



SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES

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Living under the State and Storms: The History of Blood Cockle Aquaculture in Bandon Bay, Thailand

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and Kono Yasuyuki†

Bandon Bay, on the east coast of peninsular Thailand, has seen rapid development of coastal aquaculture since the 1970s. It has also seen the emergence of conflict between fishermen and aquaculture farmers over competing claims on marine resources. This article examines the roles of state initiatives, environmental changes, and natural disasters in the development of these conflicts.

Blood cockle aquaculture was introduced to Bandon Bay through state policies that incentivized in-migration and the establishment of “cooperative communities.” After significant damage due to natural disasters in the late 1980s, large-scale government-sponsored rehabilitation projects and an associated influx of capital gave aquaculture a “great leap forward.” Environmental changes and government policies triggered adaptations by farmers that led to an expansion of cultivation into new—and illegal—areas, and a transformation of cultivation from small-scale to large-scale farms.

The expansion of the aquaculture area brought about conflicts over the use of coastal resources between aquaculture farmers and coastal fishermen. Yet these two communities that had developed from agricultural settlement in the early 1980s had no traditional means of negotiation and bargaining to resolve the conflicts and therefore relied on deep connections to the bureaucratic system rather than relations with each other.

Keywords: coastal aquaculture, Bandon Bay, natural disaster, blood cockle, pollution, climate change

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Introduction

Coastal aquaculture around Bandon Bay, in Surat Thani Province of Southern Thailand, developed in the context of state development projects implemented as part of the government's anti-Communism policies. The government further promoted intensive aquaculture when neighboring countries declared a 200-nautical-mile exclusive economic zone off their coasts at the end of the 1970s.¹⁾ Since then, the Bay has become the main aquaculture area of Thailand and, according to 2000–04 aquaculture production statistics, one of the most concentrated aquaculture areas in Southeast Asia (Campbell 2011, 31). The main products of the Bay can be divided into two groups according to the method and area of cultivation. The first is intensive cultivation of marine shrimp, or prawns, in ponds constructed on land along the riversides and coast. Production depends on these controlled and artificial settings in order to ensure a stable supply for the export market. The second is extensive aquaculture in natural marine settings that relies not only on the local climate and water quality but also on natural food organisms (*ibid.*, 6). In Bandon Bay, this extensive aquaculture includes the cultivation of blood cockles (*hoi kraeng*, *Anadara nodifera*, *Anadara granosa*), oysters (*hoi takrom*, *hoi nangrom*), and green mussels (*hoi maeng phu*).

Pond cultivation of shrimp accounted for more than half of the total aquaculture area in Bandon Bay during 2000–10 (Fig. 1). Blood cockle production was ranked second after shrimp.²⁾ Unlike shrimp cultivation, which is an export-oriented industry, blood cockles are produced mainly for the domestic market. Although Surat Thani has a significant share of the domestic market, blood cockles are not a major product for the province,³⁾ and the government does not consider it significant because it is not an export product. As cockle cultivation relies heavily on local climate and water quality, cockle farmers have to adapt farm management to minimize the risks from climate variability and pollu-

1) The exclusive economic zone of India was declared in 1977 (James 2014, 100). The Socialist Republic of Vietnam issued a declaration on its territorial sea, contiguous zone, exclusive economic zone, and continental shelf in May 1977 (US Department of State 1983, 3). The Burmese government declared its territorial sea of 12 nautical miles and a zone of 24 nautical miles in 1977. Burma has also claimed an exclusive economic zone of 200 nautical miles since 1977 (Selth 2001, 5).

2) These official statistics were collected only in the areas legally defined as cultivable and only among registered cultivators, and hence do not reflect the exact situation. In 2009, for example, bivalve mollusk cultivation occupied 11,988 acres in the Bay according to official statistics but 31,685 acres (mostly blood cockle) according to a GIS survey by the Surat Thani Fisheries Office.

3) According to the Surat Thani Province Governor's Office Plan, agricultural products accounted for 30 percent of the province's total production. There are five categories of agricultural products: rubber, 71 percent; oil palm, 17 percent; coastal fisheries, 8 percent; and livestock and fruit, 2 percent (Samnakngan Changwat Surat Thani 2013).

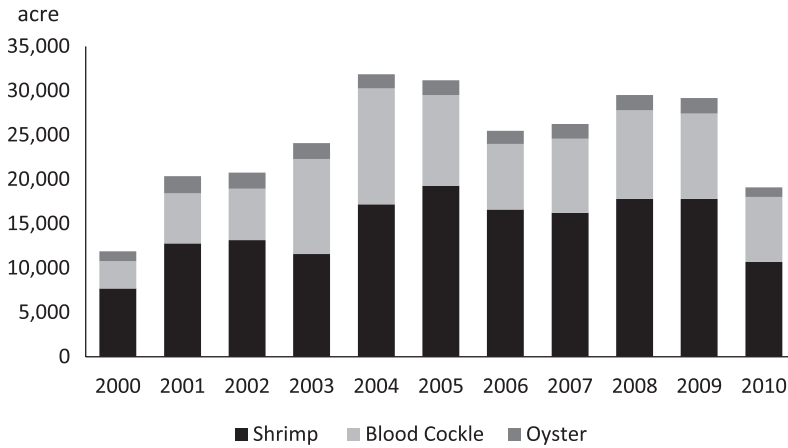


Fig. 1 Cultivation Area by Species in Bandon Bay, 2000–10

Sources: Computed from annual statistics from the Department of Fisheries.

tion. They have expanded their farms 3 kilometers out from the shore into areas outside the zone legally approved by the government. This expansion has challenged the marine usage rights of poor local fishermen, as rich local fishermen are able to illegally convert common marine areas into their own private assets thanks to their political influence. As a result, conflicts between artisanal fishermen and blood cockle farmers over the use of resources have repeatedly erupted in recent years, not only in Bandon Bay but also in the Bay of Pattani and Phetchaburi Province.

Studies on the development of coastal aquaculture in Thailand focus primarily on conflicts over coastal resource management. Thai academicians pay attention to the ways in which sociocultural norms of local communities can enhance the roles of local actors in dealing with resource conflicts. This analysis framework gained popularity as a tool in case studies of water and forest resource management in Northern Thailand. As for studies on coastal resources, most emphasize case studies of local fishery communities in the lower southern parts of Thailand, including the east (Gulf of Thailand) and west (Andaman Sea) sides. Such communities are found in Songkhla, Pattani, and Phangnga (Anan 2000; Chalita 2000; Watthana 2001; Lertchai *et al.* 2003; Lertchai and Narit 2009).

Among studies on coastal aquaculture, studies on coastal shrimp farming are extraordinarily ubiquitous. That is because shrimp is the most commonly farmed seafood in coastal Thailand, and shrimp has been the export item that triggered the most widespread attention on the standardization of food safety when compared with other kinds of coastal aquaculture. Notably, most studies on coastal shrimp farming emphasize sustainability. Since the origination of shrimp farming in the early 1970s and throughout the next four

decades, shrimp farmers have employed various cultivation strategies and technical innovations to expand farms and products. However, these methods have not been able to cope with problems such as water pollution and land-use conflicts. As a result, current studies tend to focus on ways to manage structural problems within the Thai natural resource management system, such as aquaculture zoning and water resource management (Szuster 2006). Likewise, this analytical approach has been applied to the study of shellfish resources in Ban Don Bay, as can be seen from the study by A. Jarernpornnipat *et al.* (2004).

This study focuses on sociopolitical aspects of the conflicts over coastal resource management, based on the case study of blood cockle cultivation, which is highly dependent on natural factors. Due to its dependence on natural factors, blood cockle cultivation is vulnerable to environmental change. Understanding this vulnerability will help us ascertain ways to make blood cockle cultivation sustainable. Moreover, most aquaculture communities in the Bay are relatively new, having been established via state policies initiated in the 1970s. As a consequence, the sociopolitical organization of this particular area is dissimilar to that of long-established communities in Northern and lower Southern Thailand.

The few studies on resource conflict in the Bay argue that traditional economic activities and community culture have been destroyed by capitalism.⁴⁾ However, this argument oversimplifies the issue and does not sufficiently examine the political and economic conditions and historical context during the 1970s and 1980s, specifically the impact of state development projects on local communities. Through these projects, coastal lands were distributed to non-local and landless farmers, creating new aquaculture communities. This ignited new conflicts between established fishing communities and the newcomers.

A mixed-method approach was employed to examine the main object of this study. The main methodology of this study is the historical approach, which can help us understand the sociopolitical aspects of resource management through a local economic and environmental history. Thai national archives and official documents were perused to study state policies and environmental statistics. Natural science research reports on the environment of the Bay were reviewed to gauge environmental changes during four decades beginning in the 1970s. Basic field face-to-face interviews were conducted with 10 farmers in the Bay from 2011 to 2015 to find out their personal aquaculture experiences, farm operations, and strategies to reduce the effects of pollution and natural disasters.

4) Such as Mahawitthayalai Walailak (2006).

This study examines the dynamics of blood cockle cultivation in the Bay from 1979, the first year that the government assigned “cultivable areas” in the Bay, focusing on three factors: the state’s aquaculture projects, environmental changes, and the adaptations by blood cockle farmers. The article is divided into four parts. The first traces the background of cockle production in the Bay. Historical statistics of the size of cultivated areas and yields are analyzed to ascertain trends in production. The second part examines government programs that have played a key role in triggering the production of cockles in the Bay and their results. The third section focuses on the construction of cockle seedbeds, as a result of government intervention, which sparked new conflicts in the Bay. The last part examines the adaptations of farmers to state regulations and environmental changes.

I Background of Blood Cockle Production in the Bay

History

According to the Cabinet minutes of March 1953, General Phibun Songkhram, the prime minister of Thailand at the time, ordered the minister of agriculture to start a project to promote intensive cultivation of crabs, shellfish, blood cockles, and oysters. Four coastal areas on the west and east sides of the peninsula were chosen as the pioneer sites (NA [3] SR 0201.31/56). Until the early 1970s, however, blood cockle cultivation was confined mostly to Phetchaburi and Samut Songkhram Provinces, where natural blood cockle seedbeds had formed around the mouth of the Mae Klong and Phetchaburi Rivers.

In the first half of the 1970s, the release of waste from sugar factories into these rivers made the natural cockle seedbeds unsuitable for production (Siri 1983). Due to the resulting decline in blood cockle production, a group of farmers in Satun Province, with the cooperation of Malaysian farmers, took the opportunity to introduce a Malaysian style of capital-intensive cockle farming by sowing cockle spat⁵⁾ in the Tam Malang Bay in Mueang District, Satun Province. This type of cockle farming was conducted on a large scale (farms of 80–350 acres) and was costly because of the need to purchase the spat and transport it from Perak, Malaysia. Despite the costs, the method expanded to other provinces in Southern Thailand, including Trang, Ranong, Nakhon Si Thammarat, and Surat Thani, on both sides of the peninsula (*ibid.*). The 1967 *Thailand Marine Fishery Census* records one household in Bandon Bay cultivating blood cockles on 2.37 acres

5) Spat are young, immature bivalves.

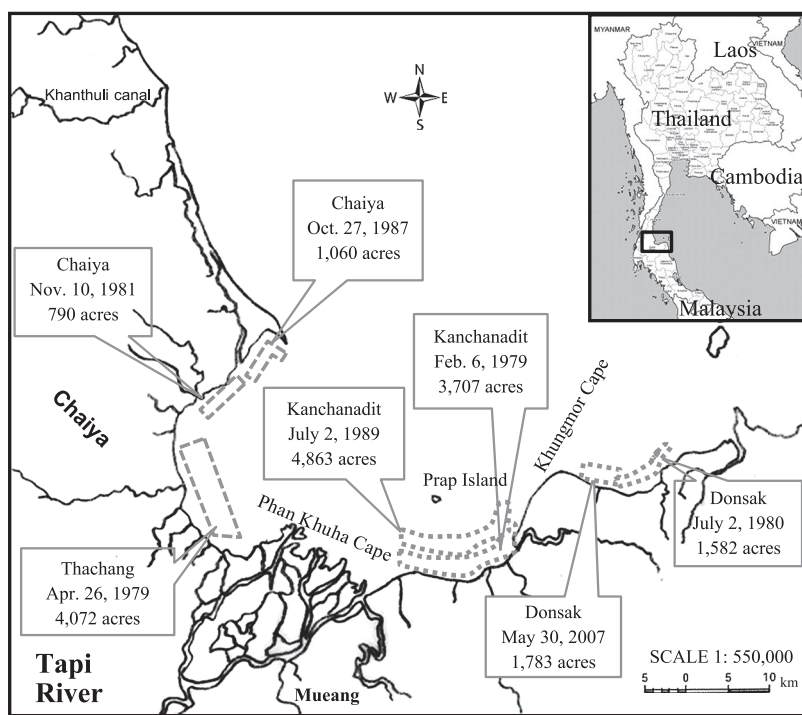


Fig. 2 Areas Declared as Cultivable in Bandon Bay

Source: Samnakngan Pramong Changwat Surat Thani (2010).

(Krom Pramong 1968, 150), indicating that the transfer of techniques did take place at the individual level even before 1970.

Scale

Although some farmers had experimented with the intensive method of blood cockle cultivation, only in 1979 did the Department of Fisheries (DOF) declare 7,779 acres of coastal waters in Kanchanadit and Thachang Districts as cultivable areas for aquaculture.⁶⁾ By 2007, the DOF had declared 17,857 acres in the Bay as cultivable areas for aquaculture (Fig. 2).

According to a 2010 survey by the Surat Thani Provincial Fisheries Office, however, a total of 31,685 acres of fish and shellfish were actually cultivated in the Bay, meaning

6) According to the 1947 Fisheries Act, the government may proclaim stretches of sea as cultivable areas for aquaculture. Prospective farmers must register and apply for a two-year cultivation permit. By law, cultivable areas may be reassigned; but in practice the first permit-holders apply for new permits to keep their rights and may rent out the farm to others.

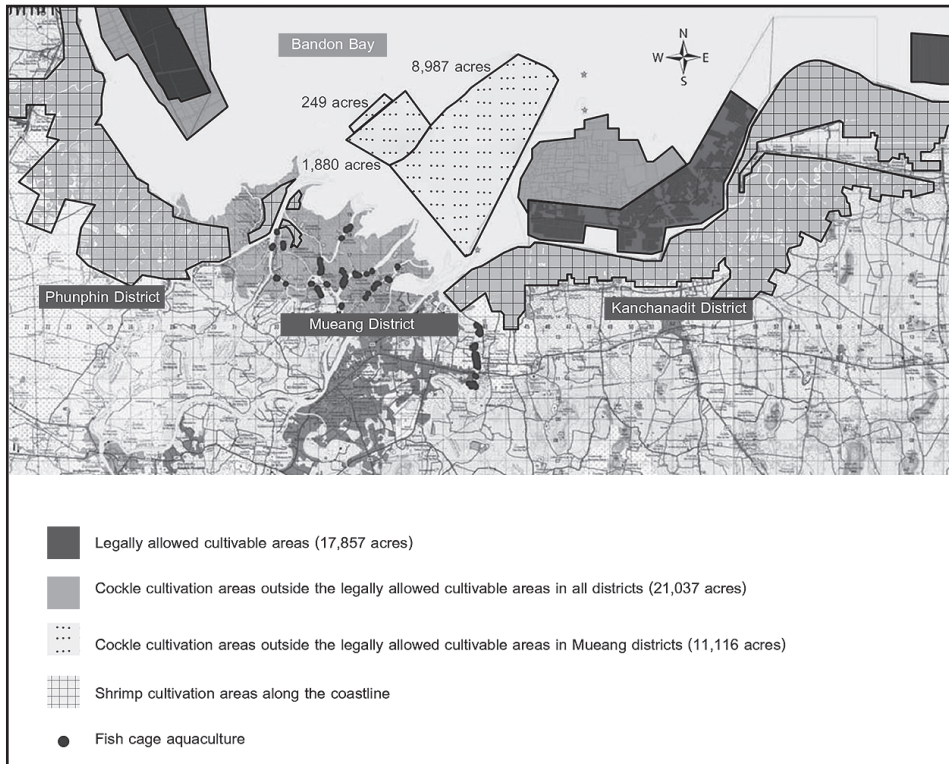


Fig. 3 Coastal Aquaculture in Bandon Bay, 2010

Source: Adapted from the Map of Samnakngan Pramong Changwat Surat Thani (2010).

that 21,037 acres were cultivated outside the legally allowed area of 17,857 acres (Fig. 3) (Samnakngan Pramong Changwat Surat Thani 2010).

The dark gray, light gray, and dot marine cultivated areas in Fig. 3 show bivalve mollusk cultivation. The dot area in Mueang District became a cultivated area after 2006, when artificial blood cockle seedbeds were successfully constructed. Figure 4 shows that blood cockle has had the major share of bivalve mollusk production in the Bay in terms of cultivated area since 1991 and in terms of yield since 1998. Figure 5 shows that over the period 1991–2010, blood cockle production increased more sharply in Surat Thani (Bandon Bay) than in the three other provinces. The figure also shows the year-to-year fluctuation in production.

Most cockle cultivation in the Bay is capital-intensive. According to interviews with farmers, they usually purchase the cockle seed from two main producing areas depending on the species (*Anadara nodifera* from Phetchaburi Province and *Anadara granosa* from northern Malaysia, especially Perak). Malaysia has occasionally prohibited cockle seed

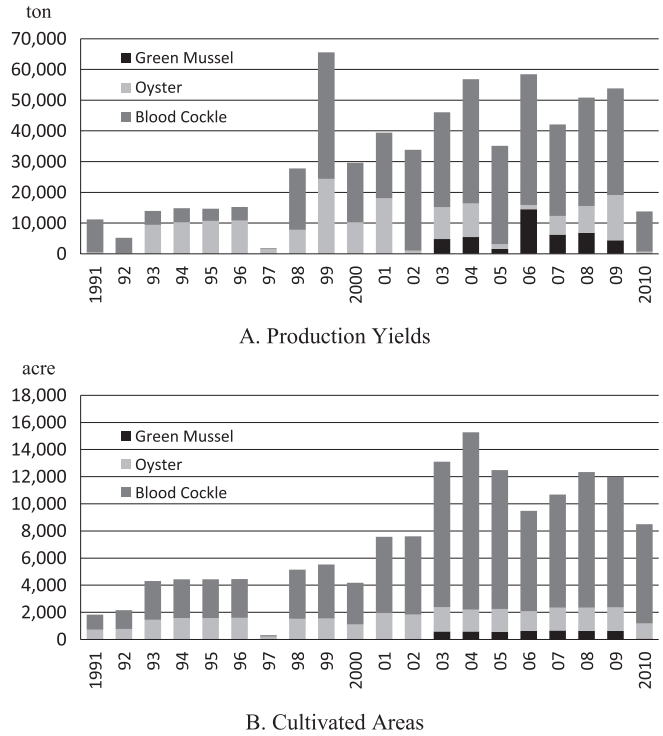


Fig. 4 Production Yields and Cultivated Areas by Species in the Bay, 1991–2010
Sources: Computed from annual statistics from the Department of Fisheries.

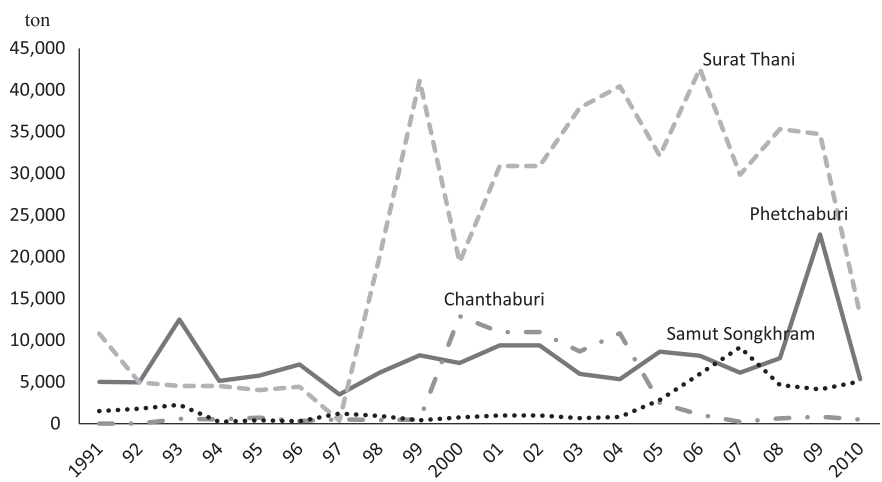


Fig. 5 Blood Cockle Production in Four Major Provinces in Thailand, 1991–2010
Source: Computed from annual statistics from the Department of Fisheries.

exports for local reasons, but Bay farmers are still able to purchase illegally imported seed from Malaysia through connections with local merchants.

Production Cycle

One cycle of cockle farming in the Bay lasts 18–24 months (Fig. 6). The beginning of the cycle depends on several conditions, such as the origin of the spat and the size of the sowing seed. Farmers decide on the seed size depending on their farm location, budget, cockle market prices, local climate, and so on. Seed sizes are measured by the number of seeds per kilogram. For example, a count of 10,000/kg means there are 10,000 cockle seeds per kilogram. A farmer can harvest 125 kilograms of market-size cockles (80 cockles per kilogram) from a farm sown with 10,000/kg seed and can harvest 3.75 kilograms of market-size cockles from 300/kg seed. Therefore, the large seed sizes are more economical. To cultivate the 10,000/kg seed, a farmer needs more capital and must have a nursery farm about 1–2 kilometers away from shore. A mortality rate of 30 percent is

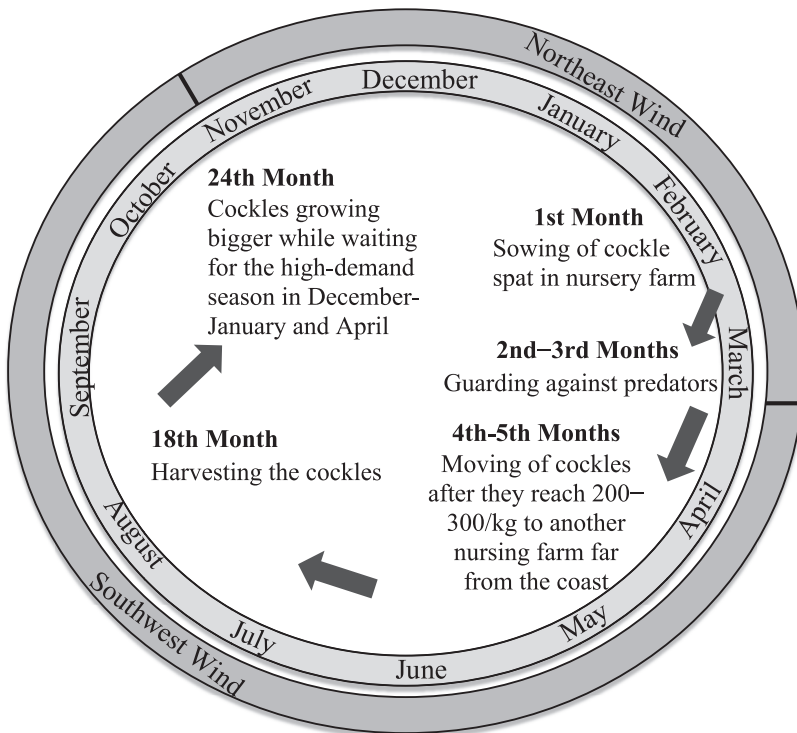


Fig. 6 Cycle of Blood Cockle Farming in Bandon Bay

Sources: Interviews with various people engaged in blood cockle farming in Bandon, August 2011, August 2012, September 2013, February 2014, September 2014, and August 2015.

normal for cockle cultivation in the Bay.

What factors contributed to the sharp fluctuation in yield and cultivated area in Bandon Bay? The next section examines the impact of government policies.

II Coastal Aquaculture Projects and the Settlement of Aquaculture Communities

The government's projects in the Bay result from two different yet interrelated policies. The first includes projects aimed to promote cockle cultivation through the organization of pilot farms, local coastal aquaculture cooperatives, and local aquaculture communities. The second, which will be discussed in the next section, includes projects designed to overcome production constraints such as the lack of cockle seed in the Bay, the lack of investment funds, and the resistance of local artisanal fishermen to cockle cultivation.

According to DOF reports, the promotion of blood cockle cultivation was originally a project of import substitution. In 1970, the DOF applied for a loan from the Asian Development Bank for fisheries development projects, including the development of brackish water aquaculture (NA. K/P 6/2513/20). In 1971 a shrimp experimental unit, today's Coastal Fisheries Research and Development Center, was established in Kanchanadit District, Surat Thani Province. In 1976, this center was promoted to the Brackish Water Fishery Station of Surat Thani. However, projects promoting blood cockle cultivation could not be launched immediately due to fear of local resistance. According to the 1947 Fisheries Act, artisanal fishermen had no rights to fish in areas that the DOF declared as cultivable for aquaculture, and hence fishermen often mounted opposition (*Government Gazette* 3, 64, 81–114). In practice, a person who wanted to apply for a cultivation permit needed to first negotiate with local residents. The final decision on the proclamation of cultivable areas was made by the DOF at the central government level (Siri 1983, 15). To avoid local resistance, in July 1976 a Land Settlement Cooperative was organized in Kanchanadit and Thachang Districts. The tenure of public lands, including the mangrove forest of these cooperatives, was transferred to the Cooperative Promotion Department (Krom Pramong 1980, 2). Under anti-Communism policies, numerous rural economic development projects were implemented in Southern Thailand at the same time.

Surat Thani in particular was a target area for development projects under the Fourth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1977–81). In an attempt to reduce local resistance, in 1976 cooperative communities (*nikhom sahakon*) were established in Thachang and Kanchanadit Districts and cooperative community lands were

distributed both to local landless farmers and to newcomers (NA [8] MT 5.4.2.1/36). Coastal areas around the Bay were developed for aquaculture beginning in 1980, when shrimp farm projects were promoted jointly by the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, and the Fourth Army. This was the first time that shrimp cultivation was promoted to farmers through the Cooperative Communities Office in Kanchanadit District (*ibid.*).

The Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives started aquaculture development projects in the Bay with finance from a US\$14 million loan agreement signed between the Asian Development Bank and the Ministry of Finance (*Government Gazette* 33, 96, 1067–1068). In February 1979, 7,779 acres of coastal land under land settlement cooperatives in Kanchanadit and Thachang Districts were declared as aquaculture cultivable areas. Any farmer who wanted to cultivate bivalve mollusks had to apply for a permit and pay a yearly cultivation tax of 80 baht per 0.4 acre. The permit gave the rights to cultivate and receive compensation for damages. However, because there was no natural seed supply in the locality, spat had to be purchased and transported from Phetchaburi and Malaysia at some expense. Although the mudflats of the Bay were suitable for blood cockle cultivation, the costs were high for local villagers because of the need to import spat. In late 1981, the DOF made available 958 acres of cultivable area for private investors to organize blood cockle pilot farms in Thachang District (Krom Pramong 1982, 9). A similar farm was set up in Chaiya District in 1982 after 791 acres were declared as cultivable for aquaculture (Thanasit 1994, 42). According to statistics from 1980 to 1987, between 958 and 1,085 acres of the cultivable areas were held by these pilot farms, which were used to study soil properties and ideal methods of cultivation (Chat *et al.* 1986). Almost all blood cockle cultivation in the Bay up until 1987 resulted from these DOF policies combined with funds from private investors.

Despite the promotion of blood cockle cultivation through the pilot farms, in 1987 only approximately 1,800 acres (oyster culture included) of the 8,567 acres of the declared areas were actually cultivated. In 1988, a Blood Cockle Cultivating Group Project was formed in 1988 through cooperation between the DOF, the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives (BAAC), and local community leaders such as a village headman and an imam in Mueang District. The official objective of the project was to encourage artisanal fishermen to gain income from cultivating blood cockles. Because there were no natural seedbeds, blood cockle cultivation was not considered a natural fishery in the Bay at that time. According to the 1979 reports of the Community Development Department, the main income of villagers around the Bay came from agriculture. Villagers from seven subdistricts earned seasonal income from artisanal fishing. Only farmers in Thathong Subdistrict reported receiving income from oyster farming. In Phun Pin

Subdistrict and Patthana Tambon Lilet District, located at the mouth of the Tapi River, more people were primarily engaged in fisheries between February and July when they were free from rice cultivation and there was no monsoon (NA [8] MT 5.4.1.64/49, 54).

In 1988, 70 artisanal fishermen joined the blood cockle project and obtained a loan from BAAC to purchase spat from Phetchaburi. The DOF allocated 395 acres of cultivable land in Kanchanadit District to implement the project. As the culture areas in the Bay were expanded, the number of farms rose to 37 in 1989. The project was opposed by some groups of local artisanal fishermen, especially from Li Let Subdistrict at the mouth of the Tapi River. Bamboo fences around the cockle farms blocked the fishermen from fishing in the cultivated areas (*Thai Post*, October 9, 1997, 12). Conflict between the artisanal fishermen and the blood cockle cultivators in the Bay emerged in the late 1980s.

In June 1993, a group of fishermen was organized as the Surat Thani Province Coastal Aquaculture Cooperative in order to promote “eco-coastal” aquaculture and reduce illegal fisheries (Sahakon Phulieng Satnam Chaifang Surat Thani c.2012, 1). The cooperative operated under the Coastal Fisheries Research and Development Center, which provided guidance on cultivation techniques and the purchase of spat. New aquaculture cultivable areas were declared in the Bay in 1987, 1989, and 1990. A decade after the first declaration, the legally declared cultivable areas had increased from 10,152 to 16,075 acres. Perhaps due to the founding of the cooperative, in 1993 the area actually cultivated increased from 1,800 to 2,862 acres and the number of farms increased three times from the previous year to 302.

Disaster Response

Between 1997 and 2010 the area and yield of blood cockle production fluctuated sharply (see Fig. 7). Due to severe monsoon flooding in October and November 1996, the cultivated areas declined dramatically—from 2,861 acres the previous year to 110 acres—and the yield decreased from 4,421 tons to 339 tons. Consequently, in 1997 the government provided a 195-million-baht low-interest loan fund to organize a Blood Cockle and Oyster Sustainable Cultivation Career Development Project in order to rehabilitate cultivation in the Bay. This five-year project, which was implemented by the Surat Thani Provincial Fisheries Office and the Surat Thani Coastal Fisheries Research and Development Center, provided loans and training for cockle cultivation and arranged the purchase of spat. Because members of the cooperative could apply for loans of up to 300,000 baht, the number of members jumped from 641 in 1997 to 1,372 in 1999 (*ibid.*, 13). Most of the 35 cultivator groups were located in Kanchanadit District, with a few in Thachang and Chaiya Districts. The cultivated area increased from 3,070 acres in 2000 to 5,633 acres in 2001. The group expanded cultivation into public land outside the proclaimed

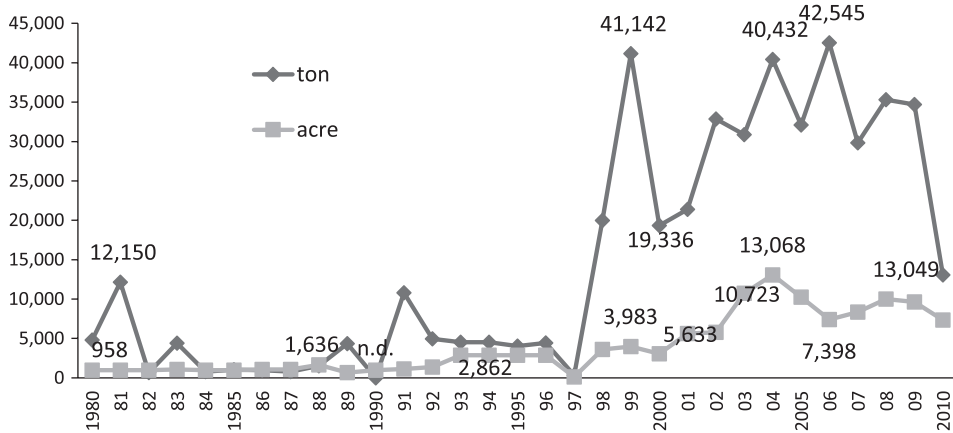


Fig. 7 Blood Cockle Production and Cultivation Areas in Bandon Bay, 1980–2010

Source: Computed from annual statistics from the Department of Fisheries.

cultivable areas. Local villagers objected and accused cultivators near the Research Center's farms of colluding with investors to encroach onto public land defined as natural reserves (*Khao Sot*, February 13, 2002, 29).

The expansion of cultivated areas continued, reaching 10,723 acres in 2003 and peaking at 13,068 acres in 2004. In 2004 the DOF launched a Seafood Bank Project in conjunction with several government organizations, including the BAAC and the new Assets Capitalization Bureau founded in 2003. Under this project, cockle farmers could apply for a loan using the cultivable land they held under permit as collateral. The project therefore added value to the permitted cultivable areas and transformed the rights of cultivation into an unofficial tenure of an asset that could be bought and sold.

From the official data, it is difficult to assess the impact of this project on the dynamics of aquaculture in the Bay. However, local NGOs and media argue that the project sparked the uncontrolled expansion of aquaculture beyond the proclaimed cultivable areas, which in turn affected the local management of natural resources in the Bay. Small-scale blood cockle farmers, such as ex-members of the cooperative, sold their cultivated areas to large-scale farmers who had a greater capacity to handle risk. Thus, ultimately large-scale farmers benefited from the government projects.

As noted above, the establishment of cooperative communities led to the settlement of newcomers along the coastal areas of Kanchanadit and Thachang districts. Initially they cultivated shrimp, but later they switched to blood cockles under the state-initiated Blood Cockle Cultivating Group Project. These farmers subsequently established the Surat Thani Province Coastal Aquaculture Cooperative. Thus, the social make-up and

economic activity of these settler communities was significantly molded by government policies to promote aquaculture in the Bay.

III Man-made Seedbeds: Overcoming Constraints and the Birth of New Conflicts

Apart from the establishment of pilot farms and coastal aquaculture cooperatives, the government launched projects to overcome the constraints of cockle production in the Bay. The production of cockles decreased in 1984 and did not increase again until 1988, the first year that blood cockle cultivation was promoted to the local villagers (see Fig. 7). The decrease was related to the lack of cockle seed supply. To overcome this constraint, the DOF requested technical assistance from the International Center for Living Aquatic Resources Management. On December 14, 1980, a project named Technical Assistance for Applied Research for Coastal Aquaculture was initiated with an agreement between the center and DOF, and finance was arranged by the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (McCoy and Tanittha 1988, ix). Researchers examined the growth and mortality of cockle seed transplanted from Phetchaburi (*Anadara nodifera*) and Malaysia (*Anadara granosa*) to sites in Nakhon Si Thammarat and Chumphon Provinces (*ibid.*). Experimental sites were also created in Nakhon Si Thammarat, Phangnga, and Surat Thani Provinces for the study of cockle seed settlement and the farming of breeder cockles. The objective of the project was to create artificial seedbeds by sowing larvae in an area suitable for seed settlement and growth.

Similar projects supported by various funding sources continued from 1980 to 1987 (Samnakngan Setthakit Kankaset 1990, 53–69). As the experiments at the Surat Thani site proved successful, the DOF acquired funds from the Farmer's Aid Fund to pursue this project in 1987 (*ibid.*, 59). Funding from United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the Agriculture Technology Transfer project was used to implement projects such as cockle seed production at the Prachuap Khiri Khan Provincial Fisheries Station and the Surat Thani Brackish Water Fisheries Station (Songchai *et al.* 1987, 1).

A DOF survey of cockle seedbeds between April 1991 and March 1992 concluded that Kanchanadit and Thachang Districts were suitable areas for cockle cultivation but unsuitable for breeding cockle spat (Wichien and Thawisak 1992), hence cockle spat would still have to be purchased from Phetchaburi and Malaysia. On the basis of information from artisanal fishermen, the survey also identified a settling ground for natural cockle seed at Kungmo Cape on the east side of the Tapi River (*ibid.*). During January–December 2000, the Surat Thani Coastal Aquaculture Research and Development Center

conducted a study on environmental factors and the spatfall⁷⁾ season of cockles (*Anadara granosa*) at two cultivation sites, one at Kungmo Cape and the other on the east side of the Tapi River's navigable channel (the center's site located inside the light gray area of Fig. 3) (Teeraya *et al.* 2004). The study found that the spatfall season in both locations occurred in December, contradicting a 1992 technical paper finding that cockles developed to the mature gonad stage all year round and spawned in July and November, but never developed into spat (Wichien and Thawisak 1992; Teeraya *et al.* 2004, 16–18).

During 2002–06, the center published some related papers on the diversity and distribution of plankton along the shoreline of the Bay. In October 2006, two Thai newspaper articles reported that a seedbed had been found on the west side of the Tapi navigable channel and that its economic value was equivalent to approximately US\$1.4 million (*Delinew*, October 10, 2006, 10). In mid-2006, according to a survey conducted by the Coastal Habitats and Resource Management Project (CHARM), cockles were cultivated in Kanchanadit, Thachang, and Chaiya Districts but not at the mouth of the Tapi River. By 2010, according to the DOF survey of Surat Thani (see Fig. 3), new cockle cultivation areas had appeared on the west side of the Tapi River navigable channel. However, economically valuable seedbeds did not develop every year; according to newspaper interviews they were found only in May 2006, 2011, and 2012.

The DOF conducted studies in an attempt to understand what environmental changes had resulted in the Tapi River becoming a suitable natural site for cockle seedbeds. Several factors may have been in play. For two decades from the 1980s, cockle farms had expanded beyond the legally allowed cultivable areas, in particular moving away from the shore and closer to the Tapi navigable channel. In addition, due to severe flooding in Surat Thani at the end of 1988, the government had drawn up a master development plan to minimize the impact of natural disasters in the province. Under the Surat Thani Urban Land Use Plan of December 1991, areas on the west side of the Tapi River (dark gray in Fig. 8) were designated as agricultural areas. In 1994 the government introduced the Marine and Coastal Water Quality Standard of Thailand in order to control marine food safety (*Government Gazette* 16 ngo, 111, 64–72). Shellfish aquaculture in the Bay was now controlled by these food safety, environment, and land use measures. As a result of the changes in the landscape of the Tapi Delta and the surface layer of the sea over three decades, the west side of the Tapi navigable channel had somehow become a suitable area for the occurrence of seedbeds.

Even so, the DOF had temporarily overcome the constraints on seedbed cultivation. However, the discovery of the natural seedbeds resulted in conflict between cockle farm-

7) The setting and attachment of young bivalves to the substrate.

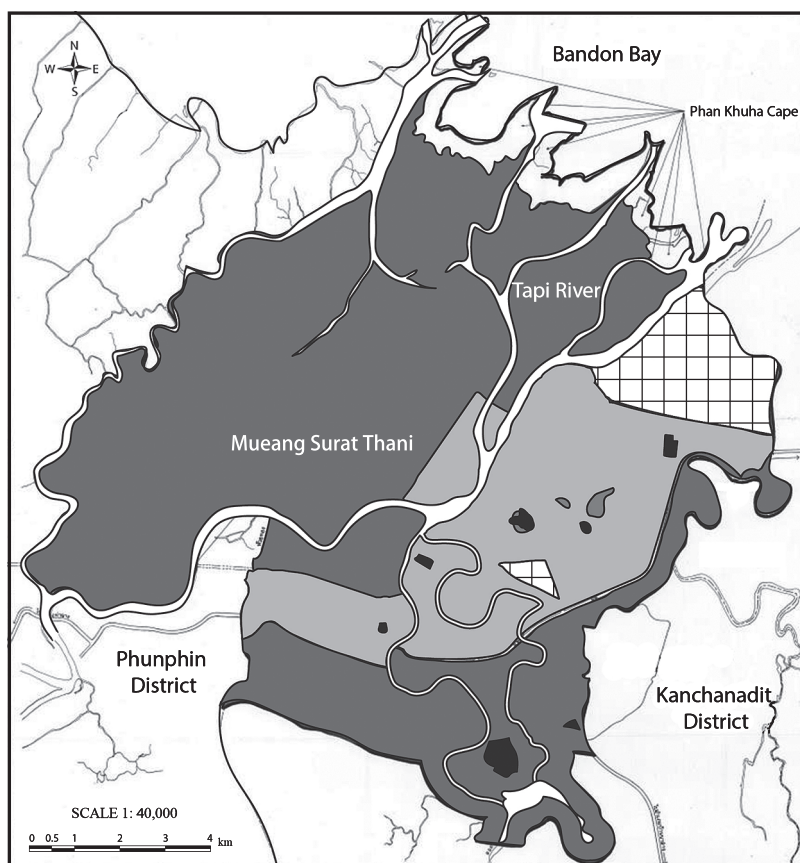


Fig. 8 Urban Land Use Plan for Surat Thani Province, 1991

Source: Adapted from the Map of *Government Gazette* 220m, 108 (December 14, 1991, 1–10).

ers and artisanal fishermen over usage rights. Since cockle cultivation was not traditionally practiced in the Bay, there was no local custom for communities along the coast to manage the seedbeds, unlike in Phetchaburi Province, where such customs were well established. In the absence of such customs, the conflict between communities on the west and east sides of the Tapi River over the tenure and usage rights of the seedbeds was difficult to resolve.

According to the land use plan, residential areas (light gray areas in Fig. 8) and a special industrial area (grid) were planned for the east side of the river. These land use changes affected the quality of marine water in the legally allowed aquaculture areas in Kanchanadit District located 3 kilometers from the coastline. How the farmers handled these environmental changes is discussed in the next section.

IV Farmers' Survival Strategies: Adjusting to Pollution and Environment Changes

Blood cockle cultivation in the Bay can be categorized into two types according to the size of the cultivated area and the capital required. Large-scale capital-intensive farms are operated by individuals, households, or companies. Small-scale farms are operated by small households, mainly comprising artisanal fisherfolk who cultivate blood cockles as a means to diversify their income. Both groups cultivate under the same environmental conditions and must rely on the local climate and quality of marine water. However, each group adapts to state policies and environmental conditions in a unique way determined by its assets. This section examines the strategies employed by farmers to reduce the effects of pollution and natural disasters. Interviews were conducted with three large-scale capital-intensive farmers in Kanchanadit and Chaiya Districts and seven small-scale farmers in Kanchanadit, Mueang, and Chaiya Districts.⁸⁾ All of the interviewed farmers had experienced damage from long-term pollution and short-term climate variation, such as heavy rains outside the monsoon season, drought and strong waves and winds, and heavy rains in the monsoon season.

Pollution and Environmental Changes

Polluted water from the wastes of the residential and industrial areas on the east side of the Tapi River flows into the Bay and affects the water quality of the legally allowed cultivable areas in Kanchanadit District. The effects of pollution on marine water fluctuate according to the season. In the rainy season, the large volume of water flowing from the rivers and canals brings more pollution into the Bay. A 1999–2001 marine water quality survey conducted by the center found that some areas one kilometer away from the coast became unsuitable for aquaculture, especially for the cultivation of oysters to be consumed raw. In this near-shore area, because land was more expensive, a large-scale, more capital-intensive operation was more economical. As a result of this economic factor and the pollution, some oyster farmers in the area sold the official rights of their farms to large-scale cockle farmers who had the capital to finance a 10,000/kg size cockle spat nursery. Then, to combat the impact of the pollution, the large-scale farmers expanded their farms beyond the legally cultivable areas. Some of the large-scale farmers were newcomers who were attracted by the profits and had the strong economic-socio-political assets to override the legal restrictions on the cultivable area. Some

8) Fieldwork was conducted in August 2011, August 2012, September 2013, February 2014, September 2014, and August 2015.

artisanal fishermen who lost their fishing areas due to the expansion of aquaculture farms decided to adopt cockle cultivation to compensate for their lost income. Now it has become difficult to clearly distinguish between artisanal fisherman and aquaculture cultivators. Many farmers run an aquaculture farm for their main income yet also fish to obtain supplementary cash for daily expenses.

Cockle farmers worry about climate variability more than water pollution, because damage from the former is more costly. The monsoons bring heavy rains in November and December (Fig. 9). Farmers understand this season well and protect their assets from the monsoon rains.

Damage to cockle cultivation from natural disasters was not recorded until the end of the 1980s, when the government's Blood Cockle Cultivating Group Project began to promote cockle cultivation. According to interviews and personal and official records, the natural disasters that affected blood cockle cultivation in the Bay until 2011 can be categorized into three types. The first type is the heavy rain that fell in Surat Thani in November 1988 and December 1996. In 1988 the DOF had just begun to promote cockle cultivation among villagers. The Cultivating Group Project distributed cockle spat to the member groups according to the government's fiscal calendar, so the farmers sowed the spat in September, the last month of the fiscal year and the middle of the monsoon season. Heavy rainfall at the end of November (Fig. 9) destroyed the spat and reduced the salinity of the marine water in cultivated areas. As a result, member farmers became indebted and had to take out more loans from the BAAC (Samnakngan Setthakit Kankaset 1990). However, the cockle cultivation groups continued the project.

The economic loss in bivalve mollusk cultivation in the Bay due to the heavy rainfall of December 1996 was valued by DOF at US\$10 million (Sahakon Phulieng Satnam Chaifang Surat Thani c.2012, 20–29). The rainfall was less than that in 1988 and 1993, but the loss was greater because the areas under cockle cultivation had increased—from 3,070 acres in 2000 to 5,633 acres in 2001, largely due to the Sustainable Cultivation Career Development Project and the provision of US\$5.04 million worth of low-interest loans (Sahakon Phulieng Satnam Chaifang Surat Thani c.2012). In December 2008, as can be seen from the comparison of daily rainfall in Surat Thani Province in Fig. 9, heavy rain again resulted in a loss, this time estimated at US\$170 million.⁹⁾

The second type of disaster is a result of drought or strong waves and winds, and it is not as severe as heavy rainfall. This type of disaster slows the growth rate of shellfish and increases mortality, decreasing farmers' profits but not causing bankruptcy. Accord-

9) Unpublished dataset of Special Projects and Alleviation Sub-Division, Department of Fisheries, Thailand.

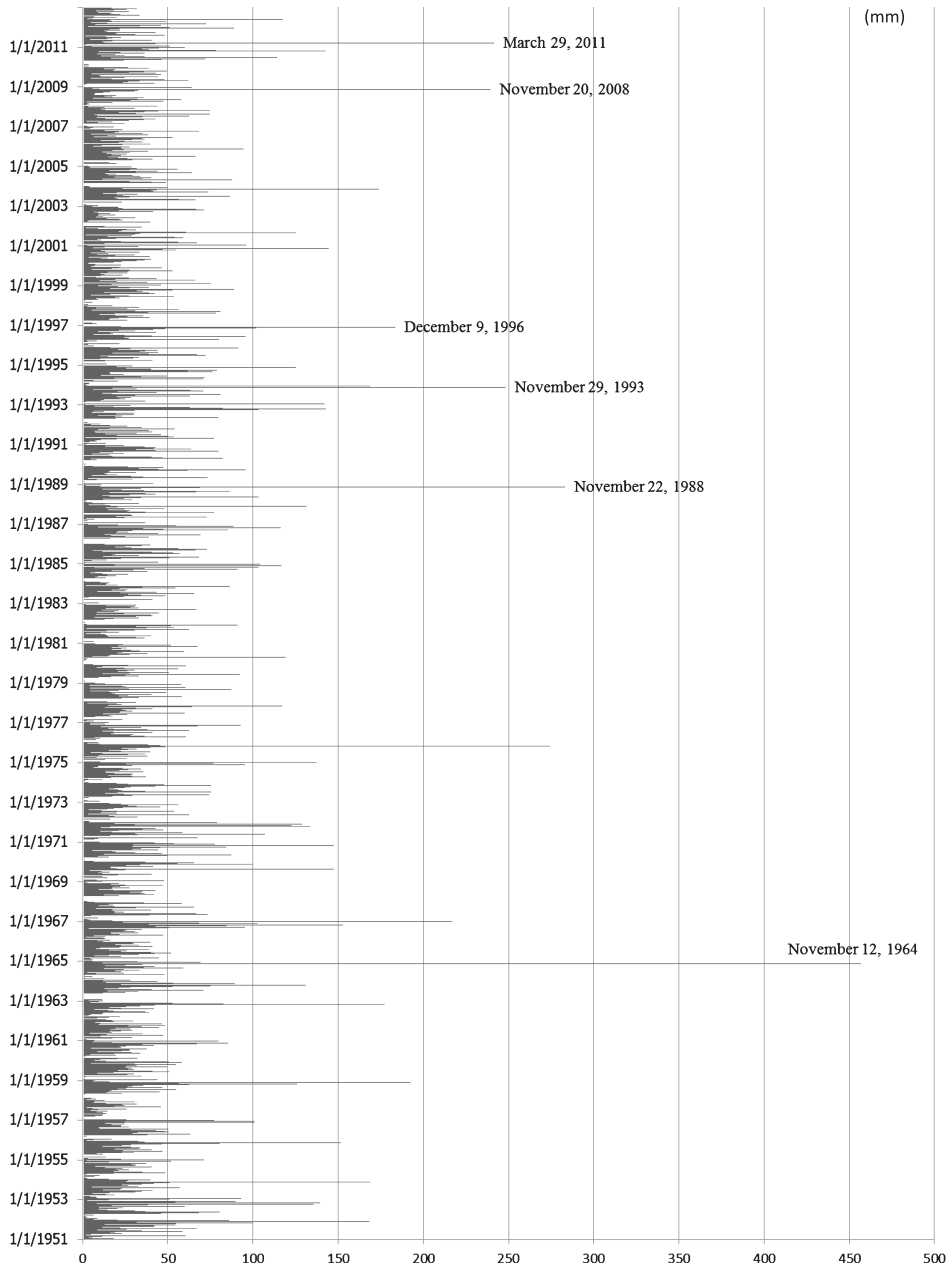


Fig. 9 Daily Rainfall in Surat Thani Province, 1951–2012

Source: Computed from daily statistics from the Thai Meteorological Department, Surat Thani Provincial Meteorological Station.

ing to a report of the Surat Thani Coastal Aquaculture Cooperative, a drought linked to El Nino occurred in 1999. In the same year, there were strong waves and winds in December. Some farmers who had cultivated within the officially allowed areas decided to sell their permits to other farmers. This happened during the time the Assets Capitalization Bureau implemented its projects.

The third type of disaster is heavy rain in the dry season. Figure 9 shows that the daily rainfall on March 29, 2011 was equivalent to the level during the monsoon. Nothing like this had occurred since the first year that meteorological records were kept in the Bay. The 2011 disaster caused significant damage because the storm hit during spat-sowing time. In order to reduce the effects of fresh water from the Tapi River, the spat needed to be moved from the nursery farm to other farms far from the coast, but both groups were unable to do this in time. The massive amount of water flowing in from the river and canals reduced the salinity level of all cultivated areas, making it impossible for the cockles to survive. Both types of farmers were affected by the disaster.

Despite the frequency of natural disasters and their impact on cockle production, the DOF's rules for disaster compensation have not been adjusted. For disaster relief in the form of finance or equipment, the DOF categorizes fisheries into three types: (1) all species of fish; (2) shellfish (shrimp, crabs, and bivalve mollusks); and (3) ponds and fish cages. Since cockle farms are included in the same group as shrimp farms (the main target of the assistance), in the 2011 disaster they were provided with dolomitic limestone, which is used to improve the water quality of shrimp and fishpond farms but is unsuitable for cockle farms in the sea. The outdated rules clearly illustrate the low status of bivalve mollusk cultivation compared to the export-oriented shrimp industry.

Farmers' Survival Strategies

As the three types of natural disasters caused unprecedented damage to blood cockle cultivation in the Bay, the DOF's regulations for disaster compensation were not adequate; they were neither timely nor efficient in responding to the environmental changes. Both small-scale and large-scale farmers had little confidence in the official rules or local climate. Thus, they tried to create individual solutions appropriate for their situation.

Small-scale farmers in particular have some common risk management strategies. First, most of them prefer a short period of cultivation due to their worry about unprecedented disasters and shortage of financial assets. They therefore harvest and sell their cockles to large-scale farmers before they reach market size. They gain less profit, but they do not have to worry about any disaster occurring during the extra months before the cockles reach market size. Some farmers reduce the area of cockles in favor of green mussels, which fetch less profit than cockles but can be harvested within six months.

Some have also tried to cultivate clams from wild spat gathered in the Bay.

G and A were small-scale farm owners in the Bay. G lived in the Muslim coastal community in the special industrial area of Mueang District (grid area in Fig. 8). G's father had moved from a Muslim community along the Saen Saep canal in Bangkok to the Bay in the 1950s. He was one of three pioneer families who settled the Muslim community in this area. Most of the inhabitants in this community had moved from the Muslim community along Saen Saep canal in Bangkok and Chachoengsao Province. Most of them identified themselves as relatives of one another. G had worked as a fisherman all his life. Due to the expansion of cockle farming at the end of the 1990s, fishing areas shrank; and this made G decide to try cockle farming to generate a new source of income after 2003 to replace the income that he used to get from working on a fishing trawler.

During the heavy rains in March 2011, G decided to do nothing because he could not afford to hire a boat. Because his farm was located outside the cultivable area, he did not receive disaster compensation from the DOF. This disaster deprived him of the ability to repay the loans that he had taken from BAAC as capital for cockle farming. He sold his land in Prachuap Khiri Khan Province to settle his debts. He started to accumulate capital by not only offering services to build and repair small fishing boats but also catching fish along the coastal areas. In addition, he invested in cockle farming by purchasing cockle babies from Malaysia for US\$5,672. In 2013, he reaped a good profit from the cockle farm. Currently, G has changed his farming strategy by reducing areas of cockle farming and turning to green mussel farming.

The situation is similar with A, a small-scale farmer in Kanchanadit District. According to her memory, heavy rains occurred in November 1993 and considerably affected the business of oyster farmers. Consequently, many of them quit cockle farming and sold their farms. A purchased 16-acre oyster farm located in the cultivable area from her relative who was affected by the 1993 rains. Her father was an oyster farmer and had a small oyster stall near her home. As cockle farming was more lucrative, she decided to cultivate blood cockles instead. Because of the disaster in 2011, her blood cockle farms were completely destroyed. She received US\$5,600 in compensation from the government, which she used as capital for the next cultivation. After that, she decided to operate her farm using a new strategy applied by many farmers. A purchased 1,600/kg seed for the equivalent of US\$5,672 and sowed it in the farm in June 2011. The cockles would reach marketable size in 8–10 months, so she planned to harvest and sell them the following April during the long Songkran Festival vacation. She also purchased 20,000/kg seed for US\$2,828 to sow in her nursery farm. These reached marketable size in the next two years. Since there were no disasters, she reaped a handsome profit.

Large-scale farmers have different strategies for managing risks. Some purchase

100–300/kg size spat from small farmers to shorten the cultivation period. They cultivate the 100–300/kg size spat in farms located away from the shore, outside the legal cultivable area, in order to reduce the effects of fresh water flowing from the river and canals. In this way they can fulfill their contracts and maintain their long-term relationships with seafood wholesalers in Samut Sakhon Province, even though their profit is reduced.

K and S were owners of large-scale capital-intensive farms that covered an area of 790 acres. They started operating their farms in the early period of blood cockle cultivation in the Bay. They knew each other and learned the way of cultivation at the same time in the late 1980s. Their cockle farms were located in Kanchanadit District, both inside and outside the legal cultivation zones. K was a member of a shrimp-farming family in a province in the Upper Gulf of Thailand. He had moved to Surat Thani in the mid-1980s to work as a manager of a shrimp farm. He started blood cockle cultivation in 1987–88. In 1997, he worked as a secretary of the Surat Thani Province Coastal Aquaculture Cooperative and as a key person of the Blood Cockle and Oyster Sustainable Cultivation Career Development Project.

S was an operator of his family's fishery and aquaculture business. He assisted his parents on an oyster farm from 1979. His family switched from oysters to blood cockles in 1987 due to the declining price of oysters. Fishermen who used to do oyster farming in the legal zones began selling their cultivation rights to others. S's family had other business lines, including owning a large fishing boat with 50 crew members. They bought coastal areas that became nursery farms for cockle seed.

K and S shared a similar experience of cockle farming. The most important capital in this business was cockle seed from Malaysia. After years passed and seedbeds became available in the Bandon Gulf, they started to purchase cockle babies born in the gulf instead. They sold the cockles to seafood wholesalers in Samut Sakhon Province. A wholesaler offered them a loan and asked them to use it for cockle farming and send the products to her. However, they both declined her offer as they were worried about environmental factors, which they could not control. For instance, because of heavy rains in the dry season in March 2011, K and S said, they could not move the spat since the continuous heavy rainfall made it too dangerous to sail. Besides, S had denied a contract offer from an international hypermarket chain in Thailand. S emphasized that he could not predict environmental changes. Unlike the wholesaler in Samut Prakan Province, with whom he had the personal relationship to negotiate in case he could not fulfill their contract, he could not do the same with the international hypermarket chain.

V Conclusion

State development projects were the driving force behind the growth of cockle cultivation in Bandon Bay from 1980 onward. The declaration of cultivable areas, promotion of pilot farms, and establishment of cooperatives led to new settlements of aquaculture farmers in the Bay. After major natural disasters caused significant destruction in the late 1980s, the government approved large budgets for rehabilitating affected areas. After that, the influx of capital supported by the state increased the area under aquaculture in a great leap forward.

Cockle cultivation in the Bay is a costly form of aquaculture that is vulnerable to climate variability and pollution. Some farmers are attracted to the high potential returns in comparison to green mussel and oyster farming. The state's readiness to provide relief in case of natural disasters is limited because cockles are not an export product, and the costs of compensating for disasters may exceed the benefits accruing to the state. Farmers must develop their own survival strategies in response to natural disasters. These strategies differ according to the scale of cultivation, location of the farm, and personal situation of the farm owner. Medium and large-scale farms have a higher ability to handle the risks from climate variability. Small-scale farmers have switched to safer crops that involve fewer risks but deliver lower profits. Many have abandoned cockle cultivation and sold their farms to large-scale farmers.

In 1979 the Department of Fishery promulgated a law, succeeding the Fishery Act 1947, which enabled local people to temporarily utilize some offshore areas for private aquaculture. Although the state's proclamation in 1979 legally allowed the use of common marine resources for private farms, conflicts between artisanal fishermen and cultivators did not emerge until the late 1980s, when cockle cultivation expanded outside the officially allowed areas and common marine resources on the west side of the Tapi River channel were illegally converted to private farms. Artisanal fishermen whose usage rights are being challenged have opposed cockle cultivators since that time. Fishery communities regard the aquaculture farmers as proxies of the state.

The conflict is more complex than a confrontation between fisheries and aquaculture, between customary practice and innovation. Some fishermen are primarily agriculturists who fish to earn extra income during periods when they cannot practice rice cultivation. Among the artisanal fishery communities, some local people have adopted aquaculture as a secondary means of income.

The aquaculture communities in Kanchanadit were settled by the cooperative communities projects in the second half of the 1970s (NA [8] MT 5.4.2.1/36). Some in the community are newcomers from outside the locality, while some are former local agri-

culturists who have switched to artisanal fishing or aquaculture. There is no sociocultural foundation for negotiation and bargaining.

Due to their harsh geography and tropical monsoon climate, some areas of Southern Thailand were sparsely populated prior to 1950. However, these areas were a potential frontier for making a living by farming. As a result of the nationwide population boom from the 1940s to 1970s, outsiders began to move into these areas. This settlement was supported by the state through policies to establish cooperative communities and develop new forms of production such as aquaculture. The society of coastal Southern Thailand is not only made up of villagers who have long subsisted on fishery—before 1970—but has a large admixture of new communities constructed within the framework of state-led development. Vulnerability to natural disasters has added to tensions over conflicting claims on marine resources. Different segments of local society share a common connection to the bureaucratic systems of the state, yet they lack the ability to negotiate and bargain with each other.

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Volunteers from the Periphery (Case Studies of Survivors of the Lapindo Mudflow and Stren Kali, Surabaya, Forced Eviction)

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This article discusses volunteer movements active during the Indonesian presidential election of 2014, with a focus on volunteers in two troubled regions. The first group of volunteers consists of survivors of the Lapindo mudflow disaster in Sidoarjo, East Java, who are united in Korban Lapindo Menggugat (KLM, Victims of Lapindo Accuse); while the second consists of residents of Stren Kali, Surabaya, who were forcibly evicted and later united through Paguyuban Warga Stren Kali Surabaya (PWSS, Association of Residents of Stren Kali Surabaya). This article attempts to answer two questions: first, how did KLM and PWSS transform themselves into volunteer movements in support of Jokowi? And, second, what actions were taken by KLM and PWSS in support of Jokowi?

The transformation of KLM and PWSS into volunteer movements was intended to resolve issues that the groups had already faced for several years. Their acts were self-serving ones, albeit not based in individual economic interests but rather collective political ones. They were instrumentalist, negotiating an exchange of their support for Jokowi's assistance in resolving their groups' issues. Jokowi was supported because he offered a victory through which the groups' issues could be resolved. Furthermore, these groups' actions were to meet concrete short-term goals.

Keywords: volunteers, volunteerism in the 2014 Indonesian election, Korban Lapindo Menggugat, Paguyuban Warga Stren Kali Surabaya, rapping, Coins for Change, political contracts

I Introduction

One of the most prominent phenomena during the 2014 Indonesian presidential election was the massive role of volunteers—both individuals and groups—in organizing and

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consolidating support for the presidential candidate Joko Widodo, better known by the nickname Jokowi. Such volunteerism is not unprecedented in Indonesia.¹⁾ The rise of this phenomenon in Indonesia cannot be separated from the Reformasi (Reform) movement of 1998, which opened political space for mass public participation. The explosive growth of public participation in the early phases of Reformasi was followed by a dramatic increase in the number of civil society organizations (CSOs),²⁾ spread of CSO coverage (PLOD 2006),³⁾ and CSO influence and political leverage (Cornelis 2010).

Nevertheless, this phenomenon still raises important questions, particularly considering the following two factors. First, it occurred during a period of increased public dissatisfaction with politics, in which various democratic institutions—particularly political parties and parliament—were perceived as having performed poorly.⁴⁾ Second,

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- 1) Volunteer movements are not a new phenomenon in Indonesia. In the lead-up to the 1999 general election, supporters of the PDI-P collaborated to erect *gardu* (meeting places) and communications posts for the PDI-P alongside strategic roads throughout Indonesia, from the cities to the villages (Abidin 2007, 16).

Volunteerism has emerged also in movements against the weakening of the Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi (KPK, Commission for the Eradication of Corruption). These include the Cicak Lawan Buaya (Geckos against Crocodiles) support movement for Bibit Samat Riyanto and Chandra Hamzah (two KPK leaders who were detained by the police in 2009) and Save KPK in 2012. In 2009, Koin Keadilan untuk Prita (Coins of Justice for Prita), which provided support to Prita Mulyasari in her court case against Omni International Hospital, was established. This movement, an initiative of the Langsung Network, mobilized volunteers from a variety of backgrounds and parts of Indonesia to establish communications posts and collect coins (Ventura 2010).

In a local electoral context, volunteer movements—particularly those supporting Jokowi and Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok)—were prominent during Jakarta's 2012 gubernatorial elections. The work of these volunteers was not limited to campaigning for Jokowi-Ahok; it also included funding the campaign through the sale of plaid shirts and souvenirs, such as Jokowi-Ahok key chains.

- 2) Since Reformasi, an increasing number of CSOs have emerged in Indonesia. Data from the Institute for Applied Economic and Social Research and Education (LP3ES) indicate that in 2001 there were only 426 CSOs. Six years later that number had increased to 2,646, according to data from the SMERU Research Institute. In July 2013, the Ministry of Domestic Affairs recorded 139,957 CSOs in Indonesia; these were under the purview of the Ministry of Domestic Affairs (65,577), Ministry of Social Affairs (25,406), Ministry of Law and Human Rights (48,866), and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (108). This number does not, however, include the numerous local-level CSOs (Adam and Yulika 2013).
- 3) During the New Order, CSOs were concentrated in Jakarta and other major cities (Eldridge 1988; 1989). Since 2001, they have become more widespread. A number can be found in border regions such as Papua and Aceh, as well as East and West Nusa Tenggara. Data from SMERU indicate that these four regions were home to 130, 223, 124, and 136 CSOs respectively in the first six years of Reformasi, compared to the 292, 224, and 209 for Jakarta, West Java, and East Java. This indicates that CSOs have become national in scope, rather than limited to Java.
- 4) A survey conducted by the Lembaga Survey Indonesia (LSI, Indonesian Survey Institute) between September 9 and 15, 2009 indicated that public trust in political parties had reached a low of 36.3 percent, compared to trust in the bureaucracy (40.3 percent), parliament (45 percent), and mass media (55.5 percent). Three years later, the level of public trust in political parties had yet to ↗

compared to previous volunteer movements in Indonesia, a greater depth and breadth of spectrum was covered by the movements supporting Jokowi. These volunteer movements were spread throughout Indonesia, in both urban and rural areas. They crossed class boundaries as well as religious and political-ideological lines. They knew no age boundaries and included persons of all fields, from cultural critics to farmers. Furthermore, these movements were gender-blind.⁵⁾

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- ↘ increase. LSI's 2012 survey indicated that political parties were considered the most likely to commit corruption, as compared to institutions such as parliament, the state attorney's office, the police, the president, the KPK, and the Badan Pemeriksa Keuangan (BPK, Audit Board of the Republic of Indonesia). The 2013 Global Corruption Barometer for Indonesia found parliament and political parties to be perceived by the general populace as corrupt institutions. Parliament was considered the second-most corrupt, whereas political parties were ranked fourth (Transparency Indonesia, December 3, 2013). A survey conducted by the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in February 2012 indicated that societal support for political parties had decreased because voters were disappointed by parties' performance. Informants considered the parties to be tools used by the political elites to attain power and control over available resources (CSIS Survey 2012).

The lack of trust in governmental institutions was clearly recorded also in social media. One common joke went that a bus carrying all of Indonesia's members of parliament fell off a cliff. When the police came, all of the passengers had already been buried. When local residents explained what had happened, the police asked "Are you sure that they were all dead? To the point you buried them?" The residents immediately replied, "Well, some screamed that they were still alive. But as you know, we can't trust anything they say."

- 5) Gultom, the coordinating secretary of the Tim Koordinasi Relawan Nasional Jokowi-JK (National Volunteer Coordination Team for Jokowi-JK), claimed that there were approximately 1,289 volunteer groups throughout Indonesia, consisting of an estimated 1–1.5 million people. This figure is based on the declarations of volunteer status released by the team's office. Many, however, did not register, and thus this is estimated to be only a third of all of the volunteers.

Among the organizations established to support Jokowi were the Seknas Jokowi (National Secretariat for Jokowi), found in 30 provinces and including in its network subgroups such as Seknas Perempuan (National Secretariat for Women) covering women volunteers, Seknas Muda (National Secretariat for Youths) covering youth and student volunteers, Seknas Tani (National Secretariat for Farmers), and Serikat Petani Indonesia (Indonesian Farmers Alliance). Other volunteer groups included the Barisan Relawan Jokowi Presiden (Volunteer Brigade for President Jokowi), Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (Alliance of Archipelagic Adat Societies), KSP Prodjo (Prodjo Savings and Loan), Rumah Koalisi Indonesia Hebat (Coalition Home for a Great Indonesia), Kawan Jokowi (Friends of Jokowi), Koalisi Anak Muda dan Relawan Jokowi (Coalition of Youths and Jokowi Volunteers, including such groups of volunteers as HAMI [Indonesian Association of Young Lawyers], JASMEV [Jokowi Advance Social Media Voluntary], JKW4P [Jokowi 4 Pembangunan, Jokowi for Development], Jokowi Centre Indonesia, Jokowi4ME, REMAJA [Relawan Masyarakat Jakarta, Jakartan Social Volunteers]), and GEN A), ALMISBAT (Aliansi Masyarakat Sipil untuk Indonesia Hebat, Alliance of Civil Society for a Great Indonesia), Aliansi Rakyat Merdeka (Alliance of Independent Society), Relawan Buruh Sahabat Jokowi (Labor Volunteers Friends of Jokowi), Laskar Rakyat Jokowi (People's Troops for Jokowi), Komunitas Sahabat Jokowi (Friends of Jokowi Community), Gema Jokowi (Societal Aspirations Movement for Jokowi), POSPERA (Posko Perjuangan Rakyat, Communications Posts for the People's Struggle), BRPJ4P (Barisan Rakyat Pendukung Jokowi For President, Brigade of Supporters for Jokowi for President), Jaringan Masyarakat Urban ↗

This article is not intended to discuss all of the phenomena mentioned above. It is, instead, limited to two volunteer movements that emerged in regions facing social turmoil. The first is Korban Lapindo Menggugat (KLM, Victims of Lapindo Accuse), which consists of survivors of the Lapindo mudflow in Sidoarjo, East Java. The second is Paguyuban Warga Stren Kali Surabaya (PWSS, Association of Residents of Stren Kali Surabaya), which consists of survivors of the forced eviction of riverbank settlements in Stren Kali, Surabaya, East Java.

This article stems from research commenced by the writer in November 2014, shortly after the inauguration of the elected president, Jokowi. This research was conducted in two regions in East Java: the area affected by the Sidoarjo mudflow, in Sidoarjo District, East Java; and in Stren Kali, an enclave of Surabaya's poor residents along the banks of the Jagir River, which has faced forced eviction. Research was conducted over a period of four months, from November 2014 to February 2015; this included four weeks of field research.

The article explores the backgrounds of KLM and PWSS, how they transformed themselves into support movements for Jokowi, and their activities as volunteers for Jokowi. This article is divided into six sections. The first section is introduction. The second section gives a short overview of the concept of volunteer movements at a practical and theoretical level. The third section provides a summary of the history of the Lapindo mudflow disaster and the fourth section discusses the land issues in Stren Kali—the issues behind the formation of KLM and PWSS, respectively. The fifth section discusses the transformation of KLM and PWSS from advocacy movements to pro-Jokowi volunteer movements, as well as their activities in their respective regions. The sixth section is conclusion.

↘ (JAMU, Network of Urban Society), Ayo Majukan Indonesia (Let's Develop Indonesia), Forum Rakyat Nasional (National People's Forum), Barisan Jokowi untuk RI (Jokowi for Indonesia Brigade), GEMA JKW4P-7 (Gema Masyarakat Jokowi For President Ke-7, People's Movement for Jokowi as the 7th President), Komunitas Kasih Matraman Raya (Caring Community of Matraman Raya), Ekspone 96–98 Pro Mega Perjuangan (Exponents 96–98 for Pro Mega Struggles), Alumni ITB Pendukung Jokowi (Alumni of the Bandung Institute of Technology for Jokowi), Alumni Trisakti Pendukung Jokowi (Alumni of Trisakti University for Jokowi), Blusukan Jokowi (Meeting the Grass-roots with Jokowi), Komunitas Artis Sinetron Laga (Community of Soap Opera Performers), Pondok Jokowi Presidenku (Lodge for Jokowi, My President), Gerakan Masyarakat Bangkep (Bangkep Social Movement), Keroncong JK4P (Keroncong for Jokowi, for President), FORPERTA, Barisan Relawan Nasional, Gerakan Relawan Jokowi Cimanggin 14 (GRJWC14, Cimanggin 14 Volunteer Movement for Jokowi), and Barisan Pendukung Jokowi (Brigade of Jokowi Supporters). Interview with Gultom, August 14, 2014.

II Volunteer Movements: An Overview

Volunteering is a freely chosen action done to promote the public interest. Motives for volunteering tend to be romantic, idealistic, and altruistic (Mowen and Sujan 2005). The presence of volunteers in politics is related to an abstract idea of volunteerism that Sidney Verba, Kay Schlozman, and Henry Brady (1995) classify as a civic participation model of public involvement. They draw on the classic book by Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (2000), which connects successful democratic practice with a high level of voluntary participation, defined as “public association in civil life.”

The transformation of volunteerism from a general act to a political one, particularly individual campaigns for public office, is a recent development. Volunteer support for Barack Obama in his campaign for the 2008 presidential election in the United States—which was repeated in the 2012 election and drew more than 2.2 million people (Han and McKinna 2015)—spearheaded the rise of planned, mass-scale volunteerism in politics. Obama’s success transformed the way in which volunteers were viewed: people who had previously been considered burdens came to be viewed as assets. In subsequent years, political volunteerism continued to develop and spread worldwide. In the 2014 South African election, all parties involved volunteers. Volunteers for the Democratic Alliance, for instance, conducted intensive door-to-door campaigns and remained involved during voting (Brand South Africa 2014). During the final weeks of the Canadian federal election in May 2015, 3,500 volunteers from the Liberal Party conducted door-to-door campaigning and reached no fewer than 200,000 potential voters. These were pioneers of a modern campaigning style that combined traditional face-to-face communications with recent data. Volunteers equipped themselves with smartphones or tablets on which they had installed the MiniVAN application, which provided information on potential voters (Bryden 2015). Significant volunteerism was recorded also in the Ukrainian election of 2015, albeit with a different motive: in Odessa, for instance, many volunteers were paid (Holmov 2015).⁶⁾ Some, however, remained unpaid, including such professionals as lawyers, accountants, and IT experts.

6) Volunteers who distributed flyers were given UAH150 (\$6.04 per day), the lowest rate available. Those propagandizing in the streets also received little remuneration, UAH200–250 (\$8.06–\$10.07) per month. Door-knocker volunteers received UAH3,500–4,000 a month (\$140.99–\$161.13 per day). They were employed during certain periods of time and were maintained despite being very aggressive in completing their tasks. The gangs managed a small number of door knockers and were paid UAH5,500–7,000 per month (\$221.55–\$281.97 per day). Above them were the people tasked with supervising and auditing the effectiveness of the work structure below them; they received UAH6,000–8,000 per month (\$241.69–\$322.26 per day).

III The Roots of Volunteerism in Sidoarjo: Advocacy for the Mudflow Disaster

On May 29, 2006, hot mud began to spew from the Banjar Panji-1 Well, owned by PT Lapindo Brantas, an oil and gas exploration company formed as a joint venture of PT Energi Mega Persada (50 percent), PT Medco Energi (32 percent), and Santos Australia (18 percent); the Bakrie family⁷⁾ maintains control over the company (Liauw 2012). Hot mud from the well, which was located in Renokenongo Village, Porong District, Sidoarjo Regency, East Java, soon covered several regions; it continues to flow today. This disaster led to debate over its characteristics. One view was that the mudflow was man-made (Davies 2007).⁸⁾ Some holders of this perspective argued that it was an industrial disaster (Bosman 2009; 2012; 2013; Bosman and Paring 2010),⁹⁾ while others described it as an “ecological and social disaster” (Drake 2008; 2012; 2013; 2015).¹⁰⁾ Some held that this was a complex issue that required comprehensive and detailed disaster management. Others, however, held that the mudflow was natural (Mazzini *et al.* 2007),¹¹⁾ and as such understanding and management of the disaster was simpler and resolvable at a techno-

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- 7) Aburizal Bakrie served as the chairman of Golkar from October 9, 2009 to December 31, 2015. When the Lapindo mudflow began, he was serving as the coordinating minister for social prosperity (December 7, 2005 to October 21, 2009).

The Banjar Panji-1 Well is a gas exploration well owned by Lapindo Brantas. The owner of this company is the Bakrie Group, a conglomerate established by Achmad Bakrie in 1942. Aburizal Bakrie, the son of Achmad Bakrie, led the Bakrie Group from 1992 to 2004.

- 8) This view holds that the Lapindo mudflow is man-made and was created by the activities of Lapindo Brantas, which had conducted drilling in Renokenongo Village, Sidoarjo. Owing to a technical error during drilling—a casing was used that was too short for the drill—materials from within the earth began to spew to the surface. The technical term, which has since become popular, is “underground blowout.” Davies, for instance, concludes that the hot mud began spewing to the surface as a result of the drilling activities at Banjar Panji-1 Well.
- 9) Bosman (2013) views the Sidoarjo mudflow as an industrial disaster and argues that it cannot be categorized as a natural disaster. This disaster, he argues, occurred because Lapindo decided to deliberately not follow industry security procedures. He considers the issue to involve collusion, conflict of interest, and politicization, particularly given Aburizal Bakrie’s ministerial position.
- 10) Philip Drake understands the Sidoarjo mudflow from a socio-ecological perspective. The mudflow’s handling indicates human failure in the management of ecological needs and in mitigating social and environmental losses. It also positions humans as being the ones to bear risks. He argues that there is an urgent need to develop a new conceptual understanding, which he terms “ecological criticism.” This perspective, he says, is necessary for the interrogation of power (capital structures, capitalist ideology, and relations between humans and nature) as well as the construction of complex and intricate networks through ecological interactions.
- 11) This group holds that the earthquake that struck the city of Yogyakarta, in central Java, on May 27, 2006 (two days before the Lapindo mudflow first erupted) either led to the creation of a new fracture or reactivated an old fracture, thus allowing the hot mud to flow to the surface.

cratic level. As can be expected, it was difficult to find a middle ground between these views, each of which was supported by subjective interests.

The government came up with an ambiguous compromise for policymaking purposes: the disaster was both man-made and natural, having been caused by human actions and natural phenomena. This compromise influenced the ambivalent policies taken by the government several months later. Lapindo Brantas was required to provide compensation to the direct victims of the mudflow, with the government responsible for regions subsequently affected by the disaster. This ambivalence was reflected also in the government institution that was tasked with managing the disaster: the names of the team and agency established indicated that the disaster was natural, but there were also strong indications that Lapindo Brantas was responsible.

The government's immediate response to the mudflow was to establish a team—the Tim Nasional Penanggulangan Semburan Lumpur di Sidoarjo (National Team for the Management of the Sidoarjo Mudflow)—through Presidential Decree Number 13 of 2006, dated September 8, 2006. This team was given a mandate for six months, which was later extended through Presidential Decree Number 5 of 2007. By the end of 2006 the mudflow was spewing 148,000 cubic meters of mud per day, and due to the continued and spreading impact in the first three months of 2007, the government converted the team's status into a stronger formal institution, an “agency,” through Presidential Regulation 14 of 2007 regarding the Badan Penanggulangan Lumpur Sidoarjo (BPLS, Sidoarjo Mudflow Management Agency), dated April 8, 2007. This agency was given a broader mandate: it was to, among other things, take steps to coordinate the management of the mud's eruption and flow, to rescue the area's residents, to handle societal issues, and to maintain the infrastructure affected by the mudflow, while ensuring that Lapindo Brantas took responsibility for the management of social and community issues in the areas included in the Map of Affected Areas (MAA).

The initial MAA indicated that in 2007 residents of at least 12 villages spread through three districts and covering an area of 640 hectares were affected. In 2011, the MAA was extended with the addition of nine new *rukun tetangga* (RT)—sub-village governance units. It was again extended in early 2012, with the addition of a further 65 RTs. By 2012, a total of 11,881 families had become victims of the Lapindo mudflow (*Kompas* 2012a).

Two different schemes were used for compensation. Residents whose land and buildings had been covered by mud and were included on the MAA of March 22, 2007 were the responsibility of Lapindo Brantas, and as such the company was to pay compensation to them. Victims whose land was not included on the MAA of March 22, 2007 but was affected by the mudflow were compensated by the government through the

national budget.¹²⁾ According to Article 15, Paragraphs 1 and 2, of Presidential Regulation 14 of 2007, victims whose land was covered by the first MAA were to be offered an incremental compensation plan upon proof of landownership in the form of a land sale certificate validated by the government. Twenty percent of compensation was to be paid up front, with the remainder to be paid within two years. Victims outside the first MAA, meanwhile, were to be paid in installments over a period of five years.¹³⁾ By 2014, all victims of the mudflow whose land was not located on the MAA of March 22, 2007 (covering 555 hectares) had received compensation totaling more than Rp.4 trillion (Detik 2014). A very different fate, however, was faced by the victims whose land was included on the map of March 22, 2007, whose compensation was the responsibility of Lapindo Brantas. The company had to pay Rp.3,830,547,222,220 in compensation, divided among 13,100 victims. However, in 2014 there were still 3,100 victims who had yet to receive full compensation, representing a total monetary figure of Rp.786 billion (Diananta 2014).¹⁴⁾

This situation led to the birth of several organizations, supported by local and national CSOs, to fight for victims' rights.¹⁵⁾ One of these was Korban Lapindo Menggugat (KLM),

12) Presidential Regulation 14 of 2007 limits Lapindo's liability to the area recorded by the MAA of March 22, 2007. The remainder is the responsibility of the government (Article 15, Paragraph 5). As the mudflow has spread, the government has revised this decree to expand its area of responsibility. These revisions have been done through Presidential Regulations 48 of 2008, 40 of 2009, 68 of 2011, 37 of 2012, and 33 of 2013.

13) Payment was divided as follows: 20 percent in the 2008 fiscal year, 30 percent in the 2009 fiscal year, 20 percent in the 2010 fiscal year, 20 percent in the 2011 fiscal year, and 10 percent in the 2012 fiscal year.

14) On April 30, 2015, a few months after being inaugurated, Jokowi passed Presidential Decree 11 of 2015 regarding the Establishment of the Team for the Speedy Resolution of Land and Building Sales for the Victims of the Sidoarjo Mudflow in the Area Recorded in the MAA of March 22, 2007. This was followed on June 26, 2015 by Presidential Regulation 76 of 2015 regarding the Giving of Anticipatory Funds for the Sale of Land and Buildings owned by the Victims of the Sidoarjo Mudflow in the Area Recorded in the MAA of March 22, 2007. Mechanics for the payment of Lapindo's obligations were set through the publication of the Project Content Form for the 999.99 Budget of the BPLS Work Unit on June 26, 2015 (Velix 2015).

15) Organizations that have advocated for victims of the mudflow include Jaringan Advokasi Tambang (Network for Mining Advocacy), Komisi untuk Orang Hilang dan Korban Tindak Kekerasan (Commission for Disappeared Persons and Victims of Violence), Koalisi Rakyat untuk Hak Atas Air (People's Coalition for Rights to Water), Koalisi Rakyat untuk Keadilan Perikanan (People's Coalition for Fisheries Justice), Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia (Indonesian Environmental Forum), Konsorsium Pembaruan Agraria (Consortium for Agrarian Reform), the Indonesia Human Rights Committee for Social Justice, Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Indonesia (Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation), Lembaga Studi dan Kajian Advokasi HAM (ELSAM, Institute for the Study and Research of Human Rights Advocacy), and Perkumpulan untuk Pembaharuan Hukum Berbasis Masyarakat dan Ekologis (HuMa, Association for Legal Renewal Based in Society and Ecology).

an object of this research, which was established in 2010. During the 2014 presidential election, KLM transformed itself into a volunteer group supporting Jokowi.

III-1 *The Dynamics of KLM's Struggle*

Korban Lapindo Menggugat, as a movement, has united victims of the Lapindo mudflow who are demanding compensation for the destruction and damage they faced following a 100-meter dam breach at points 79 and 80, located in Gempolsari Village, on December 23, 2010. Long before KLM, various other groups were established by victims of the mudflow (Paring 2009; Rusdi 2012; Drake 2013; Anis 2014). These included Pagar Rekontrak (Paguyuban Rakyat Renokenongo Menolak Kontrak, Association of Renokenongo Residents Against Rentals),¹⁶⁾ Pagar Rekorlap (Paguyuban Warga Renokenongo Korban Lapindo, Association of Renokenongo Lapindo Victims), Lasbon Kapur (Laskar Bonek Korban Lumpur, Bonek Troop of Mud Victims),¹⁷⁾ and Gabungan Korban Lumpur Lapindo (GKLL, Lapindo Mudflow Victims Group)—which subsequently split into two groups in response to the compensation scheme¹⁸⁾—Tim 7 Desa

16) Pagar Rekontrak was the first organization to organize the victims of the mudflow, many of whom were residents of Renokenongo Village. It was relatively easy for these residents to work together because they were gathered in the same refugee camp, in Pasar Baru. Pagar Rekontrak rejected the repayment scheme outlined in the presidential regulation because it felt that by receiving money for renting homes, residents would be separated; this, it argued, would make it more difficult for residents to consolidate themselves in future fights for their rights. Furthermore, they felt that the initial payment of 20 percent was insufficient to help residents start new lives, particularly since the remaining 80 percent would only be paid 23 months later. Pagar Rekontrak demanded sale of their land, rather than the 20%/80% system offered, and for Lapindo to prepare 30 hectares of land for residents to build together in unity rather than be divided. These demands were reduced over time, to 50 percent down payment and 30 hectares of land. These reduced demands led to the formation of a splinter group, Pagar Rekorlap. Ultimately, owing to their weak bargaining position, both Pagar Rekontrak and Pagar Rekorlap agreed to a 20 percent down payment with a cash and resettlement scheme.

17) Lasbon Kapur consisted of victims who joined the 80 percent payment scheme offered by Minarak Lapindo Jaya (MLJ), a company established by Lapindo to handle compensation payments. This scheme involved resettlement in the Kahuripan Nirwana Villages Complex. MLJ offered several types of homes, and interested residents needed only to compare the value of 80 percent of their assets with the price of the home chosen. If they had greater assets, then the residents could receive the difference in cash. Most of this program's participants were residents of the Tanggulangin Anggun Sejahtera Housing Complex.

18) Another 80 percent payment scheme offered by MLJ was cash and resettlement. This scheme was used for GKLL. Through this scheme, MLJ paid cash for the buildings that had been swallowed by mud. Compensation for land, meanwhile, was given through resettlement. The GKLL administration's agreement with this scheme led to the group splitting into two factions, the 16 Perumtas Team, covering RW 16 in the Tanggulangin Anggun Sejahtera Housing Complex, and Gerakan Pendukung Perpres 14/2007 (Geppres, Movement in Support of Presidential Resolution 14/2007), which demanded cash and carry compensation.

Renokenongo (Seven Team of Renokenongo Village) and Forkom Mindi (Forum Komunikasi Mindi, Mindi Communications Forum).¹⁹⁾

The dam breach of December 23, 2010 allowed mud to flow through the dam and toward the village of Glagah Arum. Mud soon spread over 30 hectares of housing and rice fields, ultimately affecting eight villages: Glagah Arum and Plumbon in Porong District; Permisan and Bangunsari in Jabon District; and Kalidawir, Gempolsari, Sentul, and Penatarsewu in Tanggulangin District (Ugo 2011).²⁰⁾ As a result, residents of these villages had to evacuate, and their harvests failed. This led them to conduct demonstrations outside the Sidoarjo Parliament in January 2011 and demand compensation for their destroyed land, homes, rice fields, and fish farms as well as polluted rivers and air. The people of Gempolsari also demanded clean water. Residents of four villages—Sentul, Glagah Arum, Gempolsari, and Penatarsewu—blocked the alternative route between Surabaya and Malang for two days (October 24–25, 2011) to pressure BPLS to quickly pay compensation (Idha Saraswati 2011).

The January 2011 demonstrations were facilitated by a local parliament member from the PDI-P (Partai Demokrat Indonesia–Perjuangan; Democratic Party of Indonesia–Struggle) named Mundir Dwi Ilmiawan. He was a legislative member from the Sidoarjo 2 electoral district, which included several districts affected by the mudflow: Jabon, Krembung, Porong, and Prambon. Ilmiawan then asked Wardah Hafidz renowned CSO activist, to help residents organize their demands. Hafidz was the coordinator of the Urban Poor Consortium (UPC), an organization with extensive experience in defending the interests of Indonesia’s urban poor. After meeting with the UPC, KLM received guidance and organized its demands. It also received strategic training on how to voice its demands, as well as an invitation to join UPLINK (Urban Poor Linkage), a network of urban poor organizations and their supporters.²¹⁾

19) The Mindi Communications Forum was established by residents of Mindi village to disseminate information and organize demonstrations. It was active between 2009 and 2011, before Mindi was included in the MAA by Presidential Regulation 68 of 2011.

20) These villages were not included in the MAA as specified by Presidential Regulation 14 of 2007 or Presidential Regulation 48 of 2008.

21) UPC involvement began in the early phases of the disaster. On December 26, 2006, seven months after the mudflow began (and long before KLM was established), UPC sent two members from its Makassar and Surabaya secretariats to “observe the situation and learn about the social and environmental problem created by the mud volcano” (Mutjaba *et al.* 2009, 8). Observations indicate that UPC established UPLINK Porong as part of its UPLINK Indonesia network to organize communities and create a sense of unity among victims. UPLINK’s first focus was the evacuees living in the market, most of whom came from Renokenongo. The organization provided cloth to serve as partitions between families, assisted in the public kitchen, and worked with victim communities. These market residents later established Pagar Rekontrak. UPLINK had no office but mingled with residents. It pushed for victims to organize demonstrations, introduced them to other concerned

KLM has not limited its demands to compensation. The group has also argued against further drilling at the site. In total, Lapindo Brantas owns 30 wells in Sidoarjo, spread through Porong and Tanggulangin Districts. In Kali Dawir, for instance, it owns two wells; both were drilled before the eruption of the Banjar Panji-1 Well in Renokenongo. Since the disaster, residents have consistently rejected further drilling. On April 22, 2012, approximately 150 residents from five villages—Glagah Arum, Penatarsewu, Kalidawir, Sentul, and Gempolsari—held a vigil against Lapindo Brantas's gas drilling and called for the company to leave Sidoarjo. KLM has also protested BPLS's decision to divert mud to the Ketapang River (Melki 2013) owing to the serious pollution and damage to irrigation systems this has caused. To this end, on November 29, 2013 KLM went to the Sidoarjo Parliament to demand that BPLS stop diverting mud to the Ketapang River. Because the northern dams were in increasingly critical condition, KLM also called for BPLS to reinforce existing dams. Both demands were unsuccessful (Abdul 2013); in 2014, mud was still being diverted into the Ketapang River and no reinforcement efforts had been undertaken.²²⁾ This failure was related to victims' refusal to allow BPLS to redirect mud into the Porong River and reinforce the dams until they had received compensation from Lapindo Brantas.

Furthermore, KLM, working with UPC, demanded that persons who applied for birth certificates more than a year after birth being reported be able to do so without going to court or paying any fees.²³⁾ After data collection and document verification, it was found that some 400 members of KLM did not have a birth certificate. These certificates were fought for at the Civil Registry, local parliament, State Court, and Regent's Office beginning in June 2013. KLM even sent birth certificate applicants' data to the Komisi Perlindungan Anak Indonesia (KPAI, Indonesian Child Protection Commission) in Jakarta to prepare for a case in the Constitutional Court. This struggle was ultimately successful. The Regent and State Court for Sidoarjo promised that 400 birth certificate applications from KLM members would be handled without cost and could be filed collectively. This was an important symbolic victory for the residents, as birth certificates are crucial as basic administrative proof for residents to claim their rights, including compensation.

↘ organizations, and taught them how to interact with the government. UPLINK did not limit its activities to the local level. In December 2007 it demonstrated together with mudflow victims in front of the National Parliament Building and Presidential Palace, as well as the offices of the Social Ministry, UN Habitat, and the National Commission for Human Rights (Mutjaba *et al.* 2009).

22) Interview with Manarif, a member of KLM, Sidoarjo, November 29, 2014.

23) Law No. 24 of 2013 regarding the Amendment of Law No. 23 of 2006 regarding Civic Administration stipulates that birth certificates may be received automatically only within a year. To report a birth after this, residents must go through a legal process and pay a fine.

Every year KLM, in collaboration with UPC, holds a ceremony commemorating the Lapindo mudflow tragedy. This is intended to maintain morale and ensure that the issue remains alive in the public's memory—not only among affected individuals but also among outsiders, especially policy makers. Nevertheless, these efforts have not completely succeeded. KLM members have been afflicted by a sense of hopelessness, as shown by the group's declining membership. One member of KLM indicated that most members had become worn out because their demands had had very few results.²⁴⁾ In 2013, field data indicate, there were only 480 active KLM members, from four villages.²⁵⁾ Residents of the other four villages were no longer active in KLM activities.

IV Roots of the Volunteer Movement in Surabaya: Forced Evictions in Stren Kali

IV-1 *Land Issues in Stren Kali, Surabaya*

The Jagir River is a man-made tributary of the Mas River that was first excavated during the Dutch colonial period. It runs along Jagir Wonokromo Street. During the Dutch colonial period, the clear waters of the Jagir carried the boats of fishmongers and bamboo sellers and served nearby residents' bathing and washing needs. Before the 1950s, the banks of the Jagir River were uninhabited land filled with weeds. Slowly, however, as the city of Surabaya developed, this empty land became occupied by informal-sector workers such as pedicab drivers, beggars, vagrants, and sex workers. Aside from constructing their own dwellings, the people living in Stren Kali established businesses such as corner stores and repair shops (LKHI 2009).

The banks of the Jagir River became more crowded in 1964, when the Wonokromo Market was expanded and approximately 50 merchants—mostly ironmongers—were relocated. The Surabaya municipal government offered these merchants two alternatives: to be relocated to an empty shop in the market measuring approximately 2.5×4 meters, or to be relocated to the Jagir–Wonokromo area along the riverbanks. Most merchants took the second option. In this new area, they built places to live and do business. When the Social Department of Surabaya relocated more residents in 1970, Stren Kali was the location of choice. With funds from the PONSORIA WAWA (a sort of lottery), in 1970 the government built Jagir Avenue. Public transportation such as DAMRI

24) Interview with Manarif, a member of KLM, Sidoarjo, November 29, 2014.

25) The four villages that are still active members of KLM are Penatarsewu, Kalidawir, Sentul, and Gempolsari.

buses and minibuses began to operate in the area. Electricity became available in 1983 (*ibid.*). The area, though populated by the city's lower-class residents, thus had ready access to lighting and transportation. Stren Kali became increasingly crowded as Surabaya grew as a trade and service city and as the provincial capital of East Java. This area quickly developed into an enclave for Surabaya's poor.

Stren Kali's strategic location has been a main consideration with residents in choosing a place to live. Data released by Arkom Indonesia in 2012 indicate that 51.6 percent of Stren Kali residents live less than a kilometer from their place of work, with a further 15 percent living 1–3 kilometers from their place of work. Many residents (42.5 percent) have a monthly income of less than Rp.500,000; 33.1 percent earn between Rp.500,000 and Rp.1,000,000; 10.7 percent earn between Rp.1,000,000 and Rp.1,500,000; and 13.7 percent earn more than Rp.1,500,000. This further indicates that the residents of Stren Kali are predominantly the city's poor. Many homes are located directly on the banks of the Jagir River. When this researcher went with Gatot, an informant from PWSS, to the local meeting hall one night, he passed a row of narrow "houses" made of sheet metal and measuring only 3 × 3 meters. These were used either as family housing or as a place for sex workers to do business. According to Gatot, after the Doli prostitution district was closed, Stren Kali became the location of choice for former Doli sex workers, who joined the sex workers already living in the area. When this researcher passed the area in daylight, Stren Kali was relatively empty.

Most of Stren Kali's residents have lived there for 30 years. Said, an informant from the *kampung* (kampong) of Bratanggede, explained that he was the second generation of his family to live there, his parents having relocated to Stren Kali in 1957.²⁶⁾ Residents of Stren Kali who were not born there often migrated to join family (37.5 percent) or friends (17.1 percent) originally from the area. Covering an area of 6.76 hectares, Stren Kali is the location of 926 buildings (59.3 percent permanent, 30.9 percent semi-permanent, and 9.8 percent non-permanent). These are predominantly (57.8 percent) used for housing, though some (33.6 percent) are used as places of business (ArkomIndonesia 2012). The 926 buildings in Stren Kali are occupied by 817 families, 109 of whom rent their homes. Although most residents own their homes, proof of ownership is non-standard. Some have building construction permits, but most only have permission in the form of a letter from the water company, a business registration, or a statement of land/home ownership based on a receipt. This reflects the various ways in which residents came to occupy their land: through purchase, inheritance, direct settlement, relocation (after eviction), permission from the water company, and rental. As such, each *kampung* has a different

26) Interview with Said, Kampung Baru, Stren Kali, December 8, 2014.

history to its settlement (Totok and Ita 2009).

IV-2 *Creation of the Advocacy Group Geser Bukan Gusur (Squeeze Past Not Evict)*

Beginning in 2002, the people of Stren Kali began to face threats of eviction, as they were said to cause the pollution and shallowing of the Jagir River. On May 31, 2002, the Surabaya municipal government surprised the residents of Stren Kali with a warrant for demolition. This warrant was issued because the government felt that garbage and waste from the settlements in Stren Kali had led to the Jagir River becoming shallower and polluted (LKHI 2009). In response, residents, many of whom were street vendors, sex workers, and street children, organized themselves by establishing the umbrella group Jerit (Jaringan Rakyat Tertindas, Network of Oppressed Peoples). Three years later, in February 2005, six *kampungs* that had originally been part of Jerit (Bratang, Jagir, Gunungsari, Jambangan, Kebonsari, and Pagesangan) broke off and established their own group, PWSS (Laurens 2012). As time passed, membership expanded to include 11 *kampungs*: Bratang, Jagir, Gunungsari 1 and 2 (Gunungsari PKL), Jambangan, Kebonsari, Pagesangan, Semampir, Kampung Baru, Kebraon, and Karangpilang.

After PWSS was established, UPC and a network of academics, architects, sociologists, and legal experts guided residents in formulating an alternative concept to *kampung* management that integrated residents' needs with the river's. This concept, referred to as JOGOKALI, was conveyed through lobbying and dialog to the provincial government of East Java and the Surabaya municipal government as well as the Ministry of Public Works, Housing, and Regional Infrastructure. This led to several agreements being reached, including the formation of a joint team involving the conflicting parties. This team, however, proved incapable of reaching a satisfactory compromise.

The situation worsened in January 2005, when the provincial government sent a warning to residents of Medokan Semampir (part of the Stren Kali settlement) that they would be forcibly evicted so that the river could be broadened. After extensive negotiations, PWSS and the provincial government agreed to establish a joint team to formulate a new policy for Stren Kali. At the same time, PWSS—working with Ecoton, Friends of the Earth Indonesia, and Gadjah Mada University—conducted a study that found 60 percent of the river's pollution originated from factories; only 15 percent originated from riverbank residents. The results of this study, however, did little to discourage the government's decision to expand and deepen the river. This would require the demolition of 3,400 homes; residents would be relocated to a subsidized housing complex some 5 kilometers distant. Negotiations continued, and ultimately a compromise was reached. This compromise was given legal basis with Regional Bylaw No. 9 of 2007 regarding the Management of Riparian Zones for the Surabaya River and Wonokromo River, dated

October 5, 2007. This bylaw was based on a principle of movement, not eviction, and its Article 13 fixed the width of the riparian zones to 3–5 meters, as proposed by PSWW (Wawan *et al.* 2009).

On January 30, 2009 the Jagir River overflowed, and as a result the Surabaya municipal government decided to build a new dyke and evict residents. To this end, it prepared 300 subsidized housing units for the residents of Stren Kali (*Kompas* 2009). On April 28, 2009, residents received written instructions, citing violations of Municipal Bylaw No. 7 of 2002 regarding Building Construction Permits, that they were to demolish their buildings by April 30, 2009. In response, PWSS held demonstrations in front of Parliament and the Municipal Government building (Warta Jatim 2009). This, however, had no influence on the government. On May 4, 2009, 1,900 government security forces—consisting of police, soldiers, and Civil Service Police Unit officers—came to Stren Kali armed with a water cannon, a bulldozer, three backhoes, and trained dogs. They forced the eviction of residents living on the south side of the Jagir River (East Java Province Information Office 2009). Residents unsuccessfully resisted through prayers, blockades, and roadblocks. Some 380 buildings were demolished, and 425 families lost their homes and livelihoods (Detik 2009). Several years later, in May 2012, the provincial government, with the support of the municipal government, planned to evict residents from the river's northern banks. PWSS, however, refused, referring to Article 13 of Bylaw No. 9 of 2007 (*Kompas* 2012b).

Recognizing that environmental issues had been behind the government's actions, between 2002 and 2006 residents of Stren Kali began to reinforce their position by implementing the JOGOKALI principle, in which they worked together to keep the *kampung* healthy and the river pollution-free while still maintaining social and cultural ties in the *kampung*. Capital for these efforts came from the selling of paper and plastic waste, both from residents' own homes and from the river. Residents established systems of household waste management, constructed communal septic tanks, and sorted and managed their own garbage (Yuli 2009). These activities were done jointly, indicating PWSS's strong internal cohesion.

V From Advocacy to Volunteerism: The Metamorphosis of the KLM and PWSS Movements

The momentum of the 2014 presidential election brought new hope for KLM and PWSS. Together with the Jaringan Rakyat Miskin Kota (JRMK, Network of the Urban Poor), which had joined with UPLINK and Jaringan Rakyat Miskin Indonesia (Jerami, Network

of Indonesian Poor),²⁷⁾ KLM and PWSS made a political contract with the Indonesian presidential candidate Jokowi. This political contract was signed by Jokowi during a ceremony marking the eighth year of the Lapindo mudflow, held on May 29, 2014, in Siring, Porong, Sidoarjo. This political contract emphasized Jokowi's commitment to five basic issues: health care through the Indonesia Sehat (Healthy Indonesia) program,²⁸⁾ education through the Indonesia Pintar (Smart Indonesia) program,²⁹⁾ poverty eradication through resettlement programs based in an approach of "Move Don't Evict"; the resolution of the Lapindo problem through a bailout scheme for the victims; and a job security program.

This political contract was not the first for these parties. During the 2012 gubernatorial elections in Jakarta, Jokowi had signed a similar contract with JRMK and UPC on September 15, 2012. This contract included Jokowi's agreement to present a new, pro-poor, concept of Jakarta that was based in service and civil participation and called for, among other things, community participation in zoning planning; budgeting; and the planning, implementation, and supervision of urban development programs. It also promoted the fulfillment and protection of urban residents' rights through the legalization of illegal *kampung*s; use of discussion and non-eviction approaches to relocating slums; management of the informal economy to better support street vendors, pedicab drivers, traditional fishermen, housemaids, small merchants, and traditional markets; and transparency and openness in the dissemination of information to urban residents (Anggriawan 2012). When Jokowi was elected, he fulfilled the terms of this contract. The relocation of residents from the banks of the Pluit Reservoir and Muara Baru River to subsidized housing, for instance, was conducted through dialog with local residents and involving JRMK and UPC (Irawaty 2013).

The signing of their political contract with Jokowi on May 29, 2014 marked the

27) Included in this network were the Jaringan Rakyat Miskin Jakarta (JRMK Jakarta, Network of Poor Peoples, Jakarta), Jaringan Rakyat Miskin Kota Lampung (JRMK Lampung, Network of Poor Peoples, Lampung), Gerakan Rakyat Miskin Bersatu Kendari (Gerimis Kendari, Movement of United Poor Peoples, Kendari), Komite Perjuangan Rakyat Miskin Makassar (KPRM Makassar, Committee for the Struggle of the Impoverished, Makassar), Aceh, Pare-Pare, and the Urban Poor Consortium (UPC).

28) The Indonesia Sehat Program, first, guarantees poor residents healthcare services through the BPJS Kesehatan National Health Insurance program; second, it expands the scope of financial assistance programs to persons suffering from social prosperity issues and the children of financial aid recipients; and, third, it gives the extra benefits of preventative treatment and early detection.

29) The Indonesia Pintar program is intended to increase citizens' participation in primary and secondary education, increase the rate of continued education (as marked by a decrease in dropout rates), reduce the gap in education between poor and rich residents as well as men and women, and increase secondary students' preparedness to enter the workforce or continue their studies.



Fig. 1 Jokowi at Lapindo, Sidoarjo

Source: <http://us.images.detik.com/content/2014/05/29/157/jkw01.jpg>, accessed November 29, 2014

beginning of KLM and PWSS's formal support for Jokowi's candidacy (see Fig. 1). It was the beginning of the groups' metamorphosis from advocacy organizations to volunteer organizations. Their reason for providing this support can be derived from the writer's interview with Warsito, a member of PWSS³⁰⁾ who related this support to the groups' hopes that their long struggles could finally bear fruit. The use of a political contract to achieve political goals was not new in Indonesia.³¹⁾ PWSS had twice previously made political contracts with candidates, during Surabaya's mayoral elections in 2010 and the East Java gubernatorial elections in 2013. However, the results of these contracts had

30) Warsito stated, "At the beginning, the ones who asked us to support Jokowi were UPC. We supported Jokowi for our own purposes. Because we've always been threatened by forced evictions, we had to have the nerve to make a political contract with Jokowi. The stakes, the guarantee, was that we would give our voices to support Jokowi" (Pada awalnya yang mengajak kita mendukung Jokowi itu UPC. Kita mendukung Jokowi karena ada pamrih. Karena kita itu selalu terancam penggusuran, kita harus berani kontrak politik dengan Jokowi. Taruhannya, jaminannya, kita memberi suara untuk mendukung Jokowi). Interview with Warsito, Kampung Baru, Sren Kali, December 12, 2014.

31) Shortly before they formally became candidates in the 2004 presidential election, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Jusuf Kalla signed a political contract with the coalition of political parties backing them.

been disappointing, as the PWSS-backed candidates were not elected.³²⁾ For PWSS, the political contract was understood as a concrete manifestation of its political participation, as stated by Gatot:³³⁾

This political contract is a pillar of sorts, regarding how to participate in politics. Participating in politics means that we need to be involved in political issues. We are not just a source of votes. If we are just a source of votes, yeah, then we're only a target of money politics. Because we're involved, then automatically we need to put something forth to the candidate: a contract.³⁴⁾

The joint decision of KLM, PWSS, and the other movements in UPLINK to support Jokowi was reached long after he was formally proposed as a presidential candidate³⁵⁾ and after a lengthy process in which the group considered possible benefits and costs, as well as the ideal criteria for their candidate.³⁶⁾ Before the year-end meeting in Jakarta,

32) During the Surabaya mayoral elections in 2010, PWSS declared its support for the running mates it considered to be pro-people. The presidium of PWSS, Hadiono, stated that this declaration showed that the people of Stren Kali maintained the right to determine their own fate through the mayoral elections in Surabaya. The political contract presented by the people of Stren Kali stated that the new mayor had to renovate the *kampung* in a participatory manner, such as through land certification; create jobs for and protect the employment of the poor populace, including street vendors, pedicab drivers, day laborers, housekeepers, scavengers, beggars, and street children; develop the city without any forced evictions and keeping in mind the area and its local wisdom; and guarantee and provide residents with basic rights such as 12 years of education, free and quality health care, and clean water. PWSS offered 200,000 votes if the mayoral candidate would sign the political contract. Each resident of Stren Kali was believed to be capable of drawing 60–100 votes a day to support this movement. In the election, PWSS signed its political contract with the independent running mates Fitradjaja Purnama and Naen Soeyono. During the gubernatorial election, PWSS made a political contract with Khofifah Indar Parawangsa, who ultimately lost to Soekarwo. Interview with Said, Kampung Baru, Stren Kali, December 6, 2014.

33) Interview with Gatot Subroto, Kampung Baru, Stren Kali, December 17, 2014.

34) Original: Kontrak politik ini semacam pilar, bagaimana berpartisipasi dalam politik. Berpartisipasi dalam politik artinya kita harus terlibat dalam urusan-urusan politik. Kita tidak hanya menjadi kantong suara. Kalau menjadi kantong suara saja ya itu hanya jadi sasaran politik uang. Karena kita terlibat, otomatis kita harus mengajukan sesuatu ke calon, yaitu berupa kontrak.

35) Jokowi was formally presented as a candidate in the 2014 presidential election by the PDI-P on March 14, 2014.

36) Gatot Subroto, an informant, stated, "At the year-end meeting of UPLINK, 11–15 December 2013 in Jakarta, there was a deal that if we wanted to participate in politics, to play a role as residents and citizens in politics, we had to put forth the name of a presidential candidate. A lot of names were put forth then. Some supported Prabowo, others supported a figure from the PKS [Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, Prosperous Justice Party]. There was debate. If we were suggesting candidates, then of course there'd be prerequisites for would-be presidential candidates. So we tried to clarify what those prerequisites were. We agreed that the criteria would be they didn't violate human rights, the party was nationalistic, and it wasn't anyone from the military. At the year-end meeting we invited Eva Sundari, who happened to be a member of parliament and the funding coordinator for the UPC. She was the first to put forth Jokowi's name. At the time, in PDI-P, there was internal ↗

UPLINK and UPC met in Stren Kali exclusively to discuss the political contract; this meeting was predominantly to consolidate the steps they would take, as they had already made numerous efforts to gain political support from various parts of society. In the context of Sidoarjo and Surabaya, the decision had particular weight as PDI-P had a strong voter base in Surabaya and the two parties that promoted Jokowi's candidacy—PDI-P and the Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB, National Awakening Party)—had an absolute majority.³⁷⁾

Following the year-end meeting, UPC worked to arrange a meeting with Jokowi so that it could convey the aspirations of Indonesia's urban poor. On April 30, 2014, some 50 UPLINK activists came to Jokowi's official home (where he lived while serving as governor of Jakarta) at 7 Taman Suropati Street, Menteng, Central Jakarta. In this meeting, PWSS (represented by Said and Warsito) and KLM (represented by Manarif) negotiated a plan, which was then conveyed by Said.³⁸⁾ This audience resulted in Jokowi

↘ debate over Jokowi's candidacy" (Pada waktu Pertemuan Akhir Tahun [PAT] UPLINK, 11-15 Desember 2013 di Jakarta, ada kesepakatan kalau kita ingin berpartisipasi dalam politik, memainkan peran warga masyarakat dan warga negara dalam politik, kita harus mengusulkan nama calon Presiden. Banyak nama muncul waktu itu, ada yang mendukung Prabowo, ada yang mendukung tokoh dari PKS, sempat ada perdebatan. Kalau kita mengusulkan nama, otomatis ada kriteria persyaratan calon presiden. Lalu kita mencoba mengklarifikasi persyaratan calon presiden, waktu itu disepakati persyaratannya, tidak melanggar Hak Asasi Manusia, partainya yang nasionalis, tidak memilih calon dari militer. Pada waktu PAT itu kita mendatangkan Eva Sundari, kebetulan dia ini orang DPR dan koordinator funding UPC, dia yang pertama kali mengusulkan Jokowi. Waktu itu di PDI Perjuangan, di internalnya terjadi pro kontra pencalonan Jokowi). Interview, Kampung Baru, Stren Kali, December 17, 2014.

37) Data from the General Elections Commission for the parliamentary election in Sidoarjo indicate that of the 975,814 valid votes, Nasdem received 3.89 percent (38,036); PKB received the most, at 27.01 percent (263,630); PKS received 6.2 percent (60,539); PDI-P received the second-most, at 15.56 percent (151,863); Golkar received 6.98 percent (68,117); Gerindra received the third-most, at 14.09 percent (137,495); the Democrats received 7.41 percent (72,345); PAN received 12.22 percent (119,338); PPP received 1.74 percent (16,993); Hanura received 2.68 percent (26,208); PBB received 1.51 percent (14,795); and PKPI received 0.66 percent (6,455). In the Surabaya municipal parliamentary election, of the 1,152,098 valid votes, Nasdem received 4.64 percent (53,496); PKB received 10.39 percent (119,741); PKS received 5.98 percent (68,936); PDI-P received the most, at 30.05 percent (346,320); Golkar received 5.46 percent (62,943); Gerindra received the second-most, at 12.4 percent (142,879); the Democrats received 12.17 percent (140,267); PAN received 6.38 percent (73,543); PPP received 5.8 percent (66,928); Hanura received 5.53 percent (63,807); PBB received 0.63 percent (7,272); and PKPI received 0.51 percent (5,966).

38) "We went to Jokowi's official home and handed him our political contract. Would he sign a political contract with us? After he said he would, we worked. At the time we invited Jokowi too: 'Please come on 29 May to commemorate eight years of the Lapindo mudflow'" (Kita ke rumah dinas Jokowi itu menyodorkan kontrak politik ke Jokowi, mau nggak dia kontrak politik dengan kita? Setelah dia mengatakan mau, ya kita kerja. Kita pada waktu itu juga mengundang Jokowi, mohon datang 29 Mei memperingati delapan tahun lumpur Lapindo). Interview with Warsito, Kampung Baru, Stren Kali, December 15, 2014.

promising that he would initiate economic equalization programs, particularly for the poor. Although no concrete details or activities regarding such measures were discussed, the meeting was sufficient for UPLINK and UPC to agree to support Jokowi. Members would go door-to-door to collect coins and voice support in seven cities (Lampung, Bratasena, Jakarta, Surabaya, Porong, Makassar, and Kendari) and thus help ensure Jokowi's victory. It was during this meeting that UPLINK and UPC invited Jokowi to attend the ceremony commemorating the Lapindo mudflow's eighth anniversary. On May 29, 2014, Jokowi attended the ceremony and signed the political contract (UPLINK and UPC 2014).

KLM's political support was granted to the running mates of Jokowi and Jusuf Kalla (JK) for a simple but clear reason: Jokowi's faction had no political elite, nor did it have any political forces connected to the Lapindo disaster. Conversely, Jokowi's opponent Prabowo was supported by many people and groups with ties to the Lapindo disaster, including Golkar—a key figure of which was Aburizal Bakrie,³⁹⁾ the majority shareholder of Lapindo Brantas. Jokowi was thus believed to be capable of resolving the situation because he had no conflict of interest.⁴⁰⁾ Following through on the agreement reached during the audience with Jokowi, KLM and PWSS began to take action as volunteers for Jokowi–JK. The groups used three types of activities to gather support and votes for Jokowi: Coins for Change, painting the roofs of their homes with Jokowi's name, and rapping. UPC served as the initiator and driving force behind these campaigns and also provided logistical support such as shirts, flyers, stickers, and tabloids.

Volunteer Method 1: Coins for Change

Koin Perubahan (Coins for Change) was held in every city in the UPLINK network to promote a Jokowi victory. Coins for Change was a symbolic act against money politics. Gatot stated:

39) In 2012, Aburizal Bakrie declared himself a presidential candidate for the 2014 election. This decision led to heated polemics within Golkar, the party that he led. The continued eruption of the Sidoarjo mudflow was the most prominent issue raised by opponents, and this affected Aburizal Bakrie's electability (Tika 2013; Wayan 2013; Akuntano 2014). A survey conducted between June 20 and 30, 2012 by the Saiful Mujani Research Centre, which reached 1,230 respondents from throughout Indonesia, found that 80 percent of respondents knew of the Lapindo disaster, 65.9 percent knew that drilling was the cause of the disaster, 43.7 percent said that the owner of Lapindo was the Bakrie family, and 89.4 percent felt that the family should take responsibility. Bakrie's popularity reached 70.1 percent, but only 4.4 percent of respondents said that they would vote for him (Liauw 2012).

40) Interview with Abdul Jabar, Member of KLM, November 27, 2014.

Coins for Change was an effort to deflect rumors or charges that the poor could have their votes bought. Through these Coins for Change, we attempted to deflect such political games. What people needed was for their aspirations to be heard by their representatives. What the poor people wanted was change.⁴¹⁾

The total amount of funds collected was limited. The entire national UPLINK network was capable of collecting coins only to the value of Rp.27 million; on its own, KLM collected Rp.1.5 million. The entire sum was donated to the Jokowi campaign via funds transfer. PWSS initially planned on collecting funds by panhandling at traffic lights, in the markets, and in the *kampung* outside of Stren Kali. However, owing to the limited time available volunteers focused exclusively on traffic intersections.⁴²⁾ While collecting coins, they also distributed stickers and flyers regarding the political contract with Jokowi.

Volunteer Method 2: Painting Jokowi's Name on Roofs

Painting the roof of each resident's home with Jokowi's name in capital letters was—according to Gatot—Wardah Hafidz's idea (see Fig. 2). He was inspired to do so by his experiences in numerous villages, where each government office had the letters PKK (short for *Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga*, Guidance for Family Prosperity) painted on its roof. At first it was agreed that roof painting would be done in every part of the UPC network, with the intent to set a record that would be recognized by the Museum for Indonesian and World Records. However, only PWSS successfully realized this goal. Painting was carried out simultaneously in 11 *kampungs*, from Kebraon to Semampir. Residents used chalk paint mixed with glue in the hope that the paint would not easily run. Said termed this an “air campaign,” as persons photographing the *kampung* from the sky would clearly see the word “Jokowi.”⁴³⁾

The movement's success depended on several factors, including a leader figure capable of mobilizing residents,⁴⁴⁾ a high degree of participation from residents—as evidenced by their willingness to pay for their own materials—the relatively solid organizational structure of PWSS, and residents' views regarding their actions. For PWSS, this painting was important, particularly as proof of its dedication. Warsito explained,

41) Interview with Gatot Subroto. (Original: Koin perubahan merupakan upaya untuk menangkis isu atau anggapan bahwa seolah-olah rakyat miskin itu bisa dibeli suaranya. Lewat koin perubahan kita berusaha menangkis permainan politik yang seperti itu, yang rakyat butuhkan itu aspirasinya didengar oleh wakilnya. Yang diinginkan rakyat miskin itu perubahan.)

42) Interview with Komang, treasurer of PWSS, Kampung Baru, Stren Kali, December 13, 2014.

43) Interview with Komang, treasurer of PWSS, Kampung Baru, Stren Kali, December 17, 2014.

44) Interview with Gatot Subroto, Kampung Baru, Stren Kali, December 15, 2014.



Fig. 2 Jokowi's Name Painted at Kampung Baru, Stren Kali (November 26, 2014)

This painting was proof that the people of Stren Kali weren't fooling around. Whatever happened, even if our opponents badgered us, our choice was Jokowi. Yeah, Jokowi. Imagine what would have happened if Jokowi lost. What would happen to us? Surely Prabowo's volunteers would have attacked us. This was dangerous. Praise God, we won.⁴⁵⁾

The courage to openly state political affiliations represented the widespread transformation in Indonesian democracy since 1998, which supported increased openness. Such a hypothesis must, however, be tested through further research.

Members of KLM also intended to paint the roofs of their homes with Jokowi's name, as done by the volunteers in Stren Kali, but this did not happen because KLM had insufficient funds.⁴⁶⁾ A significant contribution to this failure to mobilize members was the fact that KLM required funds for emergencies. However, this was only a partial cause. Another was that the environment in which KLM was active tended to be very permissive of money politics. According to information collected from a variety of sources, after

45) Interview with Warsito, Kampung Baru, Stren Kali, December 15, 2014. (Original: Pengecatan ini merupakan pembuktian, bahwa warga Stren Kali tidak main-main, apapun yang terjadi meskipun diusik lawan, pilihan kita Jokowi, ya Jokowi. Bayangkan kalau sampai Jokowi kalah, apa yang akan terjadi dengan kita, relawan Prabowo pasti nyerang kita, ini kan bahaya sebenarnya. Alhamdulillah menang.)

46) Interview with Manarif, member of KLM, Sidoarjo, November 26, 2014.

elections (be they legislative or executive), an incredible amount of money circulated among residents. This was unlike the environment in which PWSS worked, where residents were mobilized in part as symbolic resistance to money politics. Another contributing factor was that, as the organization had only gained exposure with the entry of UPC, KLM lacked the internal cohesion of PWSS.

Volunteer Method 3: Rapping

Rapping is a voter organization method involving door-to-door campaigning. It was introduced to Indonesia through the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, which taught the method to UPC and UPLINK in 2007. The name “rap” was inspired by the musical genre, which involves quick and repetitive lyrics. This method of campaigning is likewise done quickly, generally consisting of five steps taking approximately 20 minutes (unlike conventional campaign models, which require a longer period of time). Rapping as an organizational model involves an organizer (the “rapper”) approaching individuals to convince them to vote and become involved in resolving problems by making demands of or negotiating with persons capable of making or changing policies on a social issue (Ari 2012). This method was widely used to collect votes for Barack Obama during his presidential campaign in the United States.

The informant Gatot Subroto described the operational methods in the 2014 presidential election:

The rapping method, basically, it's like singing rap. People throw questions at each other, come up with arguments, like they are marketing something. What they're going to say, they've already got their points made. Their goals are to convince potential voters to help support our candidate. We did this over and over, so that people would join us. It was like cause and effect. Like, A: Why are you voting for Jokowi? B: Because I don't like Prabowo. A: Why don't you like Prabowo? So, when it got to be like that, of course we'd give them the materials, the political contract. If we didn't have any materials, we couldn't possibly sell it. We always brought along our political contract as a negotiating tool. If we'd achieved our targets, we'd say “Sorry, we'll come again tomorrow.” Then we'd schedule a large meeting. We'd call people together. At the time, we did it as we broke the fast together.⁴⁷⁾

47) Original: Metode ngerap itu dasarnya seperti orang nyanyi rap, orang saling melempar pertanyaan, mengemukakan argumen, seperti sedang memasarkan sesuatu, apa yang akan diomongkan itu poinnya sudah ada, tujuannya untuk meyakinkan calon pemilih agar ikut mendukung calon kita, ini dilakukan berulang-ulang sampai orang itu ikut kita. Ini seperti sebab akibat, misal, A: Kenapa memilih Jokowi? B: Karena saya nggak suka Prabowo. A: Kenapa ibu nggak suka Prabowo? Nah kalau sudah kena begitu otomatis kita kasih bahannya, kontrak politik ini. Kalau nggak ada bahannya kan nggak mungkin kita mau jual. Kontrak politik ini selalu kita bawa saat ngerap sebagai alat penawarannya. Kalau sudah kena, kita bilang ke beliau, “Mohon maaf Ibu kita besok mau datang kesini lagi.” Lalu kita agendakan untuk membuat pertemuan besar, kita kumpulkan. Waktu itu kita lakukan sewaktu buka bersama.

KLM went door-to-door to visit residents and ask them to support Jokowi, to understand the issues that they were facing, and to become involved in the political contract with Jokowi so that the issues could be resolved once his campaign was successful. Rapping was done over a period of one month and involved approximately 60 rappers, members of both KLM and the UPLINK network. Rapping was done in *kampungs* that had been affected by the Lapindo mudflow. While rapping, KLM volunteers also distributed flyers that included the political contract that Jokowi had signed with the Lapindo victims. They also placed posters and banners in several strategic points around the dams.

The KLM rappers faced numerous challenges in the field. The goal of each rapper reaching 60 people every day went unrealized. In the face of the community's increasingly transactional attitude, rappers were capable of reaching only their family and close friends. Every time they met with someone to campaign for Jokowi, they were asked for money (Aspinall and Mada 2014). Money politics was thus the greatest enemy of these volunteer activists. Furthermore, this was the first time that most KLM members had rapped, and as a result implementation was difficult. This was exacerbated by rappers' limited operational budget. To relieve the financial burden and fund rapping, UPC helped residents establish a cooperative business and trained them in, for example, preparing food to be sold. Unfortunately, with KLM this did not go according to plan. However, with PWSS the fund-raising programs went relatively smoothly, particularly those involving the management and sale of compost and household waste.

Volunteers were faced with the dilemma of supporting themselves and their families while still fulfilling their political duties as volunteers. Because volunteers originated from the lower class, they had difficulty balancing these two issues, and the most logical choice for them was to focus on the former. Their volunteer activities were secondary to their need to financially support themselves and their families. For them, mobilizing financial resources was not a central issue. This case indicates that lower-class volunteers had greater difficulty collecting financial support.

Aside from going door-to-door, volunteers from KLM were also active in supporting Jokowi at the polling stations. They served as witnesses and members of the *Kelompok Penyelenggaraan Pemungutan Suara* (KPPS, Committee for Election Operations). Witnesses from KLM were not from political parties, but rather present at the polling stations to see and record votes for Jokowi. Members of KLM who were also members of village-level election committees supervised the counting and escorting of votes at the village level. In Kalidawir Village, this was handled by Manarif, who served as a member of the KPPS. All of Manarif's campaigning was done outside of the village, as legally he was

required to act neutrally.⁴⁸⁾

In Stren Kali, meanwhile, rapping was not a new experience. In 2009, UPC had taught PWSS how Obama's volunteers had used this method to campaign for their candidate. Gatot, together with other representatives of his movement, went to Jakarta for training. PWSS first used this method during the 2010 mayoral elections in Surabaya as part of its campaign for the independent running mates Fitradjaja Purnama and Naen Soeyono. In this election, five pairs of candidates ran, with Tri Rismahani and Bambang DH of PDI-P winning with 358,187 (38.53 percent) votes. Fitradjaja came last, with only 53,110 votes (5.71 percent) (Elin 2010). Although Fitradjaja won in Stren Kali, a subsequent evaluation by UPC found that he had benefited from a strong "follow the leader" system that had led Stren Kali residents to vote for him. Rapping, thus, had been unable to develop residents' political awareness (UPC 2010). During the presidential election, PWSS asked for the General Elections Committee's registered voters list to determine appropriate targets. Each person rapped to 50 potential voters, and each RT had its own coordinator. The number of rappers assigned to an RT depended on its population and total area; some RTs had three or four rappers.

From the results of the presidential election, it is difficult to determine whether PWSS and KLM's involvement played a role in Jokowi's victory. Of the 31 districts in Surabaya, only 1 was won by Prabowo–Hatta, where the pair received 36,829 votes to Jokowi–JK's 35,563. Jokowi–JK won all 30 other districts. The 11 *kampungs* joined in PWSS were won by Jokowi. Monitoring efforts by the Kawal Pemilu Web site confirm this Jokowi victory. In Jagir, Prabowo–Hatta received 4,352 votes (43.31 percent), whereas Jokowi–JK received 5,697 (56.69 percent) (Agita 2014; Kawal Pemilu 2014b).

A different pattern was found in Sidoarjo. In this regency, Jokowi–JK received 550,729 votes (54.22 percent), slightly above the national average of 53.15 percent, while Prabowo–Hatta received 464,990 votes (45.78 percent). In Tanggulangin District, Jokowi–JK were victorious with 23,698 votes (50.71 percent), below the national average; Prabowo–Hatta received 23,031 votes (49.29 percent). In Porong District, Jokowi–JK were victorious with 21,316 votes (57.53 percent), whereas Prabowo–Hatta received 15,734 votes (42.47 percent). The data indicate, however, that Jokowi–JK were not victorious in all areas united by KLM. In Kalidawir, for instance, where three of the informants lived, Jokowi–JK suffered a rather significant loss: they received 919 votes (42.76 percent), while Prabowo–Hatta claimed victory with 1,230 votes (57.24 percent) (Kawal Pemilu 2014a).

48) Interview with Manarif, member of KLM, Sidoarjo, November 28, 2014.

VI Conclusion

This article has discussed volunteer movements in the 2014 Indonesian presidential election as practiced by communities facing concrete problems requiring concrete solutions. Several points from the above discussion should be emphasized. First, the transformation of KLM and PWSS into volunteer movements in support of Jokowi was intended to resolve issues that the groups had already faced for several years. Belying the general view of volunteers as actors without personal considerations or hope for remunerations, but rather romantic, idealistic, and altruistic intentions, both cases show the opposite to be true: volunteer actions here were considered and self-serving. Unlike in Ukraine, where individual-based financial considerations were the motor that mobilized volunteers, KLM and PWSS used collective-based political considerations as their mobilizing motor. Likewise, belying the general view of volunteerism as promoting an abstract goal with personal satisfaction as the central explanatory factor, both cases show that volunteer movements can be formed to realize concrete, short-term goals.

Second, both cases indicate the instrumental nature of volunteer movements. These movements were used as tools to realize groups' subjective interests, namely, compensation and not being evicted. They were negotiation tools offered in exchange for Jokowi's willingness to resolve the issues the groups faced. This indicates a further, self-centered, dimension of the volunteer movements. Contrary to the argument promoted by Marcus Mietzner (2015) that Jokowi's magnetism and leadership style—described as “technocratic populism”—was sufficient to explain the extraordinary number of volunteers backing him in the 2014 presidential election, these two cases indicate that movements were more self-centered—focused on groups' own self-interests. Though not explicitly stated during research, it is apparent that these volunteer movements emerged from a rational calculation by KLM and PWSS regarding the potential of a Jokowi victory. In short, Jokowi was supported because he promised victory, and through his election these groups' own issues could be addressed.

Third, KLM and PWSS had some similar characteristics: both were movements of marginalized groups specifically targeted at resolving the issues they faced. Both used similar approaches and received support from the same national networks of CSOs. In terms of achievement, however, they differed significantly: PWSS was much more successful than KLM. This can be attributed to PWSS's higher level of internal cohesion as well as its greater capacity. In both cohesion and capacity, PWSS greatly outpaced KLM in its mobilization.

Finally, both cases showed that a lack of finances, spare time, and civic skills—all important elements of volunteering—was a serious problem for volunteer groups of

marginalized peoples. The idea that spare time was (hypothetically) available to lower-class volunteers was shown to be incorrect; spare time remained a rare commodity. Volunteers had to use their time for one of two non-overlapping activities: activities that satisfied their own individual, corporeal hunger, or activities of a political nature that could help them realize their collective goals.

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Conflict over Landownership in the Postcolonial Era: The Case of *Eigendom* Land in Surabaya*

Sukaryanto**

This article attempts to explore the controversy surrounding *eigendom* land (land owned under colonial state management rights) in Surabaya and its relations with the enforcement of the Basic Principles of Agrarian Law (BAL), in an effort to realize the ideals of the Republic of Indonesia—justice and prosperity for all people. The enactment of the BAL, which independently regulated land tenure and ownership, was a milestone in the autonomy of postcolonial Indonesia. One of the effects of the law was agrarian reform, which led to most *eigendom* land becoming *tanah negara*, or state-controlled land. This *eigendom* land has been used for public housing, though some consider such usage to deviate from the BAL. In recent years, the issue has led to conflict between settlers of *eigendom* land and the municipal government of Surabaya. This article concludes that the existence of *eigendom* land in the postcolonial era is a reality and its impact can be seen in the form of residents being driven to oppose the government. If the law were consistent with the BAL, there would be no land with *eigendom* status in Indonesia. The best hope for achieving justice and welfare for the people of Indonesia, in accordance with the goals of agrarian reform, is to convert the status of all *eigendom* land to the types of land rights determined by BAL.

Keywords: *eigendom*, ownership rights, conflict, Surat Ijo, land rights conversion, Surabaya

Introduction

Law No. 5 of 1960 Concerning the Basic Principles of Agrarian Law (Undang-Undang No. 5 Tahun 1960 tentang Peraturan Dasar Pokok-pokok Agraria, hereafter BAL) is the basis of land management policy in Indonesia. Since this law was enacted, there has been

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a reform in the control, ownership, and use of land in Indonesia. This has included the conversion of a colonial model of land rights (land titles) to a national one. Land rights that were in effect during the colonial period, which were based on the Agrarische Wet (Agrarian Law, hereafter AW) of 1870 and the Burgerlijk Wetboek (Civil Code, hereafter BW) of 1847, including *eigendom* (ownership rights), *opstal* (rights over buildings erected on land), *erfpacht* (lease rights), *gebruik* (use rights), and *servituut* (servitude rights), have been required to be converted to the types of land rights determined by the BAL, including *hak milik* (ownership/freehold rights, hereafter HM), *hak guna bangunan* (building rights, hereafter HGB), *hak guna usaha* (cultivation rights, hereafter HGU), *hak pakai* (usage rights, hereafter HP), and *hak pengelolaan* (management rights, hereafter HPL). The same requirement for conversion has applied to land with attached *adat* rights such as *yasan*, *gogolan*, *pekulen*, and *bengkok* (Parlindungan 1990, 1).

The requirement for conversion has had a number of effects, one of them being that foreign nationals who previously held colonial land rights have lost those rights; their land has fallen under the control of the state. The BAL stipulates that citizens of foreign countries are not permitted to have HM rights over land in Indonesia; they may only receive HP rights. The complicated administrative procedures involved in the conversion of colonial rights over land to HP rights has meant that most citizens of foreign countries who held *eigendom* rights over land decided to leave Indonesia, allowing their lands to fall under the control of the Indonesian state.

The national government has delegated authority to the regional governments to manage state-controlled land as part of the latter's agrarian reform programs. In Surabaya the majority of state-controlled land (8,275,970.28 m² [827.6 hectares], representing approximately 55.31 percent of the total state-controlled land in the municipality [14,963,717.29 m²/1,496.372 hectares]) is presently used for residential settlement. This includes land under HPL rights as well as land under *eigendom* rights. Upon this state-controlled land there are 48,200 residential plots, measuring on average 200 m² in size. Residents of these plots are legally considered renters, holding Permission to Use Land (*Ijin Pemakaian Tanah*, hereafter IPT; also known as Surat Ijo [Green Certificate]) certificates for the land they occupy. They have been, to date, unable to convert this land into HM in their names, even though such conversion is allowed by law.

Since 2001, three years after the beginning of the Reformasi period, the issue of agrarian reform has again been an important theme in national discourse. This followed the enactment of the Decree of the People's Consultative Assembly No. IX/MPR/2001 Concerning Agrarian Reform and the Management of Natural Resources (Ketetapan Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat No. IX/MPR/2001 tentang Pembaharuan Agraria dan Pengelolaan Sumber Daya Alam), Article 2 of which stated:

The agrarian reform involves a continuous process in which the control, ownership, and use of agrarian resources is reorganized to better ensure legal protection and certainty, as well as justice and prosperity, for all of the people of Indonesia (Pembaharuan agraria mencakup suatu proses yang berkesinambungan berkenaan dengan penataan kembali penguasaan, pemilikan, penggunaan, dan pemanfaatan sumber daya agraria, dilaksanakan dalam rangka tercapainya kepastian dan perlindungan hukum serta keadilan dan kemakmuran bagi seluruh rakyat Indonesia).

Subsequently, the National Land Bureau (Badan Pertanahan Nasional, BPN) established two formulas for agrarian reform: first, the reorganization of the legal and political land systems, based on the Pancasila, 1945 Constitution, and BAL; and second, the implementation of Land Reform Plus, the reorganization of the people's land assets and access to economic and political resources that allow them to best use their land (Kementerian Agraria dan Tata Ruang 2014).

The first formula is directed and intended to realign the control and ownership of land in accordance with the Indonesian constitution, particularly Article 33, Subsection 3: "The land, the waters and the natural resources within shall be under the powers of the State and shall be used to the greatest benefit of the people (Bumi, air, dan kekayaan alam yang terkandung di dalamnya dikuasai oleh negara dan dipergunakan sebesar-besarnya untuk kemakmuran rakyat)." The second formula is directed and intended to alleviate poverty by providing land for distribution, as well as access to economic resources to the populace—particularly the landless, homeless, and jobless. Other goals and principles of agrarian reform are reorganizing land control and ownership policies, reducing conflict, ensuring legal certainty, respecting the rule of law, and unifying land laws (*ibid.*).

Based on this agrarian reform program, the municipal government of Surabaya is in the process of converting state-controlled land, both *eigendom* and former *eigendom* land, through Surabaya Municipal Bylaw No. 16 of 2014 Regarding the Release of Land Assets Held by the Municipality of Surabaya (Peraturan Daerah Kota Surabaya No. 16 Tahun 2014 tentang Pelepasan Tanah Aset Pemerintah Kota Surabaya). This municipal bylaw states that state-controlled land that is occupied by civilians can be converted, with HM rights, into their name. However, when it comes to implementation this law has not met expectations. Though it was hoped that the bylaw would ensure justice and prosperity for the settlers of state-controlled land, in accordance with the goals of agrarian reform, this has remained but a pipe dream. As of 2016, not a single settler of *eigendom* land had filed a request for HM rights over the land he or she presently occupied. Why is this so? This article attempts to, objectively and without promoting any agenda whatsoever, understand and explain the historical context of *eigendom* land in the post-independence era. Hypothesis: The continued existence of *eigendom* land in the postcolonial era due

to inconsistencies in the implementation of the BAL has impacted social justice and prosperity by giving rise to conflict between residents of *eigendom* land and the municipal government of Surabaya.

Previous Studies

Civilian settlement of state-controlled land was researched by a team from the School of Land Studies, Yogyakarta. Written by Binsar Simbolon *et al.*, the study titled “Surat Hijau di Kota Surabaya, Provinsi Jawa Timur” (Green Certificates in the municipality of Surabaya, province of East Java) uses two approaches (legal and social) to discuss the issue of Green Certificates. In its legal analysis, the study concludes that the use of the IPT system for state-controlled land settled by civilians is akin to retaining the colonial paradigm of land control and ownership, a paradigm that is not tenable in an independent Indonesia.

The research project’s social analysis concludes that the IPT system has imposed greater financial burdens on settlers, which has in turn become a source of dissatisfaction for and triggered resistance from the settlers. It also concludes that the conflict between Green Certificate-holding settlers and the municipal government of Surabaya has occurred because both sides have different understandings of the Green Certificates. At the end of its report, the research team recommends that in order to achieve better social harmony, a national land policy must be formulated that is truly free of colonial legal products. For this purpose, then, the writers urge that settlers be given HGB rights over the land they have settled, so that HM rights over this land may subsequently be granted.

An interesting finding of this report is, as mentioned above, that conflict over Green Certificate land has emerged because of different perceptions regarding the position of the land. This appears to be an oversimplification of the issue. If, as argued by the research team, the conflict is caused simply by a difference of opinion, it should be simple to resolve, as both sides need only to reach a shared understanding. The reality, however, is that both sides want to control or own the state-controlled land upon which civilians have taken residence. Thus, this conflict is a more substantial one. In this perspective, conflict over Green Certificate land is perceived as a conflict over control of land, with the settlers involved in a struggle of community. This means that the source of the conflict is the land itself and not simply different perceptions. Owing to their interest in the land, both sides develop their own different (and often opposing) perceptions.

This article, thus, attempts to understand one aspect of Green Certificate land, namely *eigendom* land, land that still maintains its colonial rights and has yet to be converted to rights allowed by the BAL. *Eigendom* land can be considered “status quo” land,

which, we argue, is easier to release to civilian settlers than Green Certificate land under HP and HPL rights. Once this land has been transferred to its settlers, the latter will no longer require legal aid or protection, as noted by Agus Sekarnaji (2005). Furthermore, if the land is used as collateral at a bank, its value will increase and the calculation of its value will be simplified. As noted by Njo Anastasia (2006), if this land is converted then banks will no longer have to separately calculate the value of the land and the buildings upon it.

The Continued Existence of *Eigendom* Land

One interesting phenomenon in postcolonial Surabaya, a city in the province of East Java, is the continued existence of *eigendom* land rights. Even 55 years after the BAL was enacted, some of the land under the control of the municipal government of Surabaya remains under these colonial rights, having not been formally converted to HP or HPL rights. This has created considerable controversy and negative perceptions.

During the colonial period land laws were based on the principle of *domeinverklaring*, an assumption that land with no proof of ownership was owned by the state. As the ultimate owner of land, the colonial government of the Netherlands East Indies maintained the right to manage land in accordance with its own interests; this included—during the period of Governor-General H. W. Daendels (1808–11), for example—selling land and granting *eigendom* rights to the purchasers, who were generally capital holders or investors. These investors, the purchasers of land, were known as *tuan tanah* (landlords).

As holders of *eigendom* rights, *tuan tanah* were given the authority to manage their land and all who settled on it. Generally, people who lived on privately owned *eigendom* land had a variety of obligations, including forced labor (*rodi*), guarding the area at night (*ronda*), and crop taxes. These obligations were considered a form of service toward the *tuan tanah*, who acted in their own self-interest when determining obligations and ensuring that the obligations were met by the residents of the land. This determination of the types and varieties of obligations by *tuan tanah* is referred to as *hak pertuanan* (landlord rights).

The types of obligations for people living on one plot of *tanah partikelir* (privately owned land) differed from those of people living on another one. However, they all had the same ultimate result: difficulty for settlers, which led to a sense of dissatisfaction in society. Dissatisfaction over these injustices, which were faced over an extended period of time, often led to resistance against the *tuan tanah*. This could be seen in a number

of cases from the period of Daendels to the beginning of the twentieth century, including the *Ratu Adil*, machinist, indigene, and nativist movements (Sartono 1973; 1984). In short, the existence of *tanah partikelir* during the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth was synonymous with entrenched injustice and served as a strong mobilizer for social resistance; this general fact held true in Surabaya as well (Diesel 1878, 237–238).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, at the dawn of the decentralization era (1903), a number of autonomous regional governments were formed, one of them being the *gemeente* (municipality) of Surabaya in 1906. As an autonomous regional government, it had to be able to financially support itself, and thus the *gemeente* promoted efforts to exploit its regional potential. One such effort was the repurchasing of the *tanah partikelir* within its administrative jurisdiction, such as in Keputran, Ketabang, Kupang, Pakis, and Darmo. These *tanah partikelir* became *eigendom* lands in the name of the *gemeente* of Surabaya (Purnawan 2011). Much of the land was then rented to the general populace, particularly sharecroppers, but some was also allocated for the construction of housing for the municipality's residents, particularly those of European descent (Colombijn 2010). These efforts increased the income of the *gemeente* of Surabaya.

After Indonesian sovereignty was recognized by the Dutch in 1949—or, more specifically, after the establishment of the municipal government of Surabaya (Pemerintah Daerah Swatantra Kota Besar Surabaya) in 1950—lands owned under *eigendom* rights were inherited by the *gemeente*, which took over their management. The land's status as *eigendom* land was maintained, though this is understandable as the newly independent Indonesia did not yet have its own land laws. Part of the *eigendom* land was settled by residents and used for housing; settlers included fighters from the National Revolution and returning refugees (Dick 2002). In 1960 the BAL was enacted. It included a requirement to convert all land rights so that they would be in accordance with the BAL. However, the reality is that there are still *eigendom* lands that have yet to be converted.

The BAL of 1960 forms the basis of postcolonial Indonesian land management, and its passage gave Indonesians hope that citizens—especially the homeless, landless, and unemployed—would attain prosperity and justice, for instance through the recognition of individual rights to own land (Article 21 [1]). When the BAL was passed, the AW was repealed. The BAL specifies that the state is not a landowner and thus may not hold land with HM rights. According to Article 2, Paragraph 1, of the BAL, the state is the highest organization in society. As such, it serves only to provide land, grant rights over land, and manage legislation and law relating to land (Article 2, Paragraph 2).

In theory, *eigendom* rights over land should have already expired and thus are void. All such land rights should have already been converted to rights recognized by the BAL

(Decree of the Minister of Agrarian Affairs No. 9 of 1965 Concerning the Conversion of Usage Rights and Management Rights, or Peraturan Menteri Agraria No. 9 Tahun 1965 tentang Konversi Hak Pakai dan Hak Pengelolaan). *Eigendom* rights over land should have been converted to HPL or HP rights. However, there are still plots of land with *eigendom* rights, be they in the name of the *gemeente* or *tuan tanah*; such land has not yet been registered or its rights converted in accordance with the BAL at the regional office of the BPN (see Tables 3 and 4 in the next section).

This conversion process, if permitted, can be considered to be the nationalization or Indonesianization of land rights. Such a process should be completed entirely, without exception; in other words, all remaining colonial land rights must be converted into Indonesian rights in accordance with the BAL. This position has been taken also by legislation issued after the BAL. For instance, the Decision of the Minister of Agrarian No. 12/KaJ1963 Concerning the Conversion of Land Rights (Keputusan Menteri Agraria No. 12/KaJ1963 tentang Konversi Hak Atas Tanah) mandates that all *opstal* and *erfpacht* rights over municipally owned *eigendom* land must be converted to HGB or HGU rights.

Despite such provisions, the conversion process was neither absolute nor immutable. It could be modified depending on the use of the land. Land with *opstal* rights for buildings, for instance, could be converted to HGU rights if there was a change in its purposing in accordance with the municipal master plan; such land could then be used for agriculture. *Erfpacht* rights could be converted to HGB rights if there was a change in purposing, such as for housing. The lenient nature of this conversion also allowed the continued existence of *eigendom* land rights, the highest land rights possible under the colonial system; these rights appear to have been maintained by the municipal government of Surabaya as the holder of HPL rights over the land.

Subsequently, the Decree of the Minister of Agrarian Affairs No. 9 of 1965 was enacted; it mandated that controlling rights (*beheer rechts*) over land be converted to HPL rights. Before then, *beheer* rights had been converted to controlling rights (*hak menguasai*). Since 1965 regional governments have been managing rights (HPL). The changing terminology was considered more specific and operational. Meanwhile, cities' *erfpacht*, *opstal*, and *eigendom* rights were to be converted to HGB rights for the buildings situated upon land with HPL rights (Ali 2004).

***Eigendom* Land under the Control of Surabaya Municipality**

The total area of state-controlled land in the municipality of Surabaya is 14,963,717.29 m² (1,496.37 ha), approximately 4.58 percent of the city's total area (326.81 km²/32,681 ha).

Table 1 Area of State-Controlled Land Based on Category of Land Rights

Status of Land Rights	Before BAL	After BAL		Notes
	1956 (m ²)	1996 (m ²)	2008 (m ²)	
<i>Besluit</i>	n.a.	423,913.29	379,993.29	Decreased
<i>Eigendom</i>	6,870,000.00	4,297,274.00	4,171,741.00	Decreased
P2TUN	–	659,200.00	622,669.50	Decreased
HP	–	487,300.00	1,123,494.50	Increased
HPL (<i>beheer</i>)	1,760,000.00	6,225,293.00	7,687,775.00	Increased
TNLL	–	1,499,151.96	978,044.00	Decreased
Total	8,630,000.00	13,592,132.25	14,963,717.29	Increased

Source: Compiled from Pemerintah Kota Surabaya (1996; 2008).

Notes: Explanation of land rights categories:

Besluit : Keputusan Burgemeester Surabaya (Decision of the Burgemeester of Surabaya) serves as evidence that indigenous persons were allowed to build simple dwellings (usually out of bamboo) on *eigendom* land in the *gemeente* of Surabaya. The *besluit* land covered 423,913.29 m² (42.39 ha) in 1996; this figure had decreased to 37.99 ha by 2008. See Appendix 3, “Archives of *Besluit* Land.”

Eigendom : Landownership rights enduring from the colonial period

P2TUN : Land purchased by the Committee for the Acquisition of Land for the State (Panitia Pengadaan Tanah Untuk Negara, or P2TUN; held between 1970 and 1976)

HP : Land with usage rights (*hak pakai*)

HPL : Land with management rights (*hak pengelolaan*)

TNLL : Other lands belonging to the state, originating from ownerless and/or ab

On top of this state-controlled land lie approximately 48,200 parcels of land occupied by civilians. To date, land with *eigendom* rights represents the second-most common type of state-controlled land, after land with HPL rights. The division of land by area is as shown in Table 1.

As time has passed, the amount of *eigendom* land has decreased as a result of continued land conversion to and registration of rights provided by the BAL. The total amount of *eigendom* land, which was 6,870,000 m² (687 ha) in 1956, decreased to 4,297,274 m² (429.73 ha) by 1996 and 4,171,741 m² (417.17 ha) by 2008 (Pemerintah Kota Surabaya 1996; 2008). This indicates that the conversion of *eigendom* land to land under HP and HPL rights has occurred, albeit slowly; in the 12 years between 1996 and 2008, only 125,533 m², or 12.55 ha, was converted.

Conversely, the total amount of land with HPL rights has increased, from 176 ha of land with *beheer* rights in 1956 to 768.78 ha of land with HPL rights by 2008 (see Table 1). This indicates that the land conversion and nationalization process continues, though older land rights continue to exist (see Appendix 1). This has led several elements of Surabaya society to question the reason for the delay in the conversion of *eigendom* land.

Generally, *eigendom* land is divided into relatively large plots. Most of the plots are more than 10,000 m² (1 ha) in area, though some are smaller. There are even plots of

Table 2 Division of *Eigendom* Land Based on Region

Region	Area (m ²)	Area (ha)
South Surabaya	2,822,821	282.2821
Central Surabaya	558,970	55.8970
North Surabaya	518,058	51.8058
East Surabaya	396,237	39.6237
West Surabaya	—	—
Krian, Sidoarjo	1,188	0.1188
Total	4,297,274	429.7274

Source: Compiled from Pemerintah Kota Surabaya (1996).

Note: Data on the status of *eigendom* land at the regional level is publicly available only up to 1996; all data after 1996 is classified as a state secret.

Table 3 Division of *Eigendom* Land by District (*Kecamatan*)

District	Region	Area (m ²)
Wonokromo	South	2,801,786
Krembangan	North	402,188
Tambaksari	East	396,237
Genteng	Central	387,313
Simokerto	Central	120,447
Semampir	North	107,040
Bubutan	Central	51,210
Sawahan	South	21,035
Pabean Cantikan	North	8,830
Krian	Sidoarjo	1,188
Total		4,297,274

Source: Compiled from Pemerintah Kota Surabaya (1996).

Note: Data on the status of *eigendom* land at the district level is publicly available only up to 1996; all data after 1996 is classified as a state secret.

former *eigendom* land covering more than 100 ha. Most of the former *eigendom* land is located in the center of the municipality of Surabaya, a very densely populated region (the average population density for Surabaya was 10,047 in 1980; 10,126 in 1990; 7,966 in 2000; and 8,463 in 2010). The highest population density, reaching up to 20,000 people/km², is in the center of the city, such as in the districts of Bubutan, Simokerto, Kenjeran, Tambaksari, and Sawahan. The division of *eigendom* land can be seen in Table 2.

The *eigendom* land in Surabaya consists of 49 plots, covering an area of 429.73 ha (see Table 2). The greatest amount of former *eigendom* land, consisting of 280.18 ha or more than 65 percent of the total *eigendom* land in Surabaya, is located in Wonokromo District. The smallest amount of *eigendom* land—0.88 ha—is located in Pabean Cantikan District, North Surabaya. The division of former *eigendom* land by district is presented in Table 3.

Table 4 Division of *Eigendom* Land by Subdistrict (*Kelurahan*)

Subdistrict	District	Area (m ²)
Ngagelrejo	Wonokromo	1,271,989
Jagir	Wonokromo	579,193
Darmo	Wonokromo	533,502
Ngagel	Wonokromo	417,102
Kemayoran	Krembangan	402,188
Pacarkeling	Tambaksari	308,102
Genteng	Genteng	278,705
Ploso	Tambaksari	88,135
Simokerto	Simokerto	63,255
Keputran	Genteng	62,185
Pegirian	Semampir	58,260
Tambakrejo	Simokerto	55,580
Sidotopo	Semampir	48,780
Peneleh	Genteng	46,423
Bubutan	Bubutan	38,986
Sawahan	Sawahan	21,035
Jepara	Bubutan	12,224
Krembangan Utara	Pabean Cantikan	8,830
Krian	Krian	1,188
Kapasan	Simokerto	1,178
Simolawang	Simokerto	434
Total		4,297,274

Source: Compiled from Pemerintah Kota Surabaya (1996).

At the subdistrict level, the greatest amount of former *eigendom* land, consisting of 127.2 ha, or approximately 30 percent of the total *eigendom* land in Surabaya, is found in Ngagelrejo Subdistrict, Wonokromo District. It is followed by Jagir, Darmo, and Ngagel Subdistricts, all of which are administratively part of Wonokromo District. The smallest amount of *eigendom* land, 0.04 ha, is found in Simolawang Subdistrict, Simokerta District, North Surabaya. Thus, the greatest amount of *eigendom* land is located in South Surabaya. The total division of former *eigendom* land by subdistrict is presented in Table 4.

Some of the land that was controlled, owned, or managed in colonial times by the *gemeente* of Surabaya includes Goebeng (East and West), Ngagel (East and West), Boeboetan, Ketabang (East and West), Darmo III, Boejoekan, Westerbuitenweg, Assemadjadjar, Tembok Doekoeh, Plosogede, Sidotopo, and Darmo II (Fuchter 1941, 218–220).

For example, the land in Ngagel East (the portion of Ngagel to the east of the railroad tracks) was rented out (*grondhuur*) for several purposes, including for indigene agricultural activities (*Inhemsche Landbouw*), oil drilling (*grondboringen*) by the BPM (Bataafsche Petroleum Maatschappij, Batavian Petroleum Company), N.V. Melk

Table 5 Area, Population, and Population Density (per km²) of the Municipality of Surabaya, 1960–2012

Year	Area (km ²)	Population (individuals)	Population Density (per km ²)
1960	67.20	989,743	14,728
1971*	291.78	1,556,258	4,769
1980**	326.37	1,885,520	5,777
1990	326.37	2,191,998	6,716
2000	326.37	2,444,976	7,491
2010	326.37	2,929,528	8,976
2012	326.37	3,110,187	9,530

Source: Calculated based on population figures in Pemerintah Kota Surabaya (1960; 1971; 1980; 1990; 2000; 2010; 2012).

Notes: * In 1965, the municipality of Surabaya was expanded to include five districts that had been part of Gresik Regency (Sukolilo, Rungkut, Wonocolo, Karangpilang, and Tandes). The municipality's total area thus became 291.78 km². This expansion was based on UU No. 2 Tahun 1965 tentang Perluasan Wilayah Kota Surabaya (Law No. 2 of 1965 Regarding the Territorial Expansion of the Municipality of Surabaya).

** In 1980, the total area of the municipality of Surabaya was remeasured.

Centrale, and for use by ethnic Dutch and Chinese entrepreneurs (*ibid.*, see Appendix 2). Ngagel East has become a densely populated residential area, as evidenced by such areas as Ngagelrejo, Bratanggede, Ngagelmulyo, Bratang, Bratang Binangun, Ngagel Jaya, Ngagel Tama, Krukah, Ngagel Dadi, Baratajaya, and Pucangsewu. According to residents of this district, they settled the land after purchasing it from farmers, with a *zegel* certificate (see Appendix 4) as proof (Interview with Supadi H.S., March 17, 2016, Surabaya).

Why did the farmers (as holders of HGU rights, converted from Western rights, in Ngagel East) sell the land they were supposed to cultivate? The master plan of the municipality of Surabaya was intended to develop Surabaya into an “INDAMARDI” (INDustri, perDagangan, MARitim, dan penDidikan [Industry, trade, maritime, and education]) municipality (Soekotjo 1968, 4–5), and as a result it prioritized industrial development. This was in accordance with the perceived conditions and potential of the time—namely, the numerous factories and other industries that remained from the colonial period. The development of the industrial sector required much labor, which led to an uncontrolled surge of would-be laborers migrating from rural areas into urban Surabaya. This migration, in turn, led to a sudden increase in the municipality's population, population density, and housing requirements (see Table 5). Efforts were made to resolve the issue by converting rice fields into residential areas and factories. Importantly, the residential area of Ngagel East is located between the old industrial district of Ngagel West and the new industrial district of Rungkut, one of the largest industrial districts in Surabaya and East Java.

Birth of IPT System

The continued existence of *eigendom* land has led to a number of issues, both manifest and latent. The once-spacious *eigendom* land, which predominantly originated as *tanah partikelir*, has since been developed into densely populated residential areas.

After the 30 September Movement coup (1965), residents living on land under pre-BAL titles received legal recognition as renters of *eigendom* land. Based on the Decree of the Minister of Agrarian Affairs No. 1 of 1966 Concerning the Registration of Usage Rights and Management Rights, in Surabaya the use of *eigendom* land has been granted to third parties, particularly those who were previously homeless. Before 1966 these homeless persons tended to unlawfully occupy land, but settlers of *eigendom* land were given legal recognition as renters by the Decision of the Regional Representatives' Council for Mutual Assistance of Surabaya No. 03E/DPRD-GR KEP/1971, Dated 6 May 1971, Concerning Land Rental (Keputusan DPRD Gotong Royong Kotamadya Surabaya Nomor 03E/DPRD-GR KEP/1971 tertanggal 6 Mei 1971 tentang Sewa Tanah). It is possible that the municipal government of Surabaya at the time was so preoccupied with the issue of land rental that it neglected to register or convert *eigendom* land with the Land Bureau. The government may have likewise forgotten that according to the BAL, regional governments were not permitted to own land with *eigendom* rights and could not continue to rent out land as had been done during the colonial era.

Subsequently, in 1977 the municipal government of Surabaya enacted the Permission to Use Land system. With this new system, the settlers of *eigendom* land were given a legal document, the IPT certificate, granting further recognition. However, this system also positioned the settlers as renters of state-controlled lands, requiring all settlers of state-controlled land—including land with *eigendom* rights—to pay retribution. The legal basis for this system was the Surabaya Municipal Bylaw No. 22 of 1977 Concerning the Use and Retributions for Land Managed by the Municipality of Surabaya (Peraturan Daerah Kotamadya Daerah Tingkat II Surabaya No. 22 Tahun 1977 tentang Pemakaian dan Retribusi Tanah yang Dikelola oleh Pemerintah Kotamadya Daerah Tingkat II Surabaya).

The legal recognition of settlement on *eigendom* land may be considered part of a 1975 program to clarify the status of municipal land. According to several settlers, all the settlers were initially told to gather their proofs of sale for the land that they occupied, so that the documents could be given to the municipal government of Surabaya. At the time, rumors spread that these proofs of sale would be replaced with HM certificates. Whoever refused to surrender the documents would be branded a former member of the forbidden Communist Party of Indonesia (Partai Komunis Indonesia, PKI), a possibility

that terrified residents. As such, not a single resident refused to surrender the proof of purchase for the land that he or she occupied. A few years later, IPT certificates (Green Certificates)—essentially, renters' certificates—were issued. Effectively, this government program was a means for the municipal government of Surabaya to take control of the *eigendom* land.

This IPT system has allowed *eigendom* rights to endure, though administratively such land is listed as land under the management of the state. The IPT system used in Surabaya is not based in the BAL (Surabaya Municipal Bylaw No. 12 of 1994) and can thus be considered not based in law, or even illegal. The creation of such a land system is controversial, as it appears symptomatic of a "State within a State" (Ratna and Indriyati 2011).

Effects of the Continued Existence of *Eigendom* Land

The continued existence of *eigendom* land has created several negative effects. First, from a legal perspective, the continued existence of *eigendom* land deviates from the BAL. The deviancy is exacerbated by the enactment of the IPT system; *eigendom* rights over such land cannot be converted to HM rights by the land's settlers. According to the Government Regulation No. 24 of 1997 Concerning Land Registration (Peraturan Pemerintah No. 24 Tahun 1997 tentang Pendaftaran Tanah), *eigendom* land settled by private citizens can be converted to HM by its settlers. More specifically, *eigendom* land with an area of no more than 600 m² that has been continuously settled by the same individual for a minimum of 20 years can be converted to HGB; the settler may then apply for the land to be certified HM.

Most of the settlers of *eigendom* land who were interviewed for this study expressed their disappointment that when applying for an HM certificate at the BPN they were required to present a letter of recommendation from the municipal government of Surabaya, which has authority over and manages the *eigendom* land. This requirement is non-negotiable, yet in practice the municipal government of Surabaya has never issued a letter of recommendation; instead, it offers a plethora of reasons for not doing so: for instance, the government may state that as the holder of HPL rights, it must carefully maintain the land and ensure that it is not accused of losing state-controlled land. As a result, the settlers never meet the administrative requirements of the BPN, and thus the bureau never processes their applications. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that some settlers' groups have received HM rights over their land with a special disposition (explained further below). As a result, the (considerably more numerous) settlers who

Table 6 Total Income, Retributions from Land Held under Green Certificates, 2004–13

Year	Total (billions of rupiah)	Note
2004	17.00	
2005	24.00	
2006	27.00	
2007	37.50	
2008	44.50	
2009	69.90	Legislative/presidential election (candidates promise to release <i>eigendom</i> land)
2010	82.00	Mayoral election (candidates promise to release <i>eigendom</i> land)
2011	50.04	
2012	34.50	
2013	35.50	

Source: Compiled from data accessed at Pemerintah Kota Surabaya (2013).

have been unsuccessful in obtaining an HM certificate feel discriminated against. This, thus, is a form of injustice experienced by settlers, who have begun expressing the belief that the municipal government of Surabaya is deliberately ensuring that *eigendom* land remains within its control.

Second, from a political perspective, the settlers of *eigendom* land become political objects every five years. In the lead-up to the general and mayoral elections in Surabaya, the settlers are consistently targeted by legislative and mayoral candidates. Their campaign promise is the same: the release of *eigendom* land under HM rights to the settlers. In such situations, the settlers are deceived by the promises and vote for the candidates. However, the election promises are never kept, and the promised land releases have never been carried out. Numerous excuses have been given, such as legislative obstacles, fear of being accused of losing state property, and fear of being accused of corruption. This has occurred regularly on a five-year cycle. In turn, it has led to a decrease in the amount of retributions received by the municipal government of Surabaya, as shown in Table 6.

Third, from an economic perspective, settlements on *eigendom* land have little value in comparison to land with HM rights. As a consequence, it is difficult to use *eigendom* land as collateral for capital loans at a bank; only certain banks will accept it, and even then the land is valued only for the buildings on it. Thus, banks value *eigendom* land at an unfair or substandard level.

Furthermore, as mentioned above, the continued existence of *eigendom* land is a financial burden on its settlers, who must pay land and building taxes on top of municipal retributions. The total retribution and land and building taxes owed are based on the area of land held and its location; settlers of parcels located near main roads must pay more

Table 7 NJOP, PBB, and Retributions for Lands with *Eigendom* and HM Rights*

Land/Building Status (Classification I)	Area (m ²)	NJOP/m ² ** (Rp.)	PBB (Rp.)	Retributions**** (Rp.)	Total Payable per Parcel per Annum (Rp.)
			0.1% × (NJOP-non-taxable NJOP)***	0.2% × area × NJOP (0.2% × 200 × 3,000,000)	
<i>Eigendom</i> and/or HPL land	200	Land : 2,000,000 Building : 1,000,000	580,000	1,200,000	1,780,000
HM land	200	Land : 2,000,000 Building : 1,000,000	580,000	0	580,000

Source: Compiled from Pemerintah Kota Surabaya (2010).

Notes: * NJOP = Nilai Jual Objek Pajak (Tax Object Sales Value); PBB = Pajak Bumi dan Bangunan (Land and Building Tax)

** Value/retribution rounded for ease of comprehension

*** Total Non-taxable Tax Object Sales Value (NJOP Tidak Kena Pajak, NJOPTKP) determined per region

**** See Table 8.

Table 8 Percentage Used to Calculate Retributions for IPT

No.	Roads Classification (m)	Land Use		
		Residential (%)	Public Facilities	
			Ordinary Commercial (%)	Special Commercial (Malls and Hotels) (%)
1	I (> 15 m)	0.200	0.50	3.33
2	II (> 12–15 m)	0.175	0.45	3.00
3	III (> 8–12 m)	0.150	0.35	2.33
4	IV (> 5–8 m)	0.125	0.25	2.00
5	V (≤ 5 m)	0.100	0.20	1.33

Source: Compiled from Pemerintah Kota Surabaya (2010).

than those in the *kampung* or alleys. The total retribution and land and building taxes owed on parcels located near main roads can reach Rp.1 million to 5 million a year, whereas the retribution and taxes on parcels located in the *kampung* or alleys average Rp.300,000 to 1 million a year. The total amount of retributions paid to the municipal government of Surabaya varies. It is usually equal to the land and building taxes that are paid to the state, but it may be higher.

Table 7 shows the different financial burdens borne between settlers of *eigendom* land and residents with HM rights over their land, assuming that both parcels are located along a Class I road that is 15 meters in width and are the site of buildings of equal value. If a settler opens a shop, the total amount of retributions increases because the land is then categorized as commercial. Calculated at $0.5\% \times 200 \text{ m}^2 \times \text{Rp.3,000,000} = \text{Rp.3,000,000}$ (see Table 8), this means that the total amount of land and building taxes

and municipal retributions paid is Rp.3,580,000. This has thus led the people of Surabaya to believe that it is more expensive to live or do business on *eigendom* land than on land with HM rights. Consequently, the market value of *eigendom* land is lower than (sometimes half of) land with HM rights, even when the Tax Object Sales Value is the same.

As such, residents living alongside Class I roads (width > 15 meters) prefer to open their businesses elsewhere, either renting another location or finding *eigendom* land located on a Class V road (width ≤ 5 meters), where retribution rates are lower (0.1 percent). The businesses may include small shops, laundry services, motorcycle and tire repair shops, cheap boarding houses, and other businesses that do not require a business permit from the municipal government. Residential districts that have been developed as business districts by their residents have been designated districts for commercial public facilities by the municipal government of Surabaya. Land designated for public facilities is firmly prohibited from being converted to HM status in the name of private citizens, and as such the difficult economic situation has only reinforced the municipal government of Surabaya's status as the manager of *eigendom* land. However, it can be stated objectively that the continued existence of *eigendom* land has quashed the spirit of entrepreneurship among the settlers.

Fourth, from a social perspective, the existence of *eigendom* land has created new social groups within society, namely, groups or communities of residents of land with Green Certificates. The social position of such groups is lower than that of groups of residents living on land with HM rights. Settlers of *eigendom* land are considered second-class citizens, residents of the city lacking recognition, or even stepchildren with greater obligations than biological children.

Fifth, from a cultural-psychological perspective, settlers of *eigendom* land suffer from poor self-esteem as a result of being considered second-class citizens. This is evident when they are faced with city residents who live on land with HM rights, who may be called "true" residents of the city. The settlers feel as though they are sleeping in a rented room or house, one that does not belong to them. At any time they can be evicted by the government in the name of public interest without compensation. As such, we must ask: Can the settlers be considered prosperous? It is important to note that the majority of residents of *eigendom* land with IPT certificates are elderly, older than 70 years of age, and mostly received low wages while they were working—either equal to or lower than the regional minimum wage (approximately Rp.3.5 million a month). It would thus be beneficial to them if they received a measure of certainty over the remainder of their lives with HM rights over their land, as long as it was realized with a simple procedure, affordable compensation, and effective legal protection.

Based on the above discussion, it can be stated that *eigendom* land rights, a remnant

of the colonial government, have affected all aspects of the lives of certain segments of Surabaya society. In other words, the continued existence of *eigendom* land is synonymous with the continued existence of social injustice and a lack of prosperity. Preserving *eigendom* land rights means preserving injustice and tending to the seeds of future land disputes.

It should be noted that the word “injustice” is used here to mean injustice in one’s rights and obligations to the land upon which one lives. As explained above, settlers of *eigendom* land must pay two forms of taxation for the land (see Table 7). These two financial obligations are considered unjust by the settlers; if they were renters on land with HM rights they would only need to pay their rent, whereas if they were holders of HM rights over land they would only be required to pay the Land and Building Tax. Their current financial situation is exacerbated by their inability to convert the land, and as such they may feel abused.

The concept of prosperity here, meanwhile, is to be understood in the sociocultural context of Java, in which ownership of land and a home is the basis for one’s existence in the community. For Javanese people, someone who does not own any land or a house cannot be considered a true member of the community, or even a person at all. The landless are often ignored by people with HM rights over their land; frequently, they are not invited to neighbors’ celebrations, asked to participate in village discussions, required to participate in *gotong royong*/mutual aid work, pay neighborhood dues, etc. The landless can be termed, using George Simmel’s categorization, as “the stranger” (Mead 1934) in the community. Thus, in the Javanese sociocultural context, settlers of *eigendom* land struggle to obtain HM rights over the land they occupy so that they may be recognized and respected by the community. Prosperity, thus, should be understood as a certain satisfaction obtained from fulfilling the community’s demands; owning land with HM rights gives settlers greater respect than occupying land owned by another party.

Furthermore, the people of Java abide by the following motto regarding landownership: “*sadumuk bathuk sanyari bumi, tak belani nganti pecahe dhadha lan wutahing ludiro* [Though it is but a narrow strip of land, I will defend it until my chest bursts and blood seeps out (i.e., until I die)].” This Javanese cultural norm has, to some extent, influenced the settlers in their struggle to gain HM rights over *eigendom* land.

The struggle is influenced also by the BAL’s assurance that HM rights are “rights to land which are inherited, the strongest and fullest [rights] that one can hold over land (*sebagai hak atas tanah yang turun-temurun, terkuat dan terpenuh yang dapat dipunyai orang atas tanah*)” (Article 20). In other words, HM rights are not of limited duration, and land may be freely used or purposed by its owner so long as the usage/purposing does not conflict with the public interest (Boedi 1968).

Based on the above factors and supported by the increasingly open/democratic socio-political situation after the beginning of Reformasi, settlers of *eigendom* land have begun to fight for the land they occupy. It began with some settlers refusing to pay their IPT retributions. This act of protest was soon followed by other settlers. Despite avoiding their retributions, all settlers of *eigendom* land continued paying their Land and Building Taxes. This was followed by the establishment of organizations such as GPHSIS (Gerakan Pejuang Hapus Surat Ijo Surabaya, Fighters for the Elimination of Green Certificates in Surabaya Movement), later renamed PMPMHMT (Perhimpunan Masyarakat Peserta Meraih Hak Milik Tanah, Association of People Seeking Ownership Rights over Land), which held several open meetings and shows of force and provocation, including a mass action in front of City Hall demanding the conversion of *eigendom* land. This organization has been supported by legal thinkers and academics as well as legal practitioners, retired soldiers, retired civil servants, and others with an interest in *eigendom* land. Among the organizers are retired staff of the municipal government of Surabaya and the East Java branch of the BPN who before retirement worked to maintain the status of *eigendom* land.

In 2007 groups of settlers of *eigendom* land in the Jagir, Ngagelrejo, Baratajaya, and Perak Barat Subdistricts filed a legal challenge against the municipal government of Surabaya over the *eigendom* land at the state court of Surabaya. All of their demands were rejected by the court, including their appeal to the provincial court of East Java. The residents took their legal battle to the Supreme Court of Indonesia in Jakarta, but their demands were again rejected. Notably, the residents of Baratajaya were successful in a Supreme Court claim in 2010, but this victory was short-lived as in 2012 the decision was reversed after the municipal government of Surabaya demanded a reexamination (*Peninjauan Kembali*, PK).

The settlers' struggle for rights over *eigendom* land has impacted the performance of the municipal government of Surabaya, both as a disturbance and as an inspiration. In 2014, the government enacted the Surabaya Municipal Bylaw No. 16 of 2014. This was followed by the Surabaya Mayoral Decree No. 51 of 2015 Regarding the Process for Releasing Land Assets Held by the Municipality of Surabaya (Peraturan Walikota Surabaya No. 51 Tahun 2015 tentang Tata Cara Pelepasan Tanah Aset Pemerintah Kota Surabaya) in 2015. Though these regulations have yet to be implemented, they may be considered a response to settlers' hopes for *eigendom* land.

Halfhearted Nationalization of Land Rights

The conversion of Western land rights into rights recognized by the BAL has been a consequence of, or rather a legal obligation established by, the BAL. As explained above, all rights that applied during the colonial period and were based on the AW and BW were required by law to be converted into one of the new nationalized land rights. Land for which these criteria were not met was converted, on September 24, 1980, into state-controlled land.

In such cases the conversion of *eigendom* land depended on the future use of the land, in accordance with the municipal master plan. *Eigendom* land belonging to the regional government was likewise registered under the name of a government institution, either national or regional. As explained above, the BAL only provides the government with the authority to decide the use of land and to grant rights over the land.

Where such rights could still be found, the land's status was simply "maintaining the status quo," and thus the conversion of rights depended on the purposing of the land: be it for the public interest, the former holder of *eigendom* rights, or private citizens who had occupied or cultivated it. If land is to be used for the public interest, it must be registered with HPL rights; and the former *eigendom* rights holder and/or present settlers may not attempt to register for rights over it. If the land is not needed for the public interest, the former holder of *eigendom* rights over the land may apply to regain rights over it. If the state and former holder of *eigendom* rights over the land do not require it, the land's settlers may request HM rights at the municipal/regency BPN office.

Furthermore, *eigendom* land can be used to increase regional own-source revenue. Since the enactment of the IPT certificates, the highest retributions were received in 2010—Rp.85 billion. Since the majority of settlers began refusing to pay retributions in 2012, the amount received by the municipal government averages Rp.30 billion to 35 billion rupiah annually (see Table 6). However, the continued existence of *eigendom* rights over land also reflects a concern for possible loss of landownership. After conversion, *eigendom* land may not be granted HM status in the name of the municipal government of Surabaya; it may only be granted HP and/or HPL status, both of which are lower in degree than HM.

A baffling development is the existence of HM landownership certificates for homes located on *eigendom* plots of land. This can be found, for instance, in the housing development of Jagir Sidomukti IX (150 homes), and at Ngagel Jaya Tengah (16 homes) and Wonorejo III Streets (1 home) (Observations and direct reports with settlers, April 14, 2015). In the case of Jagir Sidomukti IX, residents of the housing development received their HM certificates following a long and complicated process that lasted from 1987 until

1999. Before jointly filing their request for HM status over the land at the Surabaya branch of the BPN, the residents jointly paid retribution to the original landowner, an Indonesian citizen of Chinese descent. The total amount paid by each family to obtain HM status was only Rp.575,000. Meanwhile, the HM certificates for Ngagel Jaya Tengah and Wonorejo III Streets were obtained owing to the special status of the settlers, who were all former bureaucrats in the municipal government of Surabaya. This phenomenon indicates the existence of exceptions for—or special treatment of—certain parties, resulting in inequality and injustice in the management of *eigendom* land.

The phenomenon of continued existence of *eigendom* land can also be understood as an inconsistency in the management of *eigendom* land within the framework of Indonesia as a sovereign state with its own land law, or as a violation of the most fundamental land law in Indonesia, the BAL. Whether it is accepted or not, profitable or not, all management of *eigendom* land must be based on the BAL, particularly since the role and position of the government in managing *eigendom* land, as a form of state-controlled land, is already clearly defined: the government handles the provision of land, grants rights over land, determines the relationship between society and land, and arranges the legal framework for land issues. This is explicitly stated in Article 2, Paragraphs 2–7, of the BAL. Owing to its position, the state—in this case, the central and municipal governments—should serve as a role model for legislative obedience.

Legislative obedience in the management of land is necessary to ensure justice and prosperity for the people of Indonesia. In the management of land, according to the BAL, no parties should be granted special privileges, be they individuals, groups, or institutions. The continued existence of *eigendom* land has led to a social jealousy of sorts, or even a legal jealousy, among certain groups, particularly among settlers of *eigendom* land who are unable to convert their land. In accordance with Presidential Decree No. 32 of 1979 Concerning Policy Fundamentals in Granting New Land Rights by Converting Western Rights (Keputusan Presiden No. 32 Tahun 1979 tentang Pokok-pokok Kebijakan dalam Rangka Pemberian Hak Baru atas Tanah Asal Konversi Hak-hak Barat), settlers of former *eigendom* land may be granted HM rights. There are at least two articles in the decree that could be the basis for such conversion:

In the case of land under Western rights that was converted to state land with HGU status and was appropriate for agriculture or residential purposes, new rights would be given to the occupants of the land (Tanah-tanah Hak Guna Usaha asal konversi hak Barat yang sudah diduduki oleh rakyat dan ditinjau dari sudut tata guna tanah dan keselamatan lingkungan hidup lebih tepat diperuntukkan pemukiman atau kegiatan usaha pertanian, akan diberikan hak baru kepada rakyat yang mendudukinya). (Article 4)

Where residential land is under HGB and HP rights that were converted from Western rights and has since become housing for the general populace, priority will be given to those people who have already occupied it after certain criteria are fulfilled, as related to the interests of the land rights holder (Tanah-tanah perkampungan bekas Hak Guna Bangunan dan Hak Pakai asal konversi hak Barat yang telah menjadi perkampungan atau diduduki rakyat, akan diprioritaskan kepada rakyat yang mendudukinya setelah dipenuhinya persyaratan-persyaratan yang menyangkut kepentingan bekas pemegang hak tanah). (Article 5)

If land formerly under Western rights can be converted into HGU, HGB, and HP rights in the name of the former rights holder, but the land is presently occupied/cultivated by others, according to this presidential decree new rights are to be granted to the land's settlers and/or cultivators. Former rights holders should be understood as the holders of Western rights over land, be they Indonesian citizens, foreign citizens, legal bodies, or the local government (*gemeente*).

This decree was followed by the Decree of Minister of Domestic Affairs No. 3 of 1979 Regarding the Stipulations for the Request for and Granting of Land Rights over Land Formerly under Western Land Rights (Peraturan Menteri Dalam Negeri No. 3 Tahun 1979 tentang Ketentuan-Ketentuan Mengenai Permohonan dan Pemberian Hak Atas Tanah Asal Konversi Hak Barat). Article 10, Paragraph 1, states:

Where land formerly under HGU rights is cultivated/occupied by another party, as meant in Law No. 51/Prp/1960, and is, according to technical considerations regarding the utilization of the land and the regional development plan, appropriate for residential or agricultural use, new rights will be given to those who meet the criteria of the applicable agrarian law, so long as the land involved is not needed for projects promoting the public interest (Tanah-tanah bekas Hak Guna Usaha yang digarap/diduduki pihak lain sebagai yang dimaksud dalam Undang-Undang Nomor 51/Prp/1960 dan yang menurut pertimbangan-pertimbangan teknis tata guna tanah serta rencana pembangunan di daerah yang bersangkutan dapat dijadikan tempat permukiman penduduk atau usaha pertanian, akan diberikan dengan sesuatu hak baru kepada mereka yang memenuhi syarat menurut peraturan perundangan agraria yang berlaku, sepanjang tanah yang bersangkutan tidak diperlukan untuk proyek-proyek bagi penyelenggaraan kepentingan umum).

These presidential and ministerial decrees are sufficient legal basis for the conversion of rights over *eigendom* land in Surabaya, as well as land under other Western rights that is presently settled by civilians.

For social justice and prosperity to be ensured for the people of Indonesia, the conversion and registration of land should be done without differentiating between individuals, groups, and organizations. For this to be achieved, the BAL, as the basis for the management of land in Indonesia, must be upheld entirely, not halfheartedly. The Indonesianization or nationalization of land should be a wholehearted endeavor. If this is not realized, then the agrarian reform will continue as it has before—halfheartedly.

Transfer of Land Rights Holdings

Since the enactment of the BAL, *eigendom* land in areas such as Jakarta, Bandung, Bogor, Cirebon/Indramayu, Semarang, and Malang has been fully converted. The conversion of *eigendom* land in the municipality of Malang, for instance, was completed in 2012. A total of 4,230 parcels of land, each measuring approximately 200 m² in area, were transferred to their settlers and converted to HM rights in their settlers' names. During the conversion process, settlers were required to pay retribution to the state totaling 10 percent of the value of the land or the Tax Object Sales Value. As such, the land was released through exchange, what may be termed *ruislag* in the Indonesian legal system. This transfer process was completed in accordance with the Decree of the Minister of Agrarian Affairs/Head of the National Land Bureau No.9 of 1999 Concerning the Procedure for Granting and Annuling Rights over State-Controlled Land and Managing Rights (Peraturan Menteri Negara Agraria/Kepala BPN No.9 Tahun 1999 tentang Tatacara Pemberian dan Pembatalan Hak Atas Tanah Negara dan Hak Pengelolaan), Article 9 of which clearly states that it is possible for private citizens to request ownership rights over *eigendom* land.

The municipality of Malang's successful experience with the release of *eigendom* land in its jurisdiction could serve as a model or inspiration for efforts to release *eigendom* land in Surabaya; in other words, the municipal government of Surabaya could use as examples other municipalities that have previously transferred *eigendom* land to their residents.

After 15 years (1999–2014) of fighting for the right of settlers of *eigendom* land in Surabaya to legally own the land upon which they live, there appear to have been results. Presently a municipal bylaw, Surabaya Municipal Bylaw No.16 of 2014 Regarding the Release of Land Assets Held by the Municipality of Surabaya, is being discussed and drafted. It deals with the issue of the transfer of state-controlled land and has received the approval of the governor of East Java (*Tribun News* 2015). Some of the provisions for land to be transferred, according to this bylaw, are:

- a. The maximum land area is 250 m²
- b. The land must have been continuously occupied/settled for more than 20 years
- c. The IPT certificate must still be valid, and retributions must be actively paid
- d. If two plots of land are held, only one may be converted
- e. Only residential land may be converted
- f. Citizens are required to pay retribution in the amount of 100 percent of the Tax Object Sales Tax to the Municipal Government of Surabaya.

For settlers of *eigendom* land, points (a) through (e) are not an issue since most of the plots of land that they inhabit measure approximately 200 m² in area and have been occupied continuously for at least 20 years. Their problem is with the provision in point (f): all settlers have stated their objection to the amount of restitution they are being required to pay to the state. Observations of the market price of land in Surabaya conducted in 2015 show that land is very expensive, between Rp.3 million and 25 million per square meter, or approximately Rp.600 million to 5 billion for a plot of land measuring 200 m². Though the Tax Object Sales Value is generally lower than the market price (see Table 7), the majority of settlers feel incapable of paying it in full, even if they are helped by being allowed to, for instance, pay in installments over a given period of time (Interview with Bambang Sudibyo, 2015).

The provision regarding the total amount of retributions to be paid as compensation to the state was decided entirely by the municipal government of Surabaya without any prior discussion with the settlers of the *eigendom* lands. From a judicial-factual perspective, the municipal government of Surabaya cannot be blamed for this decision, as it is the holder of HPL rights over the *eigendom* land. However, this provision was not expected by the settlers and, unsurprisingly, has become an obstacle to the transfer of land rights to private citizens. Many of the settlers stated that they would rather buy new land elsewhere, at a cheaper price, than pay such expensive compensation; this opinion was held even by settlers capable of paying the demanded retribution (Interviews with residents of settlements such as Sunari, Soebandi, and Suradi, March 2015). The current deadlock indicates that there is a flaw in the conversion process: namely, a provision considered unacceptable by the general populace. Now the general populace can only hope that the Surabaya Municipal Bylaw No. 16 of 2014, which has already received the approval of the governor of East Java, can be reexamined or revised.

Defect of Municipal Bylaw and Deadlock

The manner through which *eigendom* rights over land controlled by the state can be transferred is prescribed by Subchapter XII.1 of the Decree of Minister of Domestic Affairs No. 17 of 2007 Regarding the Technical Guidelines for the Management of Regional-Owned Assets (Peraturan Menteri Dalam Negeri No. 17 Tahun 2007 tentang Pedoman Teknis Pengelolaan Barang Milik Daerah). The transfer of rights can take several forms: (i) sale, (ii) exchange, (iii) grant, and (iv) equity capital. Meanwhile, Subchapter XII.3 states that the release of regional governments' lands and buildings can be done in two manners: through (i) release, involving compensation (purchase); and (ii)

exchange. Of these, the Surabaya Municipal Bylaw No. 16 of 2014 prescribes release with compensation, which may also be considered the sale of state assets, as during the transfer process residents are required to pay 100 percent of the Tax Object Sales Value.

The Ministry of Agrarian and Spatial Planning/National Land Bureau (new titles of the Ministry of Agrarian Affairs/National Land Bureau) cannot be ignored or excluded from this release process. Likewise, the Ministry of Domestic Affairs must actively involve itself and is forbidden from not doing so; as such, there must be coordination between the two ministries during the land release process.

According to the Decree of the Minister of Agrarian Affairs/Head of the National Land Bureau No. 9 of 1999 Concerning the Procedure for Granting and Annuling Rights over State-Controlled Land and Managing Rights, the granting and/or annulling of rights over state-controlled lands is the responsibility of the minister (Article 3, Paragraph 1). Meanwhile, Paragraph 2 states, "In granting and/or annulling rights, as in Paragraph (1), the Minister may delegate authority to Regional Office Heads, Land Office Heads, and/or designated Officials."

It should be recognized that the resolution of disputes involving land with *eigendom* rights involves, at the minimum, the two above-mentioned ministries. In the transfer of land rights, authority lies with the Ministry of Agrarian and Spatial Planning/National Land Bureau via the local municipal/regency Land Office. However, in cases where *eigendom* land is controlled by the state through its HPL rights, the authority for management lies with the Ministry of Domestic Affairs via the local municipal/regency government. In the framework of resolving the current disputes involving land with *eigendom* rights that is in the process of being released or transferred, both ministries must coordinate.

Based on the bylaw's contents and lack of favor for the general populace, it is likely that the drafting of the Surabaya Municipal Bylaw No. 16 of 2014 was conducted unilaterally by the Government/Regional Peoples' Representatives Council of Surabaya, serving as a state institution under the Ministry of Domestic Affairs, without any coordination or consultation with related parties such as the Surabaya Municipal Land Office or the National Land Bureau's Regional Office for East Java. The latter are institutions under the Ministry of Agrarian and Spatial Planning/National Land Bureau that are competent in land issues. The drafting likewise has not involved social figures in Surabaya competent in the issue of *eigendom* land, such as former fighters from the National Revolution, veterans, retired soldiers, and retired civil servants. Such a drafting process means that the municipal bylaw cannot be considered to be in accordance with legal requirements, and thus it is nothing but a proposal for land transfer. It is important to remember that legislation can become legislation only if it meets several conditions, including being

drafted in the legislature, being able to be implemented, and being able to be supervised by all involved parties. The Surabaya Municipal Bylaw No. 16 of 2014 does not appear to meet these conditions, and it is thus not implementable. As explained above, none of the settlers on *eigendom* land are willing to implement this bylaw because they are incapable of paying the above-mentioned compensation.

Conclusion

The continued existence of *eigendom* land in Surabaya has created serious and wide-reaching issues in the form of conflict between settlers and the municipal government of Surabaya. The continued existence of *eigendom* land stems from the incomplete conversion of land rights, which can be attributed to a lack of consistency in the implementation of the BAL. Behind this inconsistency there is a hidden meaning: The municipal government of Surabaya does not want to lose its *eigendom* land.

Besides that, this phenomenon, which appears to be a “reemergence” of the *domeinverklaring* principle (especially when combined with the rental of this land), is an indicator that the unification of land law under the BAL has yet to be fully completed. It also means that delays in agrarian reform have already led to problems in various aspects of social life, including law, economics, politics, and culture.

Though still problematic, the conflict over *eigendom* land in Surabaya and the commitment to convert such land can be understood as a form of social change and a sign that the agrarian reform process is again being implemented in Indonesia.

The implementation of laws to achieve social justice and welfare, such as in land reform, must be done in accordance with existing legal mechanisms. Furthermore, all parties (especially the municipal government of Surabaya, the Ministry of Domestic Affairs, and the Ministry of Agrarian and Spatial Planning/National Land Bureau) should share a single understanding of the points of the law, allowing them to minimize the emergence of new issues in society.

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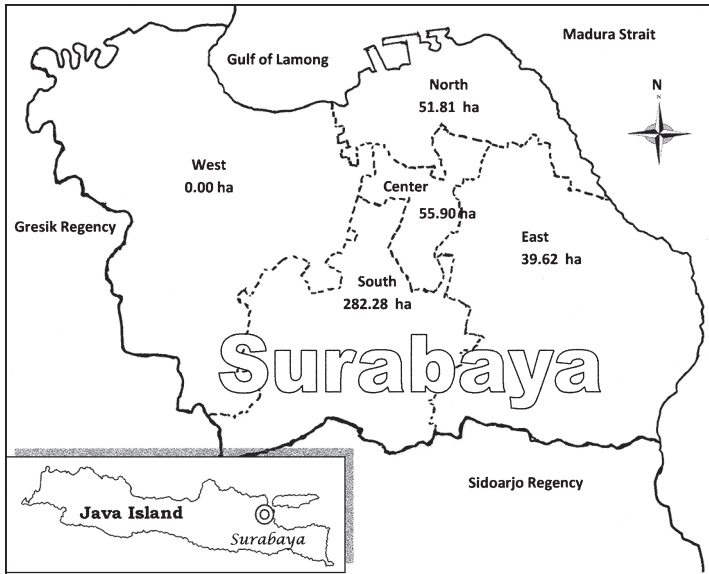
Undang-Undang No.1 Tahun 2004 tentang Perbendaharaan Negara [Law No.1 of 2004 Concerning the State Treasury].

Undang-Undang No.30 Tahun 1999 tentang Arbitrase dan Alternatif Penyelesaian Sengketa [Law No.30 of 1999 Regarding Arbitration and Alternative Dispute Resolution].

Undang-Undang No.2 Tahun 1965 tentang Perluasan Wilayah Kota Surabaya [Law No.2 of 1965 Regarding the Territorial Expansion of the Municipality of Surabaya].

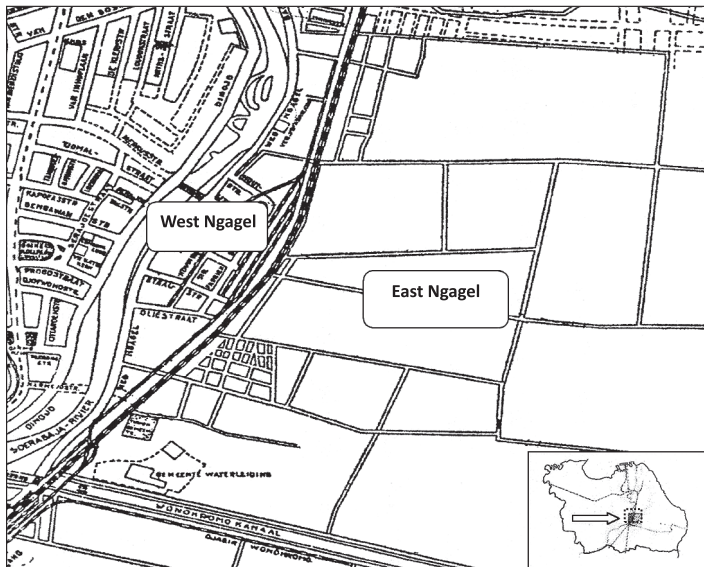
Undang-Undang No.5 Tahun 1960 tentang Peraturan Dasar Pokok-pokok Agraria [Law No.5 of 1960 Concerning the Basic Principles of Agrarian Law].

Undang-Undang No.1 Tahun 1958 tentang Penghapusan Tanah Partikelir [Law No.1 of 1958 Concerning the Elimination of Tanah Partikelir Rights].



Appendix 1 Area of *Eigendom* Land per Work Region (*Wilayah Kerja*)

Source: Compiled from various sources including Info Surabaya. February 16, 2014. <http://insurabaya.blogspot.co.id/2014/02/peta-surabaya.html>, accessed on March 6, 2015.



Appendix 2 Map of Ngagel

Source: Quoted/compiled from the daily *Pembela Rakjat* No. 31 Th. Ke-1, December 1939.

Multiple Reactions to Land Confiscations in a Hanoi Peri-urban Village

Nguyen Thi Thanh Binh*

This article examines the impact of urban expansion on a peri-urban village of Hanoi. It seeks to understand how villagers reacted to the decision by Hanoi city to take their agricultural land for urban projects. By exploring the forms of land protest adopted in this community and the diverse factors that shaped reactions in this particular case, the article contributes to the literature on responses to land confiscation in Vietnam and elsewhere. The paper shows a community divided over recent land confiscations and the complexity of the politics of resistance in land disputes in modern-day Vietnam.

Keywords: urbanization, rural transformation, land appropriation, land protest, Vietnam

In the decades since the economic reforms of the 1980s, Vietnam's urban and rural landscapes have changed dramatically as the country experiences a rapid rise of industrialization and modernization. For many years, an invisible urbanization had been taking place in rural areas based on intensified agriculture, expansion and development of handicrafts, and migration for employment by farming households (DiGregorio 2011). With the urban development strategy launched in the 1990s of "infilling and expansion," urbanization by "administrative integration," and the expansion of industrial parks, many new urban areas and industrial zones have been established in what once were primarily wet-rice-growing peripheries of major cities such as Hanoi. By applying the state's right to allocate and appropriate land for the purpose of "national defense, security, national interest, public interest, and economic development," local governments have reallocated agricultural land to developers. The government has negotiated with farming households in project areas and compensated the households for the reallocated land on a fixed-rate basis. From 2001 to 2005 the state appropriated 366,400 hectares of agricultural land; by 2010 the total rose to roughly 745,000 hectares, affecting some nine million farming people, or about 10 percent of the country's population (Kerkvliet 2014, 20). In Hanoi alone, from

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2000 to 2004 the city converted 5,496 hectares of land for 957 projects; this had critical consequences for the living and working conditions of 138,291 households, among them 41,000 classified as agricultural households (Hồng Minh 2005). In that context, rural communities, especially peri-urban villages, have been facing both opportunities and challenges to develop and better themselves.

Research on urbanization in Vietnam has highlighted a set of problems that have become manifest as the urbanization process extends into the peri-urban landscape. These problems include land degradation, chaotic land use practices, growing income inequalities, dispossessed farmers unable to find jobs in the urban economy, and land disputes (Nguyen Duy Thang 2004; Tran Duc Vien *et al.* 2005; Vu Hong Phong 2006; Trần Thị Hồng Yến 2013; Labbé 2014; Nguyễn Văn Sửu 2014). Inspired by violent standoffs between farmers and the local government during land disputes in 2012,¹⁾ some studies on land protests in Vietnam have explored disputes in rural settings by focusing on factors that instigate conflict, and the modes and contexts in which it occurs (Gillespie 2014; Kerkvliet 2014; Taylor 2014). While those works identify patterns in how and why recent land-related protests arose and analyze the discourses that guide and control disputes, they do not capture all the complexities of land disputes. The main reason is these studies focus more on the political implications of land conflicts than on land protests in a social context. In these studies, land protests are shown as dispossessed farmers' responses to land expropriations, which do not reflect the complexity of rural communities' reactions; nor do the studies examine all the processes by which the disputes have been formed and transformed.

To date, little attention has focused on the important issue of internal village conflicts over land confiscations for urbanization. In her case study in a Hanoi peri-urban village named Hoa Muc, Danielle Labbé (2011) describes the reaction of people in that village during several periods of land grabs. The case study examines the role of elderly people in opposing the local government's project to build a cultural house in front of the village communal house. The study gives some indication of the social division among villagers and suggests the complication of the politics of resistance in contemporary Vietnam. Nevertheless, more can be said about the complexity of local reactions to land expropriation in the current era.

This article shows how both urbanization and land conflict bring to light differences among villagers' reactions to land confiscation in a peri-urban village of Hanoi. Drawing

1) In 2012 the fish farmer Đoàn Văn Vuon and his brothers in Hải Phòng city laid homemade mines and discharged shotguns against the police who came to confiscate their farmland. The same year, hundreds of farmers in Văn Giang District, Hưng Yên Province, faced security agents and police in a violent confrontation to keep their land from appropriation for urban expansion.

upon recent fieldwork, the study seeks to understand how villagers of different ages, genders, and occupations have reacted to the decision of Hanoi city authorities to take their agricultural land for urban projects. It provides an in-depth anthropological study of the dynamics of the land appropriation process and the responses of farmers faced by great changes in land use and livelihoods. The study shows how and why the community has been divided over land confiscations, which has been exacerbated by villagers' protests. It demonstrates that despite most farming households not wanting to lose their agricultural land or accept low compensation, not all of them participated in the land protest. Illustrating the contestatory nature of land conflicts in contemporary Vietnam, this paper aims to bring more evidence to the complexity of the politics of resistance in land disputes in today's Vietnam. Like Labbé (2011) and Benedict Kerkvliet (2014), I try to contribute to the literature on responses to land confiscation in Vietnam and elsewhere by investigating forms of land protest in this community besides the "rightful resistance" (O'Brien 1996) approach and uncovering the diverse factors that shaped those reactions in this particular case.

Rightful Resistance Theory and Land Protests in Vietnam

Over the last three decades, Southeast Asian countries have experienced a dramatic change in land use and social relations around land. Economic growth, industrialization, and urbanization have led to the conversion of large amounts of agricultural land to urban use as well as various commercial and industrial purposes (Hall *et al.* 2011, 1). In India, during the last decade Special Economic Zones have become centers of "land wars" as farmers across the country have resisted the state's use of eminent domain to transfer their land. In the case of China, between 1987 and 2003 urban expansion transformed 10 million to 12 million hectares, about one-tenth of the country's total area, from agricultural to non-agricultural uses. Together, between 1990 and 2007, farmland conversion and inner-city redevelopment displaced between 60 million and 75 million people in both urban and rural areas (Hsing 2010, 2). Throughout the region, this urban expansion seemed to be based on the logic of dispossession (Hsing 2010; Levien 2012) or the "powers of exclusion" (Hall *et al.* 2011), which triggered increasingly explosive and widespread social unrest.

While reactions to land grabs have occurred in various countries in the region, significant explorations and discussions on the nature of this phenomenon concentrate mostly on China, where the number of land protests has been increasing since the late 1990s. In that context, the theory of rightful resistance, which was first explained by

Kevin O'Brien (1996) and later elaborated by Kevin J. O'Brien and Li Lianjiang (2006), has been influential. According to this theory, rightful resistance is a form of popular contention against the state in which groups of weak peasants use nonviolent methods, make use of institutionalized channels to press their claims locally, and then entreat higher-level officials to help. The nature of rightful resistance is peaceful; however, rightful resisters actively seek the attention of the elites, and their protests are public and open. People make use of the state's own laws, policies, or rhetoric in framing their protests.

Vietnam for a long time has been a fertile land for studies on peasant resistance in which theories of moral economy, the rational peasant, or the power of the weak²⁾ are introduced or elaborated. Against a background of increasing land disputes in recent times, scholarly works on protests over land in rural Vietnam undergoing urban expansion "have moved beyond the everyday resistance model, which used to be fruitful to study politics in rural Vietnam, to focus on a contestatory mode of politics" (Taylor 2014, 4). Labbé applied a rightful resistance approach to examine resistance to land redevelopment projects and found that "groups of villagers relied on a strategy of 'rightful resistance' embedded in the official discourse of deference, inasmuch as they based their claims on official policies and ethical pronouncements by the Vietnamese party-state itself" (Labbé 2011, 453). The core of resisters' discourse of rightful resistance to preserve their village communal house is "a sense of place and of social justice drawn from history, geography and tradition. People claim for their right to safeguard values they hold in common" (*ibid.*). In another recent investigation drawing upon more than 60 case studies of land dispute in Vietnam, Kerkvliet (2014) found that the predominant pattern for how Vietnamese today protest about land issues resonates with rightful resistance theory. In this form of resistance, "people in the same community peacefully demand that national officials make local authorities abide by the law" (Kerkvliet 2014, 26). However, some Vietnamese villagers' demonstrations do not fit this pattern and theory, such as when "angry villagers have collaborated with land protesters in other parts of the nation, and their protests, despite usually being non-violent, have not always been so" (*ibid.*, 40). According to the author, in most cases the reason why people's protest exceeds rightful resistance theory is that "Vietnamese people frequently challenge existing laws pertinent to their grievances and assert rights that go beyond those officially recognized" (*ibid.*, 21). For instance, some people refuse to surrender their land-use rights based on the notion that it is unjust to take land against the will of families who have served the Vietnamese nation (Kerkvliet 2014).

2) See Scott (1976); Popkin (1979); Kerkvliet (2005).

In this study, I also apply rightful resistance theory to analyze why and how Lua villagers protest. Like Kerkvliet (2014), I find that the reasons Lua people reacted and did not accept land appropriation at the beginning go beyond the explanation provided by rightful resistance theory. Since the collective village protest ended, some villagers have been continuing their own protest, which sometimes has involved violence, as they have tried to resist the local government's decisions. By examining the protest in process, I found that activists in the village community used some tactics that commonly have been associated with Vietnam's tradition of peasant revolutionary politics to mobilize their co-villagers to join their protest activities or to exert more pressure on local authorities to support their claim or meet their demands. Like Labbé (2011), I found that the village community was divided during the protest; but I will elaborate in more detail how the land confiscation impacted on the cohesiveness of this community. The paper aims to make a deeper contribution to what is already known about the reaction of local Vietnamese to land appropriation in a context of rapid urbanization.

Research Method and Research Site

This paper is drawn from field research conducted in Lua³⁾ village in 2014. The research was carried out using both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. For the quantitative component, 200 household questionnaires were surveyed to determine the socioeconomic situations of households. Information was collected on landownership and transfer, other personal and productive assets, income, and consumption expenditure. In this article, the quantitative survey results are not presented and are used only to understand the social context of the village. For the qualitative component, which represents the core of this paper, 60 semi-structured interviews were conducted with individuals in the village. Half of these individuals were identified from the quantitative questionnaires, while the remainder were selected to ensure a broad representation of the village by age, gender, educational background, occupation, marital status, and economic status. The interview included open-ended questions on informants' personal information and their families' socioeconomic situation. Villagers were free to share their opinions, feelings, and thoughts on urbanization and land appropriation. In order to gain an understanding of the villagers' reaction to land appropriation, we posed questions on this topic to some villagers who we believed played an important role or were directly involved in the protest, including both ordinary villagers and local authorities. Based on

3) This is a pseudonym to protect my informants.

information provided by respondents, we tried to meet and interview other villagers who were involved in the incidents. Questions were raised on the responses of people and their participation in the village protest.

Located to the west of Hanoi, Lua village is well known for its craft tradition. Despite experiencing various administrative changes in the late colonial and revolutionary periods, prior to 2006 Lua village belonged to one of the lowest administrative units (a commune) of Hoài Đức District, Hà Tây Province.⁴⁾ Rice cultivation and silk weaving were the two main livelihoods of villagers for as long as can be remembered. After the August revolution of 1945, traditional weaving died out.

Immediately after the decollectivization of local agriculture in the late 1980s, Lua people diversified their economic activities, aided by their close geographical position to Hanoi. Prior to 2009, approximately 70 percent of over 2,000 households in the village were agricultural households that also engaged in petty trade, hired labor, food processing, or small service industries. Thirty percent of households were non-agricultural. The majority of these were traders at markets in the city as well as entrepreneurs who owned weaving and cloth dying workshops in the village. The remainder ran a variety of businesses ranging from wood workshops to garment workshops, tobacco trade, food shops, and the like. The dynamics of Lua village trade can be seen as a continuation of the craft village tradition. It is possible to say that the 30 percent trading and craft households were also ranked as wealthy people in the village. The other 70 percent of households had a relatively stable livelihood created by intensifying their cash crops, peach tree flowers, and petty trade. Compared to other surrounding villages, Lua was considered one of the well-off villages in the region and one that had the internal capability to develop itself.

Under the urban growth policy in the region, on March 1, 2006 the commune to which Lua village belonged was assigned to Hà Đông town (Hà Tây Province). In June 2009, soon after Hà Tây merged with Hanoi city, Lua village became an urban administrative unit belonging to Hà Đông District. Given its convenient location, Hà Đông District urbanized rapidly: between 2005 and 2010, new roads and housing projects were quickly implemented. Two major roads were opened and cut through Lua village in 2006 and 2007.

In 2008, the local government developed a plan to take most of the village land for new urban projects. Accordingly, more than 300 hectares of agricultural land in Lua and another village in the same ward (more than 90 percent of the total agricultural land of Lua) were appropriated for 13 projects. The biggest project was Ha Dong New Urban

4) In 2008 Hà Tây was merged into Hanoi city after 17 years of being a province.

Centre⁵⁾ (Khu Đô thị mới), which has an area of 197 hectares. It consists of a service complex, a shopping center, hotels, offices, high-end housing, and a hospital. Besides these, there are several other housing projects and one international school.

The Village Protest

Although Lụa villagers had realized for some years that urbanization of their communities was inevitable, many of them were quite shocked when it actually happened. In 2006, when a major road opened and cut Lụa village in two, some households lost their cultivated land to the road expansion, but nobody protested. People accepted the compensation even though it was lower than that paid to villagers later for other mega projects,⁶⁾ because they understood it as a public works project that served the needs of the state for building infrastructure.

In early 2008, there was a rumor that most of the village land would be appropriated for road construction and housing projects with a compensation of about VND86 million per *sào* (about USD4,000 for 360 m²) plus 10 percent of the reclassified land, referred to as “service land.”⁷⁾ An old farmer in the village recalled his feeling at that time:

“I felt dizzy at the rumor. I myself had 13.7 *thước*⁸⁾ [314 m²]. My children had their own portions. If I lost all the land, I would receive about VND80 million plus about 18 m² service land. But to have that 18 m² I would have to pay almost VND40 million for infrastructure fees. If I had no more land to grow peach trees, how would I earn a living? Each year, on average, I need over VND10 million for my own expenditure. With VND40 million left, I could live for three years. After that I might have to sell the 18 m² service land to live on. As I am old, who would give me work? I was really dizzy.” (Mr. Ngô, 60 years old)

Hiền, a 40-year-old man in the village, recalled a similar sentiment: “When I heard about the land appropriation, I could not sleep for several nights. I was lying here, thinking and worrying about what I would do after losing the land.”

In this atmosphere of apprehension, villagers grouped together to discuss the rumor. At first people thought that their land was going to be taken for state projects, so they mostly discussed compensation. Later, they discovered that it was to be taken by private

5) This is a pseudonym. However, the main developer of this project is the Nam Cường group.

6) At that time the compensation was VND47 million per *sào*, around half the amount people received from mega projects later.

7) In addition to financial compensation, the province also allows farmers to retain 10 percent of the reclassified land, referred to as service land, for use or sale.

8) One *thước* equals 24 m².

companies and corporations. People discussed the state's compensation policies (Kim 2011) at length: the government would give back 10 percent of service land plus VND201,600 per square meter and financial compensation for lost income from crops.⁹⁾ Compensation was also to be offered for job training services. Villagers received VND86 million (more than USD4,000 in 2008) per *sào* (360 m²) in compensation. They began comparing Lụa to their neighboring village of Ngòi,¹⁰⁾ where for the same project VND97 million per *sào* was paid. Ngòi village was already a ward of Hà Đông town, while Lụa village, being part of a larger commune, was still a rural village commune in a peri-urban environment. The land values of urban and rural areas were thus considered different.

In the eyes of the state authorities, standard levels of compensation, based on location and land area, are calculated on the principle that farmers have only usage rights, not property rights, over land (Asia Foundation *et al.* 2014). However, Lụa villagers wanted a higher amount of compensation—not only because their land was adjacent to Ngòi village, but, as they pointed out, Ngòi's rice land was less valuable than the land that Lụa villagers were using to produce cash crops. The village is known as the “peach tree village” for its peach trees and flowers (*đào*), which generate high incomes (SGGP Special Report 2008), especially during the Tết season. This comparison of land value is common in other rural communities where farmers intensify some high-value crops, such as Van Giang (Kerkvliet 2014, 35).

Another bone of contention was that in Lụa village just 6.2 percent of land was offered as compensation in the form of service land (*đất dịch vụ*) instead of the 10 percent that was given elsewhere.¹¹⁾ For reasons that remain unclear, the road construction was counted as urban infrastructure and its 3.8 percent was deducted from the promised 10 percent. Concrete offers to provide jobs as replacement for the loss of land remained vague. From March 2008 onward, many villagers gathered at different places in the village to discuss matters. They decided not to cede agricultural land to the project in return for compensation.

Like the predominant pattern of land protest in Vietnam, Lụa people started their

9) At that time the compensation for Agricultural Land Use Rights in the village of Phú Điền in 2007 was as follows (Nguyen Van Suu 2009). A total of VND171,000 could be obtained per square meter: agricultural land use rights, VND108,000; vegetables and other annual fruit on the land, VND35,000; compensation for changing jobs, VND25,000; reward for acting quickly, VND3,000.

10) This is a pseudonym.

11) According to Nguyen Van Suu (2009), the compensation increased as farmers felt that prior to the negotiations they could show that cash crops and perennial trees were already planted. The expression is *ăn đền bù* (eat the compensation). Suu gives the example of villagers who doubled their compensation by changing from vegetables and other annual fruit such as rice and morning glory (*rau muống*), to annual crops such as willows (*liễu*) and guava (*ổi*).

protest by collectively complaining to local authorities in the pattern of rightful resistance (*ibid.*, 26). Meetings were held in each hamlet, in which most representatives of households expressed their disagreement on land appropriation. Reports of these meetings were sent to the local government. In these events, the community was already divided. Most villagers wanted to retain the land so as to maintain their livelihood, while some agreed to leave but only in exchange for fair compensation. Local authorities, Communist Party members, and people from families benefiting from the preferential treatment policy¹²⁾ (*gia đình chính sách*)—who accepted the land appropriation—often remained loyal to state policies.

Besides holding official meetings and submitting petitions, villagers sometimes publicly reacted to sudden events relating to land appropriation. Whilst their actions were usually non-violent, on some occasions angry people crossed the threshold. For instance, on March 14, 2008, many people came to the rice fields to drive away district committee staff who were mapping the village's land area. Villagers even destroyed some machines belonging to the Nam Cường company that were being used to build the project manager's house. On March 17, 2008, a thousand villagers came to the People's Committee office after an announcement regarding land appropriation was made on the commune's public broadcast system. Deliberations took place between the local authorities and a delegation of three villagers who were assigned as representatives. The answers provided by the local authorities did not satisfy the villagers, so they kept returning to the offices to protest. Villagers accused local cadres of receiving money from the estate developing company, which was investing in the area, to sell their land. Some villagers even said local cadres had "sold people" (*bán đứng dân*) for the enterprise. There was widespread mistrust among the protesters about the involvement of local party cadres in the affair. Rumors that commune leaders had been promised better land—and offered gifts and even outright bribes—became the talk of the day. Protesters threw bricks, stones, and even feces at the houses of key leaders of the commune, such as the secretary of the Party, two vice chairmen, and the head of the land administration department. As the chairman was seriously ill at the time, one of the vice chairmen was believed to have had the most important role in the land-taking decision. Protesters burned incense and established a kind of altar table in front of his home's gate (this meant that in their eyes,

12) These are families that benefited from government policies. Families that contributed to the 1945 revolution and the several wars that Vietnam engaged in (martyrs and wounded soldiers as well as other contributors) receive preferential treatment from state policies (in the form of a monthly salary, gifts during special occasions, etc.). During the land appropriation, these families were the first to follow the land-taking policy of the local government given their status and relationship with the government.

he had died).

Behind rightful resistance methods to press their claims, such as sending petitions and questioning local cadres, Lua resisters understood that their protest could be successful only if they could prevent local cadres and opponents in the village from receiving compensation. It is interesting that in this situation, some tactics that protesters used and the atmosphere of protesting that villagers recalled are often depicted in Vietnamese peasant revolutions of the old days. Drums were used widely in this period of protest as a sign to call for participation of villagers in significant events. Sometimes the protesters organized drum beating to protest. A delegation of about a hundred people marched around the village with a big drum, then stopped at the house of one key leader and beat the drum constantly from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. From March to May 2008, almost every day, from morning till night, many villagers—especially elderly and disabled people—were mobilized to surround the office building in protest, to question and criticize local cadres. People criticized and scolded local cadres behind their backs but also to their faces, both inside and outside the meetings. With the exception of key leaders who attended the office daily, most of the personnel of the social organizations in the commune were unable to work for several months. If any social organization held a meeting to implement any activity higher-level authorities requested of them, villagers took over the meeting to focus on the land compensation question. Local government was paralyzed through the entire year of 2008. Whilst resisters did not break the law by removing and taking over the power of local government, their actions disturbed and caused difficulties for local authorities.

People were very interested in the details of the protests (*phong trào đấu tranh*) (even if they did not call them by that name). In the evening, groups met at some points of the village road or at villagers' houses. Each month, every hamlet had several meetings held by the head of the hamlet or by people themselves. Active protesters from other hamlets were able to participate in these meetings to get an update on the situation or raise their questions. On normal days, people continued to surround the People's Committee building. On days the commune had a meeting or received a visit from high-level authorities, villagers informed each other and called for the participation of the crowd. People used slogans such as "No taking land when people have not agreed," "Long live the Vietnamese Communist Party," and "Long live Ho Chi Minh." These are still the most popular mobilizational slogans used by the Vietnamese Communist Party and the state. People used these aspects of the state's rhetoric to show that they still believed in and followed the Party while claiming their rights.

The most significant event occurred when a high-ranking leader of Hà Tây Province came to work at the village on April 30, 2008. Thousands of Lua villagers surrounded

the office of the People's Committee to question the provincial authority. After being detained for over a day, the leader in question could leave the village only after promising that the project would commence if the majority of villagers agreed, and that jobs would be provided for people after their land was taken. The impetus of the villagers in land protests was so great that sometimes people actually felt that they could succeed in keeping their land.

After the local government had been questioned for some months, the protest extended to the provincial capital, Ha Dong, and even to Hanoi. Hundreds of villagers went several times to Hà Đông town and Hanoi to submit petitions. Every week, on the day the city received people's petitions, a group of villagers consisting of several dozen people went to question and argue about their affairs. On special occasions, when it was necessary to mobilize the crowd, the delegation would phone people at the village to come to town to join them. On June 11, 2008, hundreds of villagers went to the office of the Provincial Party in Hà Đông town to protest. As protesters clashed with police, five people were arrested. Two of them were later jailed for two years. From June 2008 to the end of 2009, the protest of Lụa villagers was described as "some days quiet, some days effervescent" in both the village and the city.

One of the main reasons Lụa villagers could keep the protest going for over a year was the situation of being "caught in between" local cadres (Pham 2004). In early 2009 a new chairman was sent to the village from Hà Đông town to replace the previous chairman, who had died due to cancer. With the more direct and stronger leadership from the district level, local government in the village was reinforced. All leaders and Party members at the village came to a consensus to give up land, even though some of them did not agree or sympathize with the villagers. Therefore, in the first half of 2009, local cadres were the first to give up their land and receive compensation. However, since villagers were still protesting, most of them did it discreetly or even in secret.

Meanwhile, the estate company also applied tactics to divide villagers and induce them to accept compensation. From October to December 2009 some strangers, posing as brokers, came to the village to buy service land despite villagers having not yet been given any such land as compensation, and the decision of the city on service land for local people having not yet been issued. Thus, people called this transaction of buying and selling service land "steam" (*dịch vụ hơi*). Later on, Lụa villagers thought that those strangers were being sent by the Nam Cường company to induce them to accept compensation. They first came to poor families, especially those whose offspring were involved in gambling and had debts. They paid a high price, ranging from VND500 million to 600 million for a portion of service land (about 18 m²). This large amount of money caused some villagers to give land, receive compensation, and sell their service land. As

the local government saw the change in a number of villagers, local authorities asked for permission from the city to implement the service land policy in the village. By the end of 2009, some villagers had sporadically opted to receive money. This caused tension in certain families because some wives did not want to receive money but their husbands, under pressure or due to advice, decided to do it. In some cases, the father did not want to accept money but his son went to receive it.

By the end of 2009, there was an announcement that the government would pay only during a one-week period, and if people did not present themselves the money would be transferred to the state's treasury, where it eventually could be claimed. This was not an exceptional event, because the same strategy was used in other villages around Hà Đông (e.g., in Đồng Mai commune). There were also suggestions that anyone who accepted compensation would receive the allocated service land in a good location. All these factors caused villagers to join a crowd to demand money from the hamlet's chief. The village collective protest ended. Many villagers recalled the situation as a "broken battle" (*vỡ trận*).

It apparently worked, because by 2010 only 36 households had not yet accepted money. These people, mostly women, continued their protest together with over 200 households in their neighboring village. However, the 36 protesting households were divided into two groups. One group consisted of 30 households in Lụa village who called themselves the "red T-shirt group" (*phe áo đỏ*). They reduced their demands to 10 percent service land (instead of the 6.2 percent that their co-villagers had accepted). Meanwhile, six other households joined with protesters in the neighboring village, named the "white T-shirt group" (*phe áo trắng*), and maintained their demand to not lose their land at all. As at the time of writing, these protesters are still sending petitions to different government offices, and visiting offices in Hanoi once a week. They have even established blogs on the Internet and call themselves the "Lụa land lost peasants." In addition, they are always prepared to fight with the local government whenever the ward organizes a coercive land takeover of one among those households. Their fights sometimes are recorded and posted on the Internet, shown as "social dramas" to outsiders.

A Divided Community

According to many interviewees, right from beginning, around 50 percent of villagers were very concerned about their livelihood if they lost their land. This group of people did not want their land to be taken away. About 25 percent of people wanted their land to be appropriated. These were mainly old people and people no longer practicing agri-

culture. Most of them wanted the compensation for savings, paying debts, or investing in non-farm work. The remaining 25 percent of people were unsure. Many of them were already engaged in trading or other non-agricultural activities. For them, it was not a matter of accepting land compensation or continuing to cultivate crops. Their interest in the compensation scheme was minimal. Some of them were farmers. They also wanted to keep the land but were not interested in protesting or any collective activity. From this group's point of view, they let local government and the majority in the village make whatever decision they wanted regarding the land. They kept quiet when most of the villagers expressed their uneasiness over the compensation scheme.

Villagers who had participated in the protest referred to what happened as a "struggle movement to preserve land" (*phong trào đấu tranh giữ đất*). Meanwhile, other villagers called it a "protesting faction." According to villagers who considered themselves in between, right after the land-taking decision was announced, the "protesting faction" (*phe đấu tranh*) was formed. It went against the local government faction (*phe chính quyền*), which comprised local authorities and people who supported the land appropriation. As the impetus of the first faction was stronger at the beginning, about 60 percent of households looked favorably on the protest. It is significant that this number included both villagers who participated directly in the protest activities and those who supported the protest but did not show up. Interview results also reveal that some villagers had no land to keep but also participated in the land protest. Several respondents believed that some of their co-villagers just responded to the land protest for their own aims, such as to show their discontent to the local cadres. In reality, only about 10 percent of households in the village were active protesters. They were enthusiastic about all activities of the movement. The 36 households that are still protesting belong to this number. Some of them were enthusiastic and referred to as "people prepared for the fight" in the first days. Some small enterprises in the village that were built on agricultural land that might have been cleared for the project also supported financing the protest.

The movement in each hamlet¹³⁾ was different. People in Quang Minh, Hoàng Văn Thụ, and Hòa Bình hamlets were more enthusiastic about the protest than people in Vĩnh Quang, Quyết Tâm, and Đoàn Kết hamlets. Villagers explained that the main reason for

13) Traditionally, Vietnamese villages were divided into subdivisions or hamlets (Kleinen 1999, 14). These were neighborhood organizations. Men aged over 18 had to join them to fulfill their obligation to the community as well as enjoy communal activities. In the old days, Lụa village had 20 hamlets. The (Sino-Vietnamese) names of the hamlets were taken from directions as seen within the village. Each hamlet had a head of hamlet. After the 1945 revolution the village was divided into 10 hamlets with new names that have revolutionary meanings.

this difference was that people in Quang Minh, Hoàng Văn Thụ, and Hòa Bình had intensified their cash crops long before. Those villagers' land was worth more to them in value and sources of livelihood than it would have been had the land been used mainly for rice crops. At the time of land appropriation, most of the peach tree area of the village was cultivated by those hamlets, while the other hamlets grew mainly rice, which produced less income than cash crops. Also, people in Vinh Quang, Quyết Tâm, and Đoàn Kết preferred to practice petty trade or other economic activities rather than engage in intensive cash crop farming. In the case of Vinh Quang hamlet, many households had already sold their use rights to other villagers or outsiders in order to obtain spending money or to build new houses. As a result, almost no reaction occurred in this hamlet. People in this hamlet were the first to receive compensation.

During the protests, women and old people were the most active participants. This was similar to other land disputes in Vietnam, given that women are the most concerned about their families' interests while men are more hesitant to confront the police or government (Nguyen Thi Thanh Binh 2010; Nguyễn Thị Tình 2013). Young people were not interested in land appropriation since they did not have to worry about their families' livelihood, and agriculture is no longer an occupational choice for many.

When recalling their participation in the protest, many villagers said that with the exception of the 10 percent households enthusiastic about the protest (including the 36 households that are still protesting), most of them just participated in meetings and big events at the village and several times went to town to submit petitions and protest. They were hesitant to protest in town. One reason was it took up time; the other was that some of them felt embarrassed to protest there.

"I felt embarrassed when sitting in the park in Hanoi to protest, as people around looked at us curiously. Someone even criticized us for making trouble." (Mrs. Giang, 50 years old, Quang Minh hamlet)

"Whenever people called each other and me to go to town, I just said 'Yes, yes'. But I just stood at my house's gate, waited for everyone to pass, and then went back into the house and went to work. Once, I went to Ha Dong with people, but I just stood far away. I felt hesitant to be a protester." (Mr. Hiền, 40 years old, Quang Minh hamlet)

However, many people did respond to the protest by contributing money for the delegation's lunch or helping families who had protesters in jail (on several occasions, each time about 100 or several hundred thousand đồng). Understanding that the movement aimed to represent the common interest, many households tried to contribute something toward it.

“I have two brothers and one sister all living in this hamlet. I myself and my two brothers no longer do agriculture. We are busy with business outside the village. My parents are retired cadres, so they could not join the protest [state officials are not allowed to go against the state and Party’s policies]. Only my eldest sister is staying at home to do agriculture. Therefore, she had to be the representative of the family to join the movement.” (Mr. Hải, 39 years old, Quang Minh hamlet)

Sometimes people decided to join the protest because they had empathy (*nể nang*) for other villagers. Someone commented that women in the village called each other to join the protest, like in other group events. This means that relatives or friends often called each other to join them. Thus, some women joined in the protest due to their respect for friends or relatives.

“Those who stood up often had relatives, friends enticing each other to become part of a faction. If I did not join, I felt sorry for that (*ngại*).” (Mrs. Hồng, 42 years old, Hòa Bình hamlet)

In fact, enthusiastic protesters were often sharp-tongued and critical. They tended to criticize and complain about those who did not go to meetings or submit petitions. In some hamlets, enthusiastic protesters even issued a resolution (*ng nghị quyết*)¹⁴ of the hamlet to those villagers who would not join the protest or accept compensation, saying that they could no longer count on support when their families encountered difficulties due to funerals. That was the reason why many villagers, with the exception of cadre members’ families or people working for the government, tried to show their participation.

“When someone at the hamlet came back from the meeting or protest, passed my house, and saw me at home, she would say: How can you always stay at home while people go to the meeting? You cannot receive land that people claim back from the project. My husband also told me sometimes: ‘You should go, otherwise my ears will get hurt because of people complaining about our family’s absence’. We just followed the crowd.” (Mrs. Giang, 50 years old, Quang Minh hamlet)

During times of protest, villagers were divided and rifts developed in relationships between villagers and cadres as well as among villagers themselves. When attending weddings, funerals, or formal meetings, or socially in tea shops, people often argued with each other over land appropriation. As the protest faction gained the upper hand, anyone expressing their opinion by saying things such as “Land belongs to the state; people should take the money; it is better not doing agriculture anymore” would readily be criticized by others.

14) This is a revolutionary term as decisions of the Communist Party were often made through collective meetings and thus needed to be implemented.

In the village market or at wedding parties, people in the hamlet enthusiastic over land protest would publicly criticize people from other hamlets who had not joined the protest. Relatives of local cadres also criticized or even questioned them about corruption relating to their support for land taking, either openly or behind their backs. There was a story circulating in the village at that time: The chairman of the commune who signed the agreement for land appropriation attended a wedding party. When he had just sat down at a table, people at that table stood up and left, openly embarrassing him. The mother-in-law of a village authority cadre also suspected her son-in-law of accepting bribes from some companies involved in the taking of land. One active female protester even criticized and scolded her brother-in-law who was deputy secretary of the Commune Communist Party. This broke their relationship. One elderly man in Lua village commented:

“The protesters only scold local authorities, but the relationship among villagers was no longer like before. This can be referred to as ‘stories of society’, ‘quarrel outside society’, or ‘a difference of opinion’, but the consequence was that people in the village kept a distance from each other, became isolated from each other.” (Mr. Du, 78 years old)

Nowadays, some years after the protest, relationships among villagers have mostly returned to normal—but in some cases the rift has not healed. Especially for those 36 households who continue their protest, the relationship with local authorities is not harmonious. In spite of threatening these households with social exclusion, most of the other Lua villagers have accepted their right to protest. They still maintain social exchanges with them during weddings or funerals. However, the protesters themselves feel they are different, and they are frustrated. It is clear that most of the protesting households are living in old, small houses, as they have not accepted compensation. For some families, their economic situation has worsened, since they spend more time and money on attempting to claim their rights. The critical attitude of local authorities and some villagers to these protesters makes them hesitant to join communal activities, especially those organized by the local government. This feeling of alienation in the village community has pushed them to seek support and cooperation from outside. No one knows exactly who supports them, but their knowledge on law has improved. On their Internet blog, it is easy to see their meetings and cooperation with land protesters in other communities.

Conclusion

What happened in Lua village was a spontaneous response to the government's land appropriation policy. About half the villagers tried to hold the line by declaring they were determined to keep the land. Once a few people in the early days said they were "prepared for the fight," others joined the struggle. There was no leader. The protesters relied on their own resources. They did not seek assistance from intellectuals, lawyers, or others who knew the law better than they did. Their strength was in their numbers and their ability to argue and quarrel with local authorities and anyone who opposed them. They were strong enough to give pause to local cadres and some opponents. In the end, however, they could not prevail.

However, the protest dynamics were more complicated than outsiders can imagine. Their reason for protesting was not only rooted in the fear of losing land (and consequently their livelihood) but also a principle of fairness in compensation. The compensation in their village, the residents insisted, should be consistent with the amount paid to people in surrounding villages and with the real value of the land being taken from them. Second, it was not a clear or comprehensive policy. The project took over 90 percent of people's land. Some people have not lost one square meter of land, but they suffered from changes in the land situation in the area affected by the irrigation system. Meanwhile, they have no money from compensation, like other villagers, to improve their lives.

Although about half the Lua villagers shared these arguments and concerns, others did not or had other doubts about the protest efforts. Like most villages in Vietnam, Lua was not homogeneous on this land issue or other matters (Kleinen 1999). The government's land confiscation efforts brought about different reactions among residents, depending in large part on their occupations and social groups. Residents who depended on agriculture and petty trade were the most vulnerable in that process. However, farmers in hamlets with a tradition of agricultural intensification reacted more strongly than others—not only because they wanted to maintain their livelihood but also because of their stronger character. Therefore, it is significant to emphasize that it was not a protest by the Lua village community. Urbanization and land appropriation were not a tragedy for all villagers (Labbé 2015).

We can see many similarities in the pattern of the Lua village protest and recent land protests elsewhere in Vietnam. During the first two years, people just complained to local authorities and then sent petitions to higher levels. They claimed local officials abused their authority and were corrupt. They also claimed that local government and enterprises took land without consulting their views and without considering the impact on their livelihoods. Such actions, villagers contended, went against state regulations

governing land use reallocation. The protests in Lua were also largely peaceful. Like the predominant pattern of many contemporary land disputes in Vietnam, these reasons and grounds for collective protest in Lua village resonate with rightful resistance theory (Kerkvliet 2014). Yet, like other land protests in Vietnam in recent years, Lua villagers went further by rejecting the state's authority to unilaterally claim their cultivated land. They did it by showing their disagreement on land appropriation, demanding to retain the land to maintain their livelihood, or not allowing the taking of land when most people had not agreed. Their appeals to retain their farmland or get better compensation were based mostly on moral sentiments and unwritten norms about justice and fairness, and sometimes on the contribution and services that local villagers had provided to the country (Taylor 2014, 4).

Moreover, going beyond what we know about rightful resistance methods, in the case of Lua village we can see the application of traditional Vietnamese patterns of rural protest. The beating of the drum, a symbol of traditional community strength, was done by enthusiastic protesters to mobilize people and send an intimidating message to local authorities. Many villagers recalled what happened as a "movement," recalling the rhetoric of revolutionary mobilization campaigns. Other tactics and slogans reminiscent of village-based resistance during the revolutionary period, such as referring to the protests as a "struggle" or a "battle" or the issuing of village "resolutions," were applied in the protest. As factions formed in the village, several villagers even disrespectfully referred to local authorities as a "faction." Some protesters, especially in the 36 households who continue to oppose the government project, violently confronted the police. When villagers' emotions were running high, people dared to criticize, abuse, and even terrorize local cadres. Although protesters had no aim to take over the local authority, their demonstrations paralyzed local government for a short period. Together the findings from Lua village illustrate the internal dynamics of a village protest and the complexity of the politics of resistance in contemporary Vietnam.

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Karma versus Magic: Dissonance and Syncretism in Vernacular Thai Buddhism

Kanya Wattanagun*

For a number of scholars, syncretism as an analytical approach to a group's or an individual's religiosity has several shortcomings. Denoting the mixture of tenets or practices belonging to different traditions, syncretism presupposes a clearly demarcated boundary between the syncretized traditions (McDaniel 2011, 17). It also implies scholarly wrought labels and categories, which are hardly shared by the people whose religiosity becomes the subject of academic scrutiny (Tambiah 1970, 42; T. G. Kirsch 2004, 706). In this paper I demonstrate that despite its shortcomings, syncretism can be employed to expound vernacular Thai Buddhism, whose heterogeneous composition has been argued to be "beyond syncretism" (Pattana 2005, 461). Ethnographic cases presented in this paper reveal that several Thai Buddhists, noting a dissonance between the doctrine of karma and the belief in magic, differentiate Buddhist from non-Buddhist elements. The rationalization they employ to resolve this dissonance is a syncretistic activity that renders their multifarious religiosity internally consistent and meaningful. These cases challenge the assumption that syncretism is inapplicable to the highly diversified and hybrid ways Thai Buddhists observe their faith since they neither draw the boundary between diverse religious tenets and customs nor adhere to a single orthodox ideal.

Keywords: vernacular Thai Buddhism, syncretism, magic, karma

Syncretism: A Problematic Analytical Model?

Syncretism as an approach to an individual's or a group's religiosity has been problematized in many respects. Its descriptive definition, which denotes a process in which "elements of two different 'traditions' interact or combine" (Shaw and Stewart 1994, 10), implies a clearly demarcated boundary between the syncretized elements. This boundary, however, presupposes static, universal categories, which hardly exist among diverse ways people interpret and observe their faiths (McDaniel 2011, 17; Pattana 2012, 14). The subjective definition of the term, which means either "illegitimate mixing" in a pejorative sense or "legitimate mixing" in a positive sense, also entails grave pitfalls

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(Droogers 1989, 8). The negative interpretation evokes the image of a pure, authentic tradition that is debased once it is commingled with foreign elements (Shaw and Stewart 1994, 2). The positive application essentializes etic, scholarly wrought categories that are not necessarily adopted by the people whose hybrid religiosity becomes the subject of academic scrutiny (Tambiah 1970, 42; T. G. Kirsch 2004, 706).

This outlook on the discrepancy between emic and etic perspectives, which renders syncretism a problematic analytical model for some scholars, articulates two allied sentiments. First, religion as observed by people in real, diverse contexts is distinct from religion as defined by elites within the hierarchy of institutional religion or by scholars in academia (Yoder 1974, 7–8). Second, it is biased to refer to the elite's definition of religion as the norm in relation to which laymen's religiosity is assessed and analyzed (Tambiah 1970, 41; Primiano 1995, 46–47). However, can we discard syncretism on the grounds that since laypeople do not differentiate tenets and practices belonging to diverse belief traditions, they do not syncretize these elements but rather simultaneously adopt them? Or can we propound that syncretism as an analytical concept is inadequate because it inadvertently asserts scholars' preconceived categories, and laypeople do not make sense of their religiosity in terms of these preconceptions?

This paper presents ethnographic cases from Thailand that reveal ways in which lay and ordained Thai Buddhists resolve a dissonance within their manifold religiosity. Practicing Theravada Buddhism, a branch of Buddhism that gained influence in mainland Southeast Asia beginning in the twelfth century CE (Swearer 2010, ix), Thai Buddhists have an understanding of a religious goal that revolves around the doctrine of karma and its notions of merit (*bun*), demerit (*baab*), and rebirth (Piker 1973, 300). Theravada Buddhism, nonetheless, is not the only tradition that informs Thai Buddhists' religiosity. Elements of non-Theravada origins, such as magico-animistic and Chinese Mahayana¹⁾ tenets and practices, constitute Thai Buddhists' religious repertoires. The ethnographic cases presented in the following section demonstrate that these elements from diverse traditions do not always peacefully coexist within the mindset of the believing individual. In several cases, rationalizations are made to impose a hierarchy on contradictory tenets. This cognitive act resolves the dissonance noted by the believing individual and renders his or her manifold religiosity internally coherent. In light of this undertaking, I suggest that Thai Buddhists' religiosity is not really “beyond syncretism” (Pattana 2005, 461), because, as illustrated by the cases presented in the following section, syncretization is

1) A Chinese Mahayana component whose significance in Thailand's religious landscape has become most notable in the twentieth century is the worship of the Bodhisattva Guanyin (or *Kuan Im* in Thai). For more on this practice in contemporary Thailand, see Nithi (1994), Jackson (1999), Pattana (2005), Cohen (2008).

one of many strategies adopted by Thai Buddhists to configure their inclusive and heterogeneous religious repertoires.

The thought process Thai Buddhists adopt to align their belief in magic with the doctrine of karma, I argue, evinces syncretism, which in this study specifically means the conscious synthesizing of tenets or practices considered to be of different categories and fundamentally incompatible with one another.²⁾ Many studies of Thai Buddhism have shown that the doctrine of karma and the belief in magic exist side by side in the religious life of Thai Buddhists (Wells 1960, 6; Tambiah 1970, 41; Piker 1972; Terwiel 2012, Chapter 9). As Kenneth E. Wells observes, Thai Buddhism provides its adherents the “means for making merit for self and others” and “assurance of safety and good fortune by means of devotion, good conduct, amulets, and verbal mantras” (Wells 1960, 6). Thai Buddhists’ subscription to the doctrine of karma and the belief in magic contains a dissonance, which is expressed and redressed by Thai Buddhists interviewed in this study: if a person’s karma is accountable for the fortunes and miseries, the successes and failures, that he experiences in his present life, his resort to magic seems illogical. The belief in the efficacy of magic clashes head-on with the doctrine of karma since the former holds that a person can secure success and fortunes without having to perform the deeds that warrant these rewards.

Scholars who explore the relationship between Buddhism and indigenous beliefs in South and Southeast Asia express diverse views about this relationship. Some, as Barend J. Terwiel remarks, are baffled by the way in which Buddhist and non-Buddhist elements “become so intermingled that at present it is impossible to draw a distinction between them” (Terwiel 1976, 391).³⁾ Others, privileging scriptures and scholastic traditions over popular aspects of religion, imply that non-Buddhist elements debase “the so-called noble ideals of Buddhism” (Ames 1964a, 75).⁴⁾ Another group of scholars, sympathetic to lay

2) The word “syncretism” has been used to denote different things by various agents in diverse contexts of usage. In Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a group of Protestant theologians called for the reconciliation of diverse Protestant denominations. Their opponents, however, contended that the reconciliation would lead to syncretism, which means the confusing jumble of religious ideas and practices in this context. In the Renaissance period, the term denoted a continuity between Christian theology and classical philosophy, which the Renaissance philosophers and scholars enthusiastically embraced (Shaw and Stewart 1994, 3). For variable ways in which the word has been used and defined, see Droogers (1989, 7–25) and Shaw and Stewart (1994, 2–9).

3) Some scholars who express this view are John E. deYoung (1963, 110), Michael A. Wright (1968, 1), and Anuman Rajadon (2009, 35).

4) In a footnote, Ames lists the studies that propound such a view. The list includes Copleston (1908, 272–290), Elliot (1921, 42), Stephen (1953), and Ariyapala (1956). I note here, however, that this view, espoused by some scholars of Buddhism several decades ago, seems to greatly diminish in the present-day scholarship of Buddhism. In the case of Thai Buddhism, the pejorative view of popular Buddhism has been expressed primarily by ordained Buddhists and lay social critics who communicate their comments via mass media. See Taylor (1999, 163–165) and Pattana (2006, 265–267).

adherents and their hybrid religious practices, posit that what doctrinalists construe as a meaningless jumble of Buddhist and non-Buddhist elements does not necessarily bother people who practice Buddhism in real, diverse contexts (Tambiah 1970, 41) and that to interpret this intricate combination based on a scholar's preconceptions of religion is counterproductive (McDaniel 2011, 229).

Despite diverse stances on the problem, I hold that these different approaches fail to recognize the possibility that people who practice "popular" Buddhism can think about their religious practices on a conceptual level. They seem to concur that laypeople do not share concepts and categories held by elites in the institutionalized religion and by scholars who study religion in academia. Therefore, it is quite futile to make sense of their religiosity on the basis of the taxonomy and the idioms formulated within scholastic tradition or academic settings. This connotation, I argue, perpetuates the view that since people who practice popular Buddhism do not adhere to dogmatic categories or the idea of orthodoxy espoused by religious elites and scholars, they incessantly create new combinations of Buddhist and non-Buddhist elements to meet their ever-shifting spiritual needs. And they do so without feeling obligated to justify their hybrid religious practices.⁵⁾ The ethnographic cases presented in this paper prove otherwise. They show that Thai Buddhists do not unreflectively and indiscriminately adopt all religious tenets and practices regardless of their different origins and implications. Individuals interviewed in this study aptly pointed out a dissonance between the doctrine of karma and the belief in magic. They also developed a rationalization aimed at resolving this dissonance. This cognitive process indicates that, to a significant extent, informants make a distinction between Buddhist and non-Buddhist elements. They subordinate the belief in magic to the doctrine of karma to maintain the orthodoxy of the Buddhist tenet.

Apart from this introduction, I segment this study into three parts. The first part—"Karma versus Magic: Dissonance and Syncretization"—has two subsections. "Karma versus Magic: A Peculiar Mental Scheme?" discusses a mode of thought that perceives a dissonance between the doctrine of karma and the belief in magic. I argue here that this mental scheme is not an idiosyncratic trait peculiar to a few doctrinalists but a recurrent view expressed by several Thai Buddhists who are simultaneously engaged with the "philosophical" and "practical" aspects of Buddhism.⁶⁾ The discussion in this

5) McDaniel (2011, 228) directly expresses this view. Pattana (2005, 464–466) and Jackson (1999, 311) imply the same, noting the decline of the orthodoxy of state-sponsored Theravada Buddhism vis-à-vis the proliferation of newly minted supernatural cults in contemporary, capitalist Thailand.

6) E. R. Leach suggests two strata of a religion: philosophical religion and practical religion. The former is prevalent among the intellectuals, to whom religion is an intricate system of ethical principles and doctrines. The latter is religion as observed by "an ordinary churchgoer" (Leach 1968, 1) whose religious practices are relatively more oriented toward practical, worldly concerns.

part is aimed to contextualize ethnographic cases presented in the succeeding subsection, “Dissonance and Syncretization.” This section analyzes oral statements given by individual Thai Buddhists who note the dissonance and devise rationalizations to reconcile the belief in magic to the karma postulate. I further argue that by these rationalizations, informants can maintain the authority of the doctrine of karma without giving up their faith in instrumental magic. The second part—“Syncretism or Repertoire?”—delineates how ethnographic cases presented in the preceding section contribute to a well-rounded understanding of vernacular Thai Buddhism. The final part—“Problematizing Anti-syncretism”—discusses the ramifications of this study.

Informants’ accounts were collected through my fieldwork in the northeast of Thailand from May to August 2013. In order to protect informants’ privacy, only their first names are given. All Thai sources, when quoted, were translated to English by me.

Karma versus Magic: Dissonance and Syncretization

1. *Karma versus Magic: A Peculiar Mental Scheme?*

A blog maintained by a lay Buddhist who describes himself as “a college graduate from Chiang Mai who has lived in Bangkok for more than seven years” (Norasath 2011) contains the following remark on the efficacy of amulets:

If we Buddhists grant that the law of karma is the Truth, and that people reap the fruit of their actions, then let’s consider this scenario. A vicious person, wearing a powerful amulet around his neck—let’s say the amulet was consecrated by Somdet To⁷—, do you think it would safeguard him from harm? Or would it render him invulnerable or invincible? I have pondered upon this question, trying to use my personal logic to solve the puzzle. If amulets and talismans are always efficacious, regardless of the moral quality of those who carry them, then what good do we get from observing the law of karma? All sinners just need to get hold of sacred amulets, then they can easily dodge the karmic retribution. (*ibid.*)

The cited excerpt articulates a dissonance that troubles the blogger. He seems to be fully aware of the fundamental incompatibility between the belief in magic and the doctrine of karma, and the fact that both tenets have occupied prominent places in the religious life of Thai Buddhists. Feeling obligated to justify the subscription to conflicting

7) Somdet To is a casual abbreviation of Somdet Phra Phutthachan (To Phrommarangsi), the author of the renowned *Jinapannjara Gatha*. Somdet To has been much revered by Thai Buddhists for his exemplary religious conduct as well as for his reputed spiritual power. He was the originator of the prestigious Somdet Wat Rakang amulets, whose exalted monetary value is well known among Thai amulet collectors.

tenets that characterizes his own as well as his fellow Buddhists' religiosity, the blogger makes the following rationalization:

I do believe that these items [i.e., amulets and talismans] serve virtuous people. Honest bearers can take refuge in their amulets when facing threats, because miracles save only righteous people. (*ibid.*)

The blogger redresses the dissonance by placing a condition on the efficacy of amulets, and this condition is nothing else but bearers' good karma. This cognitive process of positioning magic vis-à-vis karma to remark on or tackle their fundamental incongruity is not an idiosyncratic mental scheme. A decree issued by King Rama I on August 1782 lists the names of spirits and deities that Siamese subjects can legally worship. However, the King maintained the supremacy of the law of karma, denouncing the view that supplication rituals addressing spirits and deities could relieve miseries resulting from volitional acts:

Those whose minds were estranged from the Triple Gems, when tormented by the fruit of their bad karma, are ignorant of the real agent behind their ordeals. They thus seek refuge in spirits and deities, holding the false view that the Triple Gems fail to rescue them from adversities and misfortunes. When the retribution is complete, and the ordeal comes to an end, they falsely assume that spirits and deities respond to their requests. These people, having totally forsaken the Triple Gems, are bound for the lower realms of existence. (Rama I 1986, 418–419)

I share Thomas Kirsch's view that this decree demonstrates the orthodoxy of the doctrine of karma as construed by King Rama I, who holds that "fortune and affliction alike ultimately result from *karma*, not from the actions of spirits or gods" (A. T. Kirsch 1977, 241; emphasis in original). I elaborate on Kirsch's observation by further arguing that the decree gives us a glimpse of the dissonance felt by the King, who seems to perceive that the Siamese belief in the power of spirits and deities clashes with the causal paradigm posited by the doctrine of karma. Stanley Tambiah cogently describes this conflict:

... if the doctrine of karma gives an explanation of present suffering and squarely puts the burden of release on individual effort, then the doctrine that supernatural agents can cause or relieve sufferings and that relief can come through propitiating them contradicts the *karma* postulate. (Tambiah 1970, 41; emphasis in original)

The King positioned the doctrine of karma vis-à-vis spirit worship and discerned the contradictory outlooks on cause and effect these two complexes of tenets imply. Had he not noted the dissonance, he might not have reaffirmed the orthodoxy of the karma

postulate by decrying spirit worship.

Despite different configurations of their religious ideas conditioned by their different subject positions and time periods, the blogger and the King regard the magical means of achieving desirable effects (by resorting to spirits and deities, by carrying magical items, or by means of magical rituals) as antithetical to the concept of volitional acts and their automatic fruition espoused by the doctrine of karma. Their remarks evince a mode of thought that situates karma and magic in contrast to one another. The juxtaposition results in a recognition that these distinct causal schemes espouse contradictory definitions of consequential actions. I note here that not all Thai Buddhists imagine karma and magic in this particular fashion. However, this mental scheme is not uncommon. It has been reflected in oral and written statements made by Thai Buddhists from diverse backgrounds. The noted conflict between the doctrine of karma and the belief in magic presented in this section is neither peculiar to a few Buddhist doctrinalists nor the product of my academic training that indulges in inconsistency on a conceptual level. Instead, it has been discerned by many Thai Buddhists who are not oblivious to underlying meanings of the diverse religious tenets and practices they adopt.

One more example is delineated here to bolster my argument that the felt conflict between karma and magic is not a sentiment peculiar to a few intellectual elites. A book on apotropaic rituals titled *Kao wat kao thi phithi sado khro* (The nine apotropaic rituals of nine temples) provides a detailed description of the rituals performed by nine famous Buddhist monks from nine temples located in different regions of Thailand. Regardless of their varied ritualistic procedures and the types of merit participants believe they convey, all nine rituals address a twofold objective: warding off evil and attracting boons. Given the popular framing of the book, apparent in its emphasis on the efficacy of apotropaic rituals and the mystical power of Buddhist adepts who perform these rituals, it is not unwarranted to regard the monograph as a manifestation of vernacular Thai Buddhism. The author, however, maintains that apotropaic rituals cannot ward off karmic retribution and that people cannot rely solely on rituals for fortunes and merits because all boons are realized by volitional acts that warrant them:

Those cult leaders who tell people to halt or abate karmic retaliation by means of rituals perpetuate the false belief that humans can change or evade the consequence of their actions. Holders of this false view are definitely destined for hell realms. Humans may take refuge in rituals. They may ward off evil luck or summon good fortune by rituals invented for variable purposes. However, they must have faith in the law of karma. They must first and foremost rely on their actions and efforts, which are the surest means to secure fortunes and merits. (Sira 2016, 23–24)

Sira Arsawadeeros, though granting the efficacy of apotropaic rituals, contends that karma

is the supreme causal agent responsible for merits and miseries humans experience in their lives. Karma and magic are positioned in a hierarchical order as the author notices that the granted efficacy of magical rituals contradicts the paramount principle of individual effort upheld by the karma postulate. Similar to the two cases mentioned earlier, this statement reveals the view of its author that karma and magic entail contradictory implications. Therefore, in order to retain them both, Sira feels compelled to resolve the dissonance by subsuming one under the other. The author's rationalization that apotropaic rituals are efficacious but their efficacy does not override the law of karma reveals a syncretism, by which what the believing individual recognizes as incongruous religious tenets are reconciled and retained within a single mindset. In light of this analysis, suffice it to say that the author of the quoted excerpt possesses a hybrid religious mindset in which syncretism is one of several ordering principles employed to maintain sense and consistency. This argument is reified by ethnographic cases presented in the following subsection, which delineates ways in which Thai Buddhists who note the dissonance between karma and magic redress the conflict.

2. Dissonance and Syncretization

The informants whose accounts are presented in this study noted a conflict between the doctrine of karma and the belief in instrumental magic. They addressed this discrepancy in variable fashions. Mr. Woravit, a Thai Buddhist who practices meditation and studies magic spells, stated that despite his belief in the power of magic and rituals in granting a person's wish, he harbors no doubt about the supremacy of a karmic force. Mr. Woravit's justification, which is presented in the following subsection, is indicative of the dissonance between the doctrine of karma and the belief in magic from his perspective: if instrumental magic and rituals unfailingly bring about desirable effects, the doctrine of karma, which rules that worldly achievements are the fruits of a person's good karma, cannot be true.

In a similar fashion, Venerable Ko, a Buddhist monk in a rural monastery in Buriram Province, made a justification that redresses a noted inconsistency within his hybrid religious practice. Being well versed in healing spells and rituals, Venerable Ko claimed that the success or failure of a healing rite was determined by a karmic bond between the healer and his patient. The informant made a causal connection between an individual's karma and the efficacy of healing magic to resolve what he construed as a crucial dissonance: If magic is believed to be invariably successful in producing desirable consequences, then it can be employed to avert the effect of bad karma or to benefit a person despite his vicious deeds. This assumption is problematic as it contradicts the doctrine of karma, which holds that nothing can interfere with the operation of karmic machination.

In the following subsections, I present the accounts given by each informant and discuss their implications.

2.1. Mr. Woravit

Mr. Woravit is a lecturer at a vocational college in Sakon Nakhon, a province in the upper part of northeast Thailand. He is a self-professed Buddhist who construes meditation as “the science of the mind,” by which he means the empirically verifiable method to discipline the mind for certain ends, such as a total elimination of mental defilements or an attainment of mystical power. Considering his educational background and socioeconomic status, Mr. Woravit is a member of the middle class in a provincial city, whose career in the field of electrical technology does not hinder his interest in spiritual matters. He wrote and published a monograph on psychic experiences he had while practicing profound meditation.⁸⁾ He also attested to the reality of past-life recollection, which is a supramundane ability he claimed to have acquired through the vigorous practice of meditation. By the time I interviewed him in July 2013, Mr. Woravit had taken part in an archeological expedition that he and his friend had initiated in search of an ancient Khmer temple Mr. Woravit saw in his psychic vision. In our discussion about the efficacy of instrumental magic, the informant proclaimed the efficacy of charms and spells. However, he argued against the view that magic could yield favorable consequences despite the absence of effort to achieve such effects through natural means. Such belief, he elaborated, exaggerated the power of magic. He said spells and charms do not invoke wealth, luck, or other worldly boons out of thin air. They merely tap into the user’s positive karmic force and make its fruit most favorable to him or her. Within this explanatory scheme, magic is useless without the store of good karma its user has accumulated. This interplay between karma and magic is described by Mr. Woravit:

Magic does not bring about boons and merits. People can obtain them only through their just and persistent effort, that is, through their good karma. Spells are merely means through which a person taps into the store of his good karma. By chanting a spell, the chanter’s mind is calm and receptive of positive karmic force. Metaphorically speaking, when a person does a good deed, he deposits a sum of good karma in his bank account. As he performs more good deeds, his balance

8) Mr. Woravit’s conception of profound meditation and psychic power seems to have a basis in the doctrine of six supranormal knowledges (*abhiññā*) included in the the *Sutta Pitaka* and *Vinaya Pitaka*. The doctrine construes mystical power as a quality achieved by a concentrated mind while dwelling in an advanced stage of profound meditation (*jhāna*). On the relationship between meditation and superhuman power in the Pali canon and Buddhist scholastic traditions, see Clough (2011) and Fiordalis (2008, 134–140). For ways in which this tenet informs lay Buddhists’ conceptions of superhuman power and types of individual who possess this power, see Pranke (2011) on contemporary Burma, and Scott (2011) on modern Thailand.

accumulates. Spells are passcodes that grant access to this bank account. You chant these spells to withdraw your good karma from your account, and its benevolent force rewards you with success, wealth, love, or other good things you wish for. A person may chant a spell for the success of his new business and it works out as he wishes. Why? Because he has a sufficient sum of good karma in his account. Another person may do the same but experience total failure. This is, likewise, due to the absence of—or a shortfall in—his good karma. (Personal interview, July 19, 2013)

Magic that upholds rather than contradicts the law of karma as described by Mr. Woravit is not an idiosyncratic concept. Tambiah quoted the acting abbot of That Thaung temple in Bangkok who explained that Thai people wear small Buddha images around their necks because they “believe that they will give them body protection, and that they will ensure that *good action will yield good returns*” (quoted in Tambiah 1984, 199; italics added). Underlying this explanation is the idea that the magical power of amulets complements the benevolent force of an individual’s good karma. A similar sentiment underlies a comment about the efficacy of magic posted on a Thai website that sells amulets and talismans:

Those who do not possess amulets or do not know any useful spells are totally subject to their karma. But people who make good use of these supplementaries can ameliorate the effect of a hostile karmic force. It does not mean, however, that amulets and spells can negate malevolent karmic effect. Yet they can lessen its severity. To elucidate, a vendor suffering from karmic retribution would be unable to sell a single item. But with the help of amulets and spells, he manages to sell a thing or two. (Krunoi Bandykam 2014)

These comments, like Mr Woravit’s, reiterate the idea that karmic force is the real agent behind the efficacy of instrumental magic. This justification would not be necessary if Thai Buddhists merely observed the doctrine of karma and took part in magic cults while being unaware of the different connotations underlying these practices. Mr. Woravit, like the acting abbot and the webmaster whose comments are quoted above, recognizes a dissonance underlying his hybrid religious practice in which the role of karma as the supreme causal agent clashes with the given efficacy of instrumental magic. Although the doctrine of karma and the belief in magic can coexist within a mindset, one needs to be subsumed under the other in order to resolve the dissonance, since these two outlooks espouse contradictory views of cause and effect. The former holds that intentional actions automatically yield particular consequences and no external force can compromise this automaticity. The latter, on the contrary, proclaims that intended effects can be induced by tapping into mystical power, which can be harnessed and put to use by means of spells and charms. Mr. Woravit resolves this conflict by subordinating the belief in magic to

the doctrine of karma, maintaining that magic is efficacious only when it agrees with the user's karmic build.

The acting abbot's and the webmaster's comments reveal a striking divergence from the canonical stance on the inalterability of karma. The Buddha, refuting the fatalistic sentiment inherent in the Jain concept of karma, which holds that a person is inevitably doomed once he commits wicked deeds, expounded in the *Sankha Sutta* that the effects of past evil deeds could be alleviated by abstaining from evil acts and by developing a meritorious state of mind.⁹⁾ As evinced in the *Sankha Sutta*, the idea that there is a method to lessen severe karmic force is not a new concept created by Thai Buddhists. Nonetheless, the role of magic in placating hostile karmic force or enhancing benevolent karmic force is a new component not found anywhere in the canon. This new component, I argue, results from an acute awareness of dissonance experienced by Thai Buddhists as they observe the doctrine of karma and enlist the service of instrumental magic. The noted incongruity induces a rationalization that aligns the belief in magic with the karma postulate.¹⁰⁾ This rationalization characterizes a hybrid religious practice in which a person can resort to instrumental magic and still be faithful to his belief in karma.

2.2. Venerable Ko

Venerable Ko, like Mr. Woravit, noted a crucial problem with the belief that magic operates by its own rules and is not subject to the law of karma. Underlying this belief is an implication—as indicated by the informant—that magic can overpower karmic force. Venerable Ko approached this issue from the stance of an ordained Buddhist who also serves as a spiritual healer and exorcist. Venerable Ko grew up in a peasant village in Buriram. Born in the late 1970s to a peasant family, the monk obtained secondary education from a village school then moved to Bangkok, where he worked as a menial worker for a short period of time. The informant then returned to Buriram, entered the monastic order, and served as an abbot for a new temple in Ban Nongbualong village, not far from his native community. In comparison to Mr. Woravit, Venerable Ko may be designated as a member of the working class from a rural area who appears to be more engaged with

9) The *Sankha Sutta* or "The Conch Trumpet" (Thanissaro Bhikkhu 1999b) is included in the *Samyutta Nikāya* of the *Sutta Pitaka*.

10) Steven Piker, in his study of inconsistency in Thai Buddhists' religious beliefs, presents ethnographic cases that manifest variable ways in which Thai Buddhists justify their belief in the power of amulets that contradict the doctrine of karma—"the master explanatory principle" (Piker 1972, 217) that Piker's informants hold onto. Most of his informants proclaimed the supremacy of the karma postulate, maintaining that amulets could not completely negate the effect of one's karma (*ibid.*, 220). Piker's study shows that the noted dissonance between the doctrine of karma and the belief in magic, and the felt obligation to resolve it, are not uncommon among Thai Buddhists.

“folk” than “doctrinal” Buddhism. However, the informant preaches orthodox Buddhist doctrines as often as he redresses problems regarding magic and spirits. Given his versatile role, it is not surprising that the monk recognized a conflict between the doctrine of karma and the belief in magic, which he resolved by construing karma as the agent behind the power of magic.

Michael M. Ames, in his study of the relationship between magical-animistic beliefs and Sinhalese Buddhism, contends that karma, magic, and spirits are causal theories that complement rather than contradict one another. An illness, if cured by a counterspell, is attributed to black magic. If it is healed by a supplication or an exorcising rite, the ailment indicates the evil influence of offended spirits. If it is, however, irresponsive to any remedies, it is taken as retribution for the patient’s bad karma (Ames 1964b, 38). Venerable Ko employed a different explanatory scheme to reason why healing spells work in some cases but fail in others. His reasoning reveals his attempt to resolve the dissonance underlying the belief that magic spells always work in spite of healers’ and patients’ bad karma:

It is next to impossible to guarantee the efficacy of healing spells because several factors are accountable for their therapeutic power. The most pivotal factor, though, is the karmic bond between the healer and his patient. A healing ritual works best when the healer’s positive karmic force is attuned to his patient’s. This agreement is not a matter of chance but the result of a meritorious and mutually benevolent relationship the healer and his patient had with one another in their past lives. A person suffering from a supernatural illness may seek help from numerous ordained and lay healers, only to experience one failure after another. This is either because the person is under the influence of his bad karma, because the healer’s positive karmic force is not sufficient to avert the illness, or because there is an unfavorable or no karmic bond between the healer and his patient. Now you know why some healers cure certain persons but fail to heal others. (Personal interview, June 17, 2013)

Venerable Ko’s explanation solves an ethical problem posed by the image of a wicked soul rescued from karmic retaliation by means of healing spells and rituals. He reiterated Mr. Woravit’s opinion that the efficacy of magic requires support from the individual’s positive karmic force. Magic, therefore, does not override the supremacy of karmic machination. It is noteworthy, however, that Venerable Ko focuses on the interpersonal aspect of karma, while Mr. Woravit construes it as a personal asset. The former regards human relationships as a distinct class of karma, which determines the circle of people a person meets in his present life and the relationships he develops with them. In this particular conception of karma, the power of magic lies in the quality of the past life relationship between healer and patient. If the relationship is, to use the informant’s words, “meritorious and mutually benevolent,” healing magic is believed to yield a sat-

isfactory result.¹¹⁾

The notion of karmic bond is not a new concept invented by an ordained Thai Buddhist. The idea can be traced back to the collection of Jataka stories, which always end with the identification of births or *samodhāna* (Appleton 2010, 6). The Buddha always concludes a story of his past life by matching people from the past with those in the present. Though circumstances change, the Buddha runs into the same group of people through his countless rebirths. Also, the roles of these people in his different lives are quite static. King Śuddhodana always shows up as the Buddha's father, while the Buddha's cousin Devadatta is invariably his archenemy. The *samodhāna* in Jataka stories articulates the view that the relationships a person formed in the past generate a karmic force that binds him to a certain circle of people. This force also prescribes the nature of his present relationships with those people and the way in which these relationships contribute to merits and miseries the person experiences in his life. Venerable Ko seems to draw on this notion of karmic bond as he attributes the efficacy of healing magic to the agreement between healers' and patients' positive karmic forces.

What does Venerable Ko's testimony tell us about the relationship between Buddhist doctrines and indigenous belief traditions? On the one hand, Venerable Ko's account seems to reaffirm the notion that Buddhist doctrines, once transplanted to Thai culture, override indigenous beliefs and become normative postulates in relation to which indigenous beliefs are interpreted and assessed.¹²⁾ Venerable Ko legitimizes his belief in magic by expounding its efficacy in terms of the karma postulate, which, in this case, holds epistemic authority. On the other hand, the way Venerable Ko aligns the belief in magic with the doctrine of karma shows that he makes a distinction between these separate, distinct sets of beliefs. He, like Mr. Woravit and other Thai Buddhists whose rationalizations were presented in the previous subsection, makes a justification that results in a syncretization of an orthodox Buddhist doctrine with local belief in magic. They do not merely adopt tenets and practices belonging to Thai magic cults without thinking about their proper place vis-à-vis the doctrine of karma. I discuss the ramifications of this observation in the next section.

11) A paperback titled *The Best Magical Spells of 129 Masters (Sutyot mon khatha 129 khanajarn)* reveals the four secrets behind the efficacy of a magic spell. Last on the list is the karmic build of the practitioner and the karmic bond he/she has with his/her mentor. The following statement, similar to Venerable Ko's rationalization, articulates the idea that a meritorious karmic tie between pupil and master contributes to the power of instrumental magic:

Some practitioners master magical spells in the initial phase of their training because of their supporting positive karma, or because they were pupils of the masters who invented those spells in their past lives. (Kongka Himalai 2016, 30)

12) Bernard Formoso's studies (1996; 1998) on the influence of Theravada Buddhism on the religious ideas and values of the Tai delineate this interplay.

Syncretism or Repertoire?

In the final chapter of *The Lovelorn Ghost and the Magical Monk*, Justin McDaniel (2011) proposes the concept of repertoire, which, he argues, is an analytical scheme devoid of prescribed classification that underlies the theory of syncretism. Syncretism, denoting the amalgamation of ideas or practices belonging to different traditions, implies preconceived, clearly demarcated categories. These preconceptions are counterproductive rather than illuminating when applied to the highly diversified and heterogeneous religious repertoires of Thai Buddhists (McDaniel 2011, 227–229). Scholars go into the field with prescribed labels and categories in their heads, only to discover that the people whose religious experiences they study do not perceive their religiosity on the basis of these labels and categories. Such is the case of Thai Buddhists, who do not seem to make a conceptual or value distinction between diverse religious tenets or practices that they adopt. McDaniel's description of his experience in Thailand clearly articulates this opinion:

In my experience and interviews, monks or laypeople prostrating in front of a shrine with statues of General Taksin, Kuan Im, Shakyamuni Buddha, Somdet To, Phra Sangkhacchai do not see the shrine as a syncretistic stage or themselves as multireligious. They do not process the images separately, with some being local, some translocal, some Buddhist, and some non-Buddhist. If they did, there would be a more tactical attempt to arrange the objects or justify practices. (*ibid.*, 228)

This seems to be the problem with syncretism as an analytical perspective from McDaniel's viewpoint: Since syncretism presupposes division and classification, which for Thai Buddhists do not exist, it fails to do justice to the heterogeneous, open, and indiscriminate nature of their religiosity. To do away with this shortfall, McDaniel advocates the concept of repertoire,¹³⁾ which does not invoke the image of "an integrated and prescribed system" (*ibid.*, 230) and thus recognizes the possibility that "a person's repertoire, religious or otherwise, can be internally inconsistent and contradictory" (*ibid.*, 225). McDaniel further expounds that Thai Buddhists' religious repertoires are spheres where the scholarly defined incongruity does not hinder the amalgamation of diverse sets of values and axioms. An individual may uphold worldly values such as security and abundance as much as soteriological principles such as nonattachment and imperma-

13) McDaniel defines the word "repertoire" as follows: "A repertoire is a constantly shifting collection of gestures, objects, texts, plots, tropes, ethical maxims, precepts, ritual movements, and expectations that any individual agent employs and draws upon when acting and explaining action" (McDaniel 2011, 225).

nence. Given this propensity to encompass anything an individual devotee considers relevant, a personal religious repertoire as McDaniel experienced in Thailand

... usually takes the form of accretion. Thai *religieux* seem to add to their individual repertoires but rarely subtract. Individual memories are expressed in their accumulations. A monastery is valued for its history and the display of that history through its collection of things and recorded events. A monastery accumulates images from many different traditions and many different patrons. Abundance is valued. The accumulated materials can seem like mere bricolage, and sometimes it is, but often it is valuable for its connection to a powerful person, event, or patron. (*ibid.*, 226)

It seems that new items, ideas, or practices can be infinitely added to this inherently inclusive religious repertoire in which abundance is a governing principle. Things that bear some sort of connection to the pre-existing sacral components or entities, when such connection is discerned by the individual devotee, tend to be accepted into his or her personal repertoire. Given this principle of inclusion, an amulet consecrated by a disciple of a renowned monk who produced powerful amulets will be valued for its protective potency as well (*ibid.*). This outlook on Thai Buddhists' religious repertoires seems to suggest that as long as a link between pre-existing and new elements is perceived, an individual repertoire can be incessantly embellished.

I contend that McDaniel's analytical orientation is based on two notions about Thai Buddhism and its adherents that are not always true. First, Thai Buddhists ascribe equal value to Buddhist and non-Buddhist elements; therefore, they combine Buddhist with non-Buddhist practices without feeling obligated to justify their hybrid religiosity. Second, there is no baseline or threshold to restrict diverse elements that Thai Buddhists add to their personal repertoires. Relevance and connection perceived by each individual devotee lead to an infinite accretion of elements within the repertoire, which results in the limitless possibilities of variable, hybrid ways Thai Buddhists observe their faith.¹⁴⁾ Inconsistency and dissonance, therefore, are scholarly wrought problems. On the basis

14) This view is expressed in Peter A. Jackson's study on the excessive desire for wealth that configured religious practices of Thai Buddhists during Thailand's economic boom. Jackson argues that this phenomenon characterizes what he calls "the 'anything goes' days of the boom" (Jackson 1999, 314), by which he means the 1990s—the decade when Thailand experienced rapid economic growth and a limitless proliferation of religious symbols and practices. Jackson argues that the peculiar combinations of religious beliefs and practices in this time period "proliferate beyond the power of any individual or institutional authority to limit or define" (*ibid.*, 311), and that they manifest "a Thai instance of postmodern condition in which faith in the unity of knowledge, power, and being is abandoned" (*ibid.*). It seems that for Jackson, Thai people during the economic boom did not adhere to any orthodox religious concepts nor share any common ideals. Therefore, all new inventions of religious tenets and activities are viable for them.

of the ethnographic cases presented in the foregoing section, I argue against these two notions.

The two informants are cognizant of the conflict between the doctrine of karma and the belief in magic. They are aware that the uncurbed efficacy of instrumental magic defies the karma postulate. If a person can ward off unfortunate events or achieve his heart's desire by merely using magic, then there is no reason to fear karmic retribution or to accumulate good karma. This noted discrepancy compels informants to justify their simultaneous belief in contradicting tenets. Based on the justifications made by my informants, I make two observations about Thai Buddhism and the people who observe it. First, even though there are several circumstances in which Thai Buddhists do not make a value distinction between Buddhist and non-Buddhist elements, there are also cases in which a hierarchical ordering is made. Mr. Woravit and Venerable Ko feel the need to resolve the dissonance between the doctrine of karma and the belief in magic precisely because they perceive them as two separate sets of tenets that espouse distinct views of the acceptable way to secure favorable consequences. By attributing the efficacy of instrumental magic to its user's or a client's favorable karma, they subordinate a non-Buddhist tenet to a prominent Buddhist doctrine. This "hierarchical ordering" (Tambiah 1970, 41) evinces the notion of orthodoxy held by the informants. For them, the doctrine of karma holds epistemic authority; thus, the belief in magic, espousing the view that mystical power can reward or punish a person regardless of his karmic accumulation, needs to be curtailed in order to maintain the supremacy of the karma postulate. Considering that a distinction and a hierarchical arrangement were made in this case, the concept of repertoire as suggested by McDaniel, which highlights accretion and indiscriminate inclusivity, seems unfit to convey such a process. Even though the informants claim their simultaneous belief in magic and karma, they feel obligated to subordinate the former to the latter. In this light, they seem to syncretize contradicting tenets rather than indiscriminately accept them into their religious repertoires.

This initial observation leads us to the second point. Mr. Woravit's and Venerable Ko's conceptions of magic, which venerate the doctrine of karma, reveal that even though diverse tenets are accepted into informants' religious repertoires, there is a restriction that dictates acceptable and sensible relations between these tenets. Based on my informants' testimonies, I propose that at the core of this restriction lies the orthodoxy of the karma postulate, which rules that non-Buddhist elements can be adopted as long as they do not contradict or compromise the authority of the doctrine of karma. If they do, these elements need to be aligned with this orthodox dogma. As McDaniel lucidly describes in his study, Thai Buddhists worship and supplicate deities of different traditions. They call themselves Buddhists but carry amulets from Tibet and express the desire to possess

a crucifix (McDaniel 2011, 226–228). I suggest that these non-Buddhist elements are adopted not because Thai Buddhists, not adhering to a single orthodox ideal, accept anything from anywhere. Rather, these hybrid religious practices are possible in the context of vernacular Thai Buddhism largely because Thai Buddhists believe that deities or magical objects, regardless of the tradition of their origin, do not wield power over the law of karma. Whenever the supplication to deities and the resort to magic are considered noncompliant with the doctrine of karma, as evinced in the ethnographic data presented earlier, Thai Buddhists tend to make a justification that subsumes the non-Buddhist element under the karma postulate.

Toward the end of his monograph, McDaniel problematizes the analytical perspective that focuses on detecting and pathologizing inconsistencies within a supposedly unified and coherent repertoire of individuals' religious beliefs. He construes this indulgence in consistency as scholars' adherence to the dichotomy between orthodoxy and heterodoxy, which is inadequate to explain the intricacy of and the dynamic within religious repertoires of real people in diverse contexts of practice:

Why can't we expect that a person will hold and act upon simultaneous, multiple ideals? Why don't we see this as an advantage? Why is consistency or orthodoxy seen as the ideal? . . . Perhaps it would be more accurate to abandon the dichotomy of orthodoxy and heterodoxy, to abandon the very notion that these values are inconsistent in favor of a close study of individual events, agents, and objects. (*ibid.*, 228)

McDaniel's argument is cogent since it is based on the ethnographic data he meticulously presents in his study. It is, however, inapplicable to the cases I demonstrate in this study, which convey two salient points. First, consistency and orthodoxy matter to several Thai Buddhists. My informants apparently strived for consistency as they proclaimed that instrumental magic merely tapped into its user's store of karma. They would not have made such a justification had they not deciphered the dissonance between the doctrine of karma and the belief in magic and seen it as problematic. This justification also reflects their attempt to keep their hybrid religious practice in line with the orthodox Buddhist doctrine, precisely the karma postulate.¹⁵⁾ Second, it is true that Thai Buddhists, to use McDaniel's words, "act upon simultaneous, multiple ideals" (*ibid.*, 227). Nonetheless, these multiple ideals do not carry the same weight for all Thai Buddhists. My informants believe that magic can empirically induce intended consequences. Yet they refute the idea that instrumental magic can save wicked souls from their bad karma or condemn the

15) Julia Cassaniti cogently delineates the orthodoxy of the law of karma and its function as the master explanatory scheme Thai Buddhists employ to account for merits and miseries a person experiences in his present life (see Cassaniti 2015, 149–173).

righteous despite their noble deeds. For them, the power of magic and the operation of karmic force are both real. Still, the veracity of the law of karma overrides that of magic.

These two observations lead to the final argument of this section, which proposes that two analytical concepts—syncretism and repertoire—can be combined to make sense of hybrid religious practices adopted by Thai Buddhists. The notion of repertoire, in my opinion, needs a slight modification in order to encompass diverse forms of relationships between Buddhist and non-Buddhist elements in vernacular Thai Buddhism. I espouse Tambiah's view that Thai Buddhism is "a total field" (Tambiah 1970, 41) that expresses various relations between Buddhist and non-Buddhist components. In some cases, as McDaniel's study delineates, these two components exist side by side. They are indiscriminately received by Thai Buddhists who seem not to make a conceptual or a value distinction between them. In other cases, as my study shows, a distinction is made, a conflict is noted, and a hierarchical ordering is made to resolve the dissonance and to maintain the orthodoxy of Buddhist tenets. These different scenarios express the variety of possible relations between Buddhist and non-Buddhist components within a total field of religious beliefs and practices. These possible relations include, but are not limited to, "Distinctions, oppositions, complementarities, linkages, and hierarchy" (*ibid.*, 42). The concept of repertoire, when applied to expound the totality of religious beliefs and practices Thai Buddhists hold onto, should be sensitive to these various forms of possible relations, which certainly do not exclude syncretism.

Problematizing Anti-syncretism

In his study of spirit-medium cults in contemporary Thailand, Pattana Kitiarsa draws on the term "parade of supernaturals" coined by Tambiah to describe the diversified, heterogeneous composition of religious beliefs and practices in modern Thailand.¹⁶⁾ Pattana highlights the hybridization that characterizes contemporary Thai religiosity by describing the assorted components of a Thai spirit altar:

The statue of Buddha is always positioned at the top, since he is regarded as the supreme deity in Thai religious cosmology and since Buddhism is the country's state-sponsored religion and has traditionally formed its sociocultural foundations. Below the statue of Buddha are those of Buddhist saints, male Indian and Chinese deities and royal spirits; these male deities are positioned higher than female deities like Guanyin, Uma or Kali. The bottom of the altar is the usual place for tutelary local spirits and other minor spirits, while flowers, incense, candles and offerings are placed

16) The phrase "parade of supernaturals" is the title of Chapter 10 of Tambiah's *Buddhism and the Spirit Cults in North-east Thailand* (1970).

in vases or other proper containers on the floor. Spirit altars in their symbolic and physical sense bring together deities from diverse backgrounds and origins; the altar is the sacred site where the religious hybridization of popular beliefs actually takes its concrete, collective form. (Pattana 2005, 484)

Pattana contends that since syncretism “implies something contentious, unauthenticated, and impure” (*ibid.*), it fails, as an analytical concept, to account for this hybridization that permeates spirit altars in Thailand. If Thai Buddhists perceived Buddhist elements as emblems of the orthodox faith vis-à-vis heretical, non-Buddhist components, they would never admit non-Buddhist deities or local spirits to the site of worship. For Pattana, syncretism, denoting the subordination of non-Buddhist elements to Buddhist tenets and practices, is problematic because it overstates the paramount position of Buddhism in the Thai religious landscape (*ibid.*, 464). It also downplays the commodification of religious beliefs that has incessantly produced new hybrids to meet the spiritual needs of Thai people in the particular context of contemporary Thailand (*ibid.*, 466). I suggest that the overemphasis on hybrid, diversified components that constitute religious repertoires of Thai Buddhists entails two problematic ramifications. First, it implies that Thai Buddhists, not adhering to any principle or orthodox ideal, indiscriminately adopt everything that they consider relevant to their needs and desires. Second, it reiterates the problematic assumption that people who practice religion at ground level do not share concepts and categories held by elites and intellectuals who study religion in an official, institutional setting. This assumption ultimately perpetuates the dichotomy between popular and elite interpretations of religion.

To deny syncretism is to deny the possibility that the believing individual may make a conceptual or a value distinction between diverse tenets that they hold. In a similar fashion, to say that Thai Buddhists’ religiosity is “beyond syncretism” (*ibid.*, 461) is to downplay the fact that several Thai Buddhists strive to keep their heterogeneous religious repertoires internally coherent and meaningful. As Mr. Woravit’s and Venerable Ko’s accounts show, such notions are misleading. The informants syncretized the doctrine of karma with a local belief in magic, fully aware of different sentiments that grounded these two sets of tenets. Their syncretizing activity, precisely their act of subsuming the belief in magic under the doctrine of karma, reveals that some forms of hybrid religious practice are acceptable only after they are attuned to the authoritative Buddhist doctrine. In fact, the excerpt from Pattana’s study cited above also displays this hierarchical ordering. The fact that the Buddha image is always placed at the top of the altar denotes the supremacy of Buddhism vis-à-vis other belief traditions adopted by Thai Buddhists.

To deny syncretism is to deny the possibility that people who practice popular reli-

gion may adopt a taxonomy or a categorization of religious concepts used by elites within institutional religion and by scholars in academia. Tambiah comments on this ill-founded dichotomy between the doctrinal, official religion of the elites and the practical, popular religion of the folk as follows:

... it has for some curious reason not been seen that contemporary live religion, even that observed in the village, incorporates a great deal of the literary tradition. Brahman priests, Buddhist monks, ritual experts and scribes in some measure deal with literary and oral knowledge transmitted from the past and which they themselves systematically transmitted to their successors. And for the common people at large such texts and knowledge have a referential and legitimating function, even if they themselves have no direct access to them. (Tambiah 1970, 4)

Mr. Woravit's and Venerable Ko's attempts at syncretization reify Tambiah's observation. Had the informants been insensitive to the orthodoxy of the karma postulate articulated by several sutras included in the Pali canon, they would not have felt the need to maintain its authority vis-à-vis the belief in magic. Also, had they not recognized the belief in magic and the doctrine of karma as two distinct sentiments that contradict one another, they would not have made an attempt to syncretize them. Mr. Woravit and Venerable Ko seem to adopt the canonical sentiment that neither magic nor deities overrides the law of karma,¹⁷⁾ therefore they posit that a person's resort to magic is futile without the support of his good karma. The informants' rationalizations highlight the continuity, rather than the incongruity, between the doctrinal and the practical aspects of contemporary Thai Buddhism.

All observations and arguments that I have made in this paper build to this final point: Despite the highly heterogeneous constitution of their religious beliefs and practices, Thai Buddhists do not indiscriminately accept anything from anywhere that suits their whims. At the very least, they consider the orthodoxy of the doctrine of karma, the authority of which they feel obligated to maintain at all cost. Considering the scenario I have presented in this paper, it seems that when it comes to Thai Buddhists' religiosity, we cannot yet do away with syncretism and its connotations of differentiation and categorization. Reconciling magic with karma, my informants and other Thai Buddhists whose accounts are reported in this study syncretized differentiated, contradictory sentiments regarding the legitimate means of producing the intended consequences. They made

17) Some canonical sutras that convey this view are the *Paccha-bhumika Sutta*, the *Devadaha Sutta*, and the *Cula-kammavibhanga Sutta* in the *Samyutta Nikāya* and the *Majjhima Nikāya* of the *Sutta Pitaka*. In the *Paccha-bhumika Sutta*, the Buddha maintains that prayers and supplication rituals cannot alter the consequence of volitional actions. The *Devadaha Sutta* refutes a Jain theory positing that bad karma can be burned up by ascetic practice. The *Cula-kammavibhanga Sutta* portrays karma as the supreme causal agent accountable for humans' fortunes and miseries.

patent an underrated fact that a mindset comprising disparate components does not only indicate the hybrid constitution of that mindset. It also reflects cognitive processes, among which are creative interpretation and adaptation, which render these conflicting sentiments coherently meaningful for the believing individual.

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RESEARCH REPORT

Indonesian Theosophical Society (1900–40) and the Idea of Religious Pluralism

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This article elucidates the idea of religious pluralism within the Indonesian Theosophical Society (ITS) during the pre-independence period (1900–40). ITS is perhaps the “hidden pearl” in the history of Indonesian spiritual movements in the early twentieth century. It seems that many Indonesians themselves do not know about the existence of ITS in the pre-independence era and its role in spreading a peaceful and inclusive religious understanding. The organization of ITS was legally approved by Theosophical Society headquarters in Adyar, India, at the end of the nineteenth century. For more than 30 years in the early part of the twentieth century ITS discussed the idea of religious pluralism, spreading the value of harmony among believers in the Indonesian Archipelago and managing “multireligious and cultural education” in order to appreciate the diversity and differences of the Nusantara people. This article also shows that the religious understanding of Theosophical Society members in the archipelago is different from the spiritual views of TS figures at headquarters in Adyar. ITS members’ religious views were influenced by factors such as European and American spiritualism, Indian religion and spirituality, Chinese religion, and the intermixture of Javanese mysticism (*kejawen*) and Javanese Islam (*santri*).

Keywords: Indonesian Theosophical Society, *priyayi*, *kejawen*, comparative religion, perennialism

Preface

This research focuses on how the Indonesian Theosophical Society (ITS) during the pre-independence period (1900–40) spread its ideas on religious pluralism in appreciation of Indonesia’s multireligious and multicultural society. This research is important for the following reasons. First, ITS is possibly the first “society” to have introduced a model

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of religious studies in Indonesia with an inclusive-pluralist character. This was achieved by emphasizing an esoteric approach and by recognizing and exploring the exoteric and esoteric aspects of religions. As “. . . no statement about a religion is valid unless it can be acknowledged by that religion’s believers” (Smith 1959), ITS tried to learn these aspects directly from scholars or religious leaders of the religions being researched. This model of study was followed by Professor Mukti Ali when establishing the department of Comparative Religion at PTAIN (Perguruan Tinggi Agama Islam, Islamic Higher Education), Yogyakarta, in 1961 (see Bahri 2014).

Second, if one looks at the role of Dirk van Hinloopen Labberton as a figure of the politics of Association and a key figure of ITS or the president of Nederlandsch Indische Theosofische Vereniging (NITV),¹⁾ who always called upon Theosophical Society members to “cooperate” with the Dutch colonial authorities, one may assume that ITS was used as a means of “ethical politics” of the Dutch colonial authorities to stifle the resistance of Indonesians (believers). However, one cannot ignore the significant role of ITS at that time in managing “multireligious and cultural education.” ITS members periodically gathered to discuss religious doctrines at lodges (*loji*). There were lodges in Buitenzorg (Bogor), Batavia, Cirebon, Bandung, Pasuruan, Semarang, Purwokerto, Pekalongan, Wonogiri, Surabaya, and probably in most of the small and big towns on Java. Periodically, they published Theosophical magazines that contained about 85 percent of living religions and beliefs in the archipelago. Apparently, instead of one of the objectives of Theosophy itself, namely, “to form the nucleus of a universal brotherhood of mankind,” Theosophy members also realize that diversity and differences among the Nusantara people lead to conflicts; that is why they lean toward the ideas of pluralism, harmony, and the “common word” of religions.

Third, in dealing with the awakening of nationalism in conventional Indonesian historiography, historians refer to movements such as Boedi Oetomo (BO), Indische Partij, Jong Islamische Bond, Jong Java, Jong Soematra, Jong Ambon, and similar organizations, but religious organizations are rarely ever mentioned as part of the awakening. However, it may be noted that while Islamic organizations such as Muhammadiyah (1912) and NU (Nahdlatul Ulama, 1926) were involved at the lower level, ITS was involved on an elite level in the propagation of nationalism in the era of revolution. Thus, BO and their fellows are to be seen as participants in this process at the middle level.

Research on the Indonesian Theosophical movement includes *First, Mengikis Batas Timur & Barat: Gerakan Teosofi & Nasionalisme Indonesia* by Iskandar Nugraha (2001). This work was reprinted in 2011 with the title *Teosofi, Nasionalisme & Elite Modern*

1) Theosophical Association of the Netherlands Indies.

Indonesia. It highlights two important aspects: the history, existence, and development of ITS from 1901 to 1933; and the influence of the Theosophical movement on modern Indonesian nationalism. Nugraha shows how many Indonesian students found their identity, experienced a shared destiny, and felt the urge to find their self-awareness as one nation through TS. The most significant contribution of this work is that the TS movement contributed greatly to the awakening of Indonesian nationalism (Nugraha 2011, 76, 88).

The Politics of Divine Wisdom: Theosophy and Labour, National, and Women's Movements in Indonesia and South Asia 1857–1947 by Herman Arij Oscar de Tollenaere (1996) is another significant work. This is a dissertation by de Tollenaere at the Catholic University of Nijmegen, the Netherlands. In addition to discussing the history of the international Theosophical movement from the United States to Western Europe, Southeast Asia, and Australia; the movement's members; some of the most important teachings of ITS, such as the doctrines of karma and reincarnation, the nonexistence of change, the existence of higher worlds and evolution, this work focuses on TS's relationship to three tendencies in the labor movement (in Southeast Asia and Indonesia): social democracy, Communism, and anarchism. In theory, Theosophy was for everyone, but for de Tollenaere, attempts of the Theosophical Society to reach workers and peasants were infrequent and unsuccessful. De Tollenaere's work broadly explains the political struggles of both the labor movement and women and their connections to the Theosophical movement.

A very short article by de Tollenaere on "Indian Thought in the Dutch Indies" (2000) explains TS influence in the Dutch Indies and how much Theosophy actually represented Indian thought. Another article by de Tollenaere, "The Limits of Liberalism and of Theosophy: Colonial Indonesia and the German Weimar Republic 1918–1933" (1999), explores liberalism and liberal politics as well as their relationships to the Indonesian Theosophical movement.

My research explores the religious views of ITS that are pluralists showed that religious understanding of TS members not merely an effort to strengthen the social harmony among people in the archipelago at the moment but also bring a new perspective that religious understanding is embedded within Theosophical members in the archipelago has significant distinctions—as will be discussed later—with the spirituality views of TS figures at its headquarters in Adyar, India. As far as I can tell, such research has not been done before.

This article refers to TS magazines (resembling journals) published from the first decade of the twentieth century to 1940, which are valuable sources on an important episode of the socio-religious life of Indonesians. These magazines are *Pewarta Theoso-*

phie Boeat Tanah Hindia Nederland (PTHN, Malay language, 21 volumes, 188 numbers, 1911–38), *Theosophie In Nederland Indie: Theosophie Di Tanah Hindia Nederland* (Dutch and Malay language, 80 numbers, 1918–25), *Theosophie in Nederlandsch Indie* (TINI, Dutch language, 1912–30), *Kumandang Theosofie* (KT, Malay language, 6 volumes, 46 numbers, 1932–37), *Persatoean Hidoep* (PH, Malay language, 11 volumes, 109 numbers, 1930–40), and *Pewarta Theosofie Boeat Indonesia* (PTBI, Malay language, 1912–30).

The Emergence of Theosophy in Indonesia

The first signs of a Theosophical movement surfaced in 1875 in New York City. Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831–91), a Russian aristocrat who supposedly had mystical or supernatural powers, founded the first Theosophical Society (TS) with the assistance of the Americans Colonel Henry Steel Olcott and William Quan Judge. Immediately after the establishment of the organization, Olcott was elected as its president. In 1879, the TS headquarters were moved from New York to Adyar by Madame Blavatsky. In 1895, TS entered a new era with the appearance of Annie Besant. It was under her leadership that TS became an influential force not just in India but around the world (Cranston 1993, 143–148; Nugraha 2011, 5–7).

According to Nugraha, there is no adequate evidence about the exact beginnings of the TS movement in Indonesia apart from a few notes that provide only general information. One of these notes suggests that the Theosophy movement in “Hindie” (or Indies, i.e., Indonesia) might have been established initially at Pekalongan, Central Java, as a branch of TS Netherlands, eight years after Theosophy was founded in the United States. The lodge in this small town was led by the European aristocrat Baron van Tengenagel. The founding date, however, is not clear as different sources mention two different years: 1881 and 1883. Rather vaguely, Nugraha puts the initial existence of the TS movement at the end of the nineteenth century. At that time, at least, Theosophy had already attracted many Javanese, especially from Central Java.²⁾ However, the who, what, and how of its establishment are still unclear. The only hard fact is that the Pekalongan Theosophical Society was led by an infantry captain of the Dutch East Indies who had been assigned to the topographic division before his engagement with TS. The organization was legally approved by TS headquarters in Adyar, and its license was signed by Colonel Olcott (Nugraha 2011, 8–9).

However, rumor has it that long before Blavatsky founded Theosophy in New York

2) Unfortunately, there is no evidence showing which strata of society they came from.

(1875), she had already visited the Netherlands Indies—more than once. According to the Theosophy magazine *Lucifer*, Blavatsky's interest in Indonesia was quite high before she formally founded the Theosophy movement, particularly because of the possible contributions of Javanese values to the teachings of Theosophy. Perhaps with this idea in mind, Blavatsky visited the Mendut and Borobudur temples in 1852–60, visited Pekalongan, and spent a night at Pesanggrahan Limpung at the foot of Mount Dieng. In 1862 she returned and traveled around Java, supposedly visiting many places there. Nugraha assumes that the emergence of a Theosophical movement in Pekalongan might have been related to Blavatsky's visit to Java; perhaps that its earlier activities in the Netherlands Indies were limited to its esoteric aspects only just like in its headquarters (*ibid.*, 8–9, 38). According to Nugraha, details of the earliest TS activity in the late nineteenth century and the role of Baron van Tenggagel are still unclear. The only certainty is that he died in Bogor in 1893 (*ibid.*, 9).

A new phase in the history of TS began in the early twentieth century. In 1901, TS student groups appeared in Semarang. Propaganda to attract people to become TS members was initiated by Asperen van de Velde, a Dutchman and director of a printing and publishing house. Through his job, he spread pamphlets, inviting people to join the Theosophy movement. Starting with seven members in Semarang, TS began to spread to other regions such as Surabaya (1903), Yogyakarta (1904), and Surakarta (1905). Because of his pioneering work, Asperen was later called the spiritual father of the lodge (*ibid.*).

To sum up, from the early twentieth century to 1940, the ITS movement progressed steadily. Year by year it gained in influence and increased its membership numbers. Because of its fundamental precepts on progress, mystical philosophy, sciences and brotherhood, ITS attracted many young adults and important figures of the day, whose visions later gave an ideological direction to the Indonesian Republic. Some of them were mere sympathizers, while some became members. Familiar names such as Haji Agus Salim, Radjiman Wedjodiningrat, Achmad Subardjo, Cipto Mangunkusumo, Sutomo, Muhammad Yamin, Raden Sukemi (father of Soekarno), and Datuk St. Maharadja show up in the context of TS. Other prominent figures such as Suwardi Suryaningrat or Ki Hadjar Dewantara, Muhammad Hatta, and Soekarno had close connections to the movement. Many local figures of the Javanese and Sundanese aristocracy were also active members and involved in the founding of ITS branches.

During its golden age, 1910–30, Theosophy established many organizations to realize the spirit of brotherhood and to spread the teachings of Theosophy, particularly aiming at the empowerment of indigenous people through education and by developing the quality of Eastern morality. Some of TS's most important organizations were: (1)

Bintang Timoer (1911), specializing in the teaching and practice of Sufism and esotericism or spirituality; (2) Moeslim Bond (1924), a forum for Muslim members to learn to accept the reality of world changes; (3) Mimpitoe or M 7 (1909), an organization for fighting the seven vices, namely, *main* (gambling), *minoem* (drinking alcohol), *madon* (womanizing), *madat* (drug addiction), *maling* (stealing), *modo* (hate speech), *mangani* (gluttony); (4) Perhimpunan Toeloeng-Menoeloeng (1909), a mutual help organization; (5) Widiya-Poestaka (1909), an organization for collecting all kinds of ancient knowledge that could be found in the Netherlands Indies (Nusantara) to protect it from extinction; (5) NIATWUV (Nederlandsch-Indische Wereld Afdeling Theosofische Wereld Universiteit Vereniging), or World Department of Theosophical World University Association of the Netherlands Indies, which organized schools and supported the establishment of educational institutions in the Dutch East Indies. One of the most popular schools to be established was the Sekolah Arjuna (Ardjoena-scholen, Arjuna School, 1914). This TS school was named after Arjuna, the *Mahabharata* character who was very much liked by natives and well known through shadow puppet performances (*wayang*). *Wayang* also happened to be one of the most favored media for disseminating the teachings of theosophy; (6) the Ati Soetji (Pure Heart) Organization (1914), which aimed to improve the lives of women and pursue other social causes.

In terms of membership, Nugraha's research shows that the Theosophical movement of the Dutch Indies had Dutch, Bumiputera (natives), Chinese, and Indo-European (Indo) members. However, until the first decade of the twentieth century most Indo, as part of European Dutch Indies society, had a poor and marginal socioeconomic position. This is because they were rejected by their own "father," the Europeans, and their pleas were never heeded. On the other hand, they also had difficulty adjusting to the Bumiputera, or natives, because their official status was European. Under these circumstances the Indo, who were proponents of the Association Movement, dominated the Theosophy membership. In Theosophy, apparently they found the concept that brought them closer to the Bumiputera and enabled them to fight for equality. As Merle Ricklefs states: "Theosophy was one of the few movements which brought elite Javanese, Indo-Europeans and Dutchmen together in this period . . ." (Ricklefs 2008, 198).

Bumiputera constituted the second-largest group of Theosophy members. Amongst the Bumiputera, the Javanese were the most dominant group. The concept of Theosophy and the approach of Theosophy leaders were the two main reasons the Javanese aristocracy were attracted to this movement. Theosophical teachings, which are esoteric, spiritual, or *kebatinan*, appealed to Javanese aristocrats, who were very fond of mysticism. They regarded the teachings of Theosophy as similar to the secret teachings of ancestral wisdom in their sacred and ancient books. Although embracing Hinduism, Islam, or

Christianity, these aristocrats were in fact pantheists who succeeded in consolidating (or harmonizing) their official religion with their ancestors' mystical wisdom. Therefore, according to Nugraha, the TS movement's strongest influence was in Central and East Java (Nugraha 2011, 30–31).

Nugraha assumes that the entry of a Bumiputera as a member of TS would undoubtedly be a matter of prestige. The earliest members of the aristocracy who helped to spread the teachings of Theosophy amongst students were figures with great charisma, either because of their position or education or because of their ideas. It was this that attracted most non-aristocratic Javanese students to join TS. In this period it was most unusual for a common native person to be able to mix as an equal with people from high nobility and Europeans, especially Dutchmen, who had much higher status socially and politically. TS also had adequate intellectual facilities such as libraries. Nugraha cites C. L. M. Penders, the writer of *The Life and Times of Soekarno* (1974): "Soekarno spent many hours in the Library of the Theosophical Society to which he had access because of his father's membership. It was there that he debated in his mind with some of the great political figures in history" (*ibid.*). Apart from libraries containing comprehensive collections of scientific texts, TS also offered possibilities for public discussions, either in *studie-klasse* or in *openbare lezing* (public lectures) through its NITV organization (*ibid.*, 44). Whereas colonialism divided society along distinct color lines, the TS's fundamental principle did not consider differences of skin color, race, religion, and ethnicity. This fact increasingly persuaded Bumiputera students to join the organization.

The dominance of Javanese can be seen in the attendance of the first congress of TS in Yogyakarta. Of the 78 delegates meeting at M. R. T. Sosronegoro's house, there were 19 *priyayi* (Javanese aristocrats) titled Raden (R), Raden Mas (RM), and Raden Ngabehi (R.Ng). The other 17 delegates consisted of female *priyayi*. Apart from these Javanese members, there were other ethnic representatives from Sunda, Minangkabau, Melayu, even Manado and Ambon. Based on the *ledenlijst* (membership list) of 1914 and 1915, apart from the Javanese *priyayi*, there were many noble persons from West Sumatra (Minangkabau). This is proven by the titles written after their names: Galar Sutan, Galar Datuk, Galar Marah, Galar Tan, Datuk Rangkyo, and many others (*ibid.*, 34–35). Amongst them were Haji Agus Salim, prominent fighters and national heroes, and Dt. Sutan Maharadja, a well-known figure of the nationalist movement (*ibid.*, 32). Many of the Sundanese members also held the title of Raden (*ibid.*, 35).

De Tollenaere (2000) notes that in 1930 membership had risen to its highest level ever: 2,090 people, 1,006 of whom were European. These Europeans were mainly Dutch, and they made up nearly 0.5 percent of all the Dutch in the Dutch East Indies, the highest proportion of Theosophists anywhere in the world! A total of 876 members were

listed as “Native” (Indonesian), while 208 members were “Foreign Oriental,” as most Asians of non-Indonesian ancestry were categorized. Probably about 190 of them were Chinese and approximately 20 Indian. One should not try to credit the few Indian members of the TS living in the Dutch Indies with any significant influence in the local TS lodges, let alone in the politics of the Dutch Indies. It is clear that this was one of the only places where Europeans would fraternize with “natives” and allow themselves to be in a slight minority position, i.e., not fully in control but only a strong presence. Geographically, membership was concentrated on Java. Socially, most Indonesian members were Javanese aristocrats (*priyayi*) and only a few of the “natives” were West Sumatran and Balinese noblemen. This membership which is very diverse: European, Chinese, Indian, and *Bumiputera* themselves has given a clear signal that they have mutually influence one each other, especially in the matter of religion and spirituality as well as this article concerns.

Within this organization the *priyayi*, constituting the Indonesian elite, felt equal to the Dutch, and the Dutch themselves did not humiliate the *priyayi*. Due to this noble stratification, the Dutch also gave a lot of opportunities to them, for instance enabling them to study in reputable universities in the Netherlands. Consequently, most of the Indonesian nationalist leaders who came from the elite group and who led Indonesia to independence were educated in the Netherlands.

If we look further into Islamic articles in TS journals, another important group can be found, namely, Muslim *santri* (traditional Javanese Muslims). Within the system of Javanese stratification, the status of *santri* is higher than that of common people (*wong cilik*) but lower than that of *priyayi*. Regarding the Muslim membership, Haji Agus Salim, a Muslim leader and one of the prominent Indonesian founding fathers, describes why he became a member of ITS (in English):

I had joined the Theosophical Society that was because I saw that their call to religion addressed to a good many Muslims especially who got some what estranged from religion because of their western education, but had still a long standing tradition of religious altogether [*sic*]. (Nugraha 2011, 32)

ITS and the Idea of Religious Pluralism

First and foremost, the idea of religious pluralism within ITS is centered on the concept of God. When defining Theosophy, Blavatsky interpreted *Theos* as “god” (not “God” or “personal God,” as people understand it today). Therefore, for Blavatsky, Theosophy is not to be translated as “wisdom of God” but rather as that “divine wisdom” which is

possessed by gods (Blavatsky 1981, 2). Instead, what is understood as God by ITS is a personal God, in conformity with religions in the Dutch East Indies (Leadbeater 1915a; Wongsodilogo 1921).

In a lot of articles published, because it focuses on the esoteric, the members of ITS believed that God is one, but believers call him by different names: the Dutch call him “God,” Muslims “Allah Taalah,” Hindus “Ishwara,” Tionghoa or Chinese “Kwan-shai-Yin Thian,” Jews “Jehovah,” Confucians “Tao,” Greeks “Theo,” etc. For ITS, although the names may differ, the Almighty is one and only.³⁾ In other words, there are different languages to address God but the meaning is identical.⁴⁾ This doctrine is a specialty of perennialism. Since the absolute one is impossible to grasp by man’s very limited logical capacity, He may be grasped through His appearances, symbols, or names, which in turn create plural Gods (Hidayat and Nafis 2003, 69–70).

Based upon the doctrine that the one God has many names, ITS members discussed concepts such as the essential unity of religions, the substantial relationship to God’s messengers, and the continuity and unity of the essence of the holy scriptures. For ITS, these concepts are related to one another. Because they come from the same God, the message of the prophets and the scriptures are one and the same, albeit in different languages. In other words, all prophets were sent by God to bring identical teachings, although their doctrines differed on the surface (S. M. 1926, 140; N. 1927a, 203; 1929, 147–148). Accordingly, all scriptures—the Torah, Bible, Vedas, Upanisads, Bhagavadgita, Quran, Tripitaka, and others—are regarded as holy scriptures containing noble teachings from the prophets; the contexts may be different, but they all originate from the same God (Baehler 1917, 52; Si pitjik 1926, 104). All holy scriptures are regarded as equal. Every believer, no matter what religion he professes, should learn about and do a comparative study of at least two or more of these holy scriptures (Si pitjik 1926, 104). In essence, all religions and creeds derive from the same God and have the same objective (Siswosoeparto 1912, 140). Diverse religions, in ITS terms, are actually “tools to worship God, any of them might be chosen” (Djojodiredjo 1912, 45).

There are also some writings about Islam’s view on the topics above, most referring to the teachings of Sufism. Those authors (perhaps Muslims) strongly believed that the teachings of the pearls of Sufism by Ibn ‘Arabi (1165–1240), Rumi (1207–73), al-Ghazali (1058–1111), and al-Junaid (d. 910) were apt to the doctrine and mission of TS, which wanted world peace through exploring the teaching of unity within religions and prophetic messages. According to those Muslims, the language of Sufis is the language of the heart

3) Van Motman (1912, 123–124). See also J. M. (1922, 21) and Khan (1922, 66).

4) Si pitjik (1926, 104). Confucianist Chinese also called him Goesti, Thian, Monade, Kristus (Christ), and Allah when referring to one and the same God who brings salvation. See N. (1927b, 124).

that enables people to understand the different names and manifestations of God (J. M. 1920, 87; N. 1927a, 203).

One ITS member even argued that all religions were Islam: neither in identity nor in a historical sense, but in quality, by which he meant that all religions promote safety, security, peace, and love. If all believers were to really practice their religion, and then indeed those notions of Islam indicate that since the beginning their religion meant Islam. As he argued: "If those ancient religions were not Islam, obviously their prophets were liars, because Muhammad asked us to believe all the messengers" (W1 1927, 129).

Therefore, to Muslims, all of God's messengers brought noble and true teachings that were identical with the teachings of Prophet Muhammad. Thus, if Prophet Muhammad asked Muslims not only to believe but also to love and respect the teachings of previous prophets, this implied that the followers of those prophets also should be loved and respected by Muslims. The teaching of Prophet Muhammad and other prophets is that if a Muslim loves and respects God, he or she should love all people and all of God's creatures too (TVTKL 1927, 15).

These ITS doctrines about one God with many names, the essential unity of religions, prophetic messages, and holy scriptures are all part of TS works and efforts to realize universal brotherhood amongst mankind with no prejudices about race, nation, skin color, and religion. For Theosophists, religions take different forms due to their cultural contexts, because they do not exist in a historical vacuum. For example, the religious Shari'a was developed as a response to the situation and condition of the respective era. Hassan Hanafi, a well-known Egyptian Muslim scholar, argues that revelation is not something that exists outside the solid and unchangeable context, which continuously changes in terms of experiencing (Hanafi n.d., 71). Therefore, the diversity of race, nation, and ethnicity in a certain space and time determines its difference in Shari'a law. Consequently, its rules in detail are neither universal nor applicable eternally in every situation and under every condition. This logical argument is exercised also by pluralists such as John Hick, and followers of perennial philosophy such as Frithjof Schuon, Huston Smith, and Seyyed Hossein Nasr. According to Hick, pluralists believe that there is but one God, who is the maker and lord of all: Adonai and God, Allah and Ekoamkar, Rama and Krishna are actually different names for the same God; and people in the church, synagogue, mosque, gurdwara, and temple worship the same God. Historical situations are what made the believers of various religious traditions call their God by different names as well as develop different rites. For Hick, the great world religions arose within different streams of human life and have in the past flowed down the centuries within different cultural channels. However, believers experience a spiritual encounter with the same God (Hick 1982, 48–56).

Perennialists have a similar explanation. Schuon, for instance, believes that “religions are alike at heart or in essence while differing in form.” According to this view, distinctions between religions refer to distinctions between essence and form. “Form,” of course, is closely related to the physical or the phenomenal world, which is also linked to historical and cultural aspects. Philosophically, for Schuon, the distinction between essence and accident (form) can be modulated into the distinction between exoteric and esoteric (Capps 1995, 304). In other words, outwardly all religions are different, but inwardly they originate from and shall return to a single truth. Likewise, Hossein Nasr, through theo-anthropological discourse, believes that the plurality of prophets and religions is because of changing conditions of the people to whom revelation is addressed. Each prophet reveals an aspect of the truth and the divine law, so it is necessary to have many prophets—in many different regions—to reveal the different aspects of truth (Nasr 1972, 144).

On Demeaning Other Religions, Conversion, and Harmony

Theosophists do not believe in slandering and demeaning other religions through either word or deed. There are four central principles of Theosophy on the existence of differences in religion and attitudes toward the religions of others. First, there are thousands of religions that are suited to their respective nations due to considerations of cultural uniqueness and compatibility. Therefore, there is no religion that is higher or better than another. Each religion contains the same goodness, sublimity, and goal (Djojodiredjo 1912, 45; Karim 1923, 33). In short, according to Kyai Somo Tjitro, a Muslim Theosophist, all religions are equal (Tjitro 1915, 121–122).

Second, it is not appropriate for people to hate and humiliate others only because of differences in beliefs, more so if they have not studied their own religion thoroughly nor the religions they humiliate because they consider the study of other religions to be *haram* (unlawful). For A. Karim (1923), a Muslim Theosophist, such people are in fact bigoted (“Si picik”).⁵ Thus, if a believer is a Muslim, Christian, or Hindu, his religious knowledge is not very deep (Tjantoela 1912, 53).⁶ Theosophists believe that if someone

5) A similar view was mentioned by S. Si pitjik (1926, 104).

6) Another Muslim member wrote, “. . . adanja tjela menjtela dari sesoetoe fihak kepada lain fihak itoe tiada lain tjoema terbawa dari koerang fahamnja masing-masing, atau oleh karena marika itoe beloem menjelidiki maksoednja agama-agama tadi sehingga tertib” [condemnation among people comes from a lack of understanding or because they have not yet investigated the meaning of their religion] (Broto 1926, 125).

gains a deep knowledge of the essence of their own religion, it will be impossible for them to degrade other religions or discriminate between religions (Rivai 1927, 23).

Third, God's compassion and justice is for all and not just for one person or one nation. God's mercy and grace envelop everything, while man's knowledge will always be disputable (Tjantoela 1912, 55; Karim 1925, 31).

Fourth, as stated by Dirk van Hinloopen Labberton (1912), a key figure of ITS, *a good attitude* is to study other religions; *the best attitude* is to study one's own religion and practice it in the right way; *the worst attitude* is to persuade, lure someone into, or even force others to follow one's religion. *The unforgivable attitude* is to use one's religion as a means to make someone else look stupid or like a blinded-zealot.

Theosophy does not advocate religious conversion. On many occasions it is firmly stated that religious believers—particularly ITS members—should not convert to another religion. People should be faithful to their religious teachings or Shari'a. According to Muslim Theosophists, a convert is someone who is neglectful:

It is actually not right for the *Boemipoetera* [natives] who are already Muslim to convert to Christianity or Buddhism, and vice versa. A person who has done so is called someone who is neglectful. Truly, this is just a hindrance in the journey to God, as each religion is just a way to worship God—as God is one—as the Quran says: *Inna lillahi wa Inna ilaihi raji'un* ("Verily, unto God do we belong, and verily, unto Him we shall return"). (Djojosoediro 1918, 41)⁷

Theosophy does not claim to be either an old religion or a new one,⁸ and it does not want to make people "defect" from their own religion or convert to another one. The Theosophical Society wanted religious believers—as members—to truly believe in their own religion by studying the heart and deepest meaning of their prophet's teachings, and to live together in harmony even though they had different beliefs and religions (Leadbeater 1915b, 20; Guldenaar 1916, 14). ITS claimed that, in fact, rather than preaching conversion, Theosophy's teachings would actually strengthen one's faith to one's own religion. Its members would still be faithful to their own religion (Shari'a), but with a much deeper mystic-philosophical understanding beyond exoteric understanding. Theosophy would open the hearts of believers to learn more about each religion than they ever knew before, even—in some cases—helping people to become obedient worshippers of their own religions. There was a case involving a member who wanted to

7) On the whole, the objective is God. See also Baehler (1917, 52) and Labberton (1917, 161) etc.

8) This statement is reiterated in all ITS publications; here religion is not in its common understanding or as set of system (Tjitro 1915, 121–122; Latief 1925, 189–190). There have been accusations that Theosophy is a new religion that misleads Muslims, Christians, Hindus, and others. However, according to Latief, those accusations are not based on facts. See Latief (1926b, 31).

convert, but after a Theosophy master explained the truth and reality of his religion, he changed his mind (Labberton 1912, 126; Leadbeater 1915b, 20).

Theosophy believes that religious differences merely mean different ways to reach God. On this matter, ITS members referred to the Bhagavadgita: “Man has come to Me through many paths, and through whatever path a man came to me, I accept him on this path because all the paths are Mine” (Latief 1926a, 30); and to the Quran: “For the followers of every religion: We have set certain rules to follow as good as we can, do not let them argue with you, but invite them to the Lord because you really are on the straight path” (P. A. 1926, 12–13). Therefore, Theosophists believe that differences between paths are not a matter of principle but are, in fact, the ultimate goal. Both Broto (1926), a Muslim Theosophist from Bogor, and Baehler (1916) firmly argue that all paths surely lead to the same God. With this kind of understanding, differences are not supposed to be a seed of conflict and dispute.

According to A. Latief (1926a), a Muslim member of TS, a deep understanding of Islam is in fact in line with the doctrine of Theosophy. So, if someone is willing to do research on the theme of brotherhood in the holy scriptures, they will find verses on the essential unity of religions and the brotherhood of mankind. One will find these two themes only if one is able to penetrate into the deeper aspects of the teachings of the holy scriptures. Conversely, one can expose the differences and contradictions between religions, which will only trigger conflict. As the main goal of TS is universal brotherhood and harmony, its members and all religious believers are encouraged to discover both themes when studying religions.

In order to achieve understanding and respect between religions, Labberton argued, there were only two ways for the people of the Netherlands Indies to progress: first, to study science together with the Dutch until equality with Europeans was achieved; and second, waging war with other nations (presumably the Dutch). The first way would lead to a peaceful and secure life, whereas the second would lead to war and disarray. It was up to the people of the Netherlands Indies to choose between conflict and brotherhood, war and peace, living or dying. According to Labberton, the people of Europe, China (Tionghoa), and Java who chose the second way had become partners or troops of Sang Ijajil (the Dajjal, or Antichrist); whereas if they had chosen the first way, they would have become troops of Sri Tunjung Seto—Sang Guru Dewa (The Divine Master), or King of Harmony.⁹⁾

9) Labberton (1912, 126–127). This statement of Labberton is a hint that ITS during that time, at least from Labberton’s point of view, was used as a means of “ethical politics” by the Dutch colonial regime to stifle the resistance of Indonesians (believers).

Raden Djojosoediro, an Indonesian Muslim Theosophist, reminded Muslims not to be “jealous” when a Muslim converted. Conversion to another religion often creates conflict in the Muslim community, internally or externally. As Djojosoediro wrote, conflict—whether caused by conversion or something else—usually comes from a group of “uneducated people.” Students of Theosophy, however, were urged to live together in peace and harmony (*guyub* and *rukun*), despite all their differences. Djojosoediro advised Muslims to follow the way of Prophet Muhammad, i.e., avoiding jealousy and conflict, and showing compassion (*welas asih*). Djojosoediro described India as a country with religious harmony where—during that time—people of a diversity of ethnicities and religions were able to live together in harmony, respecting and appreciating each other. Believers of different religions were also free to practice their beliefs. India had proven that differences in religions and beliefs did not necessarily produce conflict and quarrels (Djojosoediro 1918, 42).

Freedom of religion is a parallel concept to Theosophy’s idea about the equality of religions. In fact, Theosophical doctrines of unity and similarities among religions strongly support the rule and practice of religious freedom. The TS deeply agreed with the Dutch government rule on Article X concerning religion that stated:

It is prohibited to apply force on other people in their way of thinking or their religion. All man is free to worship his God. All of the religious holidays are recognized. Humiliating and diminishing the rights of any religion is prohibited . . . and do not make others miserable and their lives difficult. All religious teachers and Islamic scholars (*Ulama*) do not get salary from the government. (Redaksi 1921, 96)

TS published this law in 1921, claiming that the Dutch government was founded on brotherhood and harmony, which resonated with the core of TS doctrine.

Perennialism, Religious Humanism, and Javanese Mysticism

In appreciating pluralism, multiculturalism, and harmony, ITS has some important implications. First, it interprets religions with a perennialist approach. This approach is adherent to their research. Even TS itself is a form of perennialism. Perennialism is a well-known philosophical system. According to Charles Schmitt, it is believed that the concept of perennial philosophy originated with Leibniz, who used the term in a frequently quoted letter to Remond dated August 26, 1714. But careful research reveals that the term “*philosophia perennis*” was used much earlier than Leibniz; indeed, it was the title of a treatise published in 1540 by the Italian Augustinian Agostino Steuco (1497–

1548). According to Schmitt, although Steuco was perhaps the first to employ this phrase—he was certainly the first to give it a fixed, systematic meaning—he drew upon an already well-developed philosophical tradition, viz., the ancient tradition since thousand years ago. Drawing upon this tradition he formulated his own synthesis of philosophy, religion, and history, which he labeled *philosophia perennis* (Schmitt 1966, 506).

According to Schmitt, at the very beginning of Steuco's work he writes that there is "one principle of all things, of which there has always been one and the same knowledge among all peoples." For Steuco, *De perenni philosophia* is an ancient tradition of wisdom that can endure eternally (*perennis*). The enduring quality of this philosophy rests in the supposition that there is a single *sapientia* knowable by all (*ibid.*, 517). According to Schmitt, from Steuco's statement a question comes immediately to mind: What was Steuco's view of history? How did he interpret the process and development of man's thought so that he could argue there was a constant irreducible core of people agreement of all time? Steuco acknowledges that history brings with it changes, but these are minor when compared to the elements that remain constant. For Schmitt, when Steuco speaks of "progress" it usually means merely "moving forward" or "advance of time." History flows like time, says Steuco; it does not know "dark ages" and "revivals." Steuco was convinced that "there is but a single truth that pervades all historical periods." The truth is perhaps not equally well known in all periods, but it is accessible to those who search for it (*ibid.*, 518).

According to Steuco, the truth and wisdom within *De perenni philosophia* have always been maintained and preserved via *prisca theologia* and *philosophia*. For Schmitt, the word *priscus*, which often recurs in Steuco, probably best translates as "venerable." So that the truth and wisdom were always preserved through "the venerable philosophers and theologians." In the perennial philosophical system, truth flows from a single fountain, as it were, but is manifested in various forms. From this philosophical system comes the doctrine of the One and the many. Moreover, the revelation of truth dates back to the most ancient times (Latin: *prisca saecula*), and we can find the truth in the writings deriving from this period. The wisdom of earliest times is then transmitted to the later centuries (*ibid.*, 520).

Perennial philosophy teaches that the ultimate reality, the divine (the ontological), is nameless and unattainable, where none of the expressions can be appointed (Thomas 1996, 73). However, this philosophy subscribes to the epistemology that God can also be reached by the mind of man. In other words, the ultimate reality is the godhead, the essence, Tao, Brahman, the energy, the consciousness, or something with a similar name. He has nature qualities as well as rid of them. Regarding to his nature qualities, he is the personal one, material and actually existed in space and time, but he may also called

as an impersonal, non-material, and beyond the time and space. "He is within us, around us, and even within ourselves; but he is also at once completely outside of us, and essentially totally not us. Much can be said about him, but none of them can declare his words" (Laibelman 1996, 86). In the context of religious studies (or the comparative study of religions), perennialism considered to have an in-depth explanation of the two sides of religion, namely: (1) esoteric aspects that are eternal and immutable in all religions, and the discovery of the intersection and the unity of religions, (2) exoteric aspects that reveal all the different forms of religion. Perennialism then is used to explain the intersections and differences between religions.

If we look carefully, perennialism and Theosophy discuss a similar philosophical matter: ancient wisdom traditions. Blavatsky and other key figures after her frequently asserted that Theosophy was based on ancient knowledge or wisdom, taken from the early Greek philosophers, followed by subsequent philosophers, generation after generation in different countries, lush with eternal wisdom. The Theosophist glorifies the ultimate reality, the true and eternal, from which diverse manifestations emerge. From the one truth various forms emerged, including diverse religions. Therefore, from the outset, Blavatsky taught that the great religions, schools, and sects were small twigs or shoots growing on the larger branches, that those shoots and branches came from the same tree, the wisdom of religion. This is one of the principal teachings of Theosophy, which is drawn from eternal wisdom (*sophia perennis*). However, while perennialism discusses limited key themes such as the discourse on a personal and impersonal God and His relationship with creatures, Theosophy in the hands of Blavatsky—and her fellows—later developed into a complex and profound discourse with strong nuances of mysticism and occultism (see Blavatsky's works such as *The Key to Theosophy*, *The Voice of the Silence*, *Nightmare Tales*, *Studies in Occultism*, *Isis Unveiled*, *The Secret Doctrine*, and others).

Another important thing that should be noted is the influence of Indian Hindu spirituality with regard to perennialism's ideas on ITS members' religious views. Indian spirituality was rich in religious pluralism, i.e., the appreciation and recognition of the sanctity and salvation of non-Hindu religions. The ITS was generally sympathetic to ideas of Hinduism. De Tollenaere concludes that

the Theosophical Society, which was quite influential in the Dutch Indies, especially among the Dutch colonial administrators as well as the Javanese nobility (*priyayi*), did disseminate Indian thought to the archipelago, albeit in a highly idiosyncretic [*sic*], corrupted and "Westernized" form. (de Tollenaere 2000, 3)

Appearing to be Indian, its roots were actually from the West, viz., European-

American spiritualism, established by Blavatsky and the early Western Theosophy figures.

However, de Tollenaere forgets to mention the important fact that the archipelago had a long history and relationship with Hinduism, specifically Indian Hinduism. The influence of Hindu religion and spirituality was very strong within the Javanese community, and Javanese Islam still has many elements of Hindu culture. On the one hand, de Tollenaere was correct that Hinduism as discussed by Indian and Indonesian Theosophy members was of a sort that had already been Westernized. However, magazines published by the ITS show that the Hindu authors or sympathizers, when discussing Hinduism, were in fact often talking about Hinduism as understood and practiced in the archipelago. It was the model of pre-Islamic Hinduism that continued to exist long before Theosophy even appeared in the archipelago. Archipelagic Hinduism, particularly in Java, was a hybrid Hinduism, i.e., the acculturation between Indian Hinduism and the indigenous religion of the archipelago.

Likewise, I argue that the ITS in this respect greatly differed from what was espoused by Blavatsky and other Western figures such as Annie Besant. Blavatsky and Besant did not adhere to a religion (Christianity in this case); Theosophy became for them a way of life or “a new life guidelines” that was believed to bring them to the Truth. In fact, TS leaders referred to Theosophy as the Ultimate Truth, and there is no religion higher than the Truth (Sanskrit: *Satyan Nasti Paro Dharmah*). For Blavatsky, Theosophy is the essence or “the mother” of all religions and of absolute truth (Blavatsky 1981, 32). On the contrary, extensive data show that Indonesian Theosophy is firmly rooted in religions that had long been established in the archipelago. ITS does not adhere to a concept of an impersonal God *a la* Blavatsky, and it does not make Theosophy into a “new religion” or a “syncretic religion” that must be separated from the formal religions of its members. In other words, ITS members did not leave their formal religion or set up a new religious institution that was considered to be higher than formal religions. Theosophy was used as a tool to understand the deepest dimensions of the formal religions professed by members of Theosophy. They then tried to show the essential unity of religions, which could support the goals of Theosophy in realizing universal brotherhood amongst human beings.

Second, and closely related to the first, the religious views of ITS are colored by religious humanism. Does this humanism in ITS’s spirit and mindset affect its religious complexion or do the teachings of Theosophy and perennialism enrich their humanism spirit? It seems that the two are inextricably linked. The criticism that Theosophists base their humanism on secular humanism and do not strive to build a brotherhood of man based on religion is unfounded, but nevertheless Adian Husaini (2010), a writer and Indonesian Muslim activist, accuses Theosophy as follows (in translation):

The mission of TS that carries interfaith brotherhood is identical with the mission of the Free Masonry movement. Not surprisingly, in addition to leading the TS, Annie Besant had led Freemasonry. . . . By positioning itself outside of the existing religions, Freemasonry emphasizes interfaith humanitarian problems. Religion is not used as the basis for building brotherhood among mankind. Secular humanism became the ideological model. (Husaini 2010, xiii, xvi)

However, such allegations are futile; and as my study shows, ITS's humanism is firmly rooted in religion, especially the major religions in the Dutch Indies (Nusantara), namely, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, and Confucianism. As for Islam, I have already discussed above the theological ideas about relationships and intersections between religions—which will lead to an understanding of the brotherhood of mankind—often referring to the concept of Islamic Sufism, and therefore not based on secular Western humanism. ITS members firmly adhered to the major world religions in Indonesia, primarily emphasizing a Sufi (mystical) dimension, have been rooted deeply in the personalities of ITS members.

Within the context of Western secular and liberal humanism—in the sense of being cynical to religion, Theosophy, and especially ITS, is an exception. Despite embracing humanism, through dreaming about realizing universal human brotherhood and spreading love amongst mankind, ITS members remained rooted in their religion, particularly the formal religion that they professed. For Theosophy, humanism is the key to keeping both culture and religion civilized. Religion without a humanistic perspective or alignment to human values can easily become harsh, ruthless, and cruel, as many cases of terrorism and other forms of violence in the name of religion show. If TS considered adopting humanism, it was a religious humanism, rooted in humanist religious values.

Third, the religious views of ITS are closely linked to Javanese culture and religion (Javanism, *kejawen*). *Kejawen* is the Theological insight of Javanese as a result of the accumulation of various ancient traditions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and the traditions of the ancestors). The accumulation is very smooth and thick, thus forming a well-established worldview. The strength of this worldview is the capacity to maintain harmony and peace amongst different beliefs, concepts, and religions (Endraswara 2012, 42).

Theosophy in Indonesia developed mostly on Java. Most of the Theosophical lodges were also located on Java. The time from the emergence and development of Theosophy (early twentieth century) until the independence of Indonesia was a period that was very fertile for the views, attitudes, and practices of *kejawen*. From around the tenth century to the fifteenth, Hinduism and Buddhism were the religions followed by the majority of Javanese. Together with animism they formed the original religions of Java. Soewarno Imam, professor of Javanese mysticism at State Islamic University Jakarta, has argued that Hinduism and Buddhism in Java, especially after their spread to East Java, continued

to show rapprochement and compromise between the two. If in their country of origin, i.e., India, Hinduism and Buddhism were often involved in hostility and conflict, this did not occur in Java. A strong compromise between the two religions occurred during the time of Kertanegara (King of Singosari). Harmonious life amongst various schools of “new religion,” especially the flow of Shiva, Vishnu, and Buddha, continued until the Majapahit era, culminating with the reign of King Hayam Wuruk (Imam 2005, 20).

When Islam entered the archipelago at the end of the thirteenth century, especially on the north coast of Java, it came in a mystical form, aligned with the ethical values of the Hindu-Buddhist religion. The ethical values of mystical Islam could slowly be accepted by Hindu-Buddhist Javanese (*ibid.*, 45–47). However, the reception was not fully achieved, but still holding together most of the ethical-spiritual values of these two old religions. Thus, the term “Javanese Islam” denotes Islam as understood and practiced in conjunction with the pre-Islamic spiritual heritage. Mark Woodward, for example, an expert on Javanese Islam, has an interesting theory about it. According to Woodward, the effect of the interpretation of doctrine, practice, and the myth of Hindu-Javanese toward Javanese Islam still seems significant. One of the great debates amongst Javanese *santri*¹⁰ and *abangan*¹¹ is about *shirk* (polytheism). The debate shows the diversity of views on the issue of *shirk* and difficulties in determining the exact difference between traditional *santri* and the interpretation of Javanism (Woodward 1989, 215–217).

Another thing that stands out in Javanese Islam is the glorification of the saints (*Wali*). Great respect for the *Wali*, whether the legendary Nine Saints (*Wali Songo*)¹² in Java or their predecessors from Arabian lands, such as al-Hallaj, al-Ghazali, and Ibn ‘Arabi, is shown not only by the *santri* but also by traditional Javanese Muslims despite slightly

10) *Santri* is an old term that originally meant a student of religion, such as a student at a *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school, the place of *santri*). A *santri* is a devout or pious Muslim/student who practices shari’ah. Normally, *santri* also called as *putihan* or *kaum putih*, the white ones as opposed to *abangan*, the red/brown sort (Ricklefs 2006, 36).

11) *Abangan* are nominal or non-practicing Muslims. This term derives from the Low Javanese (*ngoko*) word *abangan*, meaning the color red or brown. According to Ricklefs, it was only in about the mid-nineteenth century that there emerged in Javanese society a category of people defined by their failure—in the eyes of the more pious—to behave as proper Muslims. At the time, the usual terms were *bangsa abangan* (red/brown sort) or *wong abangan* (red/brown people). *Abangan* originated as a term of derision employed by the *santri* or the pious *putihan*, the “white ones” (Ricklefs 2006, 35).

12) *Wali Songo* (Javanese, literally “Nine Saints”) are well-known in the spread of Islam in Java in the fifteenth–sixteenth centuries. They were the Islamic leaders at the time of Islam’s arrival in Java. The Nine Saints were revered as Islamic scholars because not only did they possess great knowledge on religious affairs, they also possessed spiritual powers. The Nine Saints were Maulana Malik Ibrahim (Sunan Maulana), Sunan Ampel (Raden Rahmat), Sunan Bonang (Raden Makhdum Ibrahim), Sunan Giri (Raden Paku or Raden Ainul Yaqin), Sunan Drajat (Raden Syarifuddin), Sunan Kalijaga (Raden Mas Syahid), Sunan Kudus (Sayid Ja’far Shadiq), Sunan Muria (Raden Umar Said), and Sunan Gunung Jati (Syarif Hidayatullah).

different interpretations. The *abangan*, in particular, has great respect for Sheikh Siti Jenar¹³⁾ and Ahmad Mutamakkin,¹⁴⁾ who had an intellectual relationship with al-Hallaj.¹⁵⁾

- 13) Sheikh Siti Jenar, also known as Sitibrit, Lemahbang, or Lemah Abang, is well known in Java as a mystic who professes the idea of the Arabic *hulul* or *ittihad*, or in Javanese *Manunggaling Kawulo Gusti* (the union of God and man). No one knows the exact time of his birth and death, but the Javanese believe that he lived in the sixteenth century along with *Wali Songo*. For the Javanese people, according to Munir Mulkhan (2003), the existence of Siti Jenar and his mystical teachings symbolizes the struggle between philosophy, mysticism, and shari'ah (Islamic law) in the transition of political power from Javanese Majapahit to Raden Fatah Islam in Demak, Central Java. Siti Jenar's doctrines, especially the doctrine about *Manunggaling Kawulo Gusti* considered against the shari'ah teachings of the *Wali Songo*. That is why that the *Wali Songo* as a part of political power of Demak Islam decided to execute Siti Jenar. According to Massignon (1975), Hallaj's teachings on *hulul* and his death as a martyr had a significant influence on the process of Islamization in Southeast Asia, especially Java, particularly in the case of Siti Jenar. Jenar is considered to have suffered a similar fate as Hallaj. According to Soebardi (1975), Shaikh Siti Jenar was in fact a Javanese al-Hallaj.
- 14) Sheikh Ahmad Mutamakkin was well-known in central Java in the eighteenth century as a controversial mystic, both regarding to his existence as historical figures or fictional, and his mystical teachings. The only source that popularized Mutamakkin is *Serat Cabolek*, a book written by Yasadipura I (1729–1803), the renowned court poet during the reigns of Pakubuwana III (1749–1803) and Pakubuwana IV (1788–1820). Wieringa (1998) points out that in the *Serat Cabolek*, Mutamakkin is described as a teacher of mysticism who disregarded the shari'ah (Islamic law). He lived in the village of Cabolek, on the northern coast of Java. As he deliberately violated Islamic law, his behavior caused a scandal among pious Muslim. However, according to Milal Bizawie (2002), *Serat Cabolek* is the only story that has been used to discredit Mutamakkin. In fact, *Teks Kajen* (Kajen text) and *Arsh al-Muwahhidin*, the work of Mutamakkin himself, show that Ahmad Mutamakkin was a Muslim mystic who had greatly respected the shari'ah. However, most Javanese Muslims believe that he really existed.
- 15) Husayn ibn Mansur al-Hallaj was a Persian mystic, revolutionary writer, and teacher of Sufism. He was born in the province of Fars in 858 and grew up in Wasit and Tustar, where cotton was cultivated and where cotton carders (that is the meaning of *hallaj*) like his father could pursue their occupation. The most prominent mystical teaching of Hallaj is *al-hulul*: the union of God and man. His renowned utterance dealing with *al-hulul* is *Anā al-Haqq*, "I am the Absolute Truth," which was taken to mean that he was claiming to be God, since *al-Haqq*, "the Absolute Truth," is one of the Ninety Nine Names of Allah. In another controversial statement, al-Hallaj claimed, "There is nothing wrapped in my turban but God." Similarly, he would point to his cloak and say: "There is nothing in my cloak but God." Such mystical utterances are known as *shathahat*. Statements like these led to a long trial and al-Hallaj's subsequent imprisonment for 11 years in a Baghdad prison. He was publicly executed on March 26, 922, at the behest of Abbasid Calif al-Muqtadir. He was the first martyr mystic in Islam (Schimmel 1975, 62–69). According to Massignon, the story of al-Hallaj had a strong influence on the process of Islamization in the Malay and Javanese worlds. In the Malay world, for instance, Hamzah Fansuri (a Malay mystic who lived in the sixteenth century), who was well known as a mystic of *wujudīya* (or *al-hulul*), is regarded as the heir of al-Hallaj. In Java, the story of al-Hallaj always clung to the figure of Shaikh Siti Jenar. Mystical teachings of both al-Hallaj and Jenar are believed to have tempted Hindus to convert to Islam (Massignon 1975, 301–305). To examine the influences of such stories of Hallaj on Islamization in Southeast Asia, in particular into figure of Siti Jenar and mystics alike in Java, see Michael Feener, *A Re-Examination of the Place of al-Hallaj in the Development of Southeast Asian Islam* (Bijdragen, KITLV, 1998).

In fact, if explored in depth, figures such as Jenar, Mutamakkin, and Hallaj, besides being considered mystical characters, are also known as scholars who upheld the shari'a, especially in their early sainthood. Javanese Islam, either in the form of the "white" *santri* or "red" Muslim (*abangan* or Javanese Muslim), has a uniqueness and complexity that is hard to view in categories of merely black and white. Even the white traditional *santri* has the attitudes of syncretic Javanese culture and mysticism embedded in his views.

According to Woodward, Javanese Islam can indeed be called syncretic, but what stands out is that the elements of Islam, especially Sufism, dominate. However, Javanese Islamic syncretism was not typical Javanese. The Javanese were not alone in trying to unite the traditions of the past with Islamic monotheism. Islamic figures such as al-Ghazali, Ibn 'Arabi, and Sultan Akbar also attempted to integrate philosophical views from outside into Islam (Woodward 1989, 234–235). Regarding syncretism among the Javanese people, the anthropologist Muhaimin (2001) argues that qualities such as tolerance, accommodation, and flexibility are indeed special to the Javanese. Rather than rejecting a new religion that came in, the Javanese accepted it as an important element in shaping a new synthesis. According to Bekki, as quoted by Muhaimin, the Javanese syncretism of religious life may result from the flexible Javanese attitude toward other religions. Although animistic beliefs were entrenched for a long time, the Javanese successively accepted Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity but then "Javanized" everything (Muhaimin 2001, 1).

According to Soewarno Imam, there are two major groups in the socio-economic structure of the Javanese community: common people (*wong cilik*), most of whom are farmers by profession; and the *priyayi*, who work mostly as civil servants or intellectuals. In terms of religious affiliation, the Javanese community is also divided into two groups: *abangan* and the *santri*. Previously, most of the *wong cilik* and the *priyayi* were *abangan* who practiced *kejawen*. The *santri*, who try to live according to Islamic law (Shari'a), mostly work as traders and entrepreneurs and are therefore considered to be quite wealthy. Thus, from the point of view of the Javanese community, the *santri* were perceived as higher than *wong cilik* but lower than the *priyayi* (Imam 2005, 54). Hence, in this socio-economic structure, we can add a third class: the *santri*, who are between the *wong cilik* and *priyayi*.

The Javanese traditional aristocracy (*priyayi*) consisted almost entirely of believers of *kejawen*, although officially many of them claimed to be Muslims. Most of them followed the community-association (including Theosophy) in their efforts to attain a perfect life through meditation and mystical ways. The *priyayi* constituted the Javanese elite, who were instrumental in carrying forward the influence of traditional pre-Islamic Javanese spiritual culture in the form of dance, gamelan, and shadow puppetry (*wayang*) (*ibid.*,

55–56). *Wayang* is a hobby among *priyayi* and was widely used by Theosophy as a medium for disseminating teachings to its members and the Javanese community in general.

We may discern a close connection between the matters discussed above (*kejawen*, Javanese Islam, and the struggle between the *santri*, *abangan*, and *priyayi*) and the religious views of Theosophy or the views of Theosophy members, consisting of the *santri* and the *priyayi*. Why were the Indonesian Theosophists fond of idealizing issues about the intersection of religions or the essential unity of religions, often referring to mystical figures? That was because *kejawen* and Javanese Islam are both saturated with mysticism, in their Islamic Sufism as well as Hindu-Buddhist varieties. This mysticism contains many teachings about the intersection between esoteric religions, which is reinforced by Javanese syncretistic culture. Thus, Javanese Theosophy has been influenced by these two forms of cultural wealth from the beginning. Why are Theosophical teachings about universal brotherhood, harmony, and peace welcomed with open arms by Javanese Theosophists? The reason is to do with Javanese lofty ideals of a culture of peace (Endraswara 2012, 38), characterized by tolerance, accommodation, and flexibility.

Inspiring “Multicultural Education”

When dealing with religious views of ITS that are inclusive-pluralist, it is important to look at the features of Theosophy magazines published for half a century. Among PTHN, PTBI, KT, and PH, for instance, almost 85 percent contained religious teachings (including ethics), especially of Indonesian living religions; about 10 percent contained scientific explanations; and 5 percent was news on the socio-political life of the time. The most interesting feature of the magazines was their diversity of religious themes. Every single issue contained articles on three to five religions, with a variety of topics. There was never a magazine that discussed only one or two religious topics. So, from the outset, Theosophical magazines have presented an educational model that appreciates differences of religion and culture, which is currently known as “multicultural education.”

When opening a Theosophy magazine, one immediately reads a comparative study of religions. Usually the top middle of the page contains the title (subject) of the article, and then explained through the perspective of religions and their connections with Theosophy. The title of the article is sometimes only one or two words, such as “Buddhism,” “On Islam,” “Hindu,” “Baha’i,” “Christian,” or “Confucianism.” After an article on one religion, the next one (on the next page) is about other religions. Similarly, when there is an article on a theme, the next one is on another theme. When an article is “to be continued,” the next part is not on the next page but interrupted by two to four posts.

Indeed, we as readers are not bored by reading about only one religion, belief, or theme. The diversity of features in printing is deeply felt by the readers.

This is different from religious magazines that were published in the New Order era until the 1980s. Some magazines are published lettering “only for personal entertainment,” or “only to a limited circle,” and it usually about an exclusive religious understanding that humiliates other people’s beliefs.

Conclusion

ITS has always advocated that deep religious understanding is closely connected to inclusive-pluralist religious views and attitudes, which is an inspiring reminder of the past harmony between religious communities in the Indonesian Archipelago. ITS’s deep religious understanding and broad horizon resulted from intense struggles and encounters with ideas from various nations—Europe, America, India, China—but also, and perhaps most important, the cultural richness of the Indonesian nation itself, especially Javanese culture, which is always inclined to harmony. Today, Indonesia is characterized by the rise of religious fundamentalism, which tends to be intolerant and exclusive, and it seems that Indonesia is increasingly losing the depth of its own religiousness and its true identity as a country that has been known for centuries for its culture of harmony, tolerance, and peace. It is in this context that ITS’s religious views are still relevant, offering much material for reflection.

The limitations of this research can be an agenda for further research. *First*, it would be alluring to examine the role of Muslim Theosophists within ITS since there are many writings on Islam in ITS magazines. In addition to the idea of a personal God, the magazines contain many Malay Islamic terms, such as “Allah,” “*tawhid*,” “*syariat*,” “*hakikat*,” “*sufi*,” etc. Among ITS publications, there are several papers discussing the teachings of Islam, including the following: PTHN (1911), PTHN (1912), PTHN (1915), PTHN (1916), PTHN (1917), PTHN (1918), PTHN (1919), PTHN (1920), PTHN (1921), PTHN (1922), PTHN (1923), PTHN (1925), PTHN (1926), PTHN (1927), PTBI (1928), PTHN (1929), and KT (1929, 1931, and 1932), and perhaps many others. Apparently, the discourse on Islam within ITS quite coloring the existence of Theosophical movement that does not happen anywhere, neither at its headquarters in Adyar nor in Southeast Asia. *Second*, it would be interesting to study the commonalities between the Theosophical organization and Freemasonry. Indonesians in particular and the people of Southeast Asia in general, do not have an accurate knowledge about the distinction between Theosophy and Freemasonry. What and how was their relationship in Southeast Asia?

In Indonesia alone, there are two representative works on Freemasons: *Tarekat Mason Bebas dan Masyarakat di Hindia Belanda dan Indonesia 1764–1962* by Th. Stevens (1994; printed in Indonesian in 2004) and *Freemasonry Di Indonesia, Jaringan Zionis Tertua yang Mengendalikan Dunia* by Paul van der Veur (1976; printed in Indonesian in 2012). The quandaries arise due to the facts that most members of Indonesian Theosophy and Freemasonry are *priyayi*. Similarly, both Theosophy and Freemasonry have the same goal: “to form the nucleus of a universal brotherhood of mankind without distinction of race, colour, or creed” (Blavatsky 1981, 22). Academic research on both will probably contribute to academic communities in Southeast Asia.

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Women in Modern Burma

THARAPHI THAN

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The 2015 election in Myanmar was a pivotal moment in history due to the landslide victory of the National League for Democracy, led by the world-renowned politician Daw Aung San Su Kyi. The presence of an outstanding female leader appears to be a testament of the popular narrative that Burmese women are powerful agents granted equal rights and status in society. In *Women in Modern Burma*, Tharaphi Than challenges this notion and reassesses the social, economic, and political position of women in Burma throughout the twentieth century.

The introduction offers an overview that includes the “official” narrative and popular image of Burmese women along with a brief political and cultural outline of twentieth-century Burma. Than shows how the national framework of historical writing has defended the privileged positions of Burmese women, who have been portrayed as powerful agents enjoying high status and equal rights to men. Contrary to this narrative, the book attempts to challenge the concept of “liberated Burmese women” by showing that Burmese women experience little freedom in reality. It accomplishes this by exploring the world of female soldiers, politicians, writers, and prostitutes and by referencing women’s writings, personal interviews, newspapers, and magazine articles (p. 4). Next, Myanmar’s political and cultural situation in the twentieth century is briefly outlined as follows: the transition to independence (1945–48), Anti-Fascist People’s Freedom League (AFPFL) (1946–52), Pyidawtha or the Happy Land Years (1952–56), Burma Socialist Program Party (1962–88), and the post-1988 period with a post-independence media landscape.

Chapter 2 focuses on how female journalists, editors, and writers struggled to achieve their positions in the print media. After the first English-language newspaper in Burma was published in 1910, print media, especially newspapers, flourished in the country and were regarded as non-lethal weapons with which to challenge British colonial rule. Thus, young, educated Burmese nationalists viewed journalists and teachers as the most attractive professions that could build a full engagement with national politics. Educated Burmese elite men often moved easily within the print media industry, politics, and the business arena, while such mobility was not available to

women. Daw Phwa Shin became the first female editor and publisher of the newspaper *Tharawaddy*. However, she used her husband's name as the publisher and editor, because she feared that readers would think *Tharawaddy* was inferior if it was known to be run by a woman. Even Independent Daw San, who demonstrated that a woman was indeed capable of managing a newspaper, wrote under a male pseudonym for fear of being blamed for not embracing modesty. However, independence caused a seismic shift in the discourse of Burmese literature and female writers. Women writers played a significant role in shaping national themes and goals for post-independence literature, particularly for the preservation of Burmese culture and contributions to nation building and national identity formation.

Chapter 3 takes up the subject of women's education. On the subject of female education in the colonial period, Chie Ikeya (2011) has already argued that the British education system was crucial to the success of Burmese middle-class women and that modern education triggered the most radical transformation in the history of female education and professionalism. On the other hand, Than insists that while the British education system might have triggered a transformation, "the transformation may simply have been a matter of learning in an institution" and that Burmese women "were not empowered to make their independent way in the world," with few exceptions (p. 49). Certainly, statistical data obtained by local NGOs, the United Nations Population Fund, and the government show that women were either highly educated or highly illiterate (p. 61). In addition, male participation in the labor force was 2.5 times larger than that of females (Chart 3.11) and men were consistently paid more than women across almost all sectors included in the 1953 survey. However, the author acknowledges that "the number of female professionals [was] higher than that of males, and this reflect[ed] the rising number of females with university-level education" (p. 64) and that "women dominate[d] the health-care and teaching sectors" (p. 65), which require a high level of education. Therefore, to say that Burmese women "were not empowered to make their independent way in the world" through education seems to be exaggerated. Furthermore, considering the lack of comprehensive statistical data, the use of statistical data seems probably misleading, as the wage differences between men and women in 1953 cannot be logically extrapolated across the entire twentieth century; the social, political, and economic background should have been taken into account.

Chapter 4 addresses the creation of the Burma Women's Army. Than reveals that a cultural landscape that expected Burmese women to be obedient, feminine, and subservient to their husbands and families was changed not because of education and modernity, but because of World War II and the Japanese occupation. Hatred of Japan and patriotic literature transformed many well-behaved women into socially and politically aware citizens. Beginning in 1943, The East Asia Youth League mobilized as many as 30,000 young women and provided them with physical and ideological training. In February 1945, as the Japanese were arresting resistance leaders, the Women's Army Division was established within the Burma Army. The Women's Army seemed ideal for active

young women, but in reality there was only one active platoon consisting of nine members. Furthermore, female soldiers deployed to the battlefield were restricted to administrative tasks—such as translation, disseminating news to the troops, and mobilizing villagers—all of which were “disgraceful” to them, according to the author. Women inevitably failed to assume key roles in the overall movement.

Chapter 5, titled “Disbanding the Army and Communist Women,” investigates the role of women in the Communist factions and discusses why the roles of female guerilla fighters were omitted from the “official” history. After World War II, although the Women’s Army was disbanded, many women’s organizations—such as the All Burma Woman Independence Group and the Burma Women Congress—were established to advance women’s rights. Than argues that there were two spheres of Burmese women’s political activism. One was composed of elite women, especially the wives and daughters of policy makers, who chose engagement tactics, such as cooperation with the government and negotiating within the system. The other sphere represented the grassroots movement, often drawing from the wives and families of nationalist leaders, and took a more confrontational and direct approach, including boycotts and strikes. Only those who demanded women’s rights within the government framework were “allowed” a space in Burmese history and are portrayed as beacons of equal status for Burmese women.

Chapter 6 considers “Women and Modernity.” The principal argument of this chapter is how Burmese women in this period were conflicted over modernity. While businesses employed images of modern women in their advertisements and many women demanded modern items, such as cigarettes, nylon fabric, and contraceptive pills, others saw modernity as a threat to the rediscovery of uniquely identified Burmese culture for nation building and the purity of the “Burman” race and Buddhism. Therefore, the issue of intermarriage was greatly politicized. Some considered the marriage of women to foreigners as a feminine vice and a betrayal of race, religion, and state. Others saw these women as victims of exploitation by opportunist foreigners. Under the objective of freeing Burmese Buddhist women from exploitation by foreigners and protecting their interests, the 1954 Special Marriage and Inheritance Act for Buddhist Women was enacted. Than argues that the division across Burma’s social landscape between those who urged women to embrace modernity and those who saw women as a bulwark against the corruption of Burmese identity by foreign cultural influence was an outstanding feature of the AFPFL years.

Chapter 7 discusses prostitution under the title of “Marginalized Women in the Making of the ‘Burman’ Nation.” During the colonial period, prostitution—which became common during and following the Japanese occupation—was seen simply as a medical concern threatening the health of British soldiers. However, after independence the issue of prostitution was used as propaganda. While the ruling party viewed prostitution as a form of moral corruption brought on by foreign ideologies and modernity and blamed women for their inherently vile nature, the opposition portrayed it as an outcome of economic injustice and evidence of government failure. After slight

mention of prostitution from the 1960s to the 1990s, the author turns to prostitution in the twenty-first century, including the Burmese social landscape and human trafficking.

Than focuses on “the forgotten women of Burma,” such as the Women’s Army, Communist women, and prostitutes; they have not been included in any “official” histories, which have been censored by authorities. The author’s challenge to reveal the ideology of the “official histories” has succeeded, as descriptions of the activities of the Women’s Army and of Communist women are limited in domestic historical research, such as *Political Movements of Myanmar Women* (Myanma Hsoshelit Lanzin Pati 1975). This book shows that gender studies are indispensable to enrich the discussion concerning the multiple histories of Myanmar/Burma.

Furthermore, this book also indicates that the context of the social landscape of women in the 1950s parallels the current situation. For example, ex-President Thein Sein enforced the four collective laws, what is called the Race and Religion Laws, including the Myanmar Buddhist Women’s Special Marriage Law, on August 2015 without discarding the 1954 Special Marriage and Inheritance Act for Buddhist Women. These laws were drafted to protect the rights of Burmese female Buddhists from the threat of Muslims, just as in the 1950s, when the issue of intermarriage was greatly politicized.

However, there is some inconsistency between the framework of the book and the text. For example, the trafficking of women, which is described as part of the arguments within Chapter 6 in Introduction (p. 15), is actually discussed in Chapter 7 (p. 161). Furthermore, it is not clear what the author wants to discuss as a whole, as there is no overall discussion and only a brief summary in each chapter. Although redundant and arbitrary usage of statistical data makes Than’s arguments monotonous and less persuasive, the topics addressed in this book are critical not only for the study of Burmese history but also for an understanding of present-day Myanmar.

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State and Finance in the Philippines, 1898–1941: The Mismanagement of an American Colony

YOSHIKO NAGANO

Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2015, 272pp.

In *State and Finance in the Philippines, 1898–1941: The Mismanagement of an American Colony*, Yoshiko Nagano aims to revise the history of the deep financial crisis that hit the Philippines between 1919 and 1922. The economic problems facing the Philippines after the end of World War I are to be understood as part of a larger Southeast Asian crisis caused by a sudden decline in the price of export products on the international markets. In the Philippine case, this crisis was particularly severe due to the collapse of the Philippine National Bank (PNB), which caused hyperinflation. The consequences were far-reaching: the Philippine financial crisis resulted in the imprisonment of several local banking officials on counts of corruption, discredited their alleged political backer Sergio Osmeña, and ended the “Filipinization” policy as practiced by Governor-General Francis Burton Harrison, who was replaced by Leonard Wood.

Examining the crisis within the wider context of financial policies of the American colonial state between 1898 and 1941, Nagano contends that it was the failure of US policies, rather than the inability and corruption of Filipino banking officials, that produced the crisis. The Americans mismanaged their colony, after which they successfully blamed their Filipino subjects for the catastrophic results of their own mistakes, in line with the colonial discourse that justified American rule and economic dominance as a means to developing the archipelago.

It is in Nagano’s thoroughly researched analysis of the PNB’s collapse that her book makes its most important intervention. As Nagano rightly laments, existing scholarship—following the US version of the crisis—customarily attributes the collapse to the incompetence and corruption of Filipino banking officials. For instance, Benedict Anderson claims that “Sergio Osmeña, Sr., and his friends helped themselves to huge, virtually free loans . . . and cheerfully ignored the subsequent bankrupting of the bank of issue” (Anderson 2004, 202–203; see also Abinales and Amoroso 2005, 141–142). Instead, Nagano claims that the main responsibility for the collapse, and hence for the severity of the crisis, lies with American policymakers. The Bureau of Insular Affairs made policies that put the bank and the currency at risk: pegging the silver-based Philippine peso to the gold-based US dollar, creating the PNB as both a commercial bank and a central bank responsible for managing the currency, and allowing the PNB to use currency reserve funds for distribution as loans to the lucrative agricultural sector during World War I. Moreover, the Bureau of Insular Affairs allowed irresponsible banking practices to persist, mainly as the PNB accepted standing crops—rather than the land itself—as collateral for loans to the agricultural sector. This practice worked as long as the export market profited from high prices; but when the market collapsed after the war ended, it meant trouble for the bank that kept the national currency.

Nagano furthermore argues that the customary presentation of the crisis as a corruption scandal in the PNB has its roots in American colonial discourses “intended to legitimize the mastery of the United States over Philippine society” (p. 188). Nagano’s view seems plausible: exposure of the mistakes made by American officials and institutions in the lead-up to and during the crisis would undermine the legitimacy of US dominance. Therefore, she goes on to argue, the Americans deliberately covered up their errors, imposed the notion of the crisis as “the corruption scandal of the Philippine National Bank” (p. 5), and strengthened their control over the finances of the Philippines. The “scandal” supposedly showed the limitations of the “Filipinizing” of the bureaucracy under Governor-General Harrison and helped give way to a renewed focus on US control under Wood.

These conclusions shed new light on the split between Osmeña and Manuel Quezon, as the latter banked on the official view of the PNB’s collapse to challenge the leadership of Osmeña, who was politically responsible for the PNB. Instead of the image of a thoroughly corrupt Osmeña being defied by a more professional Quezon (see Abinales and Amoroso 2005, 141), Nagano presents Quezon simply as the politician who was most able to use the US version of events to his own advantage. Sadly, in her eyes this makes him less of a “true” nationalist (p. 191)—but whatever the right kind of nationalism for a 1920s Filipino politician may be is not up to twenty-first-century historians to decide.

Nagano’s book adds well-researched detail to recent scholarship that is more critical of American reports (such as that of the Woods-Forbes mission which reported the “corruption scandal”) of Filipino inability and corruption (e.g., Kramer 2006, 388–398). While it is a great achievement of the book to draw attention to the US responsibility for the crisis and to emphasize the way colonial discourse covered up the failures, it also downplays Filipino responsibilities. Nagano does acknowledge that Filipino officials were liable for corruption and irresponsible lending practices. But she leaves their contributions to the crisis out of her main argument by pinning the prime responsibility on the Americans. For instance, Osmeña did play a dubious role by appointing inexperienced cronies to the PNB, but Nagano’s argument seems to confirm his rejection of his critics as being anti-Filipino.

The book’s conception of a single colonial discourse implemented from above is problematic. Nagano has a good point in arguing that the US version of the crisis as a corruption scandal in the PNB was in line with the developing mission stated in colonial discourses. But a more differentiated approach to such discourses would considerably enhance this point. Discourses never work one-way or top-down but are enacted by both the ruler and the ruled, i.e., the colonizer and the colonized. How did different Filipinos uphold colonial discourses, and how did this determine their responses to the notion of the corruption scandal in the PNB? Such a discussion may go beyond the book’s original conceptualization as a financial-political history, although the discussion of Quezon’s adoption of the rhetoric of the corruption scandal in the PNB would offer a good starting point.

A further complication emerges in the discussion of the interactions between colonial authorities and the demands and aspirations of the local elites in terms of economic and financial policies. While this is an important question that builds on from research such as Michael Cullinane's *Ilustrado Politics* (2003), Nagano tends to treat the "Filipino elite" (pp. 74, 76) as a monolithic whole without differentiating much between the demands of differences in terms of the kinds of enterprises they engaged in, or regional varieties.

Nagano may not have written the "true history" (p. 5) of the Philippine financial crisis—such a qualification applies to no account of history, however well researched, and should have been avoided by the author. Nevertheless, her book is a vital revision of this crisis and its implications for the (political) history of the Philippines.

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Humanitarian Assistance for Displaced Persons from Myanmar: Royal Thai Government Policy and Donor, INGO, NGO and UN Agency Delivery

PREMJAI VUNGSIRIPHISAL, DARES CHUSRI, and SUPANG CHANTAVANICH, eds.
Cham: Springer, 2014, xxi+245pp.

Resettlement of Displaced Persons on the Thai-Myanmar Border

BENJAMIN HARKINS and SUPANG CHANTAVANICH, eds.
Cham and New York: Springer, 2014, xix+116pp.

In 1984 displaced people from Myanmar began to flee to the Thai-Myanmar border. To date, Thailand has hosted millions of displaced people in Thai-Myanmar border shelters. These people have insufficient language skills to be integrated into Thai society, while "many Thai officers and voluntary guards did not speak the displaced persons' languages" (Premjai *et al.*, p. 72).

Both academics and policy makers need to know more about the dynamics of the Royal Thai Government's policies toward the displaced population on the border, challenges facing the stakeholder involved and policy implications for the stakeholders. These two volumes edited by the Asian Research Center for Migration at Chulalongkorn University can easily find a place on reading lists for academics interested in international security, human insecurity, refugees, and Thai studies. They are also must-reads for anyone seeking a better understanding of the displaced population on the Thai-Myanmar border.

Correcting Misunderstandings about the Royal Thai Government

A collection of essays by brilliant scholars from multiple disciplines, *Humanitarian Assistance for Displaced Persons from Myanmar* reviews the dynamics of the Royal Thai Government's policies toward the displaced population on the Thai-Myanmar border and explores the impacts of current interventions by stakeholders (e.g., donor countries, NGOs, international organizations, and the Royal Thai Government).

This volume has two parts. Part 1 (Chapters 1–6) highlights the Royal Thai Government's policies toward the displaced population on the Thai-Myanmar border, while Part 2 (Chapters 7–13) analyzes the other stakeholders' funding policies, project implementation strategies, and countermeasures against the Royal Thai Government, as well as the impacts and limitations of stakeholders. From a comparative perspective, this edited volume examines three potential solutions for the displaced population on the Thai-Myanmar border: resettlement, local integration, and repatriation.

In the opinion of the reviewer, the most obvious contribution of this edited volume is to correct misunderstandings about the Royal Thai Government, which has been contributing significant funding and human resources for the displaced population on the Thai-Myanmar border.

First, it is evident that the Royal Thai Government is not a signatory to the 1951 UN Convention on the Rights of Refugees; neither does it have any domestic legislation that directly defines the standards of the treatment for refugees. However, this does not mean that the Royal Thai Government does not follow international standards on the treatment of refugees. The government's policy toward the displaced population is "shaped in various Cabinet resolution, Ministry announcements and regulations" (Premjai *et al.*, p. 90).

For decades, the government has been providing community-based shelter services and protection to the displaced population, "not on the grounds of refugee status, but as displaced persons" (Premjai *et al.*, p. 12). It has had to balance the needs of its own citizens with those of the displaced population on the Thai-Myanmar border. According to interviews with some members of the displaced population, "they largely feel safe, and believe their education and health care provision are at a certain level satisfactory" (Premjai *et al.*, p. 75).

Second, stakeholders have been seeking durable solutions to improve the quality of life in the border shelters. For instance, “microfinance has been initiated in some settlements in the form of Village Saving and Loan Associations (VSLA) for those who are more interested in setting up their own small businesses than looking for waged employment” (Premjai *et al.*, p. 45).

As the Royal Government insists, “when the circumstances that caused them to flee have changed or ceases, then they must return to the country of their former habitual residence” (Premjai *et al.*, p. 13). Therefore, the displaced population’s voluntary repatriation is the most practical second-best solution in the future. However, voluntary repatriation of the displaced population would depend on the ceasing of armed conflict between ethnic-based militias and the Myanmar Army, and peace appears a distant prospect.

Third, some critics ignore the fact that Thailand is in a uniquely difficult position with regard to funding shortage. On the one hand, the Royal Thai Government needs to serve the immediate basic needs of the displaced population on the Thai-Myanmar border. On the other hand, it needs to provide the displaced population with opportunities for self-reliance. Due to a funding shortage, there is a lack of effective communication among the Royal Thai Government, donor countries, international organizations, and NGOs, as well as a halting pace of registrations in the border shelters. As a result, many unregistered displaced people are not eligible for the resettlement program.

Some donor countries are still recovering from the 2008 financial crisis. Not surprisingly, it is hard for the Royal Thai Government to commit to sustainable funding, let alone providing increased opportunities for vocational training and income-generating activities for the displaced population. There is an increasing incidence of violence and human rights abuses toward displaced children on the Thai-Myanmar border, and education is still disrupted: “graduation in the settlements is not recognized by the Thai education bureau yet” (Premjai *et al.*, p. 44), and “large numbers of children are not continuing their studies and number of drop-outs is quite large” (Premjai *et al.*, p. 62).

Fourth, there is a fallacy that the Royal Thai Government’s policies toward the displaced population are unchangeable. In fact, the government’s policies are somewhat flexible: “there has been flexibility at the practical and local level” (Premjai *et al.*, p. 85). For instance, members of the displaced population are allowed to leave the shelters to seek health care in Thai hospitals as well as get access to education in other shelters. More important, many displaced people leave the border shelters to seek employment. Many of them “do have jobs, and are able to leave the settlements to work for local employers, usually in agriculture and manufacturing” (Premjai *et al.*, p. 44). “This practice is often tolerated at the local level” (Premjai *et al.*, p. 24).

At the same time, displaced people can work within the border shelters, such as employees of the NGOs. The findings of this volume show that “almost two-thirds of displaced persons” who participated in the study agreed with the Royal Thai Government’s policies toward the displaced

population and “none of the displaced persons complained openly about the poverty they experienced within the shelters” (Harkins and Supang, p. xiv).

In the conclusion, the editors and contributors to this volume note that there is no optimal solution to reduce the number of displaced persons in the shelters on the Thai-Myanmar border. They believe that “resettlement is the only one of the three durable solutions available in the border shelters” (Premjai *et al.*, p. 30). This conclusion is open to further discussion.

Is Resettlement the Best Solution?

The past decade witnessed more people flowing from Myanmar into the Thai-Myanmar border shelters, “primarily due to the ongoing conflict and human rights abuses within Myanmar.” Historically, resettlement of displaced populations has the following three functions: meeting “the protection requirements or special needs of individual refugees,” providing “a major durable solution for large groups of refugees,” and serving as a second-best solution of burden sharing among the stakeholders (Harkins and Supang, pp. 10, 88).

The resettlement of displaced families on the Thai-Myanmar border is regarded as the largest resettlement program in the world, with 12 receiving countries accepting displaced families (Harkins and Supang, p. xiii). According to a report issued by the Thailand Burma Border Consortium, 11,107 displaced persons from the shelters departed for resettlement in 2010, bringing the total number of departures since 2006 to 64,513. Approximately 76 percent of this total were destined for resettlement in the United States, “with the remainder accepted by Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Japan” (Harkins and Supang, p. 2).

In practice, if an applicant living in a border shelter has “all of the documentation necessary, it is correctly filled out without any major discrepancies and they are able to answer the application questions plausibly, the process generally takes less than 1 year” (Harkins and Supang, p. 54). The applicant is also required to apply for an exit permit from the Royal Thai Government, without which he/she cannot depart from Thailand (Harkins and Supang, p. 57).

During the past decade, thousands of people have benefited due to the resettlement program. “[R]eunion with friends and family members, educational opportunities and hope for a better future were the primary reasons for their decisions to apply” (Harkins and Supang, p. 48), although most resettled families argued that “they had no control over which country their application was sent to” (Harkins and Supang, p. 55). Will the resettlement program be the most durable solution for the displaced population on the Thai-Myanmar border in the long run?

In reviewing resettlement policy-related documents, interviews, and field visits, *Resettlement of Displaced Persons on the Thai-Myanmar Border*, edited by Benjamin Harkins and Supang Chantavanich, focuses on the receiving countries of resettled families (particularly the United

States), explores the motivations and constraints for the displaced population to participate in the resettlement program, analyzes the resettlement's impacts on stakeholders (e.g., the displaced population, remaining populations on the Thai-Myanmar border, and new displaced families flowing into the border shelters). Finally, this volume stresses the policy implications for stakeholders in the foreseeable future.

This volume has six chapters. The first two review the research approach and the literature of the resettlement program. As the editors and contributors believe, there has been a public-private partnership established by the stakeholders to promote the resettlement program, such as the Royal Thai Government's agencies (especially the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Foreign Affairs), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, International Organization for Migration, Overseas Processing Entity, US Department of Homeland Security, etc.

Chapters 3 and 4 examine the negative and positive factors influencing the displaced population's attitudes toward the resettlement program. The negative factors, constitute a pre-existing exclusion to full participation in the resettlement program. As the editors and contributors suggest, the negative factors include but are not limited to "living conditions within the shelters and the future prospects for local integration within Thailand," policy restrictions (e.g., lack of registration status, and stalled registration process), and security concerns—many displaced families felt that "it was unsafe to return to Myanmar currently" (Harkins and Supang, pp. 48, 50). On the other hand, the positive factors include "better educational opportunities for children," "better job opportunities," "an overall better future for their families," as well as "family reunification" (Harkins and Supang, p. 79).

In Chapter 5, based on the cases of resettled families in St. Paul, Minnesota, and San Francisco, California, the editors and contributors to this volume highlight the challenges facing resettled families in the United States. For example, "upon arrival in the U.S. they often find that they are over the age limit to attend local public schools" (Harkins and Supang, p. 82). What is worse, since the labor market in the United States "appears to have reached its saturation point for unskilled workers," resettled families have "very limited employment opportunities in a very high-cost living environment" (Harkins and Supang, p. 90). For instance, the funding allocated for cash assistance to support the resettled families was "too low for high-cost cities such as those in the San Francisco Bay Area where taxes and living expenses are among the highest in the US" (Harkins and Supang, p. 98). What type of welfare assistance did the resettled families receive? In most cases, they received food stamps (between \$300 and \$600 per month). In addition, the majority of resettled families received rental assistance, while some "said that it did not fully cover their actual rental expenses" (Harkins and Supang, p. 83).

Finally, Chapter 6 draws conclusion and advances policy recommendations for stakeholders in the future. As the editors and contributors suggest, although resettlement should be part of a sustainable and solutions-oriented approach to displacement on the Thai-Myanmar border, "it

appears highly unlikely that resettlement can resolve the displaced person situation in the border shelters as a lone durable solution” (Harkins and Supang, p. 95).

So far, the most significant constraint is that the resettlement program is significantly underfunded. For instance, the stakeholders have insufficient funding to reinvigorate the screening mechanism that determines displaced persons’ status, in order to provide new asylum seekers with basic services.

Unfortunately, stakeholders are often requested to provide funding for the needs of resettled families, such as “adjusted immigration status, stable housing, engagement with community services and independent functioning” (Harkins and Supang, p. 82).

In the opinions of the editors and contributors, there is no truly feasible solution for resettled families from the Thai-Myanmar border shelters. Without sufficient funding, it is impossible to implement any measures for self-reliance, which is “a necessary part of any truly sustainable longterm strategy for resolving the displacement situation” (Harkins and Supang, p. 97).

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Two Crises, Different Outcomes: East Asia and Global Finance

T.J. PEMPEL and KEIICHI TSUNEKAWA, eds.

Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015, viii+267pp.

More Financial Crises Ahead?

Two Crises, Different Outcomes: East Asia and Global Finance makes three key assertions: first, contrary to the school attributing the Asian financial crisis to “crony capitalism,” the debacle of 1997–98 was due largely to unregulated capital flows that flooded the region then quickly fled at the onset of the macroeconomic distortions they had brought about.

Second, the United States and Europe could have avoided the financial collapse of 2008–09 had they learned the right lessons from the Asian financial crisis and strengthened instead of dismantling or weakening their systems of financial regulation.

Third, learning from the Asian financial crisis, the East Asian economies took steps to prevent a rerun of that crisis, including making currency swap arrangements, limiting their exposure to new financial products like credit default swaps, and, above all, building up massive financial reserves derived from intensified export-intensive trade strategies. These measures insulated them from the 2008–09 global financial crisis.

To be sure, these three arguments have been made by others in the academic and political

debates that followed both crises. But it is worth restating them cogently and with strong empirical backing, as the book does. Moreover, the essays on the region's different economies provide important nuances to the book's central arguments. For instance, Yasunobu Okabe's paper on Korea and Thailand claims that in contrast to Thailand, Korea's post-Asian financial crisis regulation of capital flows to foreign bank branches was quite lenient, and this nearly brought Korea to its knees again in 2008; the country was saved from "a second financial crisis through a \$30 billion currency swap approved by the US Federal Reserve Board in October 2008" (p. 105). Had Korea had a second financial collapse, who knows what the knock-on effects on the region might have been? We might now be writing on how the East Asian region was drawn into the maelstrom of the global financial crisis.

Some of the essays provide us with interesting insights into the institutional contexts of the different countries' responses to the two crises. Barry Naughton, in his essay on China, says that while the response of the Chinese government—the rolling out of a stimulus program—was superficially similar in both the Asian financial crisis and the global financial crisis—the institutional contexts were different. During the Asian financial crisis, the stimulus was intended by reform-oriented Prime Minister Zhu Rongji to be an emergency measure within a liberalizing trend, while during the global financial crisis it was part of a return to greater state intervention under the Hu Jintao-Wen Jiabao leadership.

In varying degrees the different authors make the point that while East Asia may have dodged the bullet during the global financial crisis, it is not out of the woods. In fact, not only is the era of high growth over, but structural crises are catching up with the different economies of the region. Building up financial reserves via vigorous export drives and largely staying away from Wall Street's dangerous financial innovations like securitized mortgages and "credit default swaps" may have saved the Asian economies from the worst effects of the global financial crisis, but their deeper problems remain unresolved—problems stemming largely from the region's integration into the global economy.

What are these problems? As the essays make clear, though the Asian economies have structural similarities, each of them has its unique configuration of challenges. Japan, Tsunekawa points out, cannot seem to shake off its quarter of a century of stagnation owing to pendulum swings between neoliberal reform advocated by reform technocrats and increased public spending in response to electoral pressures. One path cannot be pursued long enough for it to produce decisive results. However, this oscillation seems to be a symptom of something deeper, more structural in character, something that Tsunekawa mentions but apparently does not attach much significance to as a cause of Japan's stagnation. Japan's economic system has been described as "communitarian capitalism," one whose underlying logic is community solidarity. Created during Japan's drive to catch up with the West, the system sought to contain social conflict while at the same time promoting rapid development and national autonomy. Resting on social compromises such as

lifetime employment for the core workforce, worker-management cooperation in the production process, and strict observance of seniority, the system is threatened with unraveling when subjected to reforms liberating market forces. While the system worked well during the country's dynamic postwar development as a global exporting power, many analysts feel it has become dysfunctional under the current conditions of global capitalism. Yet inertia dominates because, as political economist Marie Anchordoguy claims, Japanese society would rather live with dysfunctionality than risk fundamental change, with its unpredictable consequences (Anchordoguy 2005).

For Korea, it seems the opposite is the case. While Japan was too big to be successfully brought to heel by external forces promoting liberalization, such as Washington and the International Monetary Fund, Korea was laid low by the same actors, which used the Asian financial crisis to substantially weaken the formidable alliance between the state and the conglomerates that had been the engine of Korea's sizzling growth from the 1960s to the 1990s. Liberalization has advanced in key sectors of the economy, being especially swift in the financial sector. By 2004, foreigners owned 45 percent of corporate stocks. Capital market deregulation triggered a credit card lending bust in 2003, a real estate bust in 2003–04, a liquidity crisis in 2008, and bankruptcies of savings banks in 2011 (Park 2013, 225). As noted above, only a \$30 billion swap provided by the US Federal Reserve seemed to have saved Korea from a second financial collapse in 2008. Ironically, the financial sector has become the most vulnerable point of an economy that probably had the most repressed financial sector in non-Communist Asia during the “miracle years.”

In the case of China, the challenge is not so much a choice between liberalization and a drift back to state intervention highlighted by Naughton, but between sticking to a high-growth export-oriented political economy that represses domestic demand and one more geared to expanding it. The downspin of demand in China's most important markets following the onset of the global financial crisis and the blame game that targeted its massive trade surplus with the center economies as one of the key reasons for the crash convinced the Chinese leadership that a new economic strategy was badly needed.

When in 2009 then President Hu Jintao and Prime Minister Wen Jiabao launched China's massive stimulus program—at US\$585 billion, the biggest in the world in relation to the size of the economy—their aim went beyond providing temporary relief while awaiting the recovery of the country's main export markets in the United States and Europe. The stimulus was intended to be the cutting edge of an ambitious effort to make domestic demand the driver of economic growth via redistributive and related measures (see Bello 2015).

This shift to stimulating domestic consumption made economic sense, not only because export markets were volatile but also because owing to overinvestment there was much unused capacity in the economy. Also, the stimulus was attractive from an equity point of view since it would place more purchasing power in the hands of the vast majority of peasants and workers, who had been disadvantaged by the priority given to export-oriented industry and profits. This internal rebalanc-

ing between classes would parallel the international rebalancing between Beijing and its main trading partners.

The problem was that the shift was not just a case of changing macroeconomic priorities; it would also entail transforming the composition of winners and losers. This meant taking on the set of political and economic interests that were the prime beneficiaries of the political economy of export-oriented rapid growth the previous quarter of a century.

The Hu-Wen push did not get very far. Not only did the export-led rapid growth lobby manage to neutralize the plan to make domestic consumption the cutting edge of the economy, but it was also able to hijack the massive stimulus program that had been intended to place money and resources in the hands of consumers (Wang 2014, 118–119).

It remains to be seen how the current leadership of Xi Jinping will manage citizens' expectations in a period of much slower growth, increasing joblessness, greater inequality, and much greater discontent. Will it continue to tread softly around the powerful set of interests that has dominated society for over two decades or will it muster the courage to break with the political economy of export-oriented rapid growth and lead the way to a new development paradigm based on domestic consumption underpinned by greater equity? Naughton is correct that the current leadership has still to definitively settle on a macroeconomic course, but his judgment that maintenance of "the full panoply of social insurance and industrial policies that were ramped up during the crisis . . . no longer seems natural, inevitable, and right" (p. 133) underestimates the magnitude of the challenge facing the new leadership, though he is not unsympathetic to the need for addressing the dislocations triggered by the liberalization program.

The Southeast Asian economies, for their part, are facing the challenge of moving from labor-intensive, low-value-added production to technology-intensive, high-value-added production. Indeed, Richard Doner says that the very success of the Southeast Asian economies in protecting themselves from a rerun of the Asian financial crisis has contributed to their current dilemma:

[Their] responses, which relied largely on macroeconomic measures and financial sector reforms, as well as a proliferation of free trade agreements and participation in global production networks, alleviated pressures for systematic improvements in technology-related capacities such as research and development training. They perpetrated a broader strategy that, while resulting in impressive GDP growth rates and diversification, has encouraged capital-intensive, foreign-dominated manufacturing and weak intra- and intersectoral linkages. (p. 164)

The result has been to expose these economies to what Doner calls the "middle income trap" or what Stephanie Rosenfeld and I earlier termed the "structural squeeze," that is, being caught between "low-wage/low-skill and higher-wage/higher-productivity rivals" in a competitive global economy sliding into stagnation (p. 164; Bello and Rosenfeld 1992, 251–277).

While having their own specific configurations of crisis, the East Asian economies face the common threat of increasing obsolescence of their mode of integration into a global economy that

is increasingly driven by the gyrations of finance capital.

During the late 1990s, speculative capital's push to have a piece of the Asian economic miracle and the Asian economies' need for capital to fuel their export machines combined to create the Asian financial crisis. The effort of the Asian economies to fortify themselves against new attacks on their currencies led them to build up their financial reserves through aggressive export drives. A great portion of these reserves was then recycled as loans to the US Treasury and US banks, and through the wonders of financial engineering, they helped finance the housing and other bubbles that brought on the global financial crisis. It remains to be seen what the next stage is in this increasingly toxic relationship between Asia's export-driven growth and global speculative capital. As stagnation spreads in the region's productive sectors, will its economic and political elites be tempted once more to resort to speculative finance to shore up profits?

Seen in a dynamic global context, the two financial crises explored in this volume emerge as explosions—or implosions—waiting to happen in a global capitalist system driven by instability and tending toward disequilibrium. In their conclusion, the editors lay out three possible scenarios for the coming period: a “best case scenario,” “collapse around the corner,” and “a lost decade ahead.” They seem to regard the third option as the least unlikely. East Asian societies face a range of critical problems in the next decade, including a rise in inequality, graying populations, climate change, and security crises. But one of the most serious challenges is the failure to make a transition to a post-export-led growth model even as global finance capital remains largely unbridled. This volatile conjunction, warn the editors, “could lead to the recurrence of devastating financial crises and the precarious response based on their own debt accumulation in the East Asian countries” (p. 232).

This scenario may well transpire, but it may be inflected greatly by a development that, surprisingly, the volume largely ignores: greater geo-economic competition between China and the United States. This competition accelerated greatly under the Obama administration, with its Trans-Pacific Partnership initiative, which seeks to integrate countries in the Pacific Rim—notably, Japan, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Singapore—into a US-dominated free trade area designed to counter China's economic hegemony. Fought over by two economic giants, one pushing the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the other its Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership designed to keep the United States at bay, the smaller and weaker economies are likely to be subjected to severe pressure for preferential trade, investment, and financial liberalization from both sides. With geo-economic—and geopolitical—competition added to volatile capital flows and continued addiction to export-led growth, the East Asian region is entering uncharted, troubled waters.

Walden Flores Bello
Focus on the Global South

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Catastrophe and Regeneration in Indonesia's Peatlands: Ecology, Economy and Society

KOSUKE MIZUNO, MOTOKO S. FUJITA, and SHUICHI KAWAI, eds.

Singapore: NUS Press in association with Kyoto University Press, 2016, xxvii + 466pp.

Fires and haze have become regular events during the dry season in tropical areas in Southeast Asia, especially Indonesia. This is due mainly to government institutional failure in managing resource appropriation. Hence, existing solutions of command and control to mitigate the risk have not resulted in satisfactory results in analyzing the source and impacts (Glover and Jessup 1999; Varkkey 2016).

Catastrophe and Regeneration in Indonesia's Peatlands: Ecology, Economy and Society reminds readers of the importance of the relationship between societies, institutions, and the environment in tropical settings before offering a recommendation. It shows that this relationship has been influenced by living strategies that formed through long periods of ethnic interaction, colonization, and independent state governance. The authors offer the concept known as the “Sustainable Humanosphere” to interpret this relationship and use grounded research to avoid study bias. The book then introduces the idea of developing “people forestry” in order to preserve peatlands while satisfying the economic needs of societies. These are the strong points of the book.

The book was written by 14 researchers who were in close contact with tropical societies in Indonesia. It is structured in three parts, with a total of 14 chapters excluding the introduction and epilogue. The first part attempts to explain biomass production in Southeast Asia. It gives an informative description of the tropical rainforest as intersectional beneficiary resource stock for

conservation, economic development, as well as a social motive for income survival. The first section also investigates the ways in which natural resources have been appropriated. It describes the governance of forest resources, which has been conducted by different regimes through the years in Southeast Asia. The first section also covers historical context, with appropriation trajectories of forested regions, including state agrarian policy, forest management, traditional agricultural practices, and large company projects.

Chapter 1 devotes special attention to the development of land policies and forest management in Indonesia since the days of Dutch colonization. It notes that to some extent, states have played a dominant role in the country's land and forest management. During the Dutch occupation, the agrarian law with the specific principle known as *domeinverklaring*¹⁾ provided guarantees that enabled states to own the land. It also gave freedom to companies to lease state land for efficient and productive forest management. Before the policy was passed in 1870, the Dutch had also formed some institutions for more scientific forest management, passed regulations to manage excessive exploitation of timber forests in Java and Madura, abolished *corvee* labor or *Blandong*, and set up the Department of Forest Service. These institutions engaged in forest management in a way that was hostile to the community, as it demarcated forest boundaries, created maps, and specified expansion. Even so, it increased the tree forest.

This increased tree forest suffered from differences in forest management after Indonesian independence: through the Basic Forestry Act of 1967, all controlled forestland in the country was eligible for logging and industrial tree plantation. The act accelerated the process of deforestation in the country. Within this policy orientation, the state introduced a social forestry policy for the community as well as creating consensus on forest zoning.

Like Chapter 1, Chapters 2 and 3 also note the transformation of tropical forest, which has occurred mostly through the processes of degradation and afforestation. In order to promote an understanding of the processes, Chapter 2 introduces the biotic resource approach, which identifies the relationship of transformation between humans and the ecosystem with the process of modernization. This approach shows that hunter-gatherer lifestyles, swidden agriculture, commercial crops, transmigration, and forest fires are factors that influence forest degradation. In addition to this long observation, Chapter 2 proposes that afforestation through logging still allows some natural forest species to live. Therefore, it is necessary to have a nested conservation scheme. In addition, economic incentives such as payment for ecosystem services, forest certification systems, and the UN Collaborative Programme Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation are also required to support initiatives for maintaining biodiversity.

Chapter 3 looks more deeply into the subject by evaluating the sustainability of reforested

1) *Domeinverklaring* means that "all land which is not proved to be *eigendom* (subject to complete right of ownership of land possessed by European people) land shall be deemed the domain of the state" (p.23).

areas through comparing the biomass stock of standing trees and biomass flow. Observations from acacia plantations between 2000 and 2005 show that secondary forest is sufficient to maintain the biomass balance. However, an assessment of carbon transfer through the decomposition process is necessary in order to see the complete balance. The authors of this chapter also suggest developing institutions and management that work in harmony with local communities and coexist with social forestry (pp. 112–114).

The second part of the book contains imaginative observations that take the reader from the tropical biomass region closer into peatland. As in the first part, the authors emphasize the necessity of recognizing basic knowledge of resource stock, native animals, and vegetation of peatland, as well as human relationships and the course of livelihoods from those resources in order to identify challenges and potential use of peatland. Recognition of resource stock and flow factors is important for regenerating degraded peatland. The author's concern in Chapter 4 is that a basic level of knowledge is needed regarding plants and animals living in the peat swamp, as well as livelihoods and history of local inhabitants, in utilizing the peat swamp forest. This knowledge is required for peatland restoration as well as for the purpose of study in describing the peatland ecosystem.

This concern is partially addressed in Chapter 5 by tracing historical changes in the relationship between humans and peatlands. By focusing on Sumatra, Indonesia, as the observation site, Chapter 5 shows that river topography influences the distribution of local community settlements as well as trade commodities and patterns. The influx of migrants with different motives, foreign direct investment in petroleum, and Suharto's developmentalist strategy of development are factors changing livelihood patterns.

This change is explained in detail in Chapter 6, where the authors highlight characteristics of peat swamps use by local communities in Riau. In order to describe the relationship between the local community and peatland, the Momose model, which is explained in a previous chapter, is used to classify villages in the peatland region. The authors note that during precolonial times, local communities regarded peatland as an extension of the ocean. It would require a huge investment for them to transform the area for production activities. This is not an incentive for Talang people living in the hinterland or in Pangkalan villages, other than collecting agricultural and forest products to use for economic activity. These products were sold in Muara villages at the confluence of the river. Laut people, inhabitants of fishing villages, would also trade their fishing and marine products. This relationship was broken with the arrival of migrants. At the present time, Pangkalan villages are an expansion area for palm oil plantations (p. 201).

Within this land use transformation of peatland for plantations and the phenomenon of abandonment due to decreasing productivity, Chapter 7 highlights rehabilitation of degraded peatland by reflecting on the implementation of Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation with an addition of conservation (REDD+). Through examination of types of land use in

the conception of REDD+ and livelihood reproduction, it shows that natural and secondary forest has had the most effective greenhouse gas reduction, high biodiversity conservation, and land conservation. Therefore, it is necessary to conserve the remaining forest area. Meanwhile, plantations of rubber, palm oil, and fast-growing trees provide moderate greenhouse gas control but low biodiversity. Since these plantations are highly profitable, the system requires systematic management to prevent accelerated decomposition of peatland. In addition, swidden agriculture and the conversion of peatland for farmland activities should be minimized.

The third part of the book is concerned mostly with looking at the consistency of the approaches and definitions introduced in previous chapters, such as biomass production, resource stock and flow, nested conservation, peatland biodiversity, and the relationship of river topography, social economy livelihood, and social forestry thorough direct observation in the Giam Siak Bukit Batu (GSK-BB) Biosphere. GSK-BB is the first private-initiative conservation biosphere built in the peat swamp area. The surveyed areas, as explained in Chapter 8, are separated into two zones: the Bukit Batu River Estuary and Tanjung Leban Village. In the conception of Momose, these zones have characteristics allowing them to be classified as migrant and fishing villages. The first zones are rich in alluvial soil and have strategic locations as trade points. Most of the village area in this zone is an extension of the natural peat swamp reservation area and the Sinar Mas Forestry acacia plantation. Therefore, it is interesting that Chapter 12 looks at the biodiversity and land use in this area. As one of the first systematic studies on animal diversity in the peat swamp forest, this chapter shows that the population sum and biodiversity of birds and mammals in the acacia forest is lower compared to the natural forest. Separation between the natural forest in the protected areas and the wildlife reserve by canals is one of the factors in this lack of diversity (p. 373). Therefore, this chapter suggests the importance of internal patches of rubber forest to link natural forest and secondary forest. This link is important for the movement of birds for the process of *ornitokori*, or bird population rebuilding. Chapter 14 also observes local communities and their efforts at forest restoration. It shows that the surveyed households have a high motivation to participate in the conservation of the forest. However, this chapter also notes that this desire is influenced by socioeconomic factors (p. 415).

The second zone is mostly a peat swamp area that has extended up to the coastal area. With such important resources in this area, the remaining chapters try to investigate the process of land cultivation (Chapter 9), hydrological environment (Chapter 10), livelihood activities (Chapter 11), and production of biomass by corporations and small farmers (Chapter 13). Chapter 9 notes that land use change is caused by given social characteristics of the people in the area, which was primarily peat submerged under water with abundant timber resources on top of it (latent cause). Even during the existence of *panglong* or loggers, the majority of peatland was still intact. It was dramatically changed with the expansion of acacia and palm oil plantations (trigger cause). Chapter 10 especially highlights the changing hydrological cycle of peatland with the presence of the plan-

tations. It clarifies the climatic conditions of concentrated rainfall and the characteristic of ground-water levels in the peat swamp. Chapter 11 acknowledges that although palm oil plantations are at risk of burning, village people still invest their capital for future uncertain harvests. The chapter notes the potential of developing the area as people's forestry for two indicators: the available abandoned land and potential diversion of source income from non-peatland cultivation. In addition to these, local knowledge of cultivating trees native to the peat swamp and openness to ethnic diversity show the existence of social capital for people's forestry.

In the last section of the book, the authors provide an epilogue as a space to link the conception of the Humanosphere, which is explained in the introduction, and discussion as well as findings of the chapters. The epilogue also further elaborates recommended solutions for regenerating peat swamp through people forestry and by observing the harmonization of different motives of actors in the biomass production system.

Being an edited volume, this book suffers from consistency of writing structure in some chapters. Several chapters (1, 2, 4, 8, and 11) end strongly, with a conclusion as an answer to the main question or objective. Meanwhile, most of the chapters satisfy the readers by showing summaries. This book would be more neatly organized if problems such as redundancies of acknowledgements in Chapter 12 (p. 376) were omitted.

Apart from these issues, it is clear that the sustainable Humanosphere in biomass production requires harmonization of the motives of survival, profit, and conservation by different actors. Such harmonization can be achieved through the recommended conception of people forestry. Within people forestry, biomass society can live and maintain its relationship with the environment, companies can still earn profits, and the government as well as NGOs can be satisfied with conservation results. Framing the Indonesian government with a conservationist motive is intriguing, knowing that the highlighted Suharto development policy orientation is far from conservationist. An explanation of the government's natural resource appropriation, supposedly in order to position it as a conservation agency, is missing in the book. Had it been included, it would bridge government conservation consciousness with particular implicit or explicit policies of the environmental protection trajectory in the various countries. This would clearly depict social forestry as the *commonweal* for actors in the sustainable Humanosphere (Warren and McCarthy 2009).

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Transforming Nikkeijin Identity and Citizenship: Untold Life Histories of Japanese Migrants and Their Descendants in the Philippines, 1903–2013

SHUN OHNO

Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2015, xiv+284pp.

In January 2016, Japan's Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko visited the Philippines as state guests. Mass media reported that the royal couple had wanted to visit the country as part of their pilgrimage for the victims of World War II. On January 28, the royal couple met with 86 second-generation (Nisei) Japanese descendants (Nikkeijin). The Nisei have lived extraordinarily difficult lives because of the war. Their Majesties politely listened to the stories the Nisei had kept for seven decades. Reading *Transforming Nikkeijin Identity and Citizenship: Untold Life Histories of Japanese Migrants and Their Descendants in the Philippines, 1903–2013* by Shun Ohno, we can imagine how precious this meeting was. It would probably not have been made possible without the persistent efforts of sincere journalists—as Ohno was—for decades to seek justice for the Nikkeijin in the Philippines (“Philippine Nikkei” in the book), particularly the Nisei. Journalists, together with concerned citizens and Nikkeijin associations, have demanded the Japanese government's recognition of its war responsibility for the Nisei. Nisei (often forcibly) collaborated with—or were even conscripted into—the Japanese military in the Philippines during World War II but were abandoned thereafter; no chance of repatriation was given. They were exposed to the threat of ambush. They lost practically everything—family, property, job, opportunities for education—but received no compensation at all.

The book is a culmination of Ohno's life work. It summarizes the history of Japanese male emigrants to the Philippines in the early twentieth century and that of their children and grandchildren until recent times. Their life has been tossed about by rapidly changing bilateral relations between Japan and the Philippines at each historical moment. At the same time, colonial and postcolonial Philippines throughout the twentieth century and beyond has been under the influence of the United States, and that has also affected the Philippine Nikkeijin in many ways.

As a journalist at that time, I wrote about the Philippine Nisei's impoverished and miserable post-war lives without Japanese fathers, and pointed out the inescapable responsibility of the Japanese government for having invaded the Philippines, conscripted many mestizo Nisei as Imperial Japan's soldiers and *gunzoku* [paramilitary personnel], and abandoned them without any assistance after the war. (pp. 129–130)

What Ohno began for the Nisei as a journalist in the 1980s was expanded to his broader research on their fathers (first generation, or Issei) and their children (third generation, or Sansei) and beyond. That was eventually compiled in his doctoral dissertation, which became the foundation of this book.

The Issei, who migrated to the Philippines from the 1900s to the 1930s, managed to establish themselves and settled in the Philippines, where landownership, immigration control, civil registry, and citizenship were regulated by American-made laws (Chapter 2). Many of them eventually married in the Philippines and produced the second generation, Nisei, who carry a double heritage. The community of Japanese migrants built Japanese schools for the Nisei's education in the 1920s and 1930s. Japanese schools received support from the Japanese government as institutions for "instilling the Japanese spirit in Nisei's minds" (Chapter 3). So raised, the Nisei suffered greatly as they were inevitably involved in World War II, in which their father's country—Japan—fought against the United States, the sovereign of their mother's country, the Philippines. The colony became the worst battleground during the war. Family members who had different nationalities—Japanese or Filipino, if not dual, ambiguous, or stateless—were divided as "enemies" in theory and separated physically by death or repatriation. Many Nisei were ambushed by Filipinos on suspicion of espionage (Chapter 4) or as objects of revenge. Many of the Nisei who survived the war remained in the Philippines, concealing their identity for fear of maltreatment by Filipinos in the post-World War II decades when anti-Japanese sentiment was severe.

Japanese journalists, including Ohno, uncovered the fierce lives and deaths of the children of Japanese migrants in the Philippines without compensation and began to demand justice for them. Some opposition representatives, human right lawyers, and concerned citizens of Japan joined the movement (Chapter 5). In 1990 Japan's Immigration Control and Refugees Recognition Act was revised to allow Japanese descendants up to the third generation, Sansei, to stay in Japan as long-term "special residents" without work restrictions. By then Japan had become a dream destination to many impoverished Filipinos for its economic and technological advancement, while Japanese industry needed 3D (dirty, demeaning, and dangerous) workers in the bubble economy. The Nisei began to unseal their identity and assist the Sansei to work in Japan (Chapter 6).

This is a moving story: a sincere journalist's grounded research bearing fruit after decades by moving both the Japanese and Philippine governments, which were indifferent to the issue and reluctant to render any positive actions. It proves the merit of diligent journalism, which in this case contributed to justice by turning what seemed impossible into reality. This sprawling drama does not need agitating writing. Compilations of citations of archival materials or interviews are enough to impress readers.

However, this book leaves room for improvement if it is to be more influential in the domain of social sciences. Research questions could have been more focused so that the theoretical framework and methodology were more tightly knitted. There is a list of six questions in the

first chapter. This implies that the project was not successful in narrowing down *the* research question. Also, the theoretical framework and methodology are not well harmonized. The thinness of both the introductory chapter (Chapter 1) and concluding chapter (Chapter 7) may be attributed to that.

The author claims to “analyze identities and citizenship of three generations of Nikkei” (p. 4). “Identity and citizenship” has become an important topic in understanding issues pertaining to ever-escalating human mobility, which is producing increasing numbers of transnational families and citizens in this globalizing world. Identity of migrants has been massively researched since the 1990s in migration studies and in various studies pertaining to globalization. The premise of these studies is that identity is not static but a process of othering. It is flexible, political, and relational, can be plural, and can be strategically articulated in negotiations; “It is only through the relation to the Other, the relation to what it is not” (Hall 1996, 4). The identity and citizenship of Philippine Nikkeijin as viewed by Ohno confirms such nature of identity making as manifested by different attitudes by each generation of Philippine Nikkeijin. The first generation who grew up in Japan mingled well with members of the destination community. But they were Japanese, after all. Their Japaneseness was further amplified by the growing militarism of Japan and the war (Chapters 2–4). Many mestizo Nisei, if not all, attended Japanese school and were made to collaborate with the Japanese forces during the war. They had to conceal their Japanese identity during the postwar decades for their own survival and began to reveal it only after Philippine–Japan relations improved. They played a central role in organizing Nikkeijin associations (Chapters 5 and 6). Sansei who migrated to Japan as “Japanese descendants” were treated as “foreigners” in the host country, at times discriminatorily. While they gained stable resident status in Japan, and even Japanese passports in some cases, they came to consider themselves more “Filipino” (Chapter 6). The whole story is informative.

Today, we are not unfamiliar with individuals who possess *de facto* plural citizenships or nationalities and use each of them strategically in different situations. For some global citizens today, their citizenship/nationality and sense of belongingness do not necessarily coincide. It could have been more interesting if the grand story of three generations of Philippine Nikkeijin were elevated to a theoretical discussion such as a question of nations and citizens, the transformation of nation states, or power and agency, among others.

The complex layers of power relations that the players of this history render are intellectually stimulating. References to the complex power relations among the minorities of both countries challenge the assumption of a simple majority-minority dichotomy. The book reveals not only mainland Japanese migrants’ discriminatory attitudes toward Okinawan migrants in the Philippines but also those of Filipinos toward the latter. The book also reveals the arrogant attitude of members of the Japanese military toward Japanese migrants in the Philippines—including their descendants, such as Nisei—during the war. It is shocking to learn about starving Japanese soldiers

murdering their fellow Japanese, particularly Nisei—and even massacring Okinawans—who were fighting along with them against the enemy, for food. The war made humans hungry, and extremely starving humans became beasts. Justice, particularly for Nisei, is indeed necessary.

On the Philippine side, details of the land problem in Davao City in the early decades of the twentieth century (Chapters 2 and 3) enlighten us on the intricacies of colonial American rule over the land occupied by the Bagobos, who had exercised what James Scott called “the art of not being governed” (Scott 2010). On the one hand, Americans blamed Japanese intermarriers as illegal (occupants); on the other hand, the Bagobos happily accommodated Japanese men as kin as they diligently developed their land. Members of the Filipino population who had already been assimilated into the colonial system, such as Manila-based journalists, supported the American view.

Methodologically speaking, the sources Ohno cites are skewed to Japanese ones, with few materials from the Philippines or the United States. Citations from unreliable sources, including double citations, are scattered throughout the text. Some uncritical treatments of archival materials and such citations of interviewees do not sit comfortably in the main text of the book. The publisher could have been more careful in editing for typos and biased or ambiguous expressions. While Ohno’s adoption of “citizenship/nationality” (pp. 4–5) is appreciated, these two terms are a source of confusion when discussing migration matters between Japan and the Philippines due to inconsistent usage of the terms. Nevertheless, a number of anecdotes expose untold sad stories effectively. For example it is important for us to learn about Takuma Higashiji, a Nisei, who was hanged as war criminals in 1946 (pp. 87, 102–103), while his commander from the Japanese Imperial Army and his colleagues were repatriated alive.

A huge number of newspaper and magazine articles, studies, and reports on Nikkeijin in the Philippines have been published in Japanese. This has hindered Filipinos, including Philippine Nikkei, from reading them. Although this book contains minor limitations, it is a welcome source of information for Philippine Nikkei persons, researchers, and students of the subject, particularly those who do not read Japanese, as well as supporters and government officials in both countries.

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The Yudhoyono Presidency: Indonesia's Decade of Stability and Stagnation

EDWARD ASPINALL, MARCUS MIETZNER, and DIRK TOMSA, eds.

Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2015, 362pp.

A Decade of Missed Opportunities

The Yudhoyono Presidency: Indonesia's Decade of Stability and Stagnation is a collection of papers that were presented at the annual Indonesia Update conference at the Australian National University in 2014 and edited by three Indonesianists: Edward Aspinall, Marcus Mietzner, and Dirk Tomsa. The volume's aim is to understand the presidency of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY, as he is called in Bahasa Indonesia) between 2004 and 2014. SBY was the first president elected through the democratic means of direct election in 2004. He was subsequently reelected in 2009, making him the first reelected president in democratic Indonesia. The Indonesian experience of directly electing a president in 2004 and 2009 was a watershed in the country's modern history.

This book emphasizes the personality of SBY to evaluate his terms as president of Indonesia. The most visible feature of SBY's personality was that he "was a *peragu*—a hesitator or vacillator who took care to avoid political controversy that he was rarely able to take decisive policy action" (p. 3), as described by the editors of the book. They also depict SBY as a moderating president, which means that "he viewed himself as leading a polity and a society characterized by deep divisions and he believed that his most important role was to moderate these divisions by mediating between the conflicting forces and interests to which they give rise" (p. 4). For some scholars this approach offers the possibility of writing about the positive impact of the stability offered by the SBY presidency over a 10-year period. This judgment is correct, especially when located in the broader context of Indonesian politics after the *Reformasi* (Reform), which started in 1998 and led to many social conflicts and deep divisions within both the polity and society.

However, by prioritizing stability and harmony, SBY also allowed himself to miss important economic opportunities that were provided by a commodities boom. How were these opportunities missed? It seems that SBY was reluctant to take on difficult policies because they would likely bring about open confrontation in society, and also with voters. Some of this book's contributors discuss these policies, suggesting that SBY did not take decisive action on issues such as social welfare and human rights and that this inaction can be traced to his personality.

Another obstacle that confronted SBY was the decentralization policies adopted by President Habibie in 1999. These policies eliminated the hierarchical relationship that had existed between the central and local governments under Suharto's New Order. This hierarchy had allowed Suharto to monitor and control governors and mayors or regents, which also meant that he had the power to control policies as far down as those affecting regions. The elimination of the hierarchy between the central and local governments put the president in a much more difficult situation if he wanted

to monitor national policies that had to be implemented at the local level. SBY had to operate in this new political structure of no hierarchy between the central and local governments. However, there was something that his central government was able to control: the flow of funding to regions. This control of funds served as the foundation of power for the president. Therefore, it is no surprise that SBY tried to reduce decentralization by reducing the authority and power of local governments. SBY did not openly put forward an effort to recentralize the political system, but the Ministry of Home Affairs, which was under his control, put forth initiatives to take back central government control over the regions.

In short, this book illustrates SBY and the policy actions of his government through two different approaches: personality and structure. In terms of the personality approach, SBY is shown as a vacillator with a tendency to take the middle position. Structurally (some of the writers call it the institutional approach), the government formed a political coalition—a rainbow coalition—with various parties having very different ideologies, from secular-nationalist to Islamic. These approaches are relatively successful in offering a comprehensive portrait of SBY with all the consequences of this coalition.

These two approaches aim to help us understand the presidency of SBY, but they could have been sharpened by borrowing an institutional economics approach (this approach is very different from the institutional approach used by some of the scholars in the book). Institutions are understood as formal or informal regulations created as a framework for guidance for living together in a polity and society. With this simple understanding of an institution, it can be seen that SBY functioned within the confines of the legacy that he inherited. This legacy was in the form of various regulations in politics, society, and the economy. For example, in the political domain SBY continued to adopt a coalition government, which had been initiated by Presidents Abdurrahman Wahid and Megawati Sukarnoputri. This was an indication that SBY operated in a web of institutions that were created before his presidency. On one hand, he was able to navigate his policies by negotiating this web of institutions. On the other hand, he had opportunities to create new institutions that would serve as the foundation of his rule. Therefore, even though SBY wanted to make certain changes he had to do so within the existing institutions. This is known as path dependency. Considering these facts, therefore, SBY's opportunities to effect change were wide open, but it would not be wise to think that he would put forward revolutionary policies. Drastic changes could only be proposed under huge political pressure involving large numbers of actors from both the polity and society. One can think of *Reformasi* as an example of a dramatic change that transformed many rules not only in the political arena but also the economic one.

I agree with the conclusion of the book. However, the explanation provided by institutional economics offers a comprehensive picture that describes the achievements and failures of SBY in managing the Indonesian polity, economy, and society in 10 years. From a political standpoint SBY is not the first president to have taken the initiative to form a political coalition to secure his power.

SBY made this political coalition into a much deeper form by inviting many political parties except for PDIP (Indonesian Democratic Party-Struggle), the party chaired by Megawati Sukarnoputri. By doing this SBY not only received political support from parliament, especially when he needed it to pass legislation or government policies, but also secured his presidential position from possible impeachment. It seems he believed that distributing ministerial seats would secure his political position as those political parties would back him. In short, SBY was part of a large web of power that was created before his presidency and he smartly operated within this web.

An effort by SBY to achieve his goals, as mentioned by several writers in the book, may be seen in the light of institutional complexities that existed before his administration and which he could not manage effectively. One of the legacies that he could not deal with was the bureaucracy both in the central and local governments. The most obvious examples are the installation of UK4P, the Presidential Work Unit for Development Monitoring and Control, and TNP2K, the National Team for the Acceleration of Poverty Reduction. Those two new bodies were installed outside the previous bureaucracy and reflect SBY's inability to reform the bureaucracy, but at the same time they may be interpreted as his reluctance to shock the gigantic bureaucracy. If the ministries responsible for coordinating and supervising development could have worked together, perhaps SBY would not have needed to establish those offices outside of his Cabinet to monitor and supervise development.

SBY's administration had a golden opportunity when it saw an increase in the price of exported commodities in the international market. This is an implicit message of the book: that SBY's government did not benefit from the rise of commodity prices on the international market in order to pursue a more ambitious economic agenda. The book explains that under SBY's administration Indonesia experienced a boom in primary commodities such as coal, other mineral resources, and crude palm oil. It can be said that this was Indonesia's second boom, the first one being the oil boom in the 1980s. Thus, the country once again received a huge opportunity to transform its political, economic, and social life.

Anne Booth (1998) explains that throughout its history Indonesia lost some opportunities because it put small investment in the secondary and higher education sector, which in turn did not create a pool of labor with high skills. Booth talks about Indonesia since the Dutch time until 1990s. The relevant point of Booth's discussion is that SBY's administration paid little attention to secondary and higher education to form a significant pool of skilled labor. SBY did embark on a serious effort to increase the length of compulsory education to nine years, but one should note that this initiative was rooted in the previous government and stagnated due to the economic crisis that hit the country in 1997/8. This effort toward nine years of compulsory education does little to achieve the target of establishing the pool of skilled labor that the country needs to tackle various problems, mainly the middle-income trap.

This book also mentions some difficulties faced by SBY in the improvement of human

resources. Data provided by contributors such as Faisal Basri and Dinna Wisnu show that SBY's performance in the education sector was a mere continuation of the previous administrations', starting from Suharto's time. They mention that SBY had huge opportunities to improve the human resources development of the country. If we look at the 1970s, Esther Duflo (2004) argues that in the primary education sector Indonesia had experienced success in improving the skills of its population through a massive effort to build primary schools in many parts of the country. As a consequence, any government had to seriously acknowledge this effort and take it to a higher level.

Why is education important for Indonesia? Even though there is little discussion on the future challenges that Indonesia will confront, it seems that the country's plan for integration with other member of Southeast Asian countries stressed the relevance of education. This year the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) takes effect, and Indonesia should have prepared for this economic cooperation years ago. In this book the AEC is discussed from a very different perspective by Evi Fitriani (p. 78) and Hal Hill (p. 300). Looking at the SBY administration's handling of the education sector, one could argue that this administration did not adopt suitable policies to prepare Indonesia to enter the AEC. Such policies would have placed Indonesia in a better position to address labor issues. If the SBY administration was reluctant to take necessary measures to improve education, the impact will be seen in the next 10 years or more. When students at the secondary level cannot continue to university level, or only a small proportion of those students continue, there will be a problem in the provision of human resources.

This book covers almost all the problems confronted by the SBY administration. However, it is surprising that it does not provide a section discussing the dramatic changes in the mining sector after the law on mineral and coal took effect in January 2014. The law passed in December 2008 and was signed in January 2009. When it took effect in 2014 it created a controversy, as it banned the export of all mineral ores from Indonesia. The Indonesian government wanted to benefit from the export of minerals by proposing domestic processing of the commodities. At the same time it proposed a reduction in the export of unprocessed minerals. These proposals were put forward when the international prices of those commodities decreased. Companies operating in Indonesia were forced to build smelters. The Indonesian government and foreign companies that hold big concessions in the mining sector are still negotiating on how to settle the issue, because building a smelter is a relatively less profitable business enterprise for a company.

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Brunei: From the Age of Commerce to the 21st Century

MARIE-SYBILLE DE VIENNE

Singapore: NUS Press in association with Institute De Recherche Sur L'Asie Du Sud-Est Contemporaine (Research Institute of Contemporary Southeast Asia), 2015, xviii + 345pp.

Brunei: From the Age of Commerce to the 21st Century is a translation of Marie-Sybille de Vienne's book that was originally published in French, titled *Brunei: De la Thalassocratie à la Rente* (Paris: CNRS, 2012, index, 303pp., translated by Emilia Lanier). This fascinating work examines how Brunei, a tiny sultanate of 5,765 square kilometers in the South China Sea, became today's extraordinarily rich state. Through the lens of economic history, de Vienne explores this transformation in terms of monarchy, Islam, and trade. Interestingly, although de Vienne deals primarily with the society and economy of modern Brunei (1984–2014 in this volume), the early history of Brunei is briefly explored in Chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 1–60). This is key, as the political, economic, historical, and religious aspects of Brunei cannot be explained without an understanding of the maritime "Age of Commerce" (Reid 1988/93) in Southeast Asia.

The most significant contribution of this book is that it provides the first published overview of the long-term history of Brunei. As an anthropologist and specialist in indigenous communities of the Baram Basin, Northern Sarawak, Malaysian Borneo, I have a keen interest in records of Brunei that describe the historical situation of Sarawak under the Sultan of Brunei. As de Vienne notes, "Brunei is thus the heart of a network in which all points on a north/south axis (from Canton at the top, down to Flores) correspond in pairs to the focal points of trade of the South China Sea" (p. 9).

Sarawak is well known as a major producer of jungle or forest products. By the early 1880s it was clearly outstripping its Bornean neighbors in its volume of such products, thus constituting a major proportion of the trade profile of all four countries: Brunei, Labuan, North Borneo, and Sarawak (Cleary 1996, 313), with Brunei being the most powerful polity. Carl Lumholtz writes that Antonio Pigafetta arrived in Brunei from the Moluccas in 1521, along with the survivors of Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan's expedition, and was the first to give an account of it to the Western world. Pigafetta called it "Bornei," which later, with a slight change, became the name of the whole island (Lumholtz 1920, 19).

Given the importance of Brunei in the history of the Southeast Asian Archipelago, the lack of good English references on the country is surprising. To the best of my knowledge, this is the only academic publication that examines the long-term economic history of this sultanate from the

Age of Commerce to the twenty-first century. Although historians have always been interested in Brunei in and around the Age of Commerce, the attention drops off afterward, with the exception of the national history written by D. S. Ranjit Singh, a historian of Brunei (Singh 1984). Singh's book provides an overview of Brunei's economic and political history up until the modern age.

The chapters are in chronological order, and all kinds of historical events are included in each. Chapters 1 ("Prologue: Brunei versus Borneo," pp. 1–11) and 2 ("From Thalassocracy to Rentier State," pp. 13–128) are in concert with the "rhythm" of the archipelago of Oliver Wolters (1982). These chapters describe how Brunei gained and developed a significant geopolitical advantage in the Southeast Asian Archipelago and how it reached its golden age through expansion and contraction of the Sultan's territory. The references cited in the footnotes and bibliography provide useful historical references.

This translation is undoubtedly the best reference on the history of Brunei. It would be a useful title for anyone interested in Brunei and/or Borneo or anyone who seeks to understand the historical and current situation of the maritime trade of Southeast Asia and the South China Sea. This book does not take the high road of a historian's work as it depends heavily on secondary sources. The author cites a large number of references, and the chronological historical descriptions tend to be lengthy. After Chapter 3, it becomes like any other impersonal history book. There is, of course, a major contrast between the past and present in a volume that is written in linear order with a single time line.

I have heard a wide variety of life stories from people in the Baram Basin of Sarawak who moved frequently and married across the border in Central Borneo. This is not the policymaker-centered history of nation-states like Brunei, but a history of how ordinary people, merchants, and immigrants have created their communities and built social networks in real life and in cyberspace. The political and economic position of the Chinese and Dayaks in Brunei, for example, is unclear. Although the history of Brunei has been reported to star the Malays and Western powers, the Chinese in the Southeast Asian Archipelago played a very important role. How have the Dayaks who emigrated from the Malaysian side of Borneo not been incorporated into the Islamic kingdom? Understanding Brunei in the twenty-first century requires examinations of such questions, and this book provides an excellent stepping-stone.

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***Sustainable Land Use and Rural Development in Southeast Asia:
Innovations and Policies for Mountainous Areas***

HOLGER L. FRÖHLICH, PEPIJN SCHREINEMACHERS, KARL STAHR, and GERHARD CLEMENS, eds.

Berlin and Heidelberg: Springer, 2013, x+490pp.

There is no promising way of sustainably farming sloping land in a market-oriented economy. Farmers are usually required to offer competitive prices and quality of agricultural products in order to survive in the market. That forces them to increase agricultural production, which in turn leaves them no choice apart from sedentary agriculture and land use intensification. Changes in farming system and land use usually entail degradation of sloping land, because in arable land the outflows of soil, its nutritional content, and water exceed their inflows. Preventing or mitigating land degradation, along with keeping products competitive, is the central problem in agricultural development. Although the issue seems to be straightforward, several factors—from a range of ecological to cultural settings—are intricately tangled. This is likely to be one of the reasons why many agricultural development projects have not been as successful as expected. This volume is a result of the Uplands Program, which is an agricultural development project in northern Thailand and northern Vietnam to help solve the problem.

The objectives of this volume as outlined in Chapter 1 are as follows: first, to investigate drivers, consequences, and challenges of change mainly in land use and agricultural intensification; second, to describe how technology-based innovation processes can address the challenges; and third, to describe how knowledge creation can support changes in policies and institutions. The volume is divided into four parts, an introduction followed by one part for each of the objectives: Part 1, “Overview and Synthesis”; Part 2, “Environmental and Social Challenges”; Part 3, “Technology-Based Innovation Processes”; and Part 4, “Policies and Institutional Innovations.”

This project assumes that four drivers of change from traditional swidden cultivation to permanent field cultivation, mainly cash crops, are: economic development, policy change, introduction of new technologies, and population growth. As a result, as discussed in Part 2, mainly due to annual cash crop cultivation, soil erosion increases and pesticide-contaminated water runs off to

the valley bottom (Chapters 3 and 4). In other words, sloping land is becoming a region where crops do not grow, and the watershed is getting to be contaminated by pesticide. To keep the soil environment usable as arable land, appropriate soil management is necessary. So, Karl Stahr *et al.* examine methodologies for making soil maps at a low cost (Chapter 2). Camille Saint-Macary *et al.* confirm that poverty is associated with land degradation since poor people have limited capital to invest in long-term soil conservation (Chapter 5). In Part 3, techniques of appropriate water use in sloping land cultivation (Chapter 6), effective cropping systems for soil conservation (Chapter 7), and profitability improvement in aquaculture carried out at the bottom of the valley (Chapter 8) are examined. The authors conclude that, technically speaking, there is potential to improve the farming system on sloping land in a way that is compatible with soil conservation and an increase in income. In Part 4, the authors examine and develop numerical models that may be helpful in predicting farmers' responses to a decline in soil fertility and/or conservation activities (Chapter 10). In development studies and agricultural development research, the participatory approach has been thought to be a better way to transfer scientific knowledge and techniques to farmers than the top-down approach. However, the participatory approach has not worked as well as expected, and it is now widely recognized that the approach is inappropriate in some cases. In Chapter 9 Andreas Neef *et al.* analyze the failures of the participatory approach in Southeast Asia. Chapter 11 shows that an agricultural extension network is more responsive to the diverse needs of farmers than top-down extension. Although commercialization of agricultural products and agricultural intensification have increased farm productivity and farm income, farming in the uplands is getting to be unsustainable in the long term. The government needs to support upland farmers by making policies to mitigate risks stemming from changes in agriculture (Chapter 12).

Based on the facts outlined in each chapter, the editors conclude the following (p. 22): first, intensified land use systems in mountainous areas are characterized by substantial inefficiencies; second, various technological and social innovations are available to address certain challenges, but adaptation rates remain low; third, innovation processes are more successful when using, instead of a conventional top-down approach, a participatory approach that takes into account diversity in the demand for innovations and allows people to test innovations and adapt them to their needs; and fourth, as poor farm households face difficulties in benefiting from the agricultural commercialization process, it remains important for governments to implement policies promoting market development with programs that give targeted support to poor households.

We learn from this volume that smallholders living in mountainous regions still face difficulties participating in a market economy despite various technological innovations. In a subsistence economy, farming on sloping land could have been developed in order to conserve the environment and secure livelihoods such as nomadism, shifting cultivation, and other subsistence-oriented farming systems found in Asia, Africa, and South America. However, in countries where most people live in a market economy, it is not rare for mountainous regions to be evacuated and arable

land abandoned, as in the Pyrenees and Japan. People from mountainous regions often prefer to move to the lowlands and urban areas. In economically advanced countries, mountainous regions have become unfavorable places to live. It is uncertain whether mountainous areas in Southeast Asia remain places where people still choose to make a living when innovative technologies are available. Although agricultural development projects play a vital role in increasing the sustainability of land use in the mountains, we should recognize that sustainable land use does not necessarily mean sustainability of rural livelihood.

Most of the chapters mention that education for farmers is a prerequisite for adapting innovative technologies. Transferring scientific knowledge is vital for proper use of the technologies. For example, as mentioned in Chapters 3 and 4, it is important to learn about the effects of pesticide use on the environment and people's health. Even though education is unquestionably important for proper use of technologies, it might not be the only reason why adaptation rates remain low. Even if the participatory approach is used and farmers correctly understand the benefits brought about by technology, they are bound to consider their labor and capital availability, risks stemming from the technology, ease of local government procedures, market potential, etc., and then make a decision on whether to adopt, defer, or reject the technology. Rapid adoption of technology may not necessarily be the best answer for them. If a participatory approach can allow farmers to make their own decision on technology, even if that turns out to have an unsatisfactory result for rural developers and other involved actors, that would be a distinct difference from the top-down approach that farmers often have to give in to.

Risk aversion and mitigation might be central to the stability of a farmer's livelihood. Chapters 3, 4, 5, 8, and 9 describe a range of risks—from those familiar to farmers, such as floods, to new ones that accompany the introduction of new technologies, such as pesticides, and also the market economy. For risks stemming from the market economy, such as fluctuations of crop price, Saint-Macary *et al.* (Chapter 5) describe household strategies to diversify the income portfolio, as seen in other parts of the world such as Africa and South America. In addition, the contributors claim that risk aversion strategies prevent farmers from taking on challenges. Along with Manfred Zeller *et al.* (Chapter 12), they claim that government support for mitigating a range of risks associated with the market economy is essential. Although both household strategies and public services are key components of the challenges faced by farmers, the lack of analysis of informal networks may rankle among readers familiar with the rural situation in Southeast Asia. Sharing risks through the informal network plays a role in livelihoods and also migration. It would be good to have some studies on how the network has been changing—reflected in changes in social, economic, and ecological settings—and how the network influences development activities.

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From Padi States to Commercial States: Reflections on Identity and the Social Construction Space in the Borderlands of Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand and Myanmar

FRÉDÉRIC BOURDIER, MAXIME BOUTRY, JACQUES IVANOFF, and OLIVIER FERRARI
Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2015, 168pp.

The case studies in this book encompass the utilization of, and an extension of, James Scott's "Zomia" concept. Deriving from anthropological works that focus on the "adaptation strategies of the border population" (p. 15), the book focuses on the enactment of alternative histories and (borderland) "societies" as well as on a revisiting of contemporary state-society relations, borrowing from the concept of Zomia. The authors add to the debates regarding Scott's Zomia, in their words "de-territorialize" (p. 15) the concept of Zomia and focus on the "Inner Zomians," defined as "cast-out and widely dispersed migrants, modern resisters residing within ethno-national borders" (p. 15).

The argument is that even though Zomia territory has been penetrated by the emergence of a "commercial state" based on a paddy cash crop economy that serves as a "system of statehood where rice-farming constitutes the basis of power structures" (p. 16), the "post-colonial nation-state" structures of control remain "partial" (p. 16). This can be seen in the cultural and economic exchanges as well as social and ethnic dynamism established between the "commercial" state and the Zomia communities.

To be more precise, the quote on page 24 narrates the main focus of the book:

... the modalities of the implementation of identities and the transformation of the interethnic relations provoked by development ... starting from the center, reconfigure a Zomian reality that remains geographically hard for the center to access and exploit ... we are attempting to understand the strategies that have been developed by the populations who are no longer external to the state and have become integrated, but who still remain "externalized," either through their own will or through the state's paradoxical discourse resulting from a desire to integrate these groups without putting an end to stigmatization. (p. 24)

The chapters celebrate the creativity and adaptability of the (inner) Zomians and address the questions of domination, resistance, and resilient acts through the politics of ethnic identification and construction. Despite the encroachment of the nation-states' developmental programs—some have even penetrated into Zomia territory and have impacted the socioeconomic development of minorities—the political economy of the borderlands operates "as an element of reflection for our complementary understanding of a socio-cultural landscape that cannot be restricted to a geographical landscape" (p. 16) but arguably extends to cultural landscape (ethnicity, religion, ideology) of the "Inner Zomian ... that is not only ethnic ... but also socio-ethnic" (p. 18).

The book does not limit itself to locating resistance, or the processes of "not-being-governed"

(Scott 2009), between two opposite categories such as ethnic/minority groups versus the state, but the “strata” within the particular group, coupled with their appropriative capabilities to adapt to differences and survive through the creation of new ethnic identities within the nation-state system.

The “inner” Zomia refers to the “particular strata” (p. 2) within the populations and other territorial groups—namely, the Jarai of Cambodia (Chapter 2), Chinese entrepreneurs or *taukays* and migrants (Chapter 3), the Moken or “sea-gypsies” (Chapter 4), and the minority groups of Moken and Urak Lawoi vis-à-vis the dominant populations of Thai, Sino-Thai, and Malay Muslims (Chapter 5)—that move and flow between the dual dynamics either in their “relationship with the state or with other minorities” (p. 18).

In Chapter 2, Frédéric Bourdier’s analysis locates the “infinity” of ethnic identity of the hill people and the resilience of Zomia in the borderland of northeast Cambodia despite the penetration of “commercial states” activities. The analysis takes into consideration the flexibility of people to adapt and manipulate local strategies to modify the cultural marker in a particular borderland area, or what Bourdier calls “cultural effervescence,” a manifestation of the flexible identities that are capable of sharing physical, economic, and social relations with Laos and Vietnam through historical reappropriations and recompositions of the Jarai on the Cambodian-Vietnamese border, and the reappropriation of autonyms and exonyms (the Brao and the Krung).

In Chapter 3, Maxime Boutry argues that the “sea-Zomians” bring a vulnerability to nation-state relations due to the adaptability of the Zomians in manipulating and appropriating interrelations with the nation-state to access resources and form their identities. The Moken or sea nomads’ identities survive through intermarriage with the Burmese along with frequent changes in religious practices, which subsequently challenge state-formulated racial and ethnic categories.

In Chapter 4, borrowing from Thongchai Winichakul’s concept of “interstices,” Jacques Ivanoff’s ethnographic research looks at the “sea-gypsies” of Southeast Asia in Malaysia, Thailand, and Myanmar, to locate the construction, recomposition, and reappropriation of the Moken in construing their own “Zomia” within the nation-state system at the margins.

In Chapter 5, Olivier Ferrari’s research locates the “sea-nomads” (Moken, Moken, and Urak Lawoi) in Southern Thailand. The author showcases the way in which sea-nomads perpetuate their identities surrounded by the dominant populations (Thai, Sino-Thai, Malay Muslims) through their own unique management of the “cosmological border”—the coast—as an expression of their unique ethnic identity, thus creating an ethno-regional social fabric (pp. 129–131). Such dynamic relations provide a new perspective in conceptualizing the “nation-state” and problematize the extent to which the nation-state system is capable of homogenizing Zomian societies.

Thus, the book’s analysis of “inner Zomia” identifies the enactment of an “infinite parthenogenesis of identity” (p. 16) that blurs state-society relations. The book locates the borderland as a site for contestation and negotiation of “other” societies that are embedded by, and negotiated

through, the domination of the state system. In brief, the book provides a different dynamic of “society” through the lens of a borderland that is not subsumed by the nation-state system but resilient in its own construction.

This is not an easy book to review, to be frank. The difficulty does not derive from the structure of the book. Rather, it derives from the complexities of state-society relations, the concept of “Zomia” and its interrelation to ethnic construction within the population in contemporary nation-state structures, and the ongoing shifts of identity politics in the borderlands that the book investigates. The volume covers a wide array of issues, ranging from the constant shaping of ethnic relations within the ongoing changes of borderland societies and nation-states to the constant political processes produced in a non-static fashion in the borderlands of Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand, and Myanmar.

The major contribution of the book is to provide alternative perspectives on “societies” located at the borders of “maritime and terrestrial” (p. 35) that still exist in a contemporary globalized world underpinned by a neoliberal political economy. Such alternative societies in the borderlands act as an answer to conventional views on the disappearance of societies or minority groups under the shadow of globalization and capitalism within the nation-state domain. Borderlands vis-à-vis the nation-state serve as sites to “. . . redeploy and strengthen people’s material and symbolic referents, which are in turn part of identity, which is itself in perpetual negotiations” (p. 34).

Essentially the book uses micro and localized case studies to grasp the social complexities of the locales. It provides rich ethnographic data focusing on case-by-case “micro-study” instead of macro-level patterns to generate particularities of borderlands’ political economy. The case studies characterize the non-uniformity and nuances of the “nation” and the “states” as well as “Zomia.” Rather than providing a standard model to identify the construction of ethnic identity and politics, the book provides a nonlinear analysis that showcases cultural fluidity within the borderlands and inner Zomians that are resilient and capable of generating multiple relations within a nation-state system.

The authors attempt to uncover deeper complexities, such as the organization of an “Inner Zomian zone” (p. 25), instead of emphasizing the investigation of Zomia per se; the “particular strata” of ethnic groups with the state, instead of between ethnic groups and the state; the constant shape of ethnic identities through interrelation between the dominant groups and minorities within a nation-state; and the processes that took place—negotiation, adaptation, appropriation, domination—as manifestations of new identity politics vis-à-vis the incapability of the “center” to penetrate and homogenize the “margins.”

Finally, the book serves as a critique to Scott’s “Zomia” as well as an attempt to build an extension of the concept—the “inner Zomia.” The book will be of use to those who are interested in comprehending and seeking concepts or theoretical frameworks to explain the process of change and adaptability of alternative “societies,” or existing societies vis-à-vis the nation-state system

and neoliberalism; relocating historiography other than official/national histories; and identifying processes of cultural exchange and politics.

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