

# **Looking into a Historical Mirror**

**How TU Delft's Global Housing studio has addressed or  
perpetuated colonialism and neo-colonialism while practicing  
in the Global South**

Rebecca Baugh

4570421

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## **Forward**

Before we delve into the contents of the thesis, I think it important to briefly introduce myself as the author and my positionality. I am British of Jamaican heritage, partially raised in the Netherlands. Having observed how histories of colonialism have been addressed, or better yet negated in these post-imperialist contexts, but having personally noted how these histories affect the present day, and as a student at a Dutch university I became implored to investigate the interrelation between colonialism, neo-colonialism, and architectural education.

## **Abstract**

Collaboration between the Global South and Global North is inevitable. It can work. It can be emphatic, effective, and more equal. However, there is a deeply embedded history of colonialism involving power asymmetries that give rise to the dismissal of value systems, which pervert this type of collaboration from being truly realised. Hence, within an architectural education framework, this thesis aimed to examine how TU Delft's Global Housing studio addresses or perpetuates colonialism and neo-colonialism while practicing in the Global South. The book, *Race and Modern Architecture: A Critical History from the Enlightenment to the Present*, edited by Irene Cheng, Charles L. Davis II and Mabel O. Wilson helped illuminate the historical context as it concerned the relationship between architecture and race. Additionally, Isabel Wilkerson's book, *Caste: The Lies That Divide Us*, provided a framework from which a stakeholder power dynamic analysis could be conducted. The thesis' conclusions illuminate how the studio addresses colonialism and neo-colonialism in their communication of intent and some of their actions. Contrastingly, the studio sustains elements of colonialism and neo-colonialism. For example, their definition of success is one-sided in terms of who benefits, while despite their intentions to be collaborative their use of language and approaches continue to communicate a "them versus us" narrative. This thesis is, however, an introduction to the continued work that is needed to address colonialism and neo-colonialism in architectural education.

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## Introduction

“Let bygones be bygones”. This is a common phrase used to negate exploration into colonialism. But the past, especially the colonial past, is not so simply forgotten. For example, several European imperial powers like the British, French and Dutch, relied on one of colonialism’s supporting pillars, slavery (Wilkerson, 2020). The Dutch operated slave trading fortresses along West Africa’s Gold Coast (present-day Ghana) for 270 years from 1612 to 1872 despite slavery being officially abolished in 1863 (African Studies Centre Leiden, 2020). Meanwhile, the British empire lasted for 414 years (although still to this day), nearly half a millennium, and the Dutch empire lasted for 373 years (Oxford Reference, 2012). This period relied on a culture of colonialism that largely involved exerting economic and political supremacy to establish unilateral power structures that are then dismissive of value and knowledge paradigms not born from the dominant colonial framework, the rejection of which is then used to reassert the superiority of colonisers over those being colonised (Amsler, 2016). The long-lasting history and impacts of this inherent and deeply entrenched culture have not only cemented a foundation for neo-colonialism but have also permeated even the deepest crevices of modern-day Western society, both explicitly and implicitly. This is only recently beginning to be confronted by the Western mainstream.

With regards to the perforation of colonialism and neo-colonialism in education, in previously colonised nations in the Americas, Africa and Asia, “educational models were imported from, when not imposed by, colonising countries” (Berlanda, 2017, p.69). This happens despite these models not reflecting the values or cultures of those affected communities (Berlanda, 2017). Contrarily, educational systems in colonising countries themselves, such as Britain, have undergone century-long processes of whitewashing where understandings of knowledge and knowledge dissemination are limited by colonial thinking that favours eurocentrism beyond European borders (Museum of British Colonialism, n.d.). Thus, this thesis aims to explore colonialism, neo-colonialism, and architectural education, especially their relation in Western universities.

In 1954, the Architectural Association (AA) in London launched their Department of Tropical Architecture, the first of its kind (Chang, 2020). The birth of tropical architecture, as it was presented by Western nations, was induced to assist Europeans better manage their tropical surroundings, environments of which were framed as uncomfortable, unhealthy and benighted in comparison to temperate European climates (Chang, 2020). The creation of the department aimed to educate practitioners as to how to do design in tropical zones. This trend instigated by the AA for Western architectural institutions to concern themselves with projects in the Global South soon picked up momentum. In his “Shades of Meaning” article, Toma Berlanda (2015) reviews such a course, Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s (MIT) “UNMaterial” design studio, which aimed to achieve the “maximum with the minimum” with material creativity in Kenya (Berlanda, 2015, webpage). Throughout, Berlanda highlights how these often well-intentioned projects are unsuccessful due to a lack of thorough comprehension of the social, political, cultural, environmental, and historical context in which they are working. Berlanda argues that the absence of this type of unpacking further feeds inequality and imbalanced power structures - part of colonialism’s legacy. He asserts that “the proliferation of the Western quest for exotic adventures has led to a new form of educational colonialism, where it is extremely hard to see how the important material means employed by foreign agents contribute to redress growing global inequality, or at the very least improve local capacities and skills” (2015, webpage).

After reading the article, and as a student of architecture at Delft University of Technology (TU Delft), I was elicited to investigate whether and how the architecture faculty also perpetuated modern-day

educational colonialism like Berlanda had described of MIT's practices. This aim was further galvanized after realising that there was little to no literature that explored this. Nonetheless, the Global Housing studio presented TU Delft's equivalent of MIT's UNmaterial studio and the University of London's Development Planning Unit, the successor of the AA's Department of Tropical Architecture. The Global Housing graduation studio was officially inaugurated in 2014 after participating in the 2010 Habitat Studio organized by Balkrishna Doshi, his Vastu-Shilpa Foundation, and CEPT University (Mota & van Gameren, 2018). It was created for students at TU Delft to engage with the "real deal" (Mota & van Gameren, 2018, p.35) of the "affordable housing crisis in [the rapidly urbanizing] Global South [where] there is an urgent need for critical pedagogies that are able to reconcile the spatial practices of a particular cultural setting with the performative potential of mass housing design" (Mota & van Gameren, 2018, p.36). Projects from the studio would be located in both Ethiopia and India.

This thesis, therefore, endeavours to examine the interrelation between architectural education, colonialism and neo-colonialism by way of a case study focusing on TU Delft's master's studio, Global Housing. The overarching research question that will guide the historical thesis reads, "How has TU Delft's Global Housing studio addressed or perpetuated colonialism and neo-colonialism when practicing in the Global South?"

### **Defining colonialism, neo-colonialism and its implications**

In order to grapple with what colonialism or neocolonialism are, we must first define imperialism. It is often understood that imperialism is the guiding ideology behind the *practice* of colonialism. For example, the former term involves the exercising of one country's political and economic power over another in a variety of ways including settlement, sovereignty, and/or implicit means of control (Kohn & Reddy, 2017). Contrarily, although colonialism also encompasses political and economic control, it specifically concerns the movement of people from one place to another where they become permanent settlers. Nonetheless, these populations retain their loyalty, whether that be political or economic, to their country of origin (Kohn & Reddy, 2017). Kwame Nkrumah, a Ghanaian revolutionary and the independent country's first Prime Minister and President coined the term "neocolonialism" preferring it to the less accurate "post-colonialism" which incorrectly implies the supposed death of colonialism and its descendants (Colsett, 2020). Instead, Nkrumah asserted in his book, *Neo-Colonial, The Last Stage of Imperialism* (1965), that neocolonialism is in fact the last born child of imperialism and the "most dangerous" as it maintains colonialist agendas in more implicit ways for the modern age (p. 1).

The colonisation of peoples and lands in the Americas, Africa and Asia by Europeans was often justified by so-called "civilizing missions" or humanitarian aid in the present day (Kohn & Reddy, 2017). These missions were intended to provide the requisite tutelage for "uncivilised" societies to progress from their "primitive" traditions and adopt the more "advanced" ways of European colonists. Nevertheless, colonialism itself depended on the dominance of one group to the detriment of another group's subjugation (Kohn & Reddy, 2017). Take the example of Namibia, formerly German Southwest Africa, and Germany. The arrival of German colonists brought with them several drastic schisms. In 1908 following the genocidal war with Namibia it was apparent that the German colonial state aimed to uphold their systematic practice of dispossession of African wealth and land (Cupers, 2020). Those who survived the war were to be pillaged of their land, culture and political organization to instead forcibly serve white employers (Cupers, 2020). This example illustrates the implications of colonialism concerning power asymmetries, which are further cemented by neo-colonialism. These imbalances then support the life of governing value paradigms that are dismissive of those not born in or from the dominant group.

## Methodology

Archival research in the form of reviewing Global Housing course curricula and descriptions along with interviews with professors, such as Nelson Mota the course coordinator, and PhD candidate, Anteneh Tola, and essay, "Dwelling with the Other Half: Architectural Education for the Design of Affordable Housing in the Global South" by Mota, and tutor and guest professor, Dick van Gameren, will provide the primary basis for which textual content analysis can be conducted. Nonetheless, sub-questions that will help unpack the all-embracing research question include, "what is (neo)colonialism in architecture and more specifically architectural education?". This background context will be retrieved from Irene Cheng, Charles L. Davis II and Mabel O. Wilson's 2020 book, *Race and Modern Architecture: A Critical History from the Enlightenment to the Present* that challenges and illuminates how racial thinking has irrevocably influenced principle concepts of modern architecture. Although this essential work abounds many papers from individuals active in the fields of architecture and race, the most relevant papers for the thesis include "Structural Racialism in Modern Architectural Theory" by Irene Cheng, "The invention of Indigenous Architecture" by Kenny Cupers, "Race and Tropical Architecture" by Jiat-Hwee Chang, and "Compartmentalized World" by Mark Crinson. Contrastingly, Isabel Wilkerson's book, *Caste: The Lies That Divide Us*, as well as Toma Berlanda's 2017 report, "De-colonizing Architectural Education: Thoughts from Cape Town", will provide a framework for evaluating how the Global Housing studio addresses or perpetuates colonialism and neo-colonialism.

To answer the overarching research question, the thesis' findings will then be organized into 4 main chapters, 2 of which respond to the previously introduced implications of colonialism and neo-colonialism. These chapters include; (1) a more detailed account of the historical context in which the Global Housing studio exists; (2) a comparison of the intentions fueling colonialism, neo-colonialism, and the studio; which will then be evaluated by way of (3) a comparative analysis of the stakeholders involved in colonialism, neo-colonialism, and the studio, and the power dynamics between them, (4) and finally comparative analysis of the value systems at play in colonialism, neo-colonialism, and the studio.



# Chapter 1: Historical context

## 1.1 The Importance of History

*"History, as nearly no one seems to know, is not merely something to be read. And it does not refer, merely, or even principally, to the past. On the contrary, the great force of history comes from the fact that we carry it within us, are unconsciously controlled by it in many ways, and history is literally present in all that we do."*

It is these words that Baldwin, a respected American writer and activist extraordinaire, expressed in his essay, "The White Man's Guilt", first published in *Ebony* magazine in 1965 (p.47). In the essay, Baldwin speaks of how continued racial oppression in the United States is upheld by white America's avoidance and perhaps fear to confront the country's histories. As was explained in the introduction, this thesis intends to examine how the Global Housing studio addresses or perpetuates colonialism and neo-colonialism to prevent further continuation of their unequal, unjust, and harmful impacts. Hence, historical contextualization will supplement the thesis' analyses throughout. Firstly though, this chapter will further explore the wider historical context in which the Global Housing studio exists. We will begin with an examination of the relationship between colonialism and architecture in the 19th and early 20th centuries, followed by a description of the relation between tropical architecture and architectural education.

## 1.2 Colonialism and Architecture

The essay, "Structural Racialism in Modern Architectural Theory" by Irene Cheng (2020), chronicles the omnipresence of racial thinking in architecture in 19th-century Europe. For example, Cheng articulates how most European architects and theorists, like Eugène Viollet-le-Duc and Antoine-Chrysostome Quatremere de Quincy, shared many racial beliefs. These included (1) humans being divided into various biological groups characterised by intellectual and physical traits, (2) the production of distinct building styles based on racial and cultural groups, (3) architecture being interpreted as markers for racial history in terms of evolution, hybridization and diffusion, and (4) the common consensus that a hierarchical scale of progress, ranging from primitive to modern, could be used to order different architectural forms and their creators.

This came as the result of the increasing prominence of emerging human sciences, such as race science, that informed the "epistemic legitimacy" (Cheng, 2020, p. 135) as well as rational and historically aware design theory that architects used (Cheng, 2020). Like the social structures used during colonialism, which are detailed in subsequent chapters, these beliefs generally served to feed Europeans' sense of perceived superiority. The "Tree of Architecture" (figure 1) featured in the first edition of Banister Fletcher's *A History of Architecture* in 1896, exemplifies this trope of Europeans considering themselves the global ambassadors for progress and historical development, while other peoples were doomed to historical and cultural stagnation (Gregg, n.d.). For example, the lower branches of the tree include architectural styles from the Americas, Asia and the Middle East like that of Peru, China and Japan. These thinner branches of the lower level contrast with those fuller-bodied branches of the Italian, Dutch and English architectural styles higher up. This hierarchy was used to signify the constant growth and evolution of European styles, while other non-European styles supposedly remained static.

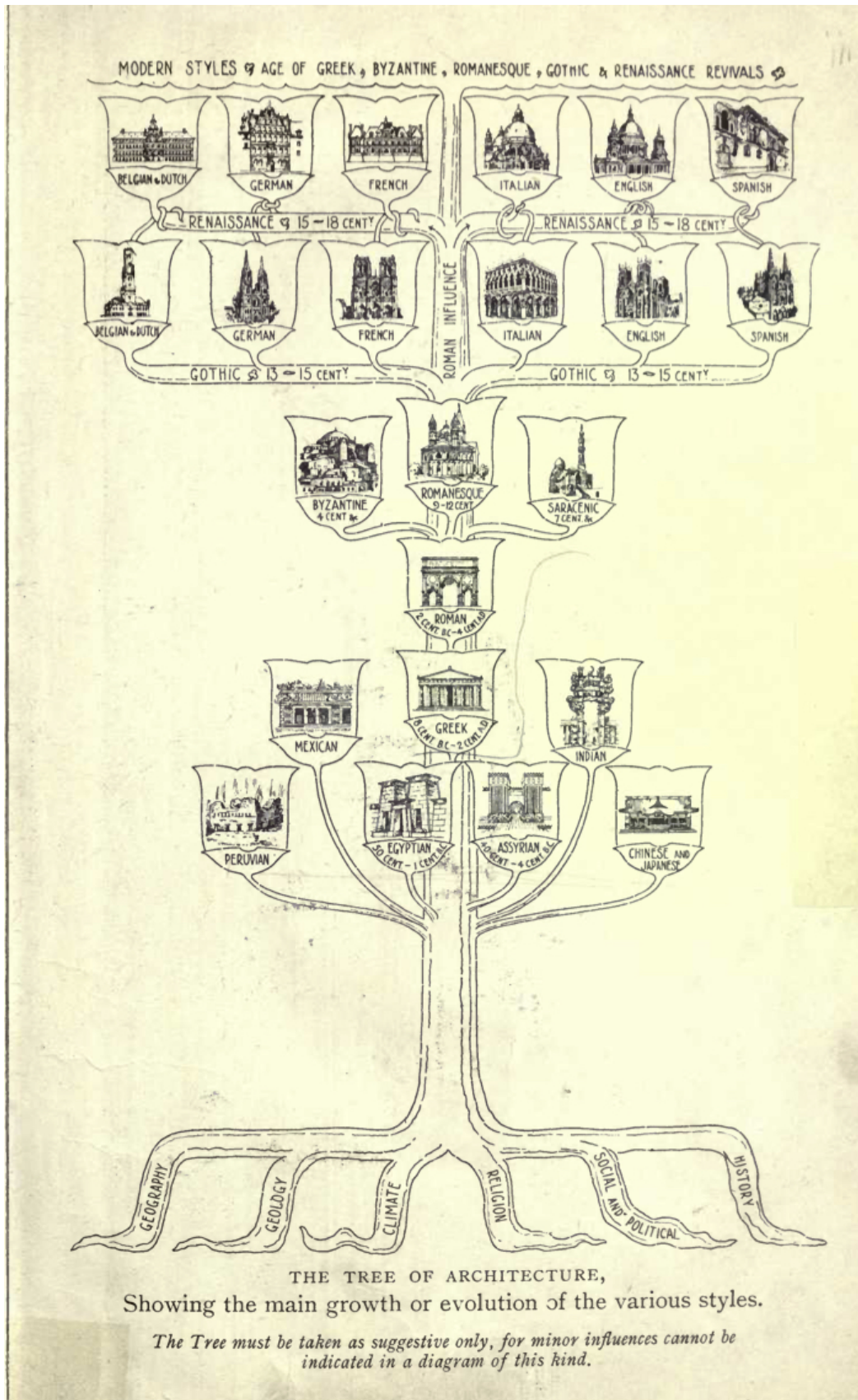


Figure 1: Fletcher, B. (1896). *A Tree of Architecture* [Diagram]. Retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Banister\\_Fletcher\\_\(junior\)#/media/File:TreeofArchitecture.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Banister_Fletcher_(junior)#/media/File:TreeofArchitecture.jpg)

This racial thinking, particularly the perceived superiority of Europeans, also translated to colonial tropical architecture. The design of tropical architecture was established to provide solutions for Europeans to be able to live in environments that were previously construed as injurious to their survival (Chang & King, 2011). In India, it provided the British with a means of cementing their presence and to exert biopolitical power. For example, tropical architecture was, up until the early 20th-century, largely designed by Europeans to cater to their own needs, where they realized cantonments and civil stations intended to distinguish their living quarters from the local population (Chang & King, 2011). Nevertheless, despite the unfamiliar surroundings, there was a rejection of indigenous knowledge and building practices. This is again reflective of the racialized colonial structure, where the dismissal showcases the belief that Europeans perceived themselves to be so advanced that they had nothing left to learn from indigenous people in the Americas, Africa and Asia.

Moreover, as time progressed into the 20th-century these racial theories continued to inform modernism. However, in this age, instead of being overtly visible, this history presented itself in the form of negation as opposed to open confrontation (Cheng, 2020). For example, in the 20th-century modernist architects advocated for an abstract, universal, and raceless aesthetic free of decoration, which was often considered undesirable and unacceptable (Chang, 2020). Nevertheless, despite these notions of universalism and racelessness, modernism continued to centrally position European architectural values in the global sphere. For instance, modernist architect Adolf Loos proclaimed that ornament was a “crime” that befitted the aesthetics of Papuans, criminals and others at the bottom of the evolutionary hierarchy but not the advanced European (Cheng, 2020). This belief mimics that of those visualised in “The Tree of Architecture”. Additionally, in its quest for a streamlined global architectural language to be showcased in the International Style Show at the Museum of Modern Art in 1932, perceived European superiority again took centre stage. Of the 62 published projects, only one was by a non-European or American architect, Mamoru Yamada of Japan (Cheng, 2020).

### **1.3 Tropical Architecture and Architectural Education**

Unlike tropical architecture’s origins, but in line with modernism’s “raceless” “universal” language, mid-20th century tropical architecture developed a more apolitical and ahistorical approach that was instead grounded in technical discourse (Chang & King, 2011). The creation of the Department of Tropical Architecture came after a conference on tropical architecture a year prior that was hosted by University College London (UCL) in 1953 (Wakely, 1983). The event was initiated by a Nigerian student, Adedokun Adeyemi, who had shared his dissatisfaction about the lack of transferability of architectural curricula taught in Britain to the Global South with Otto Koenigsberger (Wakely, 1983). The conference aimed to better prepare students to work in these contexts and in 1954 the AA’s Department of Tropical Architecture was born. The educational department was headed by Maxwell Fry who along with his wife, Jane Drew had been active architects in West Africa (Wakely, 1983; Berlanda, 2017).

By the late 1960s, the renamed Department of Development and Tropical Studies had demonstrated itself to be an influential force in spearheading the engagement of Western architectural institutions in South and Central America, Asia and Africa. These activities would only be enhanced after the Department’s creation of an “Extension Service” in 1972, which aimed to facilitate “short project-based courses in universities and professional training establishments” in the so-called Global South (Mota & van Gameren, 2018, p.34). Since then several Western architectural institutions have established similar courses. TU Delft’s Global Housing studio has thus followed in the footsteps of the AA, as well as the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich’s (ETH-Zurich) “Urban Laboratory - Addis Ababa” in collaborations with the Ethiopian Institute of Architecture, Building Construction and

City Development (EiABC), and the Catholic University of Leuven's (KU Leuven) "Modern Living in Contested Territories".

## Chapter 2: Intentions

### 2.1 The Power of Intention

Intention can be defined as having a goal or purpose in mind that an individual or collective aims to bring to fruition (Merriam Webster, n.d.). In other words, it is what directs subsequent action, which mirrors that original reason or motivation (Winfrey, 2021). It has long been acknowledged that intention is powerful. For example, in Lynne McTaggart's 2007 book, *The Intention Experiment*, she, alongside other scientists and universities, explored how intent can greatly impact our everyday lives ranging from altering the properties of seeds to make them grow faster to lowering occurrences of violence in conflict zones. Equally, in other contexts like business, intention has been credited as being an essential ingredient for guiding the desired process and response (Nayar, 2013). For instance, despite sharing well-formulated goals and visions with colleagues, without clearly communicating the intent behind them, people will not believe in them nor be inspired to act upon them (Nayar, 2013). Oprah Winfrey attributes this principle of intention to the success of her television programme, *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, which ran for 25 years with the endeavour to "uplift, enlighten, and entertain" (Winfrey, 2021, webpage). She explains how intent enabled better working communication between herself and her team, an effect of which McTaggart notes is a heightened sense of oneness spurred by group intention (McTaggart, 2007).

In their 2015 article, "Beyond Good Intentions", Todd Rogers, Katherine Milkman, Leslie John and Michael Norton, agree that while intentions are significant and powerful, following through on these intentions is equally salient. Their article focuses on the benefits of making concrete plans and recognizing the necessary steps for people to bring their intentions to life whether that be waking up earlier or committing to a healthier lifestyle. Thus, having established a definition for intention and understanding its impact, this chapter will continue to elaborate on the overarching intentions that fueled and fuel colonialism and neo-colonialism respectively. It later details the different methods that were and are used for these intentions to be realized. This will provide a foundation to afterwards examine and compare how these guiding intentions and methods differ or align with that of the Global Housing studio. The last sub-chapter also notes what the studio's intentions are in terms of addressing colonialism and neo-colonialism.

### 2.2 Colonialism and Intention

To build upon what was briefly described in the introduction, the foremost intent driving colonialism was the exertion of economic and political control by one country on another's to maximise economic gain and solidify the former's authoritative dominance (Kohn & Reddy, 2017). Take the instigation of railways in India, and henceforth the increased mobility of people, has often been used as a counter-argument to posit the benefits of colonialism. Nevertheless, Sashi Tharoor, a prominent author and Indian politician, explains otherwise in his book, *An Era of Darkness* (2016), and subsequent summative article, "'But what about the railways...?' The myth of Britain's gifts to India" (2017). The British vessel for colonialism in India, the East India Company, intended for the rail network to work to their advantage and not those of the ordinary Indian citizen in terms of "commerce, government and [asserting] military control in the country" (Governor General Lord Hardinge, 1943 as cited in Tharoor, 2017).

The railways were purposed to benefit Britain as transported resources such as cotton, iron ore, and coal were to be shipped to the British Isles where they were manufactured into garments. These goods were then (re)sold in India at strikingly high import and consumer tax rates (Tharoor, 2017). This devastated previously flourishing industries like the textile, steel and shipbuilding ones. The

modern advantage of railways for people to move from one place to another with relative ease was modified by the Indian people, it was not the aim of the British where there was only thought of doing so if it served their colonial interests (Tharoor, 2017). To vividly present the effects of this, in 1700, prior to British rule, India accounted for 27% of the world's GDP while in 1947 after its independence it accounted for just 3% after the UK had plundered and stolen from it (Tharoor, 2016 as cited in Asian Century Institute, 2019). This information demonstrates that to follow through on their intention of economic and political dominance, the British employed a one-sided benefit structure to exploit and relocate India's economic prosperity to Britain. Despite their claims of "civilizing" and "save" "lost" peoples, the British were detached from local realities, that is if they did not benefit them (Kohn & Reddy, 2017). This is reflected by the British leaving India in 1947 with a life expectancy of 27, a 16% literacy rate, and a population of whom 90% were living below what is now considered the poverty line (Tharoor, 2017).

### **2.3 Neo-colonialism and Intention**

Neo-colonialism's principal intention largely mirrors that of colonialism, where it is intended for one country to exercise economic and political control over another (Nkrumah, 1965). However, the mechanics function differently. Kwame Nkrumah (1965) explains that neocolonialism manifests in more covert and varied ways than its older predecessor. Meaning that from its exterior appearance a country may appear independent and sovereign. Nonetheless, this is deceptive as the nation's inward economic and political workings are dictated by external powers who are able to use the guise of foreign investment or humanitarian aid to exploit as opposed to develop the country (Nkrumah, 1965).

For example, in 2012, the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition (NAFSN) was inaugurated by the Group of Eight (G8), consisting of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and the European Union, as well as 10 African nations including Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal and Tanzania, private corporations, and aid donors (European Parliament, 2015). Mark Langan, the author of *The Moral Economy of EU Association with Africa*, explains that outwardly, the NAFSN intended to put an end to hunger by developing recipient nations' agricultural productivity (European Parliament, 2015). Furtively though, they were perceived as enabling land grabbing by creating agricultural corridors that were intended to benefit NAFSN's corporate partners leaving local subsistence farmers dispossessed of their land and livelihood (Langan, 2017). This detachment and outright disregard of their intentions for local farmers can be likened to the theft of Indian resources and industries by the British, which left the former country in staggering poverty as was explained previously. Despite this, however, the NAFSN's aims were supported by the UK's Department for International Development (UK DFID), the US's Agency for International Development (USAID), and publicly warranted in regards to contributing to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (Langan, 2017). Note that again these agents of neo-colonialism use a guise of saviorism, like colonialisms' "civilising missions" instead presented in the form of alleviating poverty, to pursue their own one-sided interests.

### **2.4 The Global Housing Studio and Intention**

Broadly speaking, the Global Housing studio's overarching intentions largely concern employing Dutch building traditions that "could generate ideas on how to deal with developments in the Global South", which include rapid urbanization and mass housing (Mota & van Gameren, 2018, p.38). This corresponds with the goals of the AA's Department of Tropical Architecture discussed in the previous chapter. The studio approach to do this is twofold, where they engage with both education and research. Concerning education from 2014 to 2020, the studio aimed to expose students to

“challenges that they would otherwise not be exposed to” (Mota, 2021). This would be facilitated by 2-week excursions to either Addis Ababa or Mumbai where students interact with local people and learn about their realities (Mota et al, 2014; 2015; 2016; 2017; 2018; 2019; 2020). These experiences would equip students with necessary skills to contribute to answering questions like, “where will all these new urban dwellers live?” and “how will these new urbanites dwell” (Mota et al, 2014; 2015; 2016; 2017; 2018; 2019; 2020), in the hopes of nurturing better professionals and practitioners for the future. Nevertheless, due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, students have had considerably less first-hand exposure and instead have to rely on secondary interpretations (Mota, 2021). Nonetheless, comparatively, the studio’s overarching intentions greatly juxtapose that of colonialism and neo-colonialism in regards to the latter’s ruthless, explicit or implicit, intent to further one party’s economic and political dominance over another. In contrast, the studio articulates an intention to partake in solutions pertaining to societal shifts, which is complemented and supplemented by ongoing research, by PhD candidates like Anteneh Tola (Tola, 2021).

Pertaining to addressing colonialism and neo-colonialism, the Global Housing studio also expressed their intentions to do so. Firstly, the course coordinators acknowledge the “looming” presence (Mota, 2021; Mota & van Gameren, 2018) of colonialism and neo-colonialism on the studio. Mota and van Gameren continue by recognizing how this could take place as they reference Paola Antonelli (2012) who warned of the obscure boundary between “social design”, which can verge on being sincerely involved in bettering human welfare, and further “an imperialistic or post-colonial agenda disguised as humanitarian support and relief” like that of NAFSN (Mota & van Gameren, 2018, p.44-45).

To avoid the latter from occurring as well as bring their main intention to life, the studio asked and discussed what their partners in Ethiopia and India actually want and need as opposed to mistakenly pursuing their own disconnected goals (Mota, 2021). By doing this the studio aimed to minimize the detachment and disregard of local realities, one-sided benefit, and feelings of superiority, as demonstrated by both the British in India and NAFSN. In our interview, Mota continued to explain how the studio operates in places in which it has an existing network. Anteneh Tola, a PhD candidate from Ethiopia who closely works with the studio, elaborated that having an established network was beneficial for the studio to directly contact local universities. Such institutions include the Ethiopian Institute of Architecture, Building, Construction and City Development (EiABC) in Addis Ababa and Kamla Raheja Vidyanidhi Institute of Architecture and Environmental Studies (KRVI) in Mumbai (Course Descriptions 2012-2021). When TU Delfts students would travel to Ethiopia or India, they would then share personal experiences as well as those regarding architecture, exchanges of which would allow for “fruitful cross-pollination” and mutual benefit between the different parties (Mota, 2021 & Tola, 2021, p.45). These elements are all a part of the studio’s aim to be collaborative. However, compounded with these intentions - to be connected to local realities, be collaborative and henceforth foster mutual exchange, are imbalanced power dynamics between the different stakeholders that influence the impact of them. This will be explored in the following chapter.

## Chapter 3: Stakeholders and Power Dynamics

### 3.1 The Natural World, Colonialism, Stakeholders, and Power Dynamics

Hierarchy is an embedded element of the natural world. Wilkerson (2020) describes the presence of hierarchy using a canine analogy. She highlights how the terminology and social hierarchy of canines have trickled into human culture, where terms such as alpha male, underdog and pack mentality are routine. Nevertheless, she explains how canine specialists, like Richard McIntyre, are trying to redefine the common misconceptions people have of these terms. For instance, true alphas possess quiet confidence, which helps support other members of a pack to go about their tasks. Contrarily, the omega, the lowest-ranking pack member, acts as the social glue who allows for frustrations to be expressed without it escalating to war. Every wolf assumes a role that plays to their natural strengths as opposed to their standing within a historical construct. Nevertheless, the same cannot be said of humans within a colonial context.

Although not exclusive to colonialism or neo-colonialism, as its origins predate both, Wilkerson (2020) presents an important mechanism that enables them, caste. Caste is detailed as an “invisible program” (p.33) that is;

*“The granting or withholding of respect, status, honor, attention, privileges, resources, benefit of the doubt, and human kindness to someone on the basis of their perceived rank or standing in hierarchy...[caste] is the worn grooves of comforting routines and unthinking expectations, patterns of a social order that have been in place for so long that it looks like the natural order of things.”*

Caste depends on having and reaffirming the roles of the dominant and subordinate castes, to, for example, allow for colonists to fulfill their one-sided intentions of economic and political supremacy. During colonialism, caste hierarchies were often dictated by skin colour or other physical traits that were deemed non-European (Wilkerson, 2020). Nevertheless, class, gender, and so forth also contributed to an individual's social identity and lived experience. Unlike the social systems governing wolf packs, in colonial caste hierarchies those with white skin were deemed superior regardless of individual aptitude. However, those with darker complexions were labelled inferior where they were to be subservient and convinced that they had no talents or intelligence to offer the world other than those required to serve their superiors (Wilkerson, 2020). For instance, within the architectural field, prominent figures like Viollet-le-Duc were strongly influenced by race theorists of the 19th century. For example, in regards to Gothic architecture and its connection to race, Viollet-le-Duc believed that the white race, the dominant caste, had a unique disposition to practicality, innovation, and rationality, qualities that were mirrored in the architecture produced (Cheng, 2020). He was aghast that the immense structures of Tulum, Uxmal, Chichen and Itza were created by indigenous inhabitants of the Americas and instead insisted that the responsibility must lie elsewhere, namely on Europeans (Cheng, 2020).

As was evidenced above, caste gave way to severe asymmetries of power between the varying stakeholders who were considered to be dominant or subordinate in status. This imbalance has also transferred to neo-colonialism. For instance, in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), Africa is the only continent to have no permanent seats in the 26-seat Council, despite Africa accounting for the majority of issues on the agenda (Cheikh Niang as cited in United Nations, 2020). This example demonstrates the dangers of perpetuating these inequalities including the silencing of historically subordinated castes in favour of listening to those less competent but dominant, which differs from



dynamics within wolf packs where each member plays to their strengths. This then inevitably involves the loss of valuable knowledge as a result of perceived superiority, as knowledge that does not originate from governing European ones is dismissed. Hence, this chapter identifies who the different stakeholders in the Global Housing studio are to then examine how the studio addresses or perpetuates these power disparities.

### **3.2 The Global Housing Studio and Stakeholders**

The Global Housing studio involves stakeholders from different geographies, who have historically claimed contrasting roles within the colonial caste hierarchy. According to this model, TU Delft assumes the role of the dominant caste, a European, specifically Dutch institution at the top of the hierarchy. Contrarily, the studio's partners in Ethiopia, the Ethiopian Institute of Architecture, Building Construction and City Development (EiABC), and Indian partner, the Kamla Raheja Vidyanidhi Institute of Architecture and Environmental Studies (KRVIA) as well as local experts assume the subordinate caste positions. Amongst the student population as a result of the diversity of TU Delft students, although few come from Africa (Mota, 2021), they assume varying caste roles depending on their racial background and nationality (Mota, 2021; Mota & van Gameren, 2018). Contrastingly, Ethiopian and Indian students in respective partner universities assume historically subordinate caste roles (Wilkerson, 2020). Lastly, the other stakeholders involved; however, not mentioned or named in course descriptions, essay or interviews, are the beneficiaries - the end users, of these figurative projects.

### **3.3 The Global Housing Studio, Stakeholders and Power Dynamics**

After establishing who the different stakeholders are, we will now explore what the power dynamics are between them, by way of success and language, to identify how the studio addresses or perpetuates this mechanism of colonialism and neo-colonialism. Firstly, to establish how the studio perceives these power dynamics though, during our interview Mota (2021) acknowledged that these power imbalances exist while he also expressed discomfort that they do. For example, both Mota (2021) and Tola (2021) explain how TU Delft students are generally more easily able to travel to Ethiopia or India. However, because of global structures that are imbalanced in power, the opposite - inviting students from EiABC or KRVIA, is more challenging due to increased fees for visas, as well as differing income levels (Mota, 2021; Tola, 2021). In an attempt to leverage them Mota continues by saying, "we tried not to suddenly land on these places and say these are our recipes to how things could work and let's implement them here." However, perhaps also the result of colonialism and the varying dexterities in which the subordinate caste handle oppression, Mota continues, "sometimes we also felt that that was expected from us".

#### **3.3.1 Success and Power Dynamics**

Success, which in this context is bound to the acknowledgement of who benefits from an accomplished aim, can illuminate power dynamics. Harking back to the intentions chapter, before British colonisation, India accounted for 27% of the world's GDP in 1700; however, it accounted for just 3% after its independence in 1947 (Tharoor as cited in Asian Century Institute, 2019). It is clear that the beneficiaries of colonialism were the British, the dominant caste in the colonial hierarchy, while India suffered immeasurably. In a neo-colonial context, the NAFSN advantaged the G8 and their corporate partners, the dominant caste with a neo-colonial hierarchy, while local farmers and communities were disadvantaged.

Similarly, when asked about his definition of the studio's success, Mota (2021) explained that,

*“the most gratifying part of this is when the students exactly acknowledge that this was an experience that helped them think about architecture in a completely different way. And seeing that this is not really about the creative genius especially while being engaged in these studios, they realise how you are just part of the bigger process, where of course design matters and your role as a designer matters, but it has to be brought together with many other aspects in the decision-making process”.*

As is exemplified by this interview excerpt as well as essays course descriptions, it becomes clear that the Global Housing studio identified and continues to identify the benefits for TU Delft students. However, like the British in India or the G8 and their corporate partners, a unilateral power structure is in operation that renders the mutual benefit for the studio's Ethiopian or Indian partners to be less thoroughly considered. This attitude echoes Nkrumah's sentiment where he asserts that practitioners of neo-colonialism have power void of any moral responsibility for those whom they are exercising it on (1965). The studio's actions conflict with their intention of being collaborative, as they instead present a very one-sided narrative of success. Mota seems to agree with this though, as he says, “that is something that I think could be improved” (2021). He goes on to explain, showing some awareness of the issue, that the book, *Global Housing: Dwelling in Addis Ababa*, by him and van Gameren, only features projects that were developed by TU Delft students. To better this for the future, Mota would like to “include contributions from local students on collaborative assignments so that we would actually be working together” (2021). So for future Global Housing elective studios, staff are developing a parallel program to collaborate with postgraduate students from the University of Sao Paulo (Mota, 2021).

### **3.3.2 Saviorism and Power Dynamics**

Related to the idea of success and who benefits, is the idea of who brings success. The notion of saviorism is closely bound with the justifications for colonialism, and therefore can further illustrate the power dynamics at play. As was mentioned in the introduction, European colonialism was often justified by supposed “civilizing missions” where colonists would impart their apparently much needed values, knowledge and culture onto “uncivilized” people to elevate them from their “backwards” ways (Kohn & Reddy, 2017). This echoes the previously discussed colonial belief that Europeans were more advanced and equipped with skill sets to save people. This notion mirrors that of saviorism, or the White Savior Industrial Complex (WSIC), although the term does not strictly apply to only white people. Teju Cole (2012) describes the White Savior Industrial Complex as a space in which people from the West go to Africa to become “godlike saviors (...) under the banner of ‘making a difference’” (webpage).

It could be perceived that the Global Housing studio perpetuates the WSIC when they speak of the differences between the Global South and North. For instance, Mota (2021) explains how, concerning the means, not the capacity or teaching staff, intuitions in the Global North have “power that is simply not matched with those from the Global South”. For example, “there is not so much of a tradition of PhD education in sub-Saharan Africa. So if you want to get a PhD, it's very hard to find a PhD in architecture. So typically you'd have to go and pursue them abroad” (Mota, 2021). Thus, in response, TU Delft, and the studio can afford to do exchanges, where students from the Global South have “opportunities to get exposed to these global phenomena, exposure to different cultures, different places, travelling” by coming to study at Delft. Additionally, through research projects and (fellowship) grants, the studio has offered placements to 2 Ethiopian, 1 Indian, 1 South African students in the

Netherlands, and 1 South Korean student in Uganda, to complete their PhDs. Their presence is “instrumental in strengthening the dissemination of knowledge and education” (Mota, 2021). Nevertheless, despite the undertones of implicit bias favouring eurocentric, now global educational standards (to be further explored in the value systems chapter), this expression by the studio is suggestive of them trying to equalise power relations in a world that values Western paradigms as opposed to perpetuating the WSIC.

However, in the course descriptions introducing Addis Ababa or Mumbai, the studio frames these locations in terms of the challenges they are facing. For example, from 2016/17 to 2019/20, the texts explain how there will be an additional 2.5 billion urban dwellers over the course of the next 3 decades, while 850 million people in the Global South lived in slums as of 2014, which is helpful information (Mota, 2016; 2017; 2018; 2019). Nevertheless, the studio does not equally detail what Ethiopia or India have to offer beyond their challenges, while the studio still explains what they offer. In the context of colonial saviorism and the WSIC, the absence of such information implicitly feeds notions of heroism on the studio’s behalf.

### **3.3.3 The Role of Language and Power Dynamics**

Language is often accredited as being an essential component of culture, where it acts as a vessel to communicate thoughts, beliefs and customs (Shakib, 2011). During colonialism, language acted as a divisive instrument to reassert the dominance of the higher caste over the subordinate caste. For example, “native” was a general term used to refer to people from Africa, Asia and the Americas. Nevertheless, the term adopted derogatory connotations of primitivism and cultural inferiority that was used to distinguish Europeans from their non-European counterparts (First Nations & Indigenous Studies, 2009; Dictionary.com, n.d.).

As was detailed in the intentions chapter, the Global Housing studio intends for it to be collaborative; nonetheless, their use of language continues to perpetuate a “them versus us” narrative communicated during colonialism. For instance, throughout interviews with the course coordinator as well as essays, the studio repeatedly uses the term “the other” or “the other half; the economically weaker sections of society” (Mota, 2021; Mota & van Gameren, 2018, p.35) while showing little attempt to reconcile this to create “the we”. The studio seems to justify the use of this term by highlighting its attempt to respond to and build on Charles Abrams’ 1964 *Man’s Struggle for Shelter*. In the book, Abrams posits the “importance of education to solve the housing problems affecting the developing world” (Mota & van Gameren, 2018, p.34). The book’s target audience included a privileged minority who were otherwise unaware of the problems affecting the “developing” world (Mota & van Gameren, 2018). In Berlanda’s 2017 essay, “De-colonising Architectural Education”, he affirms that collaboration between architects and architectural educators in Africa, Asia and South America, and the West is inevitable. However, this participation of foreign professionals causes doubt as to the extent and nature of which the cooperation can be effective. Reconciling the “we” to form a team can help address this power imbalance to make this partnership positively impactful.

A further example of language being used to establish notions of perceived superiority and division between the different stakeholders within the caste hierarchy was the imposing of colonial languages. This was enforced without effort to equally learn indigenous African, Asian or American languages (referring to both North and South America). English is now a global lingua franca (House, 2012) that can be used to aid communication between people of different linguistic backgrounds. Nevertheless, in the course of British colonial rule in India, English was taught only to serve the needs of the colonisers, and originally this only imparted to a select few (Tharoor, 2017). In his infamous *Minute on Education*, Lord Macaulay (1835) explains, “we must do our best to form a class who may be

interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of person, Indians in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect” (as cited in Tharoor, 2017). Equally, the German Settlement Commission imposed a German system of settlement and language on Polish and Namibian pastoralists to ensure that they felt at home whilst being far away (Cupers, 2020).

In comparison, the Global Housing studio did attempt to use and recognize local languages. For example, in their 2014/15 course descriptions, Amharic words such as *tukul*, *kebele* and *kasanchis* are used to refer to the vernacular house, informal house and colonial housing models, respectively. In the 2017/18 course description as well as essay, *sefer*, the Amharic word for neighbourhood is used. This encourages students to familiarize themselves with the context they will be working in while simultaneously alerting them of cultural nuances. In the 2014/15 course description, however, the English translation appears first, with Amharic words then italicized in parenthesis. This order can be suggestive of the historical power dynamics at play while also lessening the power and accuracy of those terms. Additionally, in all of the documents and interviews there is no further indication that students are exposed to Amharic prior to the field trip in more recent years, although they interact with local students from EiABC who translate for them (Mota, 2021). From the assessed course material and interviews, it was unclear whether students became acquainted with Hindi, Marathi or Gujarati while in Mumbai, which is troubling if they are to understand the context.

Linguists Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf, posit that language shapes our understanding of the world, meaning that these understandings are limited by the tools that the language(s) we speak offer (as cited in Evans, 2015). Thus, by using other languages we allow ourselves to be exposed to realities, knowledge, and ideas that exist and are expressed in other contexts to inform and deepen our own. For instance, Africa’s “ubuntu” largely means “I am because we are” which could develop the West’s understanding of the interconnectedness between people, the environment, and community (James Ogude, 20118 as cited in Paulson, 2020, webpage). By the British insisting on Indian people learning the English language and “intellect”, the Germans imposing their language on Namibian and Polish people to ensure feelings of comfort, and the Global Housing studio inconsistently using other languages, they disadvantage themselves from learning more. In specific regards to the studio and how students communicate with their beneficiaries and context, only using English can restrict their understanding of cultural nuance and hence their eventual designs.

## **Chapter 4: Value Systems**

### **4.1 The Significance of Value Systems**

Values can be defined as standards that are used to inform the actions and priorities of individuals and collectives to achieve certain goals (Igobin, 2011). Berlanda posits that the selection and dissemination of knowledge are indicative of who holds power and what their value systems are (2017). In regards to the thesis, examining colonialism, neo-colonialism, and the Global Housing studio's value systems can be representative of how the studio addresses or perpetuates colonialism and neo-colonialism.

### **4.2 Colonialism, and Knowledge and Value Systems**

Value systems governing colonialism largely revolved around the exertion of economic and political dominance where individualism enabled ruthless economic exploitation (Igobin, 2011). As was described in the historical context chapter, colonial values also largely centered around 19th-century racial thinking, where Europeans were regarded as beacons of human advancement and evolution while African, Asian and Indigenous people of the Americas were considered static, backwards and unenlightened (Cheng, 2020). This led to a rejection of value systems that did not originate from European paradigms. For example, colonialists perceived agriculturalism as primitive, and as the Gikuyu, an African tribe native to East Africa, lived off the land, they were deemed backwards. Nonetheless, this belief caused colonists to dismiss and misunderstand the Gikuyu connection to the natural world, where the earth was the "mother" of the tribe who acted as a medium to sustain communion with ancestral spirits (Crinson, 2020).

### **4.3 Neo-colonialism and Value Systems**

The United Nations has often been perceived as a vessel for colonialist and neo-colonialist agendas (Sadiku, 2016). For example, similarly to colonialism, economic progression is highly valued in neo-colonialism, as is demonstrated by the United Nations Economic and Social Council's (ECOSOC) naming of economics as the first of the three pillars underpinning sustainable development. Nevertheless, in a more modern era, this value is supplemented by those of environmental and social development, which have now become universal defaults (United Nations Economic and Social Council, n.d.; Sadiku, 2016). Igobin argues how the values of globalised concepts, like the UN's understanding of sustainable development, "theoretically align with positive values but practically deny it." (p.98). For example, although the UN preaches universalism, their values are rooted in European and North American systems that perpetuate notions of European superiority which silence other value systems. Take the case of the UN Security Council described in the stakeholders chapter. Most of the issues on their agenda pertain to Africa; however, of the 26 seats, there are no seats permanently occupied by Africans (Cheikh Niang as cited in United Nations, 2020).

Moreover, in 2015 the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were put into effect with the intention of establishing universal aims to address the political, environmental and economic challenges affecting the world (United Nations Development Programme, n.d.). The SDGs were conceived 3 years prior in 2012 at the Rio +20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development with 50,000 attendees (Romero & Broder, 2012). The number of participants was intended to outwardly represent the inclusivity of the SDGs. Nonetheless, Raoni Metukire, a chief of Brazil's indigenous Kayapó tribe, explained how he found himself repeating what he had expressed regarding deforestation at a similar conference 20 years prior because what he had to say was neither listened to nor respected (Romero & Broder, 2012).

## 4.4 The Global Housing Studio and Value Systems

Nevertheless, despite the aforementioned context of the UN and the SDGs perpetuating colonial value systems of power asymmetries, the SDGs positively impacted the Global Housing studio's, which framed many of its values within SDGs. For example, they consistently repeat rhetoric surrounding sustainability and inclusivity (Mota, 2014; 2015; 2019; 2020). These goals positively prompted the studio to investigate how architecture, specifically housing solutions, could contribute to promoting inclusive, sustainable development in Africa, Asia and South America (Mota & van Gameren, 2018). Questions that drove this inquiry included,

*“What is the role of the architect in the politics of affordable housing? To what extent can travelling experts become instrumental to activate design solutions that accommodate vernacular social and spatial practices? How can design expertise be used to enable citizen’s participation in design decision-making processes? Which design solutions can be implemented to stimulate capacity building and enhance job opportunities in the construction sector?”*

### 4.4.1 Knowledge Canons

Berlanda explains how colonial epistemological constructs typically invalidated local forms of history and values, in favour of upholding eurocentric design and knowledge canons, which are indicative of the power distributions at play. For example, both the AA's Department of Tropical Architecture and MIT's UNMaterial studio utilized knowledge canons that originated from Western-centric value systems (Wakely, 1983). This occurred without equally valuing the local forms of knowledge that were better grounded in the political, social and economic contexts of the projects which ultimately led to the courses' perceived irrelevance or failure (Wakely, 1983 & Berland, 2015).

Equally, the Global Housing studio demonstrated a Western-centric hegemony of education by way of implicit bias. For example, in the 2014/15 studio, Le Corbusier's modernist plan for Chandigarh was used as an investigative backdrop for the students to examine loopholes in the city's master plan and building typologies (Mota, 2014). This information was also presented in Mota and van Gameren's 2018 essay. It is reasonable to discuss the knowledge canons that you are familiar with, however in this colonial and neo-colonial context, not equally demonstrating how the studio used other canons of knowledge can feed into racial thinking of the 19th-century. Furthermore, the studio continues to express Westerncentricism by way of implicit bias. Nonetheless, before delving into an example of how this is illustrated, we must first establish a common understanding of what implicit bias is. Implicit bias works as a mechanism to subtly maintain colonial power structure and value paradigms, as it manifests in the media, film and so forth. An analogy by Wilkerson to describe implicit bias reads,

*“This is a wonderful person who has sympathy for the bad things that have happened in the past, but that person is still an American [or European] and has been fed the larger stereotypes of blacks that are deeply embedded in the culture of this society. So, despite holding no explicit racial prejudices, they nonetheless hold implicit bias that’s deep in their subconscious. They have all these negative images of African Americans [or someone from the Global South] so that when they meet an African American [or someone from the Global South], although self-consciously they are not prejudiced, the implicit biases nonetheless operate to shape their behavior. This discriminatory behaviour is activated more quickly and effortlessly than conscious*

*discrimination, more quickly than saying, 'I've decided to discriminate against this person' (David R. Williams as cited in Wilkerson, 2020).*

In the studio's first editions in 2014//15 and 2015/16, it outlines how (Mota et al, 2014, p.1; 2015, p.1),

*"Outside the known European context, we are invited to develop other positions, approaches and techniques as a response to particular cultural, social, environmental, political and economical conditions. For instance, other forms of dwelling and collectivity **may** exist, based on different social patterns and different family structures".*

This articulation of this thought, particularly the use of "may", suggests that there are no other dwelling paradigms to be found in the places that the studio locates its projects. This juxtaposes its intention to be collaborative, where students from TU Delft and EiABC exchange knowledge, as it instead unknowingly communicates the colonial racial belief that due to the superiority of Western thinking, no other knowledge paradigms are as advanced and therefore beneficial for progress. Therefore, it could also be beneficial for the course to facilitate the challenging of students' implicit biases. Anteneh Tola (2021) posits that engaging with such themes is an individual responsibility. Nevertheless, deconstructing colonialism and neo-colonialism are structural and systemic issues, it could also be added that the studio has a responsibility to address the implicit bias it has internalized. Nonetheless, during interviews and newer course descriptions, there is a greater appreciation for knowledge that exists beyond the Western paradigm. For instance, Mota (2021) explains,

*"Many aspects of the built environment and of a particular physical and social ecology were not the result of educated professionals. They were, instead, determined by vernacular social and spatial practices. In other words, by ordinary people. In our pedagogic approach, we stimulate the students to pay attention to these, as much as (if not more) than to examples or references coming from educated professionals."*

Although the use of the word "educated" is disputed, as it conforms to the limited Western understanding of education taking place at universities and other such institutions. But are there not other pluralities and ways of being "educated"?

## Conclusion

In response to the research question, “how has TU Delft’s Global Housing studio addressed or perpetuated colonialism and neo-colonialism when practicing in the Global South?”, much can be discerned. Firstly, the studio communicates no aim of adopting the intentions that fueled colonialism and continue to drive neo-colonialism, which largely concerned the exercising of economic and political dominance. Instead, the studio shares an intention of exposing its students to new realities where they will be a part of generating solutions that respond to societal developments, which is then supported by long-term research. This is in the hope that these experiences will equip students with skills to be better practitioners of architecture. Moreover, the studio expressly articulates an intent to address colonialism and neo-colonialism where the studio is collaborative in nature.

In regards to the studio’s intent to address colonialism and neo-colonialism by being collaborative, their actions work to both confront and sustain colonialism and neo-colonialism. For example, there is an acknowledgement of the power inequalities between the studio’s different stakeholders as it pertains to educational partners. For example, TU Delft assumes the role of the dominant caste in colonial hierarchies, while EiABC and KRVA assume historically subordinate roles. To equalise this inherited structure, the studio has consciously made an effort to ask their partners in Ethiopia and India what is needed and wanted, instead of imposing their own agenda. Also, the studio invites students from the Global South to complete PhDs at TU Delft. Nevertheless, although not entirely savioristic in principle, by framing Ethiopia and India in terms of their challenges, without equally highlighting what they have to offer, there is an element of heroism.

However, the studio continues to simultaneously maintain these imbalance systems, as can be demonstrated by their definition of success. Colonialism and neo-colonialism present one-sided narratives of success. This is mirrored by the studio’s definition of success largely pertaining to TU Delft students without much thoughtful consideration for how their Ethiopian and Indian partners are to benefit. For example, in the book, *Global Housing: Dwelling in Addis Ababa*, which chronicles student projects from the studio, there are no additions by Ethiopian or Indian students. Additionally, the studio uses diction that preserves a “them versus us” rhetoric by their frequent expression of “other” to refer to the Global South. Both of these examples conflict with the studio’s intention of being collaborative.

Similarly, building on diction, language was and is used as an instrument to assert caste hierarchies during colonialism and neo-colonialism. To address this mechanism of control, the studio included Amharic words like *tukul* and *kebele* in their earlier course descriptions. Nevertheless, the manner in which they are presented alludes to colonial hierarchies, while there is no further indication in course descriptions, essays or interviews that students are exposed to Amharic, Hindi, Marathi or Gujarati in later years. The absence of learning the basics or elements of these languages would impede the studio’s intentions of again being collaborative and offering students opportunities to learn about realities other than their own, as our understandings of the world are limited by the tools of the languages we speak.

In addition, values systems in colonialism were largely rooted in Eurocentrism, where economic and political advancement were favoured, and where Europeans perceived themselves to be superior. These values translated to neo-colonialism; however, they were to be considered global values. These new universal values are supplemented by values concerning the environment and people, as is exemplified by the SDGs. Nonetheless, imbalanced power structures are still present. The studio subscribes to the values presented by the SDGs like inclusivity and sustainability, which help to positively inform their approach. Also, the earlier editions of the studio aligned with eurocentric



epistemologies, more frequently validating those than local Ethiopian or Indian bodies of knowledge. Moving forward though, there has been a growing emphasis on highlighting and using other building and living traditions. There is, however, more to do.

Lastly, it should be noted that this thesis is merely an introduction to the interrelations between colonialism and neo-colonialism in architectural education. There is more work, reflection and unpacking to be done if these cross-cultural, cross-geographical exchanges are to be truly collaborative in both intention and practice. For example, additional explorations could be conducted to illuminate more general topics like what the root causes for colonialism are, or more specifically targeted to the Global Housing studio. For instance, research could analyze the studio's pedagogical approaches, how imbalance power structures can be equalised, how the TU Delft, EiABC, and KRVI students experienced the studio in terms of colonialism and neo-colonialism, and so forth. Nevertheless, for the Global Housing studio, it's time to have a deep look into the historical mirror.

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