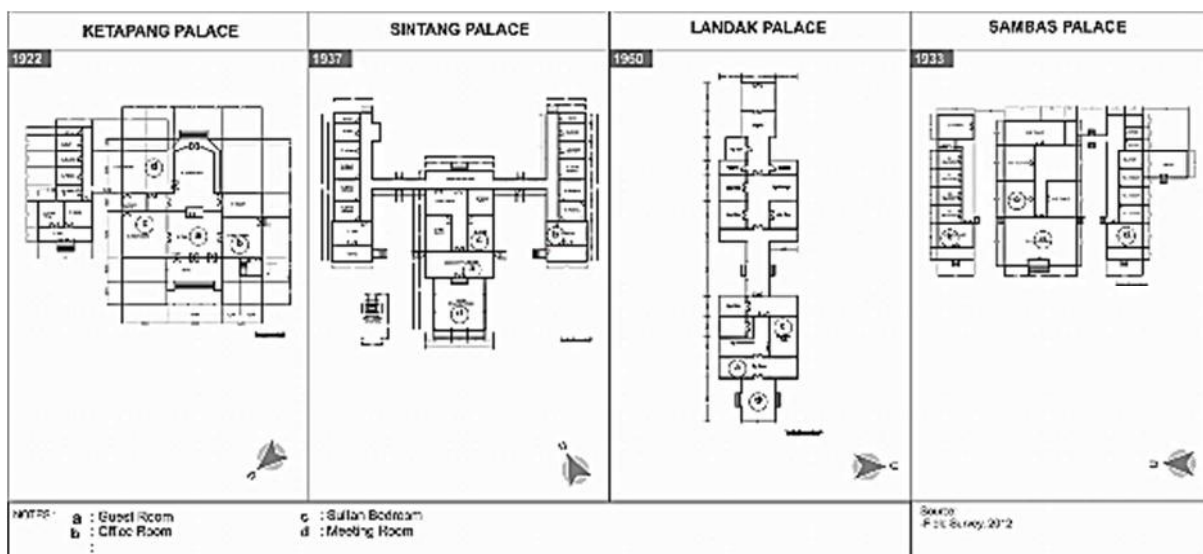
## 2) Coercion

Coercion is the threat of force or violence to secure compliance. Coercion is constructed as a latent power of an individual or group. It is applied in the built form to dominate or intimidate (spatial domination), honor (public monument), or respond with weapons (organizational space of control). Manifestations of coercion in architecture Malay sultanate palaces like dominating space in the sultanate palace area, as shown in Fig.2. The Dutch colonial must approve the placement of functions in the sultanate palace's land use. Dutch colonialists also put Chinese village or camp area functions around the palace and controller in each region. The area was mandated exclusively for the Chinese population; they could not inhabit similar locations as other ethnic groups (Aryodiguno, 2020). Chinese camp is a township of Chinese traders who helped the trade activities of the Dutch colony, thus facilitated by the Colonial (Utami, 2020). The Chinese quarter was under the leadership of a Chinese captain appointed by the Dutch. The Chinese villages are typically established next to a position or in the vicinity of the Dutch controller. The presence of the port/dock, which was used for trade at that time, usually facilitates the controller region and the Chinese quarter. All products are traded locally and externally through the dock. The existence of the fort is related to security interests. It is commanded by a captain. The position of the fort was around the controller. Even be unity with the controller.

The Dutch colonial government rarely practiced forms of coercion. They repeatedly led to resistance and rebellion in the sultanates to be dominated. In the architecture of the palaces, the forms of coercion used in the practice of power are refined with manipulation and seduction, which tends to be accepted.

## 3) Manipulation

Manipulation is a form of coercion that works by keeping the subject in a state of ignorance and unawareness of what is being done. Conditioned subjects are free to choose, but a hidden agenda exists. Manipulation can occur in a design distorted to produce a form of consent resulting from the manipulation. The colonial Dutch generally built sultanate palace architecture in this period to compensate affiliates and ethical policies (Palace of Matan, Landak, Sintang, and Sambas). In addition to constructing new buildings, the colonial party rehabilitated some buildings, such as the palaces of Pontianak and Sanggau. Practical interest has been dominant in the construction of spatial palaces. The interests of the colonial party are represented in space in the palaces. The presence of Sultan's office in each palace represents the sultanate as part of the subordination of power to the post of *Residen*/Assistant *Residen*. In the same way, the living room or meeting room is basically intended for a visit or meeting with the Dutch colonial. The throne room, where the king/sultan reigns, is largely abolished and replaced with a meeting room, except in the palaces of the Sultanate of Pontianak. The function of space changed at the sultanate palaces, as presented in Fig.3 below, while the other 4 (four) palaces showed no significant spatial changes.



**Fig. 3.** Changing in the function of space at the sultanate palace built by the Dutch colonial  
Source: Authors (2023)

The function of the palaces as part of the governmental structure of the Dutch East Indies is indicated by the office space for the resident/resident's assistant in the sultanate palaces. Similarly, the throne room is eliminated. It is replaced by a living room or a meeting room. This was done as part of the Dutch colonial effort to manipulate power. In the absence of the throne room, the king/sultan did not have containers/media to exercise his power. A living room or a conference room replaces the very sacred and monumental throne room. These rooms are more open and public. The Dutch colonial tried to minimize the intensity of the Sultan's power by manipulating the function of the spaces in the sultanate palaces.

#### 4) Seduction

Seduction is assumed to remain an act of manipulating the interests and desires of the subject. Seduction will shape the perception, cognition, and preference of someone to accept the rules that are in place (Luke, 1974). In this case, shaping the building as perceived and perceived is considered reasonable and can not be changed. The construction of a new sultanate palace financed by the colonial party is one of the forms of seduction carried out by the Dutch to the Sultanate. The palaces were constructed in the colonial period, and the colonial Dutch planned and built. There were similarities in a linear spatial pattern centered with three masses of buildings on the organizational pattern space built in the colonial period. In the middle of the building mass is the main building. The main building had a function as a lounge, Sultan's bedroom, and the Sultan's family bedroom. The building, which is on the left and right side of the space, acts as a support sultanate with the function of workspace, bedroom relatives of the Sultan, warehouses, and kitchens.

There are also a similarity and uniformity of palaces in the appearance and facade of the building. However, the height of the building is still monumental, and the palace is no longer a stage. The roof is a combination of gable and pyramidal shape. With a combination of panels and *krapyak*, the size of doors and windows in the palaces has a large dimension. Glass and metal materials were used in some palaces. There are several stained-glass windows at the front of the building in the palaces of the Matan Sultanate. No local or distinctive ornaments are found in the palaces. Only a few symbols of the Sultanate have been modified following the symbols of the European kingdoms (Fig. 4).



**Fig.4.** The Palaces built by Dutch Colonial During the colonial period. On the left is the Sultan's Palace of Sambas in 1920, while on the right is the Sultan's Palace of Sintang in 1937

Source: The photo on the left is retrieved from Syafei (2020), and on the right is retrieved from the Archive of Kementerian Pekerjaan Umum Republik Indonesia (2002).

No room is specially prepared for the throne room in the palaces built by the colonial party. The king/sultan only had a room for receiving guests and meetings and a room for rest (sleep) and his family. Some have placed the work room near the Sultan's bedroom (sultanate palaces of Matan, Sintang, and Sambas). This is related to his status as an Assistant *Residen*. The spatial representation is adapted to the limits of authority: Kings/Sultans were only responsible for domestic affairs and the community. The sultanate palace built before the colonial period (sultanate palace of Pontianak, Sanggau, and Tayan) has a throne room for a spacious room with an elongated form. This serves as the present reign of a king/sultan.

The Dutch colonialists tried seducing the sultanate party loyal to the colonial government by building a new sultanate palace. Seducing by building the palace was only to consolidate the influence

of Dutch colonial powers. The sultanate palaces' architecture has become synonymous with a representative office in other places in the Dutch East Indies colonial administration. The indigenous architecture of the Malay sultanate palaces has been lost and replaced by the Dutch East Indies architecture.

#### 5) Authority

The authority is associated with the community, state, and family institution. The authority marked with invalidates arguing, recognizing, and obeying. Symbols, rituals, and ceremonies usually legitimize authority. In such cases, the Dutch colonial had the authority as the ruling party and manipulated the status of sultanates, which automatically limited the Sultans' power and authority. With the formation of regions *Westeer-Afdeelling van Borneo 1886* by the colonial party, the Sultanate's ratification status and leadership positions were realized (Haryanti, 2023). It will affect the sultanate system with the change of status and leadership positions. The Sultanate system provides rules and laws made and set together with the Dutch colonial government. With such an arrangement, automatically, the sultanate party has been under the authority of the Dutch colonial government.



**Fig. 5.** Symbols Representing the Influence of the Power (Authority) of the Dutch Colonial Government on Malay Sultanate Palaces

Source: Authors (2023)

The Dutch colonial authorities' influence on the Malay sultanate's palatial architecture was reflected in the Sultanate's land use regulations and the new construction of the palace and symbolically in the Sultanate's architectural ornamentation. Few ornaments of buildings are found on palaces built by the Dutch colonial. Ornaments in buildings are on the roofs, and legs tend to be geometric. Ornaments are also made with other forms of irregular geometry as simple as possible on the doors and windows. In particular, the effect of the Dutch colonial authorities is substantial on the sultanate emblem (symbol kingdom). It has a sultan's crown icon or an icon like the royal crown in Europe. The symbol of the crown indicates the presence of the Dutch colonial governing authority in the government of the Sultanate. The sultanate symbols were found on the seat carving ornaments and decorating inside palaces and in the form of stamps and identity of another sultanate. Symbols shown in Fig.5 represent the authority of the Dutch colonial. In the palaces built by the colonial Dutch, there is a spacious space in front of the palaces (a patio or courtyard). This space was often used as a ceremonial arrival and welcoming of the Dutch colonial government representatives in the Sultanate. The welcome ceremony was part of the form of the Dutch colonial government of the power authority of the Sultanate.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Power is embedded in the built environment through the meanings inscribed in the social practices that govern. Sultanates underwent significant changes during the Dutch colonial period. The Dutch colonial administration is very much involved in the governance of the Sultanate. The sovereign authority is limited. Every policy has to be adopted by the Dutch colony. Laying the palaces of the Sultanate to be part of a subordinate power established by the Dutch colonial through the territorial division of *Westeer-Afdeelling van Borneo*. Dutch colonial efforts exerted force, coercion, manipulation, seduction, and authority to rule over the Malay sultanate in West Kalimantan. The architecture of the sultanate palaces represents an indirect manifestation of these practices. The colonial Dutch carried out power over architecture of the Malay sultanate palace to maintain and legitimize his

power. Power over architecture tends to take place through manipulation and seduction. These practices are latent and not direct. But they can force others to submit to and admit the governing party's authority.

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